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Presentation Abstracts



THE SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

UNDERSTANDING SOUTH ASIA'S CULTURES, HISTORIES, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The primary purposes for which SASA was organized are:

- to promote scholarly study of and public interest in South Asian civilizations and affairs;
- to provide a public forum for the communication of research and scholarship on South Asia, by means of an annual conference;
- to promote scholarship and networking opportunities for scholars of South Asia between annual conferences through electronic and other media;
- to assist public and private cultural and educational agencies and institutions in the development and dissemination of programs and teaching materials on South Asia;
- by means of a newsletter, journal, or other such publications and programs as may be feasible for the association to undertake, to facilitate exchange of information among persons and accredited academic institutions interested in South Asian studies, to disseminate research results, and to further educate the general public about South Asian affairs;
- to build bridges of understanding linking the academic, entrepreneurial and diaspora communities.

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Carol Anderson Anita Rao Mysore Felicia Lincoln	University of Arkansas
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Negotiating Third Spaces: Experiences of an Indian Pre-Service Teacher	

According to the 2010 US Census, Indians rank fourth among nations of the world and third among Asian nations (Grieco & Trevelyan, 2010) in the foreign-born population living in the US. Ramanathan (2006) states, "the economic growth of India and China make it apparent that in the future students will have to be more familiar with the present histories and cultures of such countries" (34). Sleeter and Milner (2011) posit that teachers of color can understand and respect the cultural knowledge that their students possess and use it as a basis for teaching. They call for diversifying the teaching force. In addition, while the literature on Asian-American K-12 education "provides educators with straightforward and quick overviews about various aspects of working with Asian Americans, it tends to treat the group monolithically and is thereby unable to get at the more complicated realities of Asian American identities and experiences" (Ng, Lee, & Pak, 2007, 101).

This ethnographic study chronicles the experiences of a female first-generation South Asian—an Indian immigrant as a pre-service teacher in the "third spaces" (Gutiérrez, 1999) of US society and its institutions of higher education as well as her experiences as a student-teacher and substitute teacher in the "hybrid" (Gutiérrez, 1999) environment of grades 1-8 of US public schools. Thus far research has focused on Asian and Pacific Islander (API) teachers and on Indian-American teachers who are not necessarily first-generation immigrants. Therefore the extant literature on first-generation Indian immigrant pre-service teachers is rather scant. Our study contributes to the fund of knowledge of multicultural education regarding first-generation South Asians, specifically, Indian immigrant pre-service teachers, student-teachers, and substitute teachers.

Vandana Asthana Majid Sharifi	Eastern Washington University
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Workshop on Regional Insecurities in the Persian Gulf and South Asian States (PGSAS) Region	

In this workshop, we examine the pervasive insecurity in the region of Persian Gulf and South Asian States (PGSAS), where states like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are threatened from both within and without. In contrast to the "regime of insecurity" in the PGSAS, the US used its power to build a "security community" in Western Europe after World War II. The achievement of a "security community" with the help of US power successfully transformed the once war-ridden Western Europe into a region where making inter- or intra state wars is no longer imaginable, while economic development, human rights, and social welfare are institutionalized at the regional level. Using the concept of the European security community as a heuristic model, we ask why the creation of a security community succeeded in Europe, but it has not even reached the stage of proposal or debate in the academic community or policy-making circles in the United States. The supposition behind the concept of a security community is the simple notion that security is a non-exclusionary public good. Hence, it either exists for everyone or no one has it. Viewing security as a communal good has practical implications in the life of millions of people living in these states, where billions of dollars are wasted on security policies annually. Nonetheless, the literature has rarely problematized the security/insecurity of the region as a regional problem. Moreover, running on short electoral cycles, local interests, and partisan relations, policy makers in the US have failed to see the region as spatial unit, and, regardless of administrative changes, what has remained constant is the spending of billions of dollars in security policies of PGSAS states. The contrast in the US's exercise of power in these two zones is a puzzle that the literature has largely ignored and misunderstood, but we intend to give this puzzle the prominence it deserves. We thus pose two interrelated questions: "Is the creation of a security community possible in PGSAS?" and, "If not, why not?" These lead to more fundamental questions: How and why is there a positive correlation between increased US involvement in the region and heightened anti-American Islamization? How and why has this led to a greater degree of instability for various pro-American regimes in the region? Why have US policies not been successful in creating a security community, despite aid and military intervention? These are some of the questions we explore in this workshop by examining practices in several critical events to show how the rationality of the American-led empire reproduces itself in discourses of security, economic development, and democratization. But in the practicing of these discourses in the region, we argue, the rationality of the empire is creating insecurity rather than security or the hope for constructing a regional security community.

R.J. Aycock	Monterey Institute of International Studies
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Mountains And Money

In Nepal the words "tourism" and "development" are almost synonymous. This makes sense, considering that Nepal has eight of the ten highest mountain peaks in the world as well as being host to Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha. In spite of this, Nepal is one of the poorest nations in South Asia, and lacks even basic infrastructure with which to develop a promising industry into a means of providing access to satisfy basic human needs among a larger sample of the population. Several organizations and individuals within this post-war country posit that expanding the tourism industry could lead to alleviation of the inability by many Nepalese to meet some of their most basic needs. Tourism is perceived as a means with which Nepal can strengthen its economy. This paper analyzes the obstacles that lie in the way of developing the tourism industry and which in turn could widen the scope of economic activity in Nepal.

Karki Purna Bahadur	Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
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The Challenge and Prospect of the Nepal Constitutional Assembly

This paper highlights the challenge and prospect of the Nepal Constitutional Assembly. It evaluates the members' activities in the peace process in Nepal, where Nepal's Maoist guerillas moved from bullet to ballet. Immediately after its election on 10 April 2008, the Assembly was tasked with writing a new constitution within two years, but it failed to meet this deadline, although it has been extended several times. In this circumstance people are losing their patience. The people of Nepal are still waiting for a new constitution which they might promulgate. Given such a dilemma, informed by intra-party conflict, is the reconstruction of the state possible? Can a new Constitution bring peace to Nepal? These two central questions will be addressed here. I also analyze the nature and actions of the Assembly itself, in both a legal and a social perspective. Finally, this research suggests that the Constitutional Assembly has lost the people's mandate, but, due to special circumstances, it is still functioning. The larger context of the 1991 Constitution and the recent development activities of Assembly members point to the severe conflict which will happen in Nepal in the near future.

Debashish Banerji	University of Philosophical Research, Los Angeles
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Tagore Through Portraits: A Conversation in Pictures

This talk deals with Tagore's home community of Jorasanko as an affective space of creative mutuality, where fraternity could ground critique and enable reflection and reinvention of the self in its dynamic relation to the forces of modernity. By looking at the visual language of exchanges coded into portraits of Rabindranath made by his nephews Gaganendranath and Abanindranath, I trace the locus of this internal space as the amorphous domain of the poet's self-identification.

Dina Bangdel	Virginia Commonwealth University
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Contesting Innovation and Modernity in Contemporary Nepal: When Is Traditional *Paubha* Painting Too "Modern"?

Although the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley had historically established themselves since the 7th-8th centuries as renowned master artists excelling in the traditional arts of painting, metal work and wood carving, the period after the fall of the Mallas in the late 18th century and the beginning of the Shah dynasty witnessed a breakdown of artistic patronage and hence the traditional arts. A significant Newar artistic renaissance in the mid 1930s is attributed to two traditional artists, Anandamuni Shakya and his son Siddhimuni Shakya, who were responsible for introducing a distinctive stylistic aesthetics in traditional *paubha* painting. It is this artistic revival that is responsible for what now is known as *the* "Newar" style among traditional artists working in the contemporary Nepal.

My current research focuses on constructing a visual history of this "new" Newar style, and on defining how these stylistic and aesthetic innovations simultaneously coincided with the revival of Newar intellectual and cultural modernity in Nepal. In this paper, I consider the works of two leading traditional artists, Udaya Charan Shrestha and Samundra Man Shrestha, whose stylistic and iconographic innovations are at once celebrated and contested in the contemporary context. Furthermore, the paper discusses traditional *paubha* painting as a platform to explore the issues of cultural production, aesthetics and modernity, as well as the ways in which these works offer a space for the construction of paradoxical definition of artistic authenticity.

Zara Barlas	Heidelberg University, Germany
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India in the European Operatic Imagination	

The function of the arts in both reflecting and shaping the public sphere cannot be dismissed. Within this consideration, the representations of cultural "Others" that emerge in dramatic productions in Europe can act as important signifiers of popular political and social thought, particularly during the colonial period. This presentation follows the varying portrayals of India in operas produced in Europe from the 18th century until 1947, when India broke free from foreign colonial rule. It involves a technical analysis of music, libretti, characterization and setting, but also includes a study of the underlying factors of influence, such as the interests of the agents involved, including the composers, librettists, commissioners and audiences of the operas. This research seeks to derive patterns and themes that emerge from these operatic representations (e.g., to question why the Indian male was "feminized"), but also the differences in terms of the countries that produced these operas and developments over time. All of this will be contextualized within a historical setting in order to identify the parallels between the operatic representations of India and how they correspond with the political and/or economic interests of the specific European countries that produced these operas. This research can help to deepen our knowledge of India in the European imagination (although this is not a homogeneous concept) during a critical period, through the analysis of an art form that harnessed both the visual and the musical, and was particularly popular among the elite and influential classes of Europe.

Bipasha Baruah	California State University, Long Beach
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Women and Property in Urban India: Closed Doors and Windows of Opportunity	

Women make up one-half of the world's population, perform two-thirds of the world's working hours, receive one-tenth of the world's income and own only one-hundredth of the world's property. Yet much of the research on gender and development focuses on inequalities between men and women with respect to wages, educational opportunities, schooling outcomes, mortality, morbidity, and more recently, political participation and representation. While the gaps between women's and men's education and income levels are narrowing gradually almost everywhere in the world, the disparity in property ownership remains stark and persistent even in countries where women consistently outperform men in educational attainment. This paper explores the opportunities and constraints low-income women face in securing access to land and housing in cities in India through research conducted in collaboration with the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in Ahmedabad. Because property ownership demonstrates the connections and contradictions between public and private spheres of women's lives in more complex ways than other areas of disadvantage, I argue that women's ability to own and control landed assets is a more powerful indicator of progress toward gender equality and poverty alleviation than their ability to educate themselves or to earn wages on a par with men.

Marta Becherini	Columbia University
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Forging Hybridity in Medieval Ladakh: Quotation and Artistic Invention in the Murals of the Sumtsek Temple, Alchi	

The exquisite murals decorating the walls and ceilings of the buildings within the medieval Buddhist monastery complex at Alchi (Ladakh) represent a major source for the study of the mechanisms of circulation of artistic motifs from different traditions within the Himalayan region. This paper focuses on the paintings that decorate the interior of the Sumtsek temple, one of the buildings within the complex, which were produced between the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century by artists coming from Kashmir. Besides bearing traces of Kashmiri pictorial conventions, these paintings also carry visible hints of their myriad inspirations, largely by virtue of the centrality of Ladakh at the crossroads of civilizations.

Through an in-depth exploration of a specific theme within the paintings (the representation of dancing scenes), my study shows how the impact of different artistic traditions – from Western Indian manuscript illumination to the pan-Asian production of textiles of Sasanian inspiration – may be discerned in the overall compositional scheme of the paintings and also in the representation of the figures' dress. My argument is that the makers of the murals in the Sumtsek temple made deliberate references in their work not only to artistic traditions and techniques across a vast geographical area, but also to artifacts produced at different periods in time, thereby crossing both spatial and temporal boundaries. Further, I elucidate the ways in which such quotations from multiple sources were eclectically blended in order to create decorative patterns of the richest variety and visual complexity. I conclude with an attempt to explain the motivations behind what appears to have been a conscious borrowing of motifs from different traditions and their adaptation to the local scheme.

Betty Bernhard	Pomona College
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Screening of the documentary film <i>Indian Sex Workers Theatre Troupe for Social Justice</i>	

This film documents the process and results of a group of sex workers near Pune to produce an original play based on their personal experiences in order to seek an end to social injustice against them. The women in the production of "My Mother, My Malak [lover] and Me" are interviewed about their experiences in turning real-life stories into drama and putting them on stage.

We see some footage of rehearsals and performances for an audience as well as the social scene in the *gullies* where they life and work. This life-affirming group might change your mind and catch your heart as you come to learn about their lives directly from them and not as they are often falsely represented in the media.

Purnima Mehta Bhatt	Hood College
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Folks Songs of Gujarat as a Reflection of Women's Interior Landscape	

My paper provides an exploration and critical analysis of the folklore (*Lok Katha*) of Gujarat and discusses how it reflects the interior landscape of women's lives. The popular culture is expressed in song, legends, storytelling and dance (*garba*) and is transmitted through oral tradition by word of mouth from generation to generation. It reveals the emotions and inner feelings of women living in a male-dominant patriarchal society, rigidly controlled by the dictates of custom, tradition and modesty.

The folk narratives of the women deal with the chance encounters and resulting liaisons with strangers, the joy of meeting, and the anguish of parting. They convey women's hopes and aspirations. The songs become an outlet for their pent-up frustrations and a silent rebellion against the oppression and authoritarian control of the in-laws in a strictly gendered society. Thus, these folk songs serve a dual function: they reveal the likes and dislikes, the joys and sorrows of women while at the same time enabling them to give vent to their frustrations. An understanding of these songs allows us to lift the veil of anonymity and invisibility that surrounds these women, and gives them a voice.

Purushottama Bilimoria	University of California, Berkeley
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The Disenchantments of Secularism: What Has South Asia to Teach the West?	

In his compellingly massive tome, *The Secular Age* (2007), Charles Taylor sets out three senses of secularism. I am interested in his third sense, which he christens as "secularity": "a matter of the whole understanding in which our moral, spiritual or religious experience and search takes place." Taylor is comfortable in concluding that a society would be deemed secular *qua* *secularity* or not, "in virtue of the conditions of experience and search for the spiritual." And while in passing he mentions that the case of India is correlated better (perhaps historically at least) with his latter two senses of the term, but not with his first sense, in the case of the West, "the shift to public secularity has been part of what helped to bring on a secular age in the third sense." I wish to contest Taylor's still profoundly and evidently redemptive-eschatological Christian construction of the reformed secularity he wishes to advocate, or prescribe, and more importantly, the narrow representation of the supposed case of India, that he mentions *en passim*. So I will problematize the senses in which India could be said to be secular or not secular, or the kind of secularity that afflicts the Indian condition.

The imposed discourse(s) of secularism in any and all of Taylor's valences has only helped to, as it were, muddy the waters, and has left behind in the postcolonial-scape a troubling legacy from which Indian society has barely recovered and with which the modern nation-state continues to grapple. If not that, then it becomes entangled in ambivalent and hybrid imbroglios, such that we now have adherents of God Rama protesting that India has embraced an ideology of "pseudo-secularism" to the detriment of its national and cultural harmony and, indeed, erstwhile heterogeneity. The battle line is drawn not just between secularism and spiritual transcendence, but cuts in multiple vectors across religions (of which there are more — and more adherents — than in all of the US, Europe and the rest of the Western world put together). The situation and challenges from and for secularism facing the post-Gandhian Indian experiment are so fraught with dilemmas and discursive instabilities that it is worth examining this scenario — if only so that the West may heed to its own by-gone Orientalist errors and be cautious before hurriedly coveting or expropriating religion within the nuances of secularity.



David Blundell	National Chengchi University, Taiwan
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Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and His Choice of Buddhism in the Perspective of the Cultural Unity of India	

I am visually tracing the life of Dr. Ambedkar as a project series entitled *Arising Light* with its film, *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the Birth of a New Era in India*. My purpose for the research is to present strategies for a continuation of socio-economic transformation in India as models for mobilizing world development based on the legacy of Dr. Ambedkar. The story of Dr. Ambedkar and his choices while working in India traces a Southern Asian experience with its sense of taste based on a prevailing ethos lived by Dr. Ambedkar, as do those of Gandhi and Nehru, regardless of their differences. As Dr. Ambedkar selected Buddhism for his followers, it was a conscious decision to embrace the tradition of a native son in South Asia living more than 2,500 years ago – and what it meant then, and for contemporary democracy and unity in India.

My thesis is that Dr. Ambedkar considered himself to be a South Asian in the sense of its unity in the past, present and future. As I work on the film project, my process is given to a cohesive weave key for the understanding of concepts found in *rasa*: a holistic aesthetic value system. In the case of observing the story of Dr. Ambedkar's life, these qualities work as an overarching guidance. The results come from seeded fundamental ideas for life I have found prevailing in the region.

Ray Bromley	University at Albany - SUNY
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India's Bovine Battles: Development Debates and the Sacred Cow	

Given their physical size and numbers, and the fact that their natural lifespan is only 20-25 years, the life and death of cattle and water buffalo is of great significance to India, a country with about 18% of the world's bovines, 17 % of the human population, and under 12 % of the arable land. According to the influential FAO report *Livestock's Long Shadow* (2006), bovines contribute substantially to global greenhouse gas emissions, and the primary problems are the low-yielding cattle and buffalo of South and Southeast Asia.

Our understanding of the life and death of bovines in India has focused on the term "sacred cow," reflecting Hindu, Jain and Buddhist reverence for cows as symbols of wholesome life, wealth, and abundance. In focusing on cows, many people forget that half of all bovine offspring are male, and only a small proportion of male cattle are allowed to mature sexually and reach adulthood. Real cattle are not as revered as their divine counterparts, and buffalo are of even lower status. It is common to see skinny urban cows browsing on garbage, and exhausted oxen and buffalo straining to pull carts and ploughs.

So how do bovines die, and what happens to their carcasses? Because they have saleable products like meat and skins, their owners usually endeavor to sell or slaughter them, so only a small proportion, mainly in rural areas, die naturally. Despite the existence of Cattle Shelters, Cow Protection Societies, and slaughter prohibitions in most of India, most bovines are eventually slaughtered. Many Muslims, *Dalits*, *Adivasis* and Christians can kill animals and eat beef, so trafficking, slaughtering, skinning, butchering and eating bovines has been part of India's social structure and division of labor for many centuries. The trade in bovines also has a geographical dimension, with trucks and overland drives heading for Kerala and West Bengal, the states where slaughter is legal, and historic flows to Bangladesh.

Kerry Brown	Virginia Commonwealth University
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Performing the Sacred in Buddhist Art: Dipankara Buddha and the Samyak Mahadana in Nepal	

Every four years, Buddhas descend on the city of Patan in Nepal. Known locally as the Samyak Mahadana, this quadrennial event is a great gift-giving festival where numerous Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other important Buddhist deities assemble to receive offerings from the Newar Buddhist community. Samyak has taken place since at least the 16th century, with some sources suggesting an even earlier beginning. The main deity honored at Samyak is Dipankara Buddha. Dipankara's importance in Buddhism is as the predictor of the historical Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment. The Newar Buddhist community of Patan pays tribute to Dipankara Buddha at Samyak, honoring him with an array of offerings and ritual tributes.

The iconographic meanings and messages conveyed through the veneration of Dipankara at Samyak reveal a dynamic visual narrative associated with sacred space, ritual cosmology, and ethnic identity in the Newar Buddhist community. This paper highlights some of my key findings, in particular the multivalent meanings expressed through the iconographic language of image and ritual performance at the Patan Samyak Mahadana. Based on my field research in Nepal, I analyze the Newar iconography of Dipankara Buddha in the Kathmandu Valley, and through a contextualization of these elements at Samyak, I illustrate the significance of gift-giving and merit-making as a core element in the construction of sacred meaning. I suggest that the Newar Buddhists utilize the veneration of Dipankara to reinforce and reaffirm their monastic heritage. The presence of these complex visual systems therefore demonstrates that the rich ritual, artistic, and performative traditions of Newar Buddhists are deeply rooted in ancient Buddhist philosophical concepts.

John Casey	Chapman University
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Field Learning with the International School for Jain Studies	

For the past six years, the International School for Jain Studies has supported students from around the world in learning about the Jaina faith onsite in Delhi, Jaipur, and most recently in Varanasi. In this presentation, I share perspectives on this program from the viewpoint of a scholar-learner. With an academic background in Buddhism, this direct immersion into the world of Jaina text and practice deeply enriched my knowledge and appreciation of the Jaina faith. My own research, focusing on Jaina meditation, benefitted from this combination, particularly while in the company of Jaina monks and nuns.

Amy Champ	University of California, Davis
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The Perfect Counterpoint: Yoga as Protest and the Evolution of the Intimate Public	

Large gatherings of people practicing Yoga and meditation in public have suddenly become more common in the new millennium. From meditation flash mobs to Yoga and music festivals with thousands of people (such as Wanderlust), and from large *kirtan* (chanting) ceremonies for President Obama's inauguration to Yoga classes at Occupy Wall Street, the contemporary Yoga *kula* (community) has taken to gathering *en masse* in public spaces, often with a political message in tow. Yoga practitioners have forged their own subcultural space that answers both personal and spiritual questions, and also increasingly reaches out to public social and political spaces to make social justice statements. Yoga is much more than exercise, and the effects of its practice encompass the social and political spheres.

Christopher Chapple	Loyola Marymount University
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Elements and Animals in Indic Traditions	

This presentation begins with a representative exploration of the five elements in the *Vedas*, the *Upanisads*, the *Markandeya Purana*, and the *Gheranda Samhita*. Concentration (*dharana*) on the elements appears as a central practice in the *Visuddhi Magga*, a Pali Buddhist text, and in the *Gheranda Samhita*, a late medieval Yoga text. We then turn to animals as found in Indian literature. Two themes recur within the animal stories of India. In one group of stories, the actions of animals serve as moral reminders of how to improve human behavior. In the other group, meritorious animals may earn human birth and reap spiritual benefits from prior lives. By exploring these aspects of Indian religious and philosophical literature, a sense of intimacy can be gleaned that links the human within various expressions of the living cosmos.

Tahseen Choudhury Justine Baillie	University of Greenwich, UK
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South Asian Diasporic Narratives in Contemporary Britain: Translating Cultures and Negotiating Identities in the Context of Transnational Liminality	

The contemporary study of South Asian diasporic narratives in Britain has currency in the way in which it attempts to understand the deconstruction of cultures and the reconstruction of the discourse of identity in postcolonial texts. In the context of the present cultural landscape of Britain, the purity of national culture and identity has been problematized by the transnational experiences which are contingent and deconstructive at the same time. These transnational experiences, however, are theorized in a framework that translates and interprets cultures as the hybrid performative instead of as a homogenous phenomenon. So at this transitional point South Asian diasporic narratives in Britain positively celebrate the idea of cultural plurality and the diversity of identities. Questioning the pitfalls of traditional representations of national culture, South Asian diasporic literary texts in Britain underscore the challenge of translating the cultures not only from a representational viewpoint but also from an aesthetic perspective that endorses the intra-cultural transactions between the center and the margin. These intra-cultural networks widen the scope for configuring a new diasporic identity which is hybrid and mutable on one hand and disturbing and subversive on the other. Novelists such as Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, and Meera Syal have addressed the issues of cultural fluidity and transnational identity in a way that contributes not only to the depiction of diasporic predicaments but also to the exploration of a new territory of cultural intersections that essentially destabilize the opposition of the center and the margin. This paper investigates the narrative forms of contemporary South Asian fictions in Britain to underline their role in framing cultural hybridity and negotiating transnational identities.

Neil Chowdhury	Cazenovia College
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Inside/Outside Views, Different Ways of Looking at India	

Born in the United States, photographer and digital video artist Neil Chowdhury documents and responds to South Asia, the world of his ancestors. His reflects on India's social disparity and the entrenched hierarchies of the Indian art world as well as the converging economic fates of India and the United States as prognostic metaphors for future existence.

Sharayah Cochran	Virginia Commonwealth University
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After Colonialism and Photoshop: Identity and Memory in the Vivan Sundaram's <i>Re-take of Amrita</i>	

Saloni Mathur offers the following commentary on the Indian artist Vivan Sundaram's choice of medium in several works from 1991: "oil is not an innocent art historical material, but one that is dredged through a long history of power and infused with inescapable paradoxes and predicaments." The use of photography in Sundaram's recent project *Re-take of Amrita* is no less problematic, as the objectification of the photographic subject is inherent to the medium. Umrao Singh Sher-Gil's almost obsessive documentation of his family also calls into question the effects of a patriarchal gaze.

Commercial photography studios in India during the 20th century continually altered images with little concern for their realistic quality, though they served as portraits. Likewise, Sundaram's treatment of his grandfather's family photographs adopts his own narratives and myths regarding his aunt. His constructed photographic images serve as both an aesthetic and socially interpretive frame. Rather than a Western, colonial image of an "othered" figure, the images of Sundaram and the Indore State Photographers (specifically, Ramchandra Rao and Pratap Rao) create personal myths and identities. Using the context of India's own history of photography, visual analysis and Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality, this paper explores the notions of identity and memory in Sundaram's work from the Sher-Gil Archive. Is Sundaram's collection family snapshots and images, less "colonial" than the ethnographic images taken during the introduction of photography to Indian culture? Or has time allowed India to exhibit a long tradition of photography that has adapted a postcolonial aesthetic, despite its Western origins?

Geoffrey Cook	Independent Scholar
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Pakistan And Israel: A Nuclear Confrontation?	

This is a further investigation of a paper which was presented at an early conference of the Association of South Asian Studies in Honolulu. Articles in Jane's and French strategic sources revealed a Pakistani-Israeli nuclear stand-off. At that time Israel had five top-of-the-line, extremely silent, German-made submarines. (Recently, Berlin has withheld a seventh Underwater warship until Tel Aviv releases the tax money owed the Occupied Territories; i.e., Palestine). Pakistan had indigenously constructed four similar French-designed submarines. There was no evidence then that Pakistan had nuclearized its fleet, but Israel had. Israel has also rented an island off the Ethiopian Coast (Ethiopia is an Israeli ally), built a base there, and stationed one nuclear-armed submarine on it.

Further research revealed the claim that two days before Pakistan first tested their nuclear bomb, Israel made an air raid – probably from India, another ally – where the IDF (the Israeli Defense Force) lost a large number of planes. Though this claim remains unproven, and is perhaps unverifiable, it is significant. Because of miscalculation of Israel, another unnecessary conflict may have developed, for the previous Sharon government had an irrational fear of the "Islamic Bomb," and, since Kazakhstan had renounced the nuclear captivity which it had inherited from Moscow after 1989, Pakistan was the only Muslim nation that had such a capacity, and was spreading it to Tel Aviv's enemies under A.Q. Khan. In 2011, Avner Cohen, the most knowledgeable scholar on the Israeli nuclear program, verified the existence of the Israeli island base, but skirted the question of whether fissile material was still stored there. The question becomes, then, has Tel Aviv abandoned this dangerous adventure, and, if it has not, has Islamabad been able to create a MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) scenario?

This paper examines these developments to see if there is still a danger between the two countries, or whether the West Asian Country has withdrawn its hostile intentions from South Asia. My main sources are Jane's, French Strategy journals, low-level American intelligence, United Nations studies, and relevant material from the area. My methodology is based on the work of Avner Cohen, Steve Cohen, and Sven Hellman.



Esha Niyogi De	University of California, Los Angeles
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Choreographing Nation and Desire: The Politics of Beauty in Tagore's Dance Dramas	

The last in a series of Tagore dance dramas centering women, *Shyama* is haunted by a poetic query: "Who will relieve the beautiful from bondage in the hands of the cruel? / *Sunderer bandhan nisthurer hathe ghuchabe ke?*" Far from being isolated, this troubling linkage of beauty and pleasure with masculist domination recurs in a number of gender-centered works Rabindranath Tagore wrote late in life. In this paper, I demonstrate that, as primarily an aesthetic activist, Tagore grew increasingly concerned with the vital role gendered imaginations and symbolic abstractions played in reinforcing the dual formations of empire and patriarchal nationalism. In such late dance dramas as *Chitrangada* (1935) and *Shyama* (1939), Tagore imagined ways to choreograph the desires of marginal women (a warrior, a courtesan) so as to critique nationalist articulations of proper manhood (sexually chastened/celibate; morally elevated) and instead to explore the ethical potential of women-nurtured beauty and sexuality.

Taking issue with Dipesh Chakrabarty's and Ashis Nandy's positions on nationalist aesthetics, my paper further develops an argument I have presented in my recent book--*Empire, Media, and the Autonomous Woman: A Feminist Critique of Postcolonial Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Narayan deVera	Independent Scholar
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The Succession of Avatars	

Recent spiritual history recalls Yogananda, Caitanya, Buddha, and Jesus' lost years in Asia. More distant history and mythology depict Krsna, Rama, and Hanuman, an incarnation of Siva. This presentation relates to modern-day Siva as the Avatar of Synthesis, revealing correlations between the Hindu, Judeo-Christian, and Mayan calendars, foretelling what occurs at the end of the long arc of the Mayan calendar this December.

Yogananda's teacher Yukteswar starts by describing "The Cycle of the Ages." Gold, Silver, Copper, and Iron Age periods ascending and descending compose a 20,000-year circular cycle. However, the cycle is an ellipse, not a circle. Ellipses have two long arcs and two short arcs. Physics shows gravity increasing when the dominant arc shifts from long to short. Increasing gravity means more severe earthquakes and tsunamis, worsening weather patterns, volcanic eruptions, and increased global warming as earth's core temperature extends outward toward the surface. Humanity faces all these phenomena today. Siva gives His vision, expanding electrical energy in earth's center creating magnetic fields, an expanding universe where suns birth planets and planets birth moons. Kyoto scientists, however, "blame" global warming on humanity's zeal for burning fossil fuels. Here particle physics and astrophysics are similar; the macrocosm is like the microcosm.

The ascending arc brings increasing consciousness parallel to increasing gravity. History provides evidence for increasing consciousness. Next, chakra colors become visible at the throat, Siva's energy center, one chakra above Jesus' heart center. Lies disappear; Truth Consciousness emerges. Social interactions improve. Crime recedes. Greed and poverty decline as we enter the fifth decade of the Silver Age. It's not too late to save Mother Earth.

Hardeep Dhillon	Independent Scholar
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Communalism in India: An Analysis of the Nehru Report's Interpretation of the Communal Problem	

Due to the fact that the Nehru Report failed to garner the critical support of the British government and Muslim leaders, its significance has been lost in history. However, it has immeasurable value as the first effort by Indians to design a constitutional framework for India without British interference. In addressing the question of India's future constitutional framework, the Nehru Report attempted to recognize and negotiate the concerns of various political entities, such as the Sikh League, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Muslim League on the problem of communalism in India. However, its efforts to remedy this problem were informed by an interpretation of communalism and communal safeguards that failed to understand the concerns of its most significant audience: India's most prominent Muslim leaders and organizations. The Nehru Report symbolizes the formal decision of the Indian National Congress to pivot away from its former endorsement of separate electorates and reservations to openly embrace a vision of modern nationalism for India. Moreover, the Nehru Report provides a window into a decisive moment in history in which political differences between the Indian National Congress and many Indian Muslim leaders widened. In this regard, the Nehru Report is more than a report but a political vision for India that contested, negotiated, and conversed with the other visions presented by India's political elites. This paper examines the Nehru Report's understanding of communalism and communal safeguards to develop an insight on the political sentiments which led its authors to discard communal safeguards for Muslims in India.

Brianne Donaldson	Claremont Lincoln University
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Personal Architecture and Welcome: The Convivial Occasion of Experiential Religious Naturalism	

Multi-religious learning requires an architecture of hospitality where voluntary convergence and divergence can take place. This applies to the structure of philosophies, classes, conversations, encounters, and buildings. Alfred North Whitehead's description of the actual occasion—the smallest unit of space and time—depicts a naturalistic architecture where the past and present come together toward a possible future. This naturalistic architecture represents what Ralph Acampora calls a "convivial" geography, where one can find contact zones with other bodies in our immediate surroundings. Such architecture must be foundational to any attempt at multi-religious or multi-cultural education, not just in the classroom, but as we interact with actual occasions-in-process all around us, breaking through the limitations of humanism and the walls of the Westernized, male-dominated, humanist academy. In the early 1900's Rabindranath Tagore, Asia's first Nobel Laureate, began a multi-religious, multi-cultural school and university that took students outside the traditional educational system and into their world. At its heart was a robust naturalistic empiricism articulating the links between religious naturalism, personal feeling, artistic expression, and global understanding, very similar to Whitehead. Tagore's efforts serve as a backdrop for exploring the ways that Whitehead's experiential religious naturalism can serve as the basis for contemporary visions of multi-religious engagement, insofar as religion takes on planetary dimensions, insofar as religion becomes a way of interacting with the unifying principles of growth and change in all life.

Owen Duffy	Virginia Commonwealth University
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Deconstructing Post-Colonial Platforms: Anish Kapoor, Shahzia Sikandar, and the Writings of Homi K. Bhabha	

Anish Kapoor and Shahzia Sikander are two of the foremost visual artists situated within the context of the South Asian postcolonial diaspora. Since the late 1990s, preeminent postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha has written extensively about these artists, subsequently establishing himself as the authority regarding their respective oeuvres. Through an extensive analysis of Kapoor and Sikander's works, this paper argues that their art objects communicate a shared narrative of fluid identity and hybridity, which Bhabha utilizes as a platform to engage in a broader postcolonial dialogue. If read through the lens of his seminal texts such as *Nation and Narration* (1990) and *Location of Culture* (1994), Kapoor and Sikander's works can be interpreted as manifestations of Bhabha's discourses. On a more specific level, this paper positions the work of Kapoor and Sikander as metaphorical representations of specific concepts from Bhabha's own writings. Furthermore, in analyzing his interest in these contemporary South Asian diaspora artists and their works, this paper presents an argument for *why* and *how* Bhabha writes in this voice as an authority of the visual discourses of South Asian diasporic identity.

Hiba George	Florida State University
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The Trichotomy of Hindu Women, as Portrayed through Indian Cinema	

The various roles women play in India can be classified into a trichotomy. In the movie *Chingaari* (2005), the Brahmin priest categorizes all women into the *Devi* (Goddess), *Ma* (or family woman), or *Devadasi* (prostitute). This unique type of categorization is one that is specific to the Hindu women of India, one that cannot be transferred to categorize men, or even be compared to women in the West. The division is one that is being reemphasized in the daily culture, especially through the portrayal of women in Indian cinema. Although there is some fluidity between the three groupings, there are social factors keeping up with the rigid structuring of these three categories. This type of categorization has survived through ages and continues to exist, as it cuts through various factors: rural v. urban, rich v. poor, old v. new, etc.. The trichotomy is therefore one that is necessary for present and future community planners to understand, especially concerning the "gender and development" of the community. This understanding of the social structure of women through the media lenses in India will help define some of the issues that Indian society deals with. This awareness can also help bring specific efficient recommendations for the improvements desired by the society, while also keeping necessary social structures intact.



Lina Gupta	Glendale College
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Ganga: Purity To Pollution	

The Ganga, the holiest river in India, presents a baffling picture not only to a westerner but also to some modern Hindus. How could the river, considered to be the goddess of purity and the source of all purification, be polluted by her own devotees? What kind of mindset operates behind such ambiguity? What is the logic of domination that justifies the pollution of the Ganga? What is the connecting link between the oppression of women and domination of nature? The purpose of this paper is to critically analyze the patriarchal mindset, with its logic of domination exhibited in various scriptural interpretations; to identify some of these interpretations or misinterpretations that justify the exploitation and pollution of Ganga; and to clarify the notion of "femininity" that is foundational to the patriarchal mindset and its overlapping domination of women and nature within the context of Hinduism.

Katherine Harper	Loyola Marymount University
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The Value of Public Art: The Work of Rajesh Sagara	

Rajesh Sagara, sculptor and painter, created two large-scale public monuments, the Usmanpura Underpass and the Shahibhag Underpass, in Ahmedabad. The works, dedicated to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Mohandas K. Gandhi, are viewed daily by thousands of travelers from all parts of the city and from all walks of life. Located at key intersections in the city, the works were commissioned soon after the 2002 riots in the city. The monuments are permanent reminders of the work of the two great political leaders, but also serve as the pictorial text for teaching peace and tolerance as a way of life. The paper examines the historical and artistic sources of the works, their embedded messages, as well as the metaphoric and practical uses of the non-traditional spaces.

Ashley Holdsworth	Virginia Commonwealth University
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And Tell Him of My Pain: Materiality and Womanhood in Sheela Gowda's Installation	

Bangalore-based artist Sheela Gowda employs materials in her objects and installations that are particularly significant for the atmosphere they produce and their metaphoric potency. Labor and the culture of labor are intimately connected, a notion that Gowda explores in her art. She incorporates specific local materials such as cow dung, ash, tar barrels, and human hair, that mix banality with a poetic reference to urban and rural India. These materials carry strong associations with the body and forms of labor that are becoming more marginalized in contemporary India. Thus, the use of these materials is not simply a reference to their traditional context but a purposeful subversion and critique of the labor culture of contemporary India. In response to India's rapidly growing and globalizing economy, Gowda's works have come to embody these disappearing forms of manual labor. Her focus on the artistic process connects her to a history of artistic practice involving and reflecting not merely the socio-political implication of labor but its aesthetically generative capacities.

This paper explores the multi-layered meaning of Gowda's 2007 installation piece, *And Tell Him of My Pain*, to examine female domestic life in a patriarchal society. By problematizing how the representation of women in Gowda's work has been affected by an Indian discourse on gender ideologies, and noting in what ways her work critiques or subverts these stereotypes, I demonstrate how both Gowda's materials and the multi-layered meaning imbued in them illustrate her feminist agenda.



Veena Rani Howard	University of Oregon
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Animal Stories in <i>The Mahabharata</i>	

In recent years, scholars interested in indigenous attitudes about environmental concerns have engaged questions about the treatment of animals in Indian traditions. The connections between animals in Indian traditions and the environment are often analyzed on the basis of the metaphysical unity of all beings or the divinity of animals in myths and legends. For example, animals frequently appear as the vehicles of gods and goddesses, as divinities of Ganesha and Hanuman, and also as the incarnations of aspects of Lord Vishnu. These questions of human-animal relationships can also be approached through the exegetical analysis of Hindu sacred literature, specifically *The Mahabharata*, which depicts animals as ethical beings. Narrative strategies in *The Mahabharata* defy a simplistic viewpoint about animals and establish a more complex framework. These narratives allow the reader to experience a world in which animals, humans, and gods co-exist, often on equal footing, even to the point of interchanging their bodies. Various stories of this epic incite the imagination to bridge the gap between the human and non-human by presenting animals with voices and agency. I explore select stories to show that *The Mahabharata* encompasses various strategies that affirm the dynamic, intimate relationship between humans and animals. These stories provide insight into the Hindu attitude toward humans and nature, which might also serve as a model of constructing an eco-psychology for animal protection.

Amanda Huffer	University of California, Riverside
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Hunting Exotic India: Freak Show and Festival in America 1894-2012	

This paper juxtaposes the *fin du siècle* exhibition of South Asian people at world's fairs, festivals, and carnivals in the United States with the contemporary festival genre quite popular among American yoga aficionados and metaphysicals, such as Bhaktifest (Joshua Tree, 2011). I draw together these exceedingly different historical moments in the United States in order to suggest unlikely and unsettling continuities in the construction and representation of the Indian "other" as an orientalized "exotic," despite the obvious fact that the modalities and methods have drastically changed.

I suggest that in the 19th century orientalisms were focused on external collections. Individuals collected the Orient in curio cabinets and festival displays in order to possess and exhibit it, which expanded one's social capital in elite strata of European and American society. The late 19th century marked the highest arch of the popularity of the American freak show, bolstered by radical new theories in evolutionary biology and anthropology. The exhibitionary display of the Oriental as "freak" radically othered and condemned the Oriental as sub-human species.

On the other hand, I argue that in the 21st century the individual itself has become the 19th century exhibition. Individuals appropriate Indian customs, habits, beliefs, and patterns of behavior that imagine and attempt to represent "the orient." Individuals display such attributes publicly in similarly elite social circles, which bolsters their claims to social status. I suggest that the exhibition of Indian-ness plays a similar role for contemporary American yoga aficionados and metaphysicals as it did for their 19th-century counterparts. They demonstrate their social capital within these interlaced elitist communities through displaying multifarious appropriations of the orient: one externally and the other exhibited on, by, and through their bodies. As such, the individual's bodily markers of Indian-ness signify a similar commodification of social cachet entirely dependent upon orientalist imaginings of India.



सत्यमेव जयते

Samina Iqbal	Virginia Commonwealth University
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Objects of Changing Notion: Adeela Suleman and Contemporary Sculptures in Pakistan	

Adeela Suleman is a sculptor who comes from a very conventional society, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, yet she has the most unconventional approach to visual expression. Within the patriarchal society of Pakistan, where sculpture is the most underdeveloped form of art, Suleman finds a unique way to use this medium, which nevertheless still conforms to the socially-imposed parameters for sculptural pieces. Suleman assembles everyday mundane objects to make sculptural objects. She uses multiples of one or many different objects and presents them in a new role within an entirely different context, transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Suleman is inspired by the spontaneity of current events and drastically changing political and social upheavals in Pakistan. Her work is vested in the politics and religion of this time. In her earlier works, she commented on the customs and traditions of the social lives of women in Pakistani society. More recently, her work has focused on the ever-changing political situation of Pakistan and the omnipresent religious agenda. I will specifically explore the way in which she mediates the idea of spirituality and its exploitation through false religious interpretations and promises. In this paper I explore the interplay of art and politics in Suleman's works, specifically her artistic journey, from simply a feminist voice to a human rights activist in the context of contemporary art scene of Pakistan.

Pushpa Iyer	Monterey Institute of International Studies
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Climbing the Mountains: DeMarginalizing Dalits in Nepal	

The exclusion of Dalits, one of the marginalized communities of Nepal, was one of the most important factors that ensured strong support for the decade-long Maoist-led war. For the Dalits, the Maoist demands for revolutionary social change provided them with a platform from which to seek their rights and inclusion in mainstream society. They joined and supported the war. With the Maoists in power today, one would assume that the Dalits are no longer discriminated against and share equal status and opportunities with other higher caste groups. However, as evidenced by field research in Nepal, it is clear that the situation of the Dalits has not changed much from the period before the war. While there are newer policies in place to end discrimination, it is obvious that removing the centuries-old practice of treating some as "untouchables" is practically insurmountable in the short term. This paper presents the gaps between the Maoists' slogans of ending the marginalization of Dalits and the current existing practices of discrimination against this community.

Rona Kabiri	Monterey Institute of International Studies
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The Impact of Tribal Laws on the Status of Afghan Women in Afghanistan	

This presentation focuses on two areas: 1. *The Intersection of Madrassas and Formal Law*. Even with the existence of some secular laws in Afghanistan, the Madrassas have played a much stronger role in the judicial processes of Afghanistan in the last 40-50 years. This fact has impacted women's rights in Afghanistan in different ways. Additionally, it presents a challenge for most Afghan lawmakers who are seeking more legitimacy for the constitutional and written codes and their influence in the law sector. A review of the possible impact of current discussions and proposed reforms on women's rights concludes this section. 2. *Formalization of the Tribal Courts in Afghanistan*. Similar to the implemented reform for Madrassas in Afghanistan, there have been discussions on the formalization of customary laws and tribal courts in Afghanistan. The consequences of this for the society, particularly about women's rights, and how policymakers can explore the challenges and opportunities for strengthening the rule of law in the country if the tribal courts are legalized is briefly discussed in this section.



Sagarika Sripalee Kiriarachchi Dinithi Wijesuriya	Independent Scholar University of Kelania, Sri Lanka
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Udugampola Sub Kingdom: A Historical and Archaeological Legacy	

In the history of Sri Lanka a trail of contemporary kingdoms can be observed. Those kingdoms ruled by a regional king under the guidance of the king were called subkingdoms. The Udugampola subkingdom is prominent amongst many archaeological sites in the Gampaha district.

Historical sources such as the battle of Alakeshwara in Rajaawaliya provide proof of the fact that the king Sakalakala Wallakabahuthe, son of Veeraparakramabahu VIII of Kotte, had ruled this divisional kingdom, paired to the main Kotte kingdom. An ancient temple, the Uttararama temple, has been constructed where the king's palace once was. Remnants of the Royal pond where the king bathed as well as the royal moat exist to this day. However, this legacy is diminishing with each passing day. In the spotlight cast over prominent ancient kingdoms such as Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, the value and importance of ancient subkingdoms like these with archaeological significance stands diminished. With very limited discussion surrounding these sites, the possibility to be forgotten over time threatens the evidence of their existence. This paper aims to bring forward with a new perspective the remaining factors concerning the historical and archaeological backdrop of this subkingdom.

Sheri Kling	Claremont Lincoln University
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A Serpent, a Woman, a Tree: A Comparative Exploration of ANE and Hindu Symbols	

In turning a comparative eye for archetypes toward biblical texts such as Gen. 3 and other ANE myths, a symbolic cluster emerges that links the motifs of woman/goddess, serpent, and sacred tree with the awareness that consciousness is inevitably accompanied by suffering. Similar motifs seem to be present in Hindu thought, in the *Mahavidyas* and their possible relationship to tantric religion and kundalini yoga, where the female power, kundalini shakti – represented by a serpent – is awakened and ascends the "tree" of the spine toward transformed wisdom or consciousness. The fierce countenances of Kali and Tara – goddesses associated with serpents and trees – suggest that this journey is not all fun and glory, yet believers are encouraged to "fear not." This paper explores these symbols as they appear in Mahavidya, tantric, and ANE traditions, looking for the deeper message toward which they may be pointing.

Naval Krishna	Banaras Hindu University, India
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Politics in the 17th-Century Bikaneri School of Painting Karkhanas (Ateliers)	

The effects of both state and internal politics within the painting atelier affected this local school are conspicuously discernible. We observe change in styles, the migration of painters, or even premature deaths among them, but interestingly, this curious fact which could be related to painter-*karkahan*-politics has not yet been negotiated independently by art historians.

The painting style of Bikaner (the Thar desert lands of Rao Bikaji, also called as *Jangaldesh*, spreading in the North west part of Rajasthan, India), on the one hand, was considerably affected by disturbances in the state of Bikaner either due to constant tussle between neighboring Rajputs, or by the long absence of the Maharajas, who were constantly stationed at the Deccan as Mughal commanders. On the other hand, the politics inside the painting atelier were responsible for different stages of evolution and turns in the local styles. I focus mostly on one court master, Rukandi [Ruknuddin] *Umarani Usta* and the day-to-day diaries [*bahi-khata*] of the Court.

In first half of the 17th century, a complete harmony is observed between court painters *Ustas* [convert Muslims] painting court themes and *Matherans* [convert Jaina- *Yatis*] painting geometrical designs for different festivals, with no internal politics. There were two parallel paintings *karkhanas* running under the Bikaneri Maharajas. The head of both, Rukandi promoted his less-skilled son Ibrahim in order to control both *karkhanas*. It is likely that within this process, first Rukandi proxied for his son, and thereafter worked "jointly" ["*jumale*"]. Both instantly became the favorites of *zenana*. Rukandi employed various diplomatic art-tactics to pamper Sisodaniji, the powerful Mewari wife of Maharaja Karan Singhji, or *zenana* as a whole. Apart from painting court and hunt scenes, Rukandi would commission appealing sets such as *Barahamasa* ["Twelve months"] and *Kamasutra* ["Treatises on sex"] where he, from his personal portfolios containing portraits, craftily collaged royal faces on the busts of *naayaka* and *naayikaas* [heroes and heroines]. This strategy successfully fulfilled his patrons' amorous dreams, and demoralized his opponent painters in the court.

Nita Kumar	Claremont McKenna College
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The "Spiritual" In Indian Music Education	

My paper focuses on the teaching of classical music in formal, modern Indian schools, and in the homes of traditional music teachers, often called *gharanedars*, or those who belong to *gharanas* (Indian-style "schools of music"). Indian classical music is successful in reproducing itself, but does so only through home teaching, and not through school teaching. Home-based teaching, however, is regarded by its practitioners as successful because of its "spirituality," not as purposeful, disciplinarian, and pragmatic, which it is.

I first argue that the failures of music teaching in schools are because of a weakening of the teacher, the curricula, and the student as an active subject. I then show how the centrality and autonomy of the music teacher at home, and the attention to students' individual variations and progress chimes with a postmodern interest in the hybrid nature of subjects.

I then describe the problem: because of its imputed "spirituality," none of the huge breadth and depth of Indian music; none of its genres, tonality, rhythmic structures, historical and structural variations; its play between discipline and improvisation; the causal links between times, emotions, actions; the holism of the body, mind, environment, cosmos—none of this *ever* impinges on the content of music teaching in Indian schools. The very discourse of the "spirituality" of (home-taught) Indian music renders us unable to imagine or analyze the power of the home teaching and therefore to apply in the school those practices that produce the power.

Nita Kumar	Claremont McKenna College
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The Educational Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore and Its Failure	

Education in India has failed to take any distinctive stance philosophically or pedagogically, from the beginning of the modern period (for modern education, c. 1850s) until today. One of the reasons for this is the dominance on the public stage of other agendas such as the national struggle. Other reasons include the uneven growth of modernity, including the non-discovery of "the child;" and the satisfaction of the elite with an exclusive, Anglophone education. In this paper I push this enquiry further and look at the case of Rabindranath Tagore. A poet, and not strictly a nationalist, did Tagore demonstrate the same limitations in his educational work as other leaders, or did he have a different vision?

Tagore started a school in 1901 at Shantiniketan, about 100 miles from Calcutta, and then a university in 1921. What is distinct about his effort is his own involvement with children and teaching, a contrast to other educators whose contributions are restricted to ideas and ideologies about education. Secondly, Tagore was an outstanding humanist and used his imagination and his own personal experience to feed into his educational venture. He had studied only briefly in a formal, modern school, and had hated it. He went on to write about how that kind of schooling, and many attendant processes of modernity, destroyed the beauty of childhood and human experience, and put into practice several alternative techniques in his school.

My research into his educational philosophy includes asking about his fit into the "tradition-modernity" model. What kind of individualism did he espouse? What was, for him, the nature of an ideal education, compared to his peers in educational ventures? How did he propose to actually teach in his new school?

As famous as Tagore is, his educational philosophy still remains comparatively uninvestigated. I propose a hermeneutic study of his writings, as well as a discursive comparison of his ideas with those of modernity and the educators located in modern contexts, such as those of Europe and America. This will be a subtextual comparison, one that decodes the implications of Tagore's many educational choices, such as of buildings, curricula, teachers' training, and rituals in his school.

My conclusion is that Tagore could have developed a very imaginative "Indian" educational strategy for Indian children, such as we have not had in modern India. But that he did not do so, even though he was not satisfied with the status quo. This was partly because of his many preoccupations, such as his poetry and prose. It was also for the same reason as why other modern Indians did not: finally, an amateur understanding of the child, of teaching, and of learning. To conclude that Tagore was a brilliant humanist, poet, and ideologue, but was not a committed educator, as I do, would also give us further insights into what it is that was needed for an educational venture in modern India to succeed in progressive terms and what it is that we propose is "success."



Vikash Kumar	Vinoba Bhave University, India.
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The Tribal Assertion in India in the 19th Century: The Santhal Hool

The Santhals (a tribe in the state of Jharkhand in India) are for the first time mentioned in the British reports from 1790s. The Santhal Hool (insurrection) of 1855 epitomized the organization of radical resistance movements in Jharkhand. It longed for an independent Santhal Raj (rule) and directly challenged the British authority. The Hool started as attacks on moneylenders and landlords. It developed into a regular insurrection after the colonial authorities swept aside the Manjhis' (Santhal traditional headmen) protests. However, the crippled moral foundation of the rebel organization hastened its collapse and it could not withstand the army's onslaught.

This paper studies, examines, and assesses the Santhal response and reaction to the ever-changing British policy toward them. The subsequent violent assertions of the Santhals were directed not only against the colonial regime but also the dikus (outsiders). The inability of the colonial state to respond responsibly to the movement based on tribal heritage, identity and common sufferings furthered the demand for autonomy and independent Santhal raj that formed an essential part of the Hool ideology. Further, its political radicalism was camouflaged carefully under the garb of religious revitalization. On careful examination of the available written sources and oral traditions, it could be conclusively said that the relationship between the articulation of tribal identity and colonial policy implementation in India remained a crucial issue in the 19th century and continues to plague the South Asian region even today. This model of development had no place for socio-cultural factors. It did not have the avenues for involvement of the local tribal communities, which resulted in the tribal assertion in the form of Hool in India in the 19th century.

Sethu Kumanan	Soka Ikeda College for Women, India
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The Privatization of Higher Education in India: Policies, Issues and Prospects

Higher education in India is provided by the public sector as well as the private sector with control and funding coming from three levels: federal, state and local. Education in India falls under the control of both the union government and the states. The education of rural folk is possible only through the public sector. The opening of private colleges in rural areas is truly a Himalayan task. The reason for this is that the first step is to bring about awareness amongst the people about the importance of education.

Policies of individual state governments control the process of establishing new private colleges in India. Minorities (e.g., religious minorities and linguistic minorities) can apply for establishing new private colleges easily using the minority right in the constitution. These colleges are approved and recognized by the state through the district universities. This paper addresses the issues, policies and barriers faced by such private colleges.

Muthusami Kumaran	University of Florida
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Environmentalism and the Civil Society in India

Historically, the civil society sector (also known as the NGO and the Third sector) has made tremendous strides in developing all aspects of Indian society. One of the major areas where the civil society sector has made impressive advances is the protection of natural environment. Environmental protection and conservation have always been a part of Indian tradition and culture, but civil society organizations have constantly promoted them even against aggressive exploitations and degradation of natural resources. The *Chipko* movement of 1970s against deforestation and the *Narmada Bachao Andolan* movement of 1980s against hydro-electric dams (to protect tribal lands, and various flora and fauna from destruction), are some of the shining examples of how civil society organizations galvanized environmental protection. Currently, leading environmental NGOs of India play vital roles in global environmental issues such as climate change. However, there are several areas where the civil society lags behind when it comes to environmentalism. One example is the failure to promote environmental justice. This paper will trace the history of the civil society sector's engagement with environmentalism, its current trends in promoting environmental awareness, and highlight some areas for improvement.



Gerald James Larson	University of California, Irvine
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The Hedgehog and the Fox: Metaphors for the Intellectual Life of Gandhi and Tagore	

Sir Isaiah Berlin (1909–97), probably the UK's most important intellectual historian-cum-analytic philosopher of the 20th century, wrote an intriguing (and now classic) article in 1953 entitled, "The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History". Referring to an old line from a fragment of a Greek poet, Archilocus, that says, "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing," Berlin sets forth the following heuristic dichotomy for looking at the intellectual history of ideas.

The hedgehog/fox dichotomy, in my opinion, helpfully catches the differences between the two most famous players in the 19th- and 20th-century cultural and intellectual history of India, namely, Rabindranath Tagore and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson in their biography of Tagore set forth the dichotomy in the following manner:

Tagore versus Gandhi was the cherisher of beauty versus the ascetic; the artist versus the utilitarian; the thinker versus the man of action; the individualist versus the politician; the elitist versus the populist; the widely read versus the narrowly read; the modernist versus the reactionary; the believer in science versus the scientist; the synthesizer of East and West versus the Indian chauvinist; the internationalist versus the nationalist; the traveler versus the stay-at-home; the Bengali versus the Gujarati; the scholarly Brahmin versus the merchant Vaishya; and most prominently of all, the fine flowing robes and beard versus the coarse loincloth and bald pate. (237)

The reasons for the antagonism are worth exploring, and, as I argue in this essay, are diagnostically revealing for getting a handle on the totality of Tagore's work. I say this because I am inclined to see in Tagore what Isaiah Berlin saw in Tolstoy. That is, there is a strange contradiction in Tagore's work overall that raises a question as to his status as a "fox."

Nancy Martin	Chapman University
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In Between Imaginings: Mirabai in Film and Fiction	

The character, voice and story of the 16th-century saint Mirabai reverberate through 19th and 20th century imaginings—of gender relations, of nation, of Hinduism—in the interstices between tradition and modernity, devotion and autonomy, violence and resistance, history and fiction. Even as her story was told in multiple genres across earlier centuries, so it becomes the subject of films from the silent era and of fiction, sometimes told directly, other times translated into contemporary settings or inflected through characters sharing her name, sometimes inspiring, sometimes related as a warning, domesticated and derided. This paper explores the fascination with Mirabai exhibited in film and fiction in the 20th century and the particular eddies and currents within these narrative and cultural flows of which she is a part that give voice to the ideals and desires but also the anxieties and fears of men and women across these decades of rapid social change. These artifacts of film and fiction are situated in the spaces between very individual and at times quite idiosyncratic experiences and readings of the saint and her larger power to embody crucial yet conflicting values in ongoing intersubjective negotiations of meaning and identity.

Alicia McCarty	Virginia Commonwealth University
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Constructions of Identity: Self Portrait of Amrita Shergil	

Modernist painter Amrita Sher-Gil was born to a Hungarian mother and a Sikh aristocrat father in Budapest in 1913. Her initial Western upbringing and later schooling left an indelible influence on her work. She first came to India in 1921, but was subsequently schooled in Europe at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris and, later, in Italy. Influenced by Cézanne and Gauguin, as well as other modern European artists, Sher-Gil brought a thorough knowledge of modern art into her work that can be read as a study of her hybrid identity. Sher-Gil's work often includes the representation of women and Indian culture and speaks to some of the global entanglements of modernism. When Sher-Gil returned to India she brought with her the Western techniques she had been taught. However, her work underwent an ensuing change as she tried to incorporate a more fundamentally-Indian style into her oil paintings. Many scholars have compared her to other Western-trained Indian artists as well as female painters such as Mexican artist Frida Kahlo (1907-1954). This comparison, however, is mainly made on the basis of the similarities between the two artists' eclectic and colorful biographies—principally their bisexuality and bicultural backgrounds. The tendency of the scholarship on Amrita to focus primarily on her biography and comparisons to other artists denies a more critical view of her work. This paper will consider her self-portraits both in terms of style and content as visual constructions of self-identity—specifically her shift in style from Western-oriented techniques to her distinctively mature works as reflections of her Indian heritage.

Mona Mehta	Scripps College
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From Gandhi to Gurus: The Paradox of Deliberative Politics in Gujarat, India	

I examine how we might understand the public discourses of gurus in contemporary Gujarat and Gandhi in colonial India as types of political deliberation that reflect and shape the politics of their times. I compare the deliberative style of gurus with an earlier historical mode of deliberation used by Gandhi to elucidate two distinct exemplars of deliberation, both of which use religious idioms in political talk. I argue that the discursive activities of Gandhi and the gurus produce two divergent conceptions of the Hindu subject and Indian polity that do important political work for authorizing radically different political projects. Using ethnographic accounts of live public discourses, content analysis of CDs, TV discourses, interviews with gurus and audiences, Gandhian texts, and television viewership data, my comparison between Gandhi and the gurus leads me to raise larger theoretical questions about the possibilities and limits of deliberative politics and its contradictory relationship with democracy.

Christopher Miller	Loyola Marymount University
	Panel 6C
Īśvarapraṇidhāna and Bhakti in The Gospel of Luke	

This paper juxtaposes the yogic niyama (act of voluntary penance or meritorious piety) known as Īśvarapraṇidhāna (devotion to God) as found in Patañjali's Yoga Sūtra, as well as the synonymous Hindu concept known as bhakti (devotion), with the unique and ongoing theme of prayer and devotion found in Luke's Gospel. In doing so, it demonstrates that the unique approach to prayer and devotion found in Luke's Gospel can be understood, from the perspective of yoga philosophy, as a unique form of bhakti-yoga that was practiced by the early Christian tradition. The outcome of this investigation reveals a triadic Lucan method of devotion that calls for an attitude of self-surrender, a disposition of humility, and a demand for persistence that is useful to Christians and non-Christians alike.

Katheryn Myers	University of Connecticut
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Dissent and Desire: The Evolving City in the Work of Ravi Agarwal and Sarnath Banerjee	

Ravi Agarwal, environmental activist and documentary photographer, and Sarnath Banerjee, India's first graphic novelist, contend with a sense of love and loss as rapid changes in New Delhi, "cracks in post-liberal India," are wrought by destruction and reconstruction, including Delhi's new metro and the Commonwealth Games, resulting in the evolution of natural habitats as well as traditional profession and occupations.

Prashanthi Narangoda	University of the West
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A Note on the Concept of Avalokitesvara in Sri Lanka	

This paper examines the concept of Avalokitesvara in Sri Lankan Buddhist tradition. Avalokitesvara is a prominent bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhist tradition, and considered by many the spiritual son of the Dhyanī Buddha Amitabha and his consort Pandara. Northern Buddhist countries Avalokitesvara is believed to be the creator of all beings and the protector of Buddhism between the period of the Gautama Buddha's *parinirvana* and the advent of the future Buddha Maitreya. Numerous Mahayana *sutras* describe Avalokitesvara's personality as an omniscient deity who sees the world from Potalaka Mountain and is ready to assist sentient beings toward liberation.

On the contrary, Sri Lankan Buddhists have associated the concept of Avalokitesvara in a soteriological perspective in that Avalokitesvara symbolizes the moral dignity of *sangha*, whose objective is to pave the path for salvation of the lay followers of Buddhism. He is neither an omniscient being nor the creator, but a deity who follows the path proclaimed by the Gautama Buddha leading to liberation. Eventually, he became a protective deity (Natha), and was placed side by side with the images of the Gautama Buddha and the future Buddha Maitreya.

This reveals the distinction between the two traditions, where the concept of Avalokitesvara in Sri Lankan Buddhism is unique to its socio-cultural understanding. Thus, this paper focuses on identifying the significance of the concept of Avalokitesvara in the Sri Lankan Buddhist tradition.

Alam Payind	Ohio State University
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Inside Afghanistan Twenty Years After The Soviet Withdrawal	

Regardless of military maneuvering and political posturing by the US-led coalition in the ensuing months and years, the people of Afghanistan will face exacting difficulties in attempting to establish security and reconstruct their country after over thirty years of uninterrupted foreign invasions and civil wars. This will not be the first time the Afghans have had to deal with the consequences of wars. Long a crossroad of invading armies, and often the scene of internal strife, Afghanistan has perhaps been ravaged by the superpowers of different periods more often than any other country in the world.

This paper, which is a section of a longer field work, discusses recent and current security, political, economic, social, ethnic and tribal challenges in Afghanistan, including the fraudulent August 20, 2009 presidential election and the September 18, 2011 parliamentary election, with its ongoing implications and consequences

Joe Pellegrino	Georgia Southern University
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Moving Beyond the Local: The Denial of the Postcolonial in Roy and Coetzee	

It is difficult to imagine a more localized text than Arundhati Roy's Booker Prize-winning *The God of Small Things*. Her fictional Kerala is built upon an understanding of the mores, rituals, and states of mind which are apparent in this particular village, state, and country. However, her work since this first novel has taken a turn beyond the local, and therefore beyond the postcolonial paradigm which attempts to avoid the evils of essentializing or Orientalizing the particular by privileging the local. *The Cost of Living, The Checkbook and the Cruise Missile, Power Politics, Public Power in the Age of Empire, and An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire* all address transnational, global political concerns. In the same manner, a substantial amount of J.M. Coetzee's work, especially *Giving Offense: Essays on Censorship, The Lives of Animals, and Elizabeth Costello: Eight Lessons*, moves beyond the postcolonial pigeonhole to address social and political issues in a global perspective. Both of these writers, champions of the local in their celebrated fiction, have moved beyond this sphere. This presentation investigates the tenuous relationship between the local and the global, and what each writer has gained and lost in the literary, cultural, and political arenas with such negotiation.

Stephanie Petersen-Corigliano	Boston College
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Reconsidering the Post-Secular in Yoga: Pluralism and the Spiritual Hybrid	

This paper analyzes the category of the post-secular as a contested religious identity that is broadly inclusive of the spiritual secular, the new age, and, specifically, the practices of modern yoga and meditation. I assert that the post-secular voice, with its emphasis on practice and spiritual insight, has the potential to revive the genuine immediacy of dialogue referred to by Jim Heisig. I probe the ways that the post-secular voice can challenge, be challenged, and enhance the efficacy of interreligious dialogue and theology in modern pluralism. To deny this voice is to exclude the very life-blood of religious traditions, which cannot breathe without the symbiotic repetition of the "traditional" and the incorporation of new contexts and perspectives.

Joel Post	Monterey Institute of International Studies
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Maoism and Monarchy	

The Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist (CPN-M) led a ten-year rebellion that ended with the abolition of the 240-year old monarchy and the emergence of a full constitutional democracy. The CPN-M combined Maoist rhetoric and tactics with democratic aims in a uniquely Nepali way. Who are the leaders of this political party and what motivated so many to join them? This paper looks at the evolution of the CPN-M through recent history, its interactions with other democratic parties as well as the monarchy, and its actions after coming into power through winning the Constitutional Assembly elections in 2008. Primary focus will be on evaluating the Party's progress according to its own previously-stated goals, current programs, and its plans for Nepal's future. Also included is a discussion about the current debate over possible government structures and the impact a signed constitution has for Nepal.

Joseph Prabhu	California State University, Los Angeles
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Assessing Swami Vivekananda's Vision and Mission: 150 Years Later	

The year, 2012-13 marks the 150th birth anniversary of the Indian sage and activist Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) [SV]. He was called "the cyclonic monk" for all that he managed to accomplish in the decade and a half after he was chosen by his guru, Ramakrishna Paramahansa [RP,] as his successor and charged with the mission of spreading his spiritual vision. The actual mission that SV propagated significantly modified RP's message. While SV certainly preached a universalist religious faith based on RP's vision, he also attempted to create, through the ideals of service and education, a mass consciousness among his fellow Indians suffering all the material and spiritual consequences of colonialism under the British.

Against this background, I present: 1. SV's construction of a modernized Hinduism responding to the impact of Western modernity, variously called "Practical Vedanta," or "neo-Vedanta"; 2. SV's presentation of this version of Hinduism to the world at large first at the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions and then in his public talks; and 3. The contestation of the legacy of SV in contemporary India. Here I show that SV's spiritual ideas are clearly universalist and inclusive, not ideological and revanchist, as they are sometimes made out to be.

Sara Price	Oregon State University
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Building Imagined Labor Rooms: Exploring NGO Promotion of Institutional Delivery in India	

In India, maternal healthcare has long been an area of discursive and programmatic interest for governmental, private, and NGO sectors. While 61% of women in India deliver at home, governmental and NGO forces are increasingly supporting the institutionalization of delivery. Buttressed by the Millennium Development goal of reducing maternal and neo-natal mortality and the governmental prerogative to increase the safety and quality of institutional care, the landscape of maternal and neo-natal healthcare in India is being re-sculpted. However, a number of studies have called for the critical examination of the tensions precipitated by NGO promotion of institutional deliveries in local settings and the methodologies these organizations employ to substantiate and reproduce their authority within the field of maternal healthcare. By extending development discourse as a modality for sculpting and improving institutional labor rooms, this paper illustrates how NGOs have become intricately involved in the promotion of a kind of imagined labor room environment. This raises the question as to how NGOs themselves participate more in the promotion of an idealized, imagined delivery room space than in the construction of labor rooms that reflect the lived realities of both staff and the communities they service. Drawing on data from participant observation, and in-depth interviews with staff from a Rajasthani NGO and skilled-birth attendants (SBAs) working in rural community health centers, this paper critically analyzes how tensions between the real and imagined labor room affect maternal healthcare in India.

Mittapalli Rajeshwar	Kakatiya University, India
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"Honor Killings" and the Dalits in Fiction and Film: Arundhati Roy's <i>The God of Small Things</i> and Priyadarshan Nair's <i>Aakrosh</i>	

The Caste system is openly inimical to sexual/marital relations across the caste boundaries because these relations can potentially jeopardize its very existence. Its apologists think that "honor" is indelibly linked to caste status and not meritoriously earned. They interpret heterosexual inter-caste relations as challenging their hegemonic power and the "honor" it confers on them. They therefore seek to protect this "honor" by any means necessary, including violence. Women are frequently the victims of this violence, but Dalit young men who have love affairs with upper caste women are also frequently subjected to honor killings. This everyday Indian reality has been brilliantly portrayed in Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* and Priyadarshan's Hindi film *Aakrosh*. In both these works of art honor killings occur, whether named as such or not, and dalit young men bear the brunt of the violence. While *The God of Small Things* ends in tragedy with its dalit protagonist having been killed, *Aakrosh* takes the story to its logical conclusion by making its dalit hero bring the culprits to book. It thus suggests the way forward for the dalits. Between them *The God of Small Things* and *Aakrosh* present a perspective on honor killings as far as the dalits are concerned and in the process significantly contribute to the raising of awareness among the readers and audience.

Nalini Rao	Soka University of America
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Image and Word in South Asian Art: Understanding the Paintings of Rabindranath Tagore	

This paper examines the interaction between the art and literature of Rabindranath Tagore, with an emphasis on the expressive forms of some of his early and late paintings. It classifies them into groups based on theme, subject matter, and structure. Although they appear to be unfinished, monochromatic, and even minimal, they reveal a deeper meaning that lay beneath his conscious and creative mind. Another aspect that the paper explores is the concept of creativity as central to both literature and art, particularly his poem, "Where the World is Without Fear". One of the limitations to such a study is the absence of dates on his works of art. However, it is possible to conceptually juxtapose Tagore's imagination with events of his life and some of his writings.

Although the interdependence of word and image in the history South Asian art is not new, in Tagore one can find an intuitive, spontaneous and extraordinary dependence of his art on the idea and meaning of his written word, as well as on his vision of unity of life. It is difficult to pass an aesthetic judgment on his works, but it is interesting to find that his art, like his literature, operated at different levels. It is possible to see some relation of his art with those of other modern artists and movements, but further investigation is necessary in this area to comprehend the multi-dimensional and revolutionary art forms.

Movindri Reddy	Occidental College
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Transnational Locality: Citizenship and the South Asian Indentured Diaspora	

The South Asian colonial diaspora was created between 1833 and 1920, when over one million Indians were indentured to labor in British colonies like Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad and South Africa. This paper explores the dynamics of diasporas, and investigates their impact on the political and national identity of states. The central argument is that it is the *transnationality* intrinsic to diasporic identities that *marks* them as others in the nation-state. Paradoxically, it is this element that also separates them from the homeland/motherland. This designation displaces diasporas from states, and places them in a *transnational locality* – a space that is objectively and subjectively defined. Concerning the South Asian diaspora, the paper focuses on three levels of analysis: the macro – whereby identities are decentered and constructed within the discursive framework of states and trans-state relations; the national – where Indian diasporic identity is exemplified by the kinds of relations that exist with creole and indigenous peoples, and with the "motherland"; and the micro – where Indians are marked as "ethnic Indian" across the diaspora, in part because of their own desire to separate themselves on the basis of "purity" and authenticity, and by others who attempt to demarcate *themselves* as belonging to the land, claiming indigeneity or indigenous status and rights.

Nancy Lee Ruyter	University of California, Irvine
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La Meri and Her Work with South Asian Dance Forms	

From 1925 until late 1939, the dance artist, choreographer, teacher, and writer, La Meri (Russell Meriwether Hughes, 1898-1988), traveled in Latin America, Europe, and Asia giving dance concerts and, wherever possible, studying traditional dance techniques and learning dances. When World War II prevented further international travel, she settled in New York where she opened a school, created a company, and continued performing and choreographing. In the 1950s, I studied with her—mainly the dance genres of India and Spain which had become her major areas of expertise. In this paper, I discuss La Meri's experience in and work with the dance forms of India including the following: 1) her introduction to Indian dance in Paris in 1931 through the work of Uday Shankar (1900-1977); 2) her travel and performing in India in 1937 and her study of Indian dance genres there; 3) her performance and choreography in New York after 1939, ranging from traditional dances to experimental works on Western themes with Indian dance techniques; 4) her 1941 publication, *The Gesture Language of the Hindu Dance* (later editions in 1964 and 1979). I will show slides to illustrate some of her performances.



Linda Eilene Sanchez	Community College of Denver
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Feminine Disruptions of the Illusion of Terrorism in Shahzia Sikander's <i>The Many Faces Of Islam</i>	

Sikander's *The Many Faces of Islam*, is a subtle and slyly ironic invocation of the shared global responsibility and mutuality of a contemporary religious politics of terrorism, as her hybrid female figures are the primary critical tool to disrupt what is, in effect, a politics of perception. Fully cognizant of the power of the historical and culturally heterogeneous expression of the ancient craft of manuscript painting, Sikander expands its conceptual limits to encompass the contemporary global politics underlying the illusions and mutual hypocrisies of our perception of religious oppositions that result in a mutual politics of terrorism. In the process of this international myth-making, images of women have become part of an ideological terrain where broader notions of cultural authenticity and integrity are debated, and where women's appropriate place and conduct may be made to serve as boundary markers.

Building upon a short historical overview of the craft of miniature painting, this presentation explains how this composition references the mutuality and interdependence of contemporary religious politics by pointing out several specific ways the image visualizes the myth-making capabilities of 20th-century national leaders and their diverse uses of religion to buttress nationalist identities. This presentation then explains how, in direct counterpoint to this, Sikander's hybrid uses of the female body throughout this image act as catalysts that convolute traditional stereotypes and disrupt the very myths that were created by the nationalist figures surrounding them.

Ranu Samantrai	Indiana University
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Are the Oppressed Heroic? Hindi Cinema and the Limitations of the Heroic Mode	

Is it possible to tell stories about people who resist their disenfranchisement without turning those people into heroes? We see the Enlightenment model of agency as defined by consciousness and will replicated even in discourses that attend to the dark side of Enlightenment: Marxism, feminism, and anti- or post-colonialism inevitably use the heroic mode to tell the story of the oppressed coming to consciousness and on that basis acting against their oppression. In so doing such discourses mimic the liberation narrative of humanism even as they insist on alternatives to the humanist subject. In response, anti-humanists posit subjects—such as the number or the mass—that lack consciousness of themselves as historical agents. But this theoretical turn does not help those who wish to tell stories featuring individuals, especially disenfranchised individuals and especially in popular cultural forms. We are left either accepting that the chart of liberation emerging from the specificity of European history is universal, with no significant variation in the spaces and histories outside Europe, or considering whether this pervasive story has become so dominant that we cannot conceive of a robust narrative of individual agency that does not rely on the heroic mode.

In this paper I look to instances of Hindi cinema that dramatize the difficulty of not telling a heroic story. Nagesh Kukunoor's *Dor* (2006) is exemplary in this regard, invoking feminist and postcolonial tropes that suggest a heroic trajectory, only to hinder the unfolding of that narrative. It does so by foregrounding itself as an act of representation circulating within and struggling against a world of established stories. Rather than uncovering an alternative to the heroic mode, through this critical reading I address the ubiquity and limitations of that template.

Marina Savinovich	Monterey Institute of International Studies
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The Power Struggle to Equalize Gender Relations in Nepal	

In spite of the fact that women comprise 33% of the Nepalese Constitutional Assembly (CA), as political figures and leaders women continue to struggle against the pervasive patriarchy that continues to govern every aspect of a woman's life in Nepal. Women who gained a seat in the CA are severely limited by their party's politics; moreover, they are not taken seriously by their male counterparts. Their ideas are dismissed or labeled as "a woman's issue" rather than an issue of the state. This very same sentiment is present in every social sphere. Although women have demonstrated their competencies as leaders – serving as ministers, professors, entrepreneurs, civil society organizers and as bread-winners – they continue to battle cultural and social stigma. Empowerment, therefore, either on an individual or on a collective basis, is crucial in order for social change to take place. This paper discusses the different aspects of power that shape social, political and cultural realities in Nepal. Understanding the concepts of power dynamics illuminates the struggle for gender equality in Nepal.

Jodi Shaw	Loyola Marymount University
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The Vibratory Expanse of Sound in Sri Vidya Kundalini	

Sri Vidya, a form of Tantric Shakta Hindu religious practice, teaches an intricate language philosophy, where sound is the underlying force behind everything. The letters of the alphabet and the core mantras are condensed forms of deities and power. This paper explores the syllables of the Sanskrit alphabet, the way sound vibrates and resonates, and the movements of the breath. Special attention is given to the particulars of the Sri Vidya mantra and how it moves through the body as kundalini. Although most people view kundalini as a process of vertical ascent, this study focuses on the complexity of movement, including world-affirming horizontal directionalities.

Nidhi Shrivastava	University of Michigan
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Indian at Heart, Global in Her Attitude: The "New" Indian Woman: Representations of Women in India's Popular Culture	

In this paper, I analyze the "new" woman figure and her representations in the popular culture discourse spanning across three time periods: colonial, post-colonial, and post-liberalization. The cyclical representations of the "new" woman figure are emblematic of the ideological struggle between traditionality and modernity, because she is characterized as the harbinger of forthcoming change. In other words, she is the key figure in both films and novels who shows non-normative behavior which eventually becomes socially acceptable. As a result, the actions and behaviors of the "new" Hindu middle-class woman in turn have an impact on the transformation of the society's expectations. Thus, the contemporary "new" woman sets the "new normal."

I correlate the post-liberalization Indian Hindu middle class "new" woman with the hegemonic cultural images which have circulated in the post-colonial and colonial literary and filmic discourses of the 20th century. I compare and contrast two women – those who share characteristics of the so-called "traditional" Indian woman versus those who embrace the "new" Hindu middle class woman. In each era, the contradictions become apparent in both women, further creating tensions between women who are struggling to retain their "traditional" Hindu identity and women who have adapted characteristics that are considered "modern," "global," or harboring the public's anti-western sentiments. In the present era, like the others, it is difficult to define the contradictory expectations placed upon young women as they strive to become independent, bold, and self-aware. In this study the depictions of "new" Hindu middle-class women challenge us to rethink the stringent definitions of the "traditional" roles of women intermingled with the irony of "newness" found in each era.

Rita Sherma	Confluence Integrative Studies Institute
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A Hindu Missiology? Challenges in the Transmission of Hindu Traditions	

Hindu missiological activity, though not always systematic, can be traced back to the early history of the Vedicization of the Khmer civilization, the Champa Empire of Vietnam, the Dayak Hindu cultures of Borneo, and the Srivijayan kingdom of Sumatra, among others. Later, there are theological trends that contain missiological elements, evinced particularly in the Gaudiya Vaisnava tradition. The modern era has seen the emergence of neo-Vedantic missiological efforts, and in more recent times, there have been efforts by various guru lineages to establish international outreach organizations. Nevertheless, there is certainly no overarching crystallized, theologically grounded Hindu missiology. Theoretically, it can be argued that this is not even possible, as there are countless theological schools in Hindu dharma, each with distinct ontologies, epistemologies, theological anthropologies, and moksha-tattvas. Taken to its logical extreme, such a stance can be used to question the validity of the category of "Hinduism" itself. At the same time, however, there are contemporary attempts to develop overarching theological rubrics that can at least serve as heuristic devices to understand and at the same time, "pin down" what is meant by "Hinduism." These efforts are taking place particularly in diaspora communities. It is certainly possible to move from such general theological frameworks to more systematic theologies, which could then give rise to more systematic "overarching" missiologies as well. Are such efforts authentic or false to the Hindu tradition(s)? Is such a missiology possible? If so, would it be enriching to the Hindu dharma or would it endanger it?



Sasha Sleiman	Monterey Institute of International Studies
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Moving Mountains: Women's Socio-Economic Challenges in Post-War Nepal	

The People's War in Nepal was fueled by ideals of empowerment and equality for all, particularly promoting the need to end the historical discrimination against and disempowerment of women. Due to the structural marginalization women faced in society before the war, many joined with the Maoist insurgency in hopes that the Maoist vision would advance their position in society and fulfill their basic needs. Post-war, however, discrimination and disempowerment are still creating challenges for women, particularly in regard to their social and economic status in society. Empirical research conducted in Nepal demonstrates that women felt some changes have been made and post-war reforms have enhanced opportunities in their communities. However, despite the positive rhetoric and notions of empowerment and change, there are basic needs, including health, food, and freedom from violence, that are continuous barriers to women even after they played active roles in the war. This paper focuses on the challenges women face in accessing services such as health and education, employment, and living their lives free of violence in a post-war context.

Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi	University of Peshawar, Pakistan
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Counter-Insurgencies in Afghanistan and Pakistan: The US and the Pakistan Perspectives	

Counter-insurgency narratives are gaining momentum, as Afghanistan suffers a protracted conflict. Practically, counter-insurgency is aimed at sowing the seeds of long-term peace in war-ravaged areas like Pakistan's tribal belt and Afghanistan. Theoretically, questions regarding the legitimacy of intervention over state sovereignty and whether counter-insurgency as a state policy can succeed raise doubts concerning the states' intervention. Due to the enormity and complexities of such a task, democratizing Afghanistan and pacifying Pakistan are recent examples of failure. The fact remains that the US "War on Terror" in Afghanistan and Pakistan is lacking the long-term commitment required for successful state-building. This intervention may initially gain domestic and international support but, as casualties and costs mount, states scramble to find an escape route. The use of extensive military force to eliminate the Taliban and its Al-Qaeda supporters has not yielded positive results. The Taliban insurgency has shown greater resilience over the years, deepening its roots within the Afghan populace. The steep rise in the cost of the "War on Terror" has pressed the international coalition force to adopt a counter-insurgency strategy to reduce its losses and achieve a face-saving withdrawal from the country. Given the intricacy of the conflict, with many actors involved pursuing varying agendas, the success of reconciliation and negotiation with the Taliban insurgents is questionable. Skepticism prevails among many Afghans about the possibility of incorporating the Taliban in a power-sharing formula. Will this strategy succeed or falter in the coming years?

Mihiri Tillakaratne	University of California, Los Angeles
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Palimpsests: Postwar Development, Accountability, Rewriting Narratives, and the Sri Lankan American Diaspora	

This paper examines the Los Angeles Sri Lankan Consulate's outreach event introducing the new Consul General to members of the Southern California Sri Lankan community on September 2, 2011. Throughout the night, the audience members were presented with a very specific definition of what it means to be Sri Lankan in both Sri Lanka and America: one who is both politically and financially engaged with the homeland's future. This paper explores 1) the implications of encouraging diasporic involvement in redevelopment; 2) accountability and competing narratives of war; and 3) the facilitation of diasporic lobbying of US governmental representatives by the Sri Lankan government. Drawing on Avery F. Gordon's notion of "palimpsest," we examine how the event was part of an ongoing cycle of erasure and replacement of narratives. Finally, we discuss what this event means for the future of this community as well as for the future of the Sri Lankan government's relationship to the diaspora.

Bhikshuni Lozang Trinlae	Claremont Lincoln University
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Emic Research of Dharma Traditions Using Practical Theology Formalism: A Buddhist Model	

Organizations such as the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind-Body Medicine have used empirical academic studies of Vedic yoga and Buddhist meditation systems, performed from *outside* the contexts of religious practice, to improve the delivery of health and well-being to the general public. However, empirical research done from *within* religious traditions for the benefit of teachers and students of traditional practices has been lacking. This paper presents a model, using the example of Buddhist mantra meditation, of deploying hermeneutic formalisms from academic practical theology which provide an emic framework for conducting quantitative and qualitative research from within traditional contexts of religious practice. These are, by design, intended to directly inform and benefit religious communities. After a brief review of the theoretical basis for Buddhist theology it is shown, using the example of Buddhist meditation research, how formal mechanisms for describing, interpreting and analyzing religious phenomena, and normatively integrating desired changes resulting from such research, can be generalized for the benefit of teachers and students of any dharma tradition. Furthermore, this formal framework can expand the scope for academic research of dharma traditions beyond the domain of religious studies to academic theology subject areas.

Melanie Walker	University of Calgary, Canada
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Pre-Displacement and Social Justice in India: A Case Study of a Proposed Dam	

In India, development-induced displacement has caused a socially unjust environment amongst *Adivasi* (indigenous) populations. In the context of dam displacement, social justice issues, such as increased poverty and decreased livelihood have been documented. However, in order to understand dam displacement it is important to study a proposed dam site before actual displacement occurs. What happens at the proposed or pre-dam stage that leads to socially unjust displacement? My case study of a proposed dam site in Madhya Pradesh, India, asked some of these questions through ethnographic methods. I lived and conducted research in a rural *Adivasi* village that will be partially submerged due to the dam, while also using participant observation, interviews, and community gatherings in villages that will be fully submerged. During my research, I established two emerging themes: development planning is occurring with a lack of participatory planning, thus allowing for a lack of understanding of *Adivasi* needs in the project; and a lack of policy control. Global, national, and regional policies are not being followed on the ground, leaving disparities between what *Adivasis are* experiencing during the planning stage and what they *should be* experiencing, according to policy, when a dam is proposed. A lack of development planning and policy control could hypothesize the social injustices that occur with dam displacement.



Chris Weinkauff	Claremont Graduate University
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Finding Flow in Dhyana: Still Points in a Turning World	

Stoler Miller refers to yoga as "a state of mental tranquility and spiritual freedom" and quotes TS Eliot to describe yoga as the "still point in a turning world." Much like yoga, Csikszentmihalyi's flow phenomenon has also been described with similar terms as a state of mental tranquility and freedom, Eliot's still point in a turning world. Athletes experiencing flow suggest that "time stood still," "I was one with the ball," and "I was completely calm and enjoying the moment" The same descriptors are applied to the meditative or *dhyana* experience and the flow experience. The similarities between *dhyana* and flow do not end here. This discussion outlines the similarities in these two experiences in the hope that researchers will be inspired to investigate the interaction of these two phenomena. While yoga and flow are very distinct experiences, perhaps these two may actually be experienced simultaneously. Csikszentmihalyi has suggested that "it is not unreasonable to regard yoga as one of the oldest and most systematic methods of producing the flow experience." While the literature is abundant on both topics, outside of Csikszentmihalyi's suggestion, little discussion has been found regarding their similarities or their potential for coexistence.

Dinithi Wijesuriya	University of Kelania, Sri Lanka
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19th- and 20th-Century Sri Lankan Society and Vintage Vehicles	

The research presented here focuses on an Industrial Archaeological analysis of artifacts created from 1902 to 1940. The vehicles under consideration are thought to have been brought to the island by the British. The old vehicles are categorized in two types, vintage (manufactured from 1902-1940) and classic (manufactured post-1940). There are still around 400 vintage vehicles in Sri Lanka, though no study of them grounded in Industrial Archaeology has been done. This research analyzes how the vehicles were introduced to Sri Lanka during the 19th and 20th centuries, and how these vehicles connected with the lives of upper- and middle-class Sri Lankans during that time.

Susan Willson	Claremont Graduate University
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Water as Wealth in Hindu Society: Sacred but Defiled	

Water is widely considered to be the source of life, both in a sacred and a scientific sense; water is necessary to life, but it is often polluted and wasted. In this paper I focus on the use and abuse of water in India and how the water situation is both harmonious with and in disharmony with the sacred place that water has in this largely Hindu society. The sacred nature of water and possible solutions to the polluted state of these waters is explored. Two particular bodies of water, the Ganges and the Yamuna, which are the embodiment of goddesses in India but also suffer from serious levels of pollution and overuse, will be used to illustrate the current situation.

The coincident needs of religion, economy, and ecology interact in a study of the culture surrounding the sacred worship of water and the polluted state of that water. The qualities of devotional worship stand in contrast to the ecological and environmental conditions of the water. Just as much is written about the sacred nature of water in general in Hindu tradition, much is written about aspects of and viable solutions to return waters to acceptable conditions. Movements for returning the waters to a clean state, based on environmental and economic concerns, need to connect with the sacred aspects of worship and use by the people. Recent frameworks for water policy in India, technological solutions such as purification systems, and local water management are provided as examples of both large- and small-scale solutions.

Jasmine Wolf	Monterey Institute of International Studies
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Challenges to Policing in Nepal	

After years of civil unrest, extrajudicial killings, disappearances, sexual assaults, and other human rights violations, security needs have become a top priority for most Nepalese. Today, Nepal's police force bears much of the responsibility for meeting security needs. This paper examines the challenges faced by the police in Nepal. Field research on this topic involved meetings with the police, NFPs, and advocacy organizations in Nepal. In these meetings it was apparent that while there is a large police presence in most places in Nepal, this does not translate into the general public feeling secure. But, how does an insecure police force provide security? Challenges dealt with by the police range from a lack of basic necessities (proper police stations, livable salaries, etc.) to massively complex political issues (the presence of politically-backed criminal organizations, corruption within police departments, etc.). In spite of these challenges, the police have had some success in reducing crime and human trafficking. However, it is clear that more attention must be paid to police reforms or else the lack of security will continue to challenge peace in Nepal.