Krishanu Adhikari, University of Hyderabad

“Indian Campus and the Problematics of Caste: A Study of Select Indian Campus Novels in English”

Campus Fiction as a distinct subgenre of fiction rose into prominence in the West during 1950s, which following the words of Raymond Williams can be stated as a kind of emergent cultural form. In a similar vein, Indian academia has also contributed to the ‘palimpsestic’ growth of a similar kind of fiction, written in English on Indian campuses, since 1950s, which has hitherto remained unheeded in the existing body of criticism on Indian English Fiction. Unlike their western counterpart, Indian Campus Novels, since their inception, tend to depict a picture of the campus which actively participates in the formation of the constitutive narrative of the ‘political’ in larger socio-political order of post-independence India.

This paper would attempt to study Srividya Natarajan’s No Onions Nor Garlic (2006) and M. K. Naik’s Corridors of Knowledge (2008), so as to probe how these two novels manifest two different discursive traces of approaches, concerning the deep rooted problematics of Indian Caste system in two different Indian university campuses, located in culturally/geographically two different spaces in post-independence India. While Natarajan questions the prevailing Brahminical hegemony in The Chennai University, M. K. Naik on the other hand highlights the slow downfall of Indian academia due to its over-inclusive nature. Hence the study would draw upon the theoretical postulations of postcolonial thinkers like Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha and Partha Chatterjee only to mention a few. Taking this thread of ‘postcoloniality’, the paper would also refer to the works of Andre Beteille, Derek Bok, Jacques Derrida, and the education commission reports and the writings of Ambedkar, in order to address the complex dynamics of the social responsibilities of Indian universities. Thus, by bringing into account the institutionalization of caste-based discourses, this paper would finally strive to locate the changing dynamics of campus-caste interface.

Krishanu Adhikari, presently a JRF Research Scholar from the Department of English, University of Hyderabad is pursuing a Ph.D. in English. His area of research is Indian Campus Novels in English. He did his M.A. in English from The Pondicherry University. He did his M.Phil on Rohinton Mistry from The English and Foreign Languages University. He has been published in a number of reputed national and international journals and in edited volumes, published by publishers like Authorspress, India. His areas of interest are Indian English Literature, Western Campus Fiction, Indian Campus Novels in English, and Literary Theory and Criticism.

Ifrah Afzul, Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design

“Ecocriticism: Crossing Boundaries between Human and Non-Human Spheres in Jamil Ahmed’s The Wandering Falcon”

Jamil Ahmed’s The Wandering Falcon envisions the ecological landscape of the tribal areas of Pakistan as the first setting of man when he primarily treaded the earth. Relating that every individual contains in his or her essence a “tribal gene,” Jamil Ahmed empathises with the tribesmen of Balochistan, transforming them into everyman regardless of time and space. The brutally all-consuming natural terrain of Balochistan is highlighted through the four natural classical elements such as the wind, earth, water and fire, which according to ancient Greeks formed the basis of analysis in understanding both the natural and the material world. These non-human spheres whether it be the blistering wind of a hundred and twenty days, the wasted, barren land where the borders of Iran,
Afghanistan and Pakistan meet, the waterhole where thirst-ridden men find momentary respite, or the fire and armour that the tribesmen always carry, demonstrate how the path between the natural and the human has refused to coalesce in harmony despite the struggle of the Pawindahs, these foot people, to keep it so. The dynamics of intervention are made more vividly clear through the character of Tor Baaz, whose name means the wandering falcon, and where he becomes a symbol of both human dissonance and the unforgiving non-human forces operating on man. Ironically enough it is through his character that Ahmed tries to provide a significant pathway where conflict and conservation of an old way of life overlap. Roaming the peripheral spaces amid tribes in the land, Tor Baaz becomes that liminal sphere within boundaries or borders that resist change to the new, adopted civilized way of life. Thus, Jamil Ahmed’s ecocriticism not only endeavours to imagine a sustainable post-conflict framework, but also subverts myths of barbarism regarded with tribal areas by the feigned world of civility.

Ifrah Afzal is a Lecturer of English Language and Literature at Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design. He has over two years of university teaching experience in this domain. He earned his M.Phil in English Literature from Kinnaird College for Women University, Lahore, Pakistan.

Zia Ahmed, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan


The portrayal of women in Pakistani Fiction began to alienate from the traditional women characters since the diasporic interventions into it. The post-modern and post-war era further disengaged these portrayals from the existing traditions and challenged the feminist trends. Post 9/11 shattered the remaining pieces of these isms and gave birth to the neo-liberal ideologies which challenge, especially the racial and feminist fabric and rubrics. The women portrayals in the fiction of Mohsin Hamid seen through this gaze to have their own attitudes, especially the character of “Pretty girl” who aspires to be a successful woman like any man in the Pakistani society and does not care for the traditional morals and ethics. The research attempts to explore as to how much this character portrayal deviates from the feminist ideologies propagated by the fiction in the early and later decades of the last century. The researcher reads the selected chinks of text under the debate of Neo-liberalism and the radical critique propagated by Chandra Mohanty. The researcher may reach the most probable conclusion that the ideology of neo-liberalism has initiated the challenges to the feminist scholarship.

Zia Ahmed is working as a Professor of English at ISS, BZ University, Multan, Pakistan. He earned his Masters in English and PhD in Pakistani Fiction in English from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. His research areas include Feminism, modernism, Postmodernism, Postcolonialism. He is the author of 20 research papers and has given professional advice at the M.Phil and Ph.D. level. He has also visited the University of North Texas, USA in 2015 and has been working with Raja Masood Ashraf on research projects for postdoctoral studies.

Nasia Anam, Williams College

“Transition, Translation, Assimilation: from “Migratory” to “Settled” in Bangladeshi Diasporic Fiction”

This paper will focus on the tension between “migrating” and “settling” in Britain for the diasporic Bangladeshi families depicted in Zadie Smith’s White Teeth and Monica Ali’s Brick Lane. I argue that the transition from “migrating” to “settling”—meaning simultaneously inhabiting, negotiating, and compromising—is a means of translating the volatile political transitions of postcolonial nation-formation in diaspora. Both novels track the development of British immigrant community formation: from the 1970s to the new millennium in the case of Smith’s novel, and just after September 11, 2001 in Ali’s. This was also the time span during which the Bangladeshi nation was born and established itself on the world stage. The boundary between colony and metropole shifts in the narratives of Brick Lane and White Teeth as geopolitical borders change between India, East/West Pakistan, and Bangladesh. These borders are reconfigured and translated into the hallways and narrow streets of estates housing in the outer boroughs of London. The novels bring together age-old questions of migration from rural to urban spaces and compound them with the complex, postcolonial cultural matrix of late twentieth century England. Both texts also circulate back through Bangladesh in their narratives, either by way of traveling characters or epistolary contact, and posit a dynamic relationship between the relatively new nation of Bangladesh and the increasingly rooted community of diasporic Bangladeshis in London. This paper examines the way Brick Lane and White Teeth “translate” the political and cultural impacts of establishing of the new nation-state of Bangladesh in
their depiction of diasporic Bangladeshis transitioning from “migratory” to “settled” to “the enemy within” from the perspective of the British public sphere.


**Waseem Anwar and Summer Pervez, Forman Christian College-University**

**“Postcolonial or Ghost-Colonial? Moving beyond the Inertia of the ‘Post’”**

Whatever way the phraseology of the “post,” whether occupied as a bordered era or disengaged as a borderless epoch, it ascertains an intrinsic inclusiveness that appends multiple perspectives from diverse post-colonialist and post-modernist backgrounds. From the very contemporary South Asian Pakistani perspective, when the spectrum of the post connects to growing complications of current trans-cultural expansion and its spatiotemporal reality, the technologies of global and local or the pluralism of being, it consents a ghost to be the proxy, allowing paradoxically an apparitional mobility, a moving ahead with the inertia of the “post.” The recent endangering phenomena of transpired violence and terrorized territores in the South Asia, especially Pakistan, convince us to see the post as a spectral incidence, revealing its symbolic prevalence amid the growing turbulence and trauma of our times. The postcolonial and postmodern in this regard not only transform but transmogrify into a hauntingly intense though concomitantly muffled effect that is much more visible through multiple procedural invisibilities of its politico-socio-psychological damage. The ghostliness of the dangerous, traumatic and damaging in the post is thus epitomized in Pakistani literary, critical and theoretical framework as systems being questioned, where identities are being challenged, bodies being mutilated, geographies being reviewed, cartographies being reworked, evolutionary roots being re-explored, and even the course of natural seasons being re-described or redefined.

This paper explores such (in)visible and theoretical splits of the “post” of postcolonial and postmodern as depicted in some contemporary Pakistani English fictional and nonfictional works by Mohammad Hanif, Kamila Shamsie, Uzma Aslam Khan, Nadeem Aslam as well as diaspora writers such as Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, Bapsi Sidhwa, Zulifkar Ghose, Mohsin Hamid and others. In doing so, the paper challenges the efficacy of “post” when it gets translated as a “ghost” of the ghost-colonial/ ghost-modern.

**Waseem Anwar** is Professor (English) at Forman Christian College-University (FCC-U), Lahore, Pakistan; former Humanities Dean and Chair of English at FCC-U as well as at G C University, Lahore; Fulbright Fellow twice; worked for SALA Executive Committee; and co-edited 2010 *South Asian Review* on Pakistani English creative writing.

**Summer Pervez** is Associate Professor (English), FCC-U, Lahore, Pakistan; Ph.D. from University of Ottawa, Canada; teaching since 2002; published articles on world lit./film/music; research interests include postcolonial studies, South Asian diaspora studies plus partition lit/horror films on violence/ terror, and Deleuze philosophy; she is an imagist poet in the Sufi tradition.

**Muhammad Waqar Azeem, Binghampton University, SUNY**

**“From Postcolonial to Post-9/11: A Study of the Contemporary Pakistani-American Fiction”**

After 9/11, Pakistani Muslims in the US have faced a renewed racial discrimination intensified by legally exceptional security interventions in their personal and social lives. Employing Giorgio Agamben’s notion that “homo sacer...indicates...a life that may be killed by anyone—an object of violence that exceeds the sphere both of law and of sacrifice” (Homo Sacer 86), I study Pakistani immigrants in US as placed in a “zone of indistinction.” (Homo Sacer 90). Discussing the experiences of protagonists in three post-9/11 novels, namely, Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), H. M. Naqui’s *Home Boy* (2009) and Shaila Abdullah’s *Saffron Dreams* (2009), I propose that the law of exception has transformed already racialized subjects into terrorist suspects and thereby into homo sacer. Moreover, I maintain that double narrative technique in these novels resists the imperial narrative of American exceptionalism.
Many studies interpret post 9/11 Pakistani diaspora fiction as postcolonial, assuming it to be representative of Pakistanis’ colonized conditions in US. Yehouda Shenhav, for example, argues that “the emergency rules which guide the war on terrorism and the management of these societies today painfully resemble those of the imperial age.” (Svirsky and Bignall, Agamben and Colonialism 27) I contest Shenhav’s notion arguing that, unlike any relatively definite identities of a subject race in former colonies, the empire’s subjects now are marked with mobility, evasiveness, and frequent crossing of national, cultural and racial borders. The post-9/11 imperial discourse thus marks a discontinuity from the discourse of colonization of the sub-continent because the colonial paradigm of (hyper)nationalism has been replaced by transnationalism. The US Empire expands War on Terror across temporal and spatial borders with an eventual objective to effect the cultural imperialization of the subjects (both inside and outside US) through surveillance, detentions and even torture.

Muhammad Waqar Azeem is a Ph.D. English Literature student (Fulbright Fellow) at Binghamton University (State University of New York), NY, USA. He has been teaching at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) Lahore and GC University, Lahore, Pakistan. His areas of interest include Literary Theory, and the representations of violence, War on Terror and drone strikes in post 9/11 art and fiction.

Stacey Balkan, Bergen Community College
"The Age of Flowers: Linnaean Imperialism in Amitav Ghosh’s River of Smoke"
In his recent lectures on climate change, novelist Amitav Ghosh remarked on the persistent role of empire in the dispossession of communities throughout the Global South generally, and India in particular. He spoke that the uneven effects of climate change the “result of systems that were set up by brute force to ensure that poor nations remained always at a disadvantage in terms of both wealth and power.” Given the coincidence of European imperialism and the so-called “great acceleration”—a period traced to the 18th century when Britain’s premier trading company was acquiring an exclusive writ of free trade for the purpose of growing and selling opium—Ghosh argues that we must expand our indictment of capitalism to include “an aspect of the Anthropocene that is of equal importance: empire and imperialism.”

Moving “beyond the postcolonial,” Ghosh’s argument is a distinctly materialist one—carbon and opium replacing the familiar tropes of postcolonial or diasporic identity. The lectures, like his recent Ibis Trilogy, are thus aligned with the emergent field of postcolonial eco-criticism, which seeks to reconcile postcolonial discourse with such materialist concerns. Illustrating the relevance of the imperial-colonial project to neoliberal globalization, the trilogy also offers a commentary on the establishment of free-trade in the region; the concomitant enclosure of peasant land; and such modes of epistemological violence as the cooption of local language systems and, perhaps especially, local flora. The latter is the central focus of Ghosh’s River of Smoke (2011) in which the character Zachary Reid likens the Company’s botanical gardens to the hull of a slave ship. This paper reads River of Smoke from a postcolonial eco-critical perspective, arguing for a more complicated understanding of the colonial episteme—foregrounding, to cite Partha Chatterjee, the “fruits” of Linnaeus’s “poison tree” rather than Macaulay’s.

Stacey Balkan earned her Ph.D. in English at the CUNY Graduate Center in 2016 where her work focused on postcolonial ecologies and the politics of representation in the Global South. Stacey’s work has appeared or is forthcoming in Social Text Online, Comparative Literature and Culture, The Cambridge Companion to Comparative Literature, World Literature and Comparative Cultural Studies, The Global South, Public Books, and Configurations. She teaches World Literature and courses in the Environmental Humanities at Bergen Community College where she is co-chairperson of the college’s Literary Arts Series.

Arjmand Bano, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore
“Coalescing the Human and the Animal in Aamer Hussein’s Another Gulmohar Tree: An Ecocritical Inquiry”
This research attempts to dismantle the traditional perception of ‘animal otherness’ by exploring the ways human life is affected by non-human animal world. By negating an anthropocentric reductionism the notion of the inseparability of the human and animal world is accentuated. The novella presents an intricate blending of myth and folklore with overt suggestions to conviviality, vitality and beauty inherent in the animals. Counteracting the
traditional practice of employing derogatory animal metaphors to justify human oppression, objectification and enslavement, animals are portrayed to manifest the wisdom and mysteries of human consciousness buried in the folklore. So, the agency of the animal world is established in contrast to its anthropomorphic implications. In addition, the theme of miscegenation fosters the notion of human dependency on animals for their survival. Hence, the established naturalization of human-animal separation is inverted. Furthermore, reflecting on the Australian ecofeminist, Val Plumwood’s view that this hyper-separation creates a “polarized understanding in which the human and the non-human spheres correspond to two quite different substrates or orders of being in the world”, the study aims at re-tracing of the place of animals in relation to human world (Plumwood 2003).

Arjumand Bano is a Senior Lecturer at Lahore Garrison University in Lahore, Pakistan. His research interests include: Literature of War & Conflict, Post-colonial Studies, and Islamic-feminism.

Madhurima Chakraborty, Columbia College Chicago
“Radical Realism and Mahasweta Devi’s Leftist Literary Commitment”
This essay examines the activist and liberative purpose of Mahasweta Devi’s fiction and argues that her sympathies for and commitment to radical leftist movements are coded into the narrative form of her stories, specifically in her attachment to realism. Her use of realism models a literary technique that gets beyond Indian fixation on independence as a politically watershed moment. Instead, Mahasweta’s writing shows how an ostensibly European form can be restructured and retooled to further a true liberation in India that is yet to come to the so-called postcolonial nation. So, while Gayatri Spivak has argued that realism allows for the dangerous conflation of representation as portrait or tropology (the realm of art or philosophy) and representation as “speaking for” or proxy (the realm of politics) (275), Mahasweta’s fiction proves that truly political literature must be invested in exactly this coincidence of literary and political representation, and consequently, needs to be rooted in the very “representationalist realism” that Spivak denounces. For example, through her stories such as “Statue” and “The Fairy Tale of Mohanpur,” Mahasweta mobilizes a realistic “fidelity to actuality” (Mukherjee 10) that brings together an aesthetic of the present with her politics of the present. Further, these more easily recognizable elements of realism are coupled in Mahasweta’s prose with narrative ruptures that express a sense of Lukácsian understanding of meaningful realism that “deliberately introduce[s] elements of disintegration into their works” (39) as well as shifting temporalities that oppose what Fredric Jameson sees as the “asphyxiating” nature of naturalism (104). Consequently, Mahasweta produces a radical realism that embodies what Satya Mohanty has described as postpositivist realism; a literary form essential to and inextricable from her radical literary commitments.

Dr. Madhurima Chakraborty is Assistant Professor of Postcolonial Literature at Columbia College Chicago. With Umme Al-wazedi, she is the editor of Postcolonial Urban Outcasts: City Margins in South Asian literature (Routledge, 2106). Also with Dr. Al-wazedi, she guest edited a special issue of South Asian Review on “Nation and Its Discontents.” Her monograph The Literary Politics of Mahasweta Devi is currently under contract at Brill | Rodopi. Additionally, she has also been published in Journal of Postcolonial Writing, Literature/Film Quarterly, South Asian Review, and Journal of Contemporary Literature. Her teaching and research interests include Postcolonial, South Asian, Indian Diaspora, and British literature.

Debojoy Chanda, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
“A Zone of Incidence: Where Colonial and Neoliberal Meet”
In this paper, I suggest that the metropolitan Indian city—if it be taken as a signifier of a political current running through South Asia—is presently a zone where neoliberalization and colonially-inherited policing strategies meet. An important role of post-colonial theory in this context is that it helps trace the policing strategies back to their imperial-colonial origins, thus allowing a cognitive mapping of points where the imperial-colonial and the neoliberal rhizomatically meet. To demonstrate this meeting of colonial and neoliberal, I examine the evacuation and demolition of slums in twenty-first century Calcutta as part of neoliberal strategies to make way for high-rises and apartment complexes. I trace the policing techniques used to effect this evacuation and demolition back to policing methods that the British government in India used to control red-light areas in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Calcutta.
This reading simultaneously helps understand how these colonially-inherited techniques are reconfigured by their meeting with the neoliberal. With the destruction of the slums and the concomitant management of urban space, neoliberal urban middle-class desires are being increasingly directed toward a city built along ‘global’ lines. Meeting these desires, the focus of the ‘urban’ has shifted to what Marx calls the “urbanization of the countryside”: heretofore-ignored suburbs of Calcutta like Rajarhat are now increasingly becoming the hub of the neoliberal-urban, with private investors and corporations building more high-rises, townships, sports venues, information-technology hubs, and entertainment complexes there than in the heart of Calcutta itself. The aforementioned policing techniques, by playing a part in reconstituting the urban, thus ironically focalized the neoliberal away from the metropolitan city. The trajectory of this reconstitution, I argue, cannot be traced unless post-colonial theory help demonstrate that this reconfiguration begins at the colonial-imperialist moment.

Debojoy Chanda is currently completing a Ph.D. in English at the English Department of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Diviani Chaudhuri, Binghamton University
“Artefact, Ruin, Landscape: Re-Activating Transnational Islamicate Heritage in 20th Century Pakistani Women’s Writing”
Following scholars who have invoked the medieval and ancient as transhistorical analytical categories, commemorative modes, and discursive forms that interrogate and refract the contemporary, this paper examines two novels by Pakistani women authors: Mumtaz Shah Nawaz’s 1948 ‘lost classic’ republished in 2003, The Heart Divided, and Kamila Shamsie’s A God in Every Stone, published in 2014 on the 100th anniversary of the Great War. While The Heart Divided combines elements of both shahr-i-ashob and the trope of Andalusia as a site of lost Islamicate splendour, particularly in its representation of Mughal ruins in Delhi, A God in Every Stone follows a young Englishwoman and aspiring archaeologist in the wake of World War I from Labraunda in present day Turkey to Peshawar in search of a fictional artifact, the circlet of the Greek explorer Scylax, who, as we know from Herodotus, was tasked by the Persian emperor Darius I to chart the course of the Indus river. Shimmering between legend and memory, both the artifact in A God in Every Stone and the landscape in The Heart Divided activate rememorialisations of the distant past, overlaying 20th century ethnoterritorial imaginaries with the insistent material presence of Other[ed] cultures—Gandharan, in Peshawar, and Mughal in Lahore and Delhi. The representation of the artefact and the landscape in these texts, I argue, symbolises an absence and a desire for the recovery of other, more entangled histories of the region, and constitute efforts to create new narratives of place. Viewing these texts in terms of their representation of landscape, monumentality and cultural heritage opens up new avenues of approaching South Asian literatures beyond the immediate colonial encounter and expands Ann Laura Stoler’s conceptualisation of ‘imperial debris’ to encompass the implications of material remains of empires across a larger swath of time.

Diviani Chaudhuri has recently defended her doctoral thesis, The House in South Asian Muslim Women’s Early Anglophone Novels, at the department of Comparative Literature, Binghamton University.

Moinak Choudhury, University of Minnesota
“Sublime Spaces on the Margins of Empire (and Postcolonial Studies): Colonial Himalayan Travel Narratives”
Amidst prevalent postcolonial themes of home/homelessness, hybrid consciousness, and race and ethnic difference, the direct focus on space (particularly with respect to mountainous landscape) is often relegated to the background. Moreover, in spite of a renewed interest in global travel narratives, the exhaustive corpus of accounts of colonial travels to Tibet, Bhutan, (independent) Sikkim and Nepal have seldom been given the necessary attention. In this regard, my paper seeks to contribute to this arena by exploring the interrelationship between colonial travel narratives, aesthetics of landscape, and production of space and nature in Joseph D. Hooker’s Himalayan Journals.

Using Hooker’s allusion to “douce violence” as a form of enforced negotiation tactic, I will look at the presence of this method in his appropriation of Sikkim’s landscape. In this respect, I will rely on Henri Lefebvre’s conceptualization of the “production of space” (The Production of Space), that is, space as simultaneously a historical product and process to examine the modes of appropriation employed by Himalayan Journals. My paper
will examine the framing of picturesque spaces within the “informal empire”, and the inscription of cultural products into the flora and fauna through binomial nomenclature. Furthermore, taking into account Ann C. Colley’ observations on “persistence of the sublime” (*Victorians in the Mountains: Sinking the Sublime*), I will investigate potential spaces of resistance in the narrative and its eventual subjugation under material colonial landscaping. Joseph Hooker’s *Himalayan Journals* thus provides a crucial scope for inquiry into the wide spectrum of relations between dynamics of power, aesthetics and landscape studies within the genre of travel narratives qua postcolonial studies.

**Moinak Choudhury** is a graduate student and a fellow with the Consortium for Studies in the Pre-Modern World at the University of Minnesota. With interests in landscape studies, aesthetics, ecocriticism and postcolonial studies, his current work seeks to examine Himalayan travel narratives (18th to early 20th century) with respect to the concept of production of space.

**Coleen Lutz Clemens, Kutztown University**

“Phoenix Narratives: Considering the Construction of Femininity in South Asian Memoir”

This paper will consider memoirs I have termed “phoenix narratives” and their role in Western constructions of South Asian women. Looking at the memoirs of Nujood Ali (*I Am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced*), Mukhtar Mai (*In The Name of Honor*), and Malala Yousafzai (*I Am Malala*), this paper argues that such narratives of young women rising out of the “ashes” of religious oppression and persecution play into a dominant, hegemonic narrative that says that South Asian women are lacking agency until they are violated in some way. All three stories are also mediated through a western journalist and were marketed in a similar way—ending with each of the three being “honored” as Glamour Magazine Woman of the Year. By looking at the ways these three narratives work in a similar way, this paper ultimately argues that such texts are only contributing to an absolute or essentialist version of what femininity, female gender, and female agency (or lack thereof) look like in representations of South Asia consumed in the West. The three texts have shared a certain level of notoriety and popularity in Western classrooms that requires them to be interrogated and questioned to ensure they are not reifying a post-9/11 narrative of women in “the East” as passive beings without agency.

**Colleen Lutz Clemens**, assistant professor of Non-Western Literatures at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania, earned her Ph.D. in Post-Colonial Literature at Lehigh University. Her work focuses on issues of veiling in literature and studies the intersection of women’s issues in art and politics.

**Shumona Dasgupta, University of Mary Washington**

“Beyond the Postcolonial: Post-national Longing in Ritwick Ghatak’s Partition Cinema”

I will situate the cinema of avant-garde Bengali filmmaker Ritwick Ghatak (a survivor himself) as a counter discourse to the hegemonic constructions of the Partition in Hindi language national cinema of the times in films like *Nastik* (1954), *Chhalia* (1960) and *Dharmputra* (1961). Problematically mediating questions of community and violence, these Bollywood films elide entrenched social antagonisms under the sign of the nation. In sharp contrast, Ghatak’s Partition trilogy (*The Cloud-Capped Star* (1960), *E-Flat* (1961) and *The Golden Line* (1962)) subverts the ethno-territorial by resisting the most pernicious myth of the Partition- that it led to the establishment of two mutually exclusive, heterogeneous and internally coherent nations. I argue that the entire spectrum of Ghatak’s work debunks the nation building project by focusing on the suffering of rootless, migrant populations and their sense of “unhoming” and “unbelonging” within their designated nations. Highlighting the gaps between characters’ affective attachments and national allegiances, imploding intimate relationships symbolize a burgeoning crisis of national belonging, articulating a longing for post-national modalities of identity and inclusiveness.

Ghatak’s cinematic work in its focus on how the Partition was assimilated into the fabric of the everyday depicts the unspectacular “slow violence” of shattered, discontinuous lives unable to assimilate in the aftermath. Udbastu (refugee) experience is represented as a perpetual homelessness, a forced silencing/forgetting accompanied with an attendant disciplining of the body in its habits of diet, dress and language to hide/mask one’s status as an “outsider.” I will read Ghatak’s films (focusing especially on *The Cloud-Capped Star*) as trauma narratives while exploring the shifting social landscape in Bengal and the “technologies of gender” underpinning Post-Partition
Indian identity. As sites of cultural mourning work, Ghatak’s Partition cinema articulates the longing for new affective communities while revealing how the Partition was collectively re-memoried in the turbulent 1960s.

**Shumona Dasgupta** is an Assistant Professor of English and Postcolonial Literature at the University of Mary Washington, Virginia and is writing a book on the representations of the 1947 Partition of India in contemporary South-Asian fiction and film. The book delves into Partition texts which reveal the nexus between gender practices and the practice of violence while exploring the representation of trauma, social suffering and mourning and the tentative survival of community in the wake of catastrophe.

**Nilak Datta, BITS Pilani, KK Birla Goa Campus**

“Manufacturing the Marvels and Wonders of “Hindoostan” in the Gilded Age: The 1893 Chicago Exposition and the Parliament of Religions”

Theorizations of the postcolonial have been heavily influenced by the Subaltern Studies Project in the 1980s and the 1990s. After revisions in Indian historiography were made by Ranajit Guha from the late 1970s, especially with his focus on the “politics of the people”, Subaltern Studies was joined to the concerns of Postcolonial Studies. This newly merged stream with its emphases on discourse analyses and cultural studies oriented methodologies began to ignore or sideline the original concerns of Ranajit Guha’s focus on the history of Indian nationalism. Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), a foundational text for postcolonial studies, has often been used to explain cultural encounters where colonized peoples were subject to disciplinary formations of knowledge that were formulated by westerners. Said’s idea that colonizers’ knowledge of the East was not innocent, because it was related to the hegemonic status of those who produced it, has often used by scholars to write about “postcolonial” India. In the rush to talk about the postcolonial condition, scholars have often left aside the way cultural politics of late 19th century American institutions helped construct “Hindoostan” through an institutionalized tourist gaze. This paper takes up the cultural politics of the 1893 Exposition and the World’s Parliament of Religions (held in Chicago) to show how “Hindoostan” was understood as a “nation” through the eyes of Euro-American tourists. “Hindoostan” became a metonymic substitute for a state of static, non-evolutionary presence whose characteristics could be understood after being subject to the collective Euro-American tourist gaze. This paper argues that such a focus is crucial to understanding the post-independence shift in India’s image from an erstwhile Third World nation to a global trading partner.

Dr. **Nilak Datta** has degrees from Calcutta University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Carnegie Mellon University. He has taught in the US and Qatar. He is currently Assistant Professor (English) at BITS Pilani, KK Birla Goa Campus, Goa, India. His interests span postmodernism American fiction, tourism studies, American frontier studies, and Postcolonial Fiction. His work has appeared in *Modern Fiction Studies, The Annals of Tourism Research*, and most recently, in *Callaloo*.

**Nisha Eswaran, McMaster University**

“Intimacy Beyond Identity: Friendship and Utopia in Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy*”

Following the invitation to think through the limits of ethnoterritorialism in South Asian Studies, this paper aims to bring into conversation South Asian historical fiction with contemporary queer scholarship on identity, intimacy, and collectivity. In particular, this paper traces the depiction of friendship as a mode of human relationality that exceeds geographical, national, and religious lines in Vikram Seth’s 1993 novel *A Suitable Boy*. Reading *A Suitable Boy* as not only a re-telling of India’s birth as a nation but as a potential challenge to Indian nationalism, I draw from queer scholarship that contests rigid notions of identity and identity politics in order to build collectivity across differences in identity. For instance, in his work on wildness, Jack Halberstam argues that epistemological chaos (what he terms “wildness”) functions as an “alternative [...] to identity politics, [...] to how we want to think about being – being together and apart” (127). Similarly, in *Cruising Utopia*, José Muñoz conceives of “being together” in political struggle as a utopian practice wherein differences in identity coexist with “a belonging in collectivity” (20). Tracing the friendships in *A Suitable Boy* as that which function as a utopian practice, I argue that queer investigations into the friendships animating South Asian historical fiction offer us one way of refiguring the ethnoterritorial in South Asian Studies.

**Nisha Eswaran** is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University in
Robin Field, King’s College

“‘The Question Remains...of Your Place’: Challenging Reductive Identities in Ayad Akhtar’s Disgraced”

Ayad Akhtar’s play Disgraced (2012) offers a provocative portrayal of a Muslim man in contemporary American society. Indeed, to call Amir Muslim is in itself an essentialization. Amir was born in Pakistan into a Muslim family, but he was raised in the United States and has abandoned any religious practice; he has even changed his surname to Kapoor in order to distance himself from Islam. Yet at the end of Act III, Amir spews bigoted language at his Jewish and African American friends and beats his white wife, Emily, after she confesses to adultery. These shocking acts undermine Amir’s careful distancing of himself from stereotypes about violent and bigoted Muslim men and give rise to questions about his true beliefs and character. As the Jewish character, Isaac, notes after seeing a painting of Amir in his expensive suit, “And yet….The question remains....Of your place.” Is Amir inexorably tied to his Muslim and Pakistani heritage? Or is it possible for him to reinvent himself as secular and simply American? Is there space for Amir to be viewed as flawed but still sympathetic by the audience? I contend that Akhtar deliberately invokes certain stereotypes about Islam and Muslim men in order to interrogate essentialized and reductive notions of identity rooted in place, religion, and nation-state. While Amir demonstrably holds certain prejudices, Akhtar inserts mediating factors into the text – excessive drinking, stressful workplace conditions, revelations of infidelity – to temper any easy dismissal of Amir’s actions as those of a temperamentally violent or bigoted man. Akhtar also uses the periodic appearances of Amir’s nephew, Hussein/Abe, to demonstrate the malleability of religious and cultural identity, as well as to underscore the impact of older role models on the younger generation. Disgraced offers no easy answers, only difficult questions, about how identity is created and maintained, policed and punished; but, importantly, Akhtar’s play demands that audiences engage more deeply with the stereotypes and reductive notions of identity surrounding Muslim men.

Robin E. Field is an Associate Professor of English and Director of the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at King’s College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. She is co-editor of Transforming Diaspora: Communities beyond National Boundaries (2011) and has published articles on Jhumpa Lahiri, Sandra Cisneros, and Alice Walker and author interviews with Bharati Mukherjee, Chitra Divakaruni, and Diana Abu-Jaber. She is an associate editor of South Asian Review and co-edited the special issue entitled “New Directions in South Asian Canadian Literature and Culture” (June 2016).

Meghan Gorman-DaRif, University of Texas, Austin

“A Dialectics of Violence: Making Sense of Neel Mukherjee’s Naxalite Narrative in the ‘Age of Terror’”

Neel Mukherjee’s The Lives of Others (2014) tackles the period of unrest during the Naxalite Movement in West Bengal between 1967 and 1970. Yet the final epilogue springs forward to 2012, narrating an act of non-state terror against the civilian population, thereby connecting the earlier violence of the late 1960s with contemporary Maoist violence in the ‘age of terror’, and marking a significant turn in Naxalite narratives. This paper engages with the final section of the novel to analyze this connection and what tensions it reveals within terrorist violence – historical and contemporary - between state and non-state actors. What can the past offer in understanding current non-state terror that affects civilian populations? How does the novel represent this shift in targets from the Naxalites’ earlier focus on clearly articulated class enemies? In what ways does Mukherjee return to questions of violence raised by anticolonial writers and within postcolonial discourses, while expanding these questions to include connections between state violence and the global war on terror? I argue that through his narration of what I will call a dialectics of violence, Mukherjee provides an alternative way to think through contemporary discourse on terrorism. The end of the novel offers no vision of unity or utopian possibility, which might have appeared in earlier fictional representations of revolutionary violence. Instead, Mukherjee illustrates, with both empathy and despair, the historical development of the terrorist, pushing back on analyses of extremism which highlight the personal and psychological over the social and political. In so doing, the novel emphasizes what Arun Kundnani has recently claimed is necessary to a true analysis of terrorist acts: the fact that such violence is “inseparable from the wider background of state violence that is defined as normal, necessary, and rational.”
Megan Gorman-DaRif is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of English at the University of Texas at Austin. Her research centers on contemporary Indian and African Angophone fiction, focusing on representations of historical violence and their implications in understanding the Neoliberal era.

Khem Guragain, York University
“Stateless Citizens: Rupa Bajwa’s The Sari Shop and the Failure of the National Subject”
Rupa Bajwa’s The Sari Shop (2004) intervenes an elite historiography that deliberately ignores the other side of the nation-state where lives of not only the subalterns but also the minorities are consistently crushed under the state apparatuses in their ‘project’ of creating a homogeneous nationalist narrative. I seek to complicate the Indian nationalist discourse, and demonstrate how it “fails to speak for the nation”, as in Ranajit Guha’s contention. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak”, suggests that “the subaltern cannot speak.” This assumption leaves the subaltern unrepresented, and creates anxieties about the subaltern being relegated forever to the margin. I analyse the ways in which Bajwa writes the stories of the marginalized, and through her literary representation, attempts to “make the invisible visible,” as Robert Young’s enabling assertion on the need of a postcolonialist. I argue that by exploring the lives of the subalterns, and also investigating the trauma borne out of Amritsar massacre that the Shikhs are forced to live with, Bajwa questions the authenticity of the nationalist discourse that refuses to see what is there, and invites us to rethink the history in a different way. Alternative narratives, as Homi K. Bhabha proposes, are required to intervene the monolithic elitist discourse that denies the subaltern’s agency and existence. I demonstrate that going beyond the nationalist historiography Bajwa delves into the lives of the subalterns who seek an acceptable space within the limits of Indian national imaginary.

Khem Guragain is a doctoral candidate in English at York University. He received his first M.A. in English from Tribhuvan University and second M.A. in Literatures of Modernity from Ryerson University. He taught graduate courses on non-Western literatures and Postcolonial literatures, and undergraduate courses on creative writing, communications, and non-fiction at Tribhuvan University. He is interested in looking at contemporary South Asian diaspora studies and its multifaceted dimensions of cultural, ethnic, and literary (re)presentations of South Asia, intertwined with the questions of identity and representation of minority cultures in Canada, and elsewhere.

John Hawley, Santa Clara University
“What Young South Asia Wants: Can Chetan Bhagat and Mohsin Hamid Tell Us?”
If, as the CFP suggests, the subcontinent is “now marked in some ways by neoliberal globalization and shifting diasporic and transnational flows,” and if we are to take seriously Amit Chaudhuri’s recommendation that we discuss “culture as distinct from the post-colonial discourse,” where might we find an intersection of the transnational, the diasporic, and a discourse trying to redefine the subcontinent on, as it were, its “own” terms? We saw indications of the complexities of this self-conscious self-fashioning and positioning in the global community in Amitav Ghosh’s disinterest in being considered for the Commonwealth Writers’ prize some years ago, and his resistance to withdrawing from the Dan David prize. Who is speaking for, and to, the next generation of South Asians, who will fashion this post postcolonial world? Beyond their popular novels, Mohsin Hamid and Chetan Bhagat’s collections of essays are case studies of South Asians carrying out the negotiations at the heart of our conference theme. In Discontent and Its Civilizations, Hamid notes the 60th anniversary of his nation and writes that “my wish for our national anniversary is this: that we finally take the knife we have turned too often upon ourselves and place it firmly in its sheath.” In What Young India Wants (2012) and Making India Awesome (2015), Bhagat notes that “kings and colonizers left our country nearly seven decades ago. It is time they left our minds.” His is a populist version of Ngugi’s call for the decolonization of African minds, and all of them, of course, echo Fanon’s similar invocation. This paper will investigate some of the alleys down which they lead us. If there is time, I will refer to Roy’s Listening to Grasshoppers (2009).

John Hawley is Professor of English at Santa Clara University, and former chair of the department. He is an Associate Editor of South Asia Review, and has served on three MLA executive committees, including that devoted to Postcolonial Studies. He has authored Amitav Ghosh: An Introduction, and is co-editing a collection on Ghosh in the MLA series of Approaches to Teaching. He is former president of the US chapter of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies. He has edited 14 books and published essays in several journals.
Michaela Henry, Brandeis University
“Two Novels of Nuclear Bombay Today”
This paper draws from a larger project, which begins with the premise that nuclear science and the Anglophone novel in India and Pakistan share twinned and overlapping histories. Both emerged from nationalist movements and became powerful avenues through which the newly postcolonial nations vied for world social capital. India and Pakistan each successfully tested nuclear weapons in 1998. These tests came at the same time that international appetites for South Asian novels in English began to wane. I mark this moment as a new era for the Anglophone novel, which had previously been so tightly connected to the nationalist movements of the early 20th century in which it was born. My larger project turns to five representative novels that self-consciously take up the flexible image of the bomb in order to identity a new role for the novel that does not eschew its political role from the 20th century—that role familiar to postcolonial studies in the academy—but also refuses the over-determining power of that inheritance.

This paper reads Vikram Chandra’s Sacred Games (2006) and Manil Suri’s City of Debi (2013) as two texts representative of a pattern of nuclear novels in South Asia after India and Pakistan’s 1998 nuclear armament. The current paper examines two novels which address the subject of impending nuclear attack directly. As each plot charges forward from threat of nuclear attack toward imminent detonation, it remains clear that the power of the nuclear bomb as discursive figure, literary device, and political force is that it is primarily experienced as potentiality, rather than material reality. Nuclear South Asia is a distinctly 21st Century phenomenon. This paper argues that the power of nuclear potentiality explored in these novels offers new meaning to 20th century conversations about South Asian postcolonial becoming.

Michaela Henry is a Ph.D. Candidate in the English Department at Brandeis University. Her dissertation titled Narrative’s Nuclear Spring: the South Asian Anglophone Novel after the Nuclear Bomb has been supported by a Mellon Foundation Dissertation Year Fellowship and travel grant. She is also currently Visiting Assistant Professor of English and Composition at the Global Pathways Institute in Mumbai.

Bryan Hull, Portland Community College
“Cutting Down on Visibility: Globalism, Delhi and the Irrational”
In his nonfiction book entitled Capital, Rana Dasgupta traces the ways in which global wealth, business and economic growth have transformed Delhi, creating radical changes built on the city’s postcolonial past of partition and colonial rule. Towards the end of his book, as he attempts to articulate how Delhi is distinct in its development from contemporaneous Western capitals, he notes that as New York modernized there were those who “lamented the loss of mystery, the shrinking of horizons, the rationalisation of life” as “the older, more shadowy metropolis … was spot-lit into oblivion” (434). In contrast, Dasgupta believes that Delhi has so far resisted such “bright lighting”, developing along a radically different line that refuses centralization, rational authority and the usual rush towards western modernity.

This response to western Urban development connects to other cross-cultural discussions. For example, in his book on the way perspective operates radically differently in Arab culture vs. Western culture, Hans Belting distinguishes the two visual traditions in any number of ways. Specifically, in Western culture, the “world is calculated as a world seen” (Belting 31). Perhaps, Indian culture (in its syncretic spiritual and cultural traditions), also resists a Capital calculated merely “as a world seen” and instead offers us another vision that melds the external and the internal worlds. For this conference presentation, I am interested in looking at how Dasgupta’s mysterious moments in his book might be -- in the wake of such economic upheaval -- an appropriate response to global exploitation and inequality.

Bryan Hull teaches Indian & world literature, writing and international studies at Portland Community College.

Asif Iqbal, Michigan State University
“Remembering the Dismembered local: Addressing Metropolitan Postcolonialism in the Twenty-First Century”
Although the idea of “postcolonial literature” has been contested by scholars like Aijaz Ahmed (1992), Arif Dirlik (1994), Tabish Khair (2001), and Graham Huggan (2001), the growing geography of global Anglophone literatures
continues to contribute to the discussions of literatures from non-Western spaces. While the accusation of misrepresentation against post-colonial literature continues to contribute to academic debates, the post-colonial, as Robert Young (2012) has argued, continues to complicate issues of identity, representation and in particular, misrepresentation of Islam in a post-9/11 world. With an aim to better understand the critical debates in the academia on Islam and the present climate of Islamophobia, we can re-read the conflict of nationalism in South Asia by focusing on the events of 1971, which led to the creation of Bangladesh. Bangladesh’s national narrative tends to highlight the secular in opposition to Pakistan’s Islamic national identity. To better understand the Islam-question around the events of 1971 requires investigating the otherwise unspoken accounts of the war as they lay hidden under the Bangladesh nationalist narrative. The national literature in Bangladesh inadequately captures the silenced stories of 1971—especially stories dealing with the problematic of Islamic identity of the Bengali people. This paper aims to frame Young’s conceptualization of the postcolonial to reinvigorate the efficacy of the postcolonial in literary scholarship by engaging two volumes of short story collections, *From the Delta: English fiction from Bangladesh* (2005) and *Fault Lines: Stories of 1971* (2008). Drawing on Aamir Mufti’s (2007) idea of the short story’s efficacy to dislodge the meta-narratives of South Asian nationalisms, this paper will argue that the postcolonial needs to engage with local narratives forced to remain invisible by the literatures seen as representative of postcolonialism in the metropolitan literary market-place.

**Asif Iqbal** is a Ph.D. student in the Department of English, Michigan State University. He has completed his Masters in English at the University of Maine in 2014. Iqbal’s research interest includes Bengali cultural history and literature, Bengali-Muslim identity, feminist and gender theories, and South Asian Anglophone literature. He is also a bi-lingual essayist and poet with publications in *Maps & Metaphors: Writings by Young Writers from Bangladesh and United Kingdom* (2006) edited by Dinesh Allirajah and in *9th Edge: creative writings from Bangladesh* (2012).

**Kalpana Iyengar, University of Texas, San Antonio**

**“Asian Indian American Children's Creative Writing: An Approach for Cultural Preservation”**

Many children from diverse cultures experience disconnection between their home and school. As they attempt to reconcile the conflicts among their multiple worlds, they must negotiate their situatedness in a variety of contexts, i.e. home community vs. school and construct a multifaceted identity. Absent support from school, Asian Indian American adolescents engage in acts of cultural preservation (CP), which in turn, support their scholastic achievement. This article explores the thematic content of a group of Asian Indian American children’s creative writing generated for the Kahani Project—a culturally contextualized version of Writers’ Workshop. In their texts, the six adolescents discuss the importance of their cultural traditions as tools to contest the various micro-aggressions they experience in school. Data from this study argue for cultural inclusion, not only for those at risk, but also for those students who successfully navigate a mainstream curriculum.

**Dr. Kalpana Iyengar** completed her Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching at the University of Texas at San Antonio, USA, with a dissertation on *Asian Indian American Students’ Expression of Culture and Identity Construction Through Narrative Writing*. She also organizes the Kahani Project for students of Asian Indian origin annually. Her areas of research interest include multicultural/transnational identity construction, multi-modal teaching and learning, literacy acquisition through transmediation, Asian Indian performing arts, teaching writing, and technology integration in teaching writing and literacy. Currently, she teaches at the Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching Department at UTSA.

**Asha Jeffer, York University**

**“Master of None and the Subtleties of Second Generationness”**

Aziz Ansari’s hit Netflix original series *Master of None* is rightly lauded as a watershed moment in South Asian American representation in popular culture. The story follows a fully formed and flawed Indian American man through the highs and lows of his somewhat aimless life in New York City. At various points in the shows, major themes tied to second generation American identity are explore, most notably intergenerational relationships and racism, both systemic and personal. But this paper will focus on the way that the show is able to represent the subtler ways that second generation positionality shapes its protagonist. Through an examination of the show’s treatment of domesticity, sexuality, friendship, and ambition, I argue that the show’s most powerful achievement is the way that it normalizes the particularities of second generation experience as embedded in rather than
layered on top of the more “universal” aspects of modern life. Drawing on Stuart Hall’s assertion that “identity as a ‘production’ is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside of, representation” (392), I argue that by representing an Indian American character whose ethnicity is neither just incidental nor the most important aspect of his characterization, the show pushes the boundaries of Western conceptualizations of South Asian identity. Through my analysis of this show, I advocate for the importance of considering second generation positionality in discussions of South Asian diasporic cultural production. I also argue that an understanding of the reception of such cultural production must recognize the influence of the globalized digital realm of Netflix and similar services which create a new form of production and circulation of televisual media.

Asha Jeffers is a Ph.D. Candidate in English at York University in Toronto, Canada. Her research focuses on literature about the children of immigrants, “the second generation”, across national and ethnic lines. Her article “Means of Escape, Means of Invention: Hindu Figures and Black Pop Culture in Rakesh Satyal’s Blue Boy” is published in South Asian Review 36.3 and her article “Unstable Indianness: Double Diaspora in Ramabai Espinet’s The Swinging Bridge and M.G. Vassanji’s When She Was Queen” appears in South Asian Review 37.1. Her short story “The Scar” has been published in The Puritan magazine issue 30.

Maimoona Khan, Government College University, Lahore
“The V-(irgantarian) Life in the New World: Construing Jhumpa Lahiri’s Unaccustomed Earth”
Carol J. Adams in "The Sexual Politics of Meat" endorses the similarity between the words vegan-virgin-virtue on more than just the lexical level. Synonymous for passivity, the ‘vegetable’ women in Unaccustomed Earth are responsible for cooking, cleaning and caring. This modern day transmuted 'devadasis' may be away from their temples but they are certainly not away from the ideals of puritanical abstinence. Placed in a closely knit family structure, these women lead a strange double life: economically independent on one hand, emotionally bound to the familial anxieties on the other. These subtle patterns of vegetarianism manifest itself in rigorous homemaking, fidelity to a sexless life, mortification of the flesh, and a persistent guilt complex. Extended beyond the culinary realm, this Bengali restraint from men, meat, and ‘madera’ is not merely a temperance habit, but signals an ‘absence’ from the male life of action. These women exhibit little to virtually no sign of sexual activity, self-indulgence, and hedonism. This ‘absence’ (from men-meat bustle) permits the patrilineal society to forget the female existence and enforce a mute lifestyle of subjugation.

Maimoona Khan works as Lecturer in the Department of English, Government College University, Lahore (Pakistan). He has an M.Phil degree, and is primarily interested in South Asian Fiction and continental literary theory. He is also the assistant editor Exploration, a literary research journal of the English Department, GCU Lahore.

Shahzeb Khan, University of Punjab, Lahore
“The Visible Invisible in the Pre-Postcolonial: Towards an Epistemic Reprioritization”
Critiques of colonialism and western political excesses often face censure for exclusively drawing on intellectuals based in the west. The objectors find fault with a critique of the west and its past emanating from the west. Efforts at re-narrating colonial history in the academic setting are considered outcomes of western influence. Those who work on similar ideas have to inevitably ground their work in Critical Theory which may wean them away not only from their own past but also from the immediate concerns of their own ethnoterritorial context. Such allegations sap the emancipative prowess of Postcolonialism. An effort is thus required to re-imagine and re-connect with pre-postcolonial, indigenous, anti-colonial humanistic texts. With this backdrop in mind, this paper attempts to introduce and discuss some indigenous works which had offered strong criticisms of colonialism much before the idea was adopted by the Anglo-American academy. The paper also looks at the possible reasons why, and methods through which, such works have been relegated to the epistemic periphery and rendered invisible. The works discussed are part of, what Robert Young calls, the “unauthorized” knowledge and can be understood in the context of his visible/invisible paradox. Their efficacy in South Asian humanities has been discussed. The paper thus advocates epistemic re-prioritization and revivification of emancipative desire within the South Asian academy.
Shahzeb Khan is working as an assistant professor at the Department of English Language and Literature, University of the Punjab, Lahore. He is also the associate editor of the *Journal of Research (Humanities)*, which is published by the English department. He has written for premier English dailies of Pakistan and has blogged at 1687r.wordpress.com. His areas of interest include indigenous knowledge systems, indigenization of knowledge, literature as an instrument of ideology and institutionalization of literary study. He has recently set up Indigenizing Knowledge Forum (IKF), an interdisciplinary discussion forum, at the University of the Punjab.

**Cynthia Leenerts, East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania**

**“Dark Moon, Bright Crescent: Tagore in China”**

Invited in the wake of China’s May Fourth Movement, Tagore visited China in 1924, returning briefly in 1928. His works, especially *Crescent Moon*, *Gitanjali*, and *Ghare-Baire*, were already well known by Anglophone Chinese scholars abroad, as well as by English and Chinese translations available in China as early as 1915. His first translator was Chen Duxiu, one of the founders of China’s Communist Party. Despite the initial hopes of Tagore’s hosts, however, his first visit quickly went awry. Considered as a “Has-Been Saint” by radical students—too closely allied with Confucian values, too much a would-be prophet, and (as one deeply skeptical of nationalism in any form) otherwise out of touch with the political currents in China—Tagore did not go over well. His recalling of his first-edition 1924 *Talks in China* (reissued in 1925 with several essays purged, as well as with the locations of the various talks effaced) suggests his own homecoming struggles over a trip that had not gone as planned. Surprisingly, Tagore is now well received in China, nearly a century later. Party members and nonmembers alike speak well of him: despite his problematic attitude toward nationalism (somewhat less of an issue today), Tagore has resurfaced as a neo-Romantic whose alignment with “the poorest, the loneliest, and the lost” is attracting, in the 21st century, a new generation who can perceive him for his strengths and not reject him out of hand for his distrust of nationalism. Drawing upon Tagore’s edited talks, as well as upon analyses by Tan Chung, Pankaj Mishra, Stephen N. Hay, Sisir Kumar Das, Zhou Xingyue, and others, and brought up to date by discussions with Chinese colleagues, I plan to explore the dark and the brightening phases of Tagore’s reception in China from the 1920s through the present, anticipating future directions.

**Cynthia Leenerts**, an Associate Professor of English at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, as well as a student of the Chinese language, co-edited (with Lopa Basu) *Passage to Manhattan: Critical Essays on Meena Alexander* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009) and (with George Bozzini) *Literature Without Borders: International Literature in English for Student Writers* (Prentice-Hall, 2001). Among other projects, she is currently reinventing *Literature Without Borders* for students in China, and she serves on the editorial board of *South Asian Review*.

**Anuja Madan, Kansas State University**

**“Hanuman Goes Graphic: Secularization and Postcolonial Anxiety in *Simian***”

Many recent Indian graphic novels self-consciously contest national narratives and mythologies. This paper investigates Vikram Balagopal’s graphic novel *Simian* (Parts 1 and 2)* within the context of the emergence of the Indian graphic novel in the 21st century. Published in 2014 by Harper Collins, *Simian* is a retelling of the Ramayana with Hanuman as narrator. I argue that *Simian* is a counter narrative which not only challenges the casteist, sexist and racist underpinnings of mainstream Ramayana retellings, but also reimagines Hanuman as a complex figure grappling with the ramifications of his special (divine) abilities. Simian’s iconographic innovation of depicting Hanuman as a baboon is critical to its oppositional tone. Balagopal’s departure from predominant visual conventions of representing Hanuman strips him of devotional/religious signifiers and allows readers to see him as a secular figure. In Hindutva discourse, Hanuman has been coopted as a hyper-masculine figure who symbolizes the dominant imaginary of a strong nation that is defined by its Hindu-ness. Some recent comic book and TV versions of Ramayana reinforce this symbolism. I show how *Simian* uses the graphic novel form to psychologize and secularize a popular god, subvert the prevalent association of Hanuman with militant nationalism, and critique masculinist values of the epic.

Philip Lutgendorf argues that the ubiquitous representation of Hanuman as a humanized, hairless god in calendar art is linked to the postcolonial anxiety felt by Indian thinkers and writers about Hanuman’s classification by Western scholars as a primitive zoomorphic deity. Balagopal does not rationalize the monkeyhood of his
protagonist. However, though Simian foregrounds Hanuman as a vanar through image and text, the narrator’s angst about his animalistic impulses suggests that the novel doesn’t entirely escape the lingering anxiety about his monkeyhood.

Anuja Madan is Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Kansas State University where she teaches courses in World Literature. She received her Ph.D. from University of Florida in 2016 and her M.Phil from Delhi University. Her co-authored book, Notes of Running Feet: English in Primary Textbooks (with Rimli Bhattacharya, Sreyoshi Sarkar and Nivedita Basu) grew out of a commissioned group study of Indian English-language textbooks. She has also published articles on contemporary English-language picture-book adaptations of the Indian epic Mahabharata and Jean-Luc Godard’s films.

J. Edward Mallot, Arizona State University
“Lions and Tigers and Bombs: (Un)becoming Animal at the Baghdad Zoo”
In 2003, the US air strike against Baghdad destroyed what was, perhaps, the most celebrated zoo in the Middle East. Hundreds of imported animals were reduced to a handful still trapped in their enclosures; those who escaped were systematically hunted down by US forces. Several literary texts have attempted to make sense of, or re-appropriate, the destruction of the zoo. The 2008 graphic novel Pride of Baghdad focuses on a group of lions who ventured out of their newly-opened enclosure, only to find themselves caught in the much wilder terrain of a war-torn city. Other literary interventions include the children’s book Saving the Baghdad Zoo, focusing on US military efforts to refit that space with “replacement” animals; various first-person accounts such as From Baghdad, With Love, which highlight US soldiers’ attempts to connect with Bagdad’s animal orphans; and thriller/sci-fi tales such as Alter of Eden, in which James Rollins imagines a group of Uday Hussein’s secret animal population bred to counter—and threaten—human intelligence on a global scale. Perhaps the most significant fictional intervention relating to this incident has been Rajiv Joseph’s play Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo, which begins with the true story of a tiger (played on Broadway by Robin Williams, in one of his final roles) who bites off the hand of a US soldier taunting his desperate hunger in the wake of the zoo’s destruction. Some scholars have already tied to make sense of Joseph’s intervention in the story of the zoo’s destruction, and the tiger/Williams’ role in the aftermath; most, to this point, have attempted to align Joseph’s play along a now well-established trajectory of animal studies criticism, including their ultimate conclusion that Joseph’s play seeks to echo the Deleuze-Guattari continuum of “becoming animal.” This essay seeks to complicate and, at times, deny an easy fit between Joseph’s play and the traditional framework of animal studies, highlighting both the theatrical and staging differences associated with “becoming animal,” and the philosophical and ethical problematics in trying to establish easy alignments between Joseph’s play and previous “postcolonial animality” texts. On one level, the difference here highlights the vector of desire in Deleuze and Guattari’s work; in this case, the tiger seeks to become, to echo Derrida, “the human that therefore I am (following).” But at another level, the play underscores the Zeno’s paradox, illuminated by Deleuze and Guattari, of the limitations of this desire from either direction; the closer the eponymous character attempts to become human, or to understand what it means to be “human,” the greater the distance between the tiger and its desire grows. Joseph’s play, therefore, mounts not only a significant contribution to the field of “postcolonial animalities,” but tests the limits of how closely the gap between the human and non-human subject can (un)become.

J. Edward Mallot is an Associate Professor of Postcolonial Studies at Arizona State University. His first monograph is entitled Memory, Nationalism, and Narrative in Contemporary South Asia. His published work features a variety of literatures and other modes of cultural production from throughout South Asia and its diaspora, including authors such as Kamila Shamsie, Michael Ondaatje, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Amitav Ghosh, Mahesh Dattani, Salman Rushdie, and others. He would like to invite all of you to the SALA-sponsored panel at this year’s MLA, “Ecocríticism and South Asia,” which he will moderate.

Smithi Mohan, Government College, Thripunithura and G. S. Jayashree, University of Kerala
“Beyond the Imagined Space: N(either) N(or) Dilemma in M. G. Vassanji’s The Assassin’s Song”
The concept of the margins of the postcolonial nation state is problematized by those who are caught up in the non-space: the space occupied by those inside the imagined geographical ‘Indian space,’ but outside the political and epistemological space underlying its imagination. M. G. Vassanji in his The Assassin’s Song through the story of
Nur Fazal and the shrine of Pirbaag portrays how difficult it is to maintain a ‘neither-nor’ identity in a world which demands fixities - ‘an either or identity.’ As it refuses to be compartmentalised, it is neither inside nor outside. Even then, it is targeted during the outcries for a categorical fixation in the name of ethno territorial nationalism. The shrine of pirbaag is completely destroyed during the 2002 Godhra riots. In this context, we would like to argue that the notion of ‘Indianness’ is based on the concept of Deleuze’s ‘plane of immanence’ - a pure immanence, a smooth space without constitutive divisions. The postcolonial national space is a curious case of constant clash between ethnic deterritorialization and reterritorialization, both engendered by the plane of immanence. This re-marginalises the margins and denies space for those ‘beyond the imagined national space’, which further demands a transformational politics and an alternative discourse that incorporates in-between worlds.

Smithi Mohan J.S. is Assistant Professor of English, Government College, Thripunithura. She is currently pursuing research as FDP fellow in the University of Kerala.

Dr. G. S. Jayasree is Professor and Head, Institute of English, University of Kerala and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Kerala. She is the Director, Centre for Women’s Studies, University of Kerala and the editor of Samyukta: A Journal of Women’s Studies. She has many publications and papers to her credit including The Oxford Anthology of Malayalam Women Writers.

Shreyosi Mukherjee, National University of Singapore

“Performing a New Nationalism, Looking (within and) Beyond the Postcolonial Narrative: A Recent History of Student Movement(s) in India”

A brewing dissent and disillusionment with institutional (and governmental) and educational policies which were sporadically manifested through the “Occupy UGG” movement and at the death of a Dalit student, Rohith Vehmula, transformed into a consolidated national student movement after JNU’s student union president, Kanhaiya Kumar’s arrest. Kumar’s judicial detention was followed by the surrender and arrest of two other students of the university, Umar Khalid and Anirban Bhattacharya. Upon their return to the university, the students addressed the JNU student community through three speeches, respectively. This paper is a critical reading of the political and theoretical content of the three speeches, their performative nature(s) and how they argue for a new discourse of/on nationalism that is socially and culturally inclusive and tolerant of dissent. The new nationalism, proposed through the speeches, situates the nation-state in a performative liminality. The reimagined ‘interstitial’ identity of the nation allows the citizenry to foreground the ‘eventness’ of the speeches as a transient moment for expressing and legitimizing an alternative nationalism. While simultaneously arguing for a persistence of the post-colonial critique, the speeches also highlight the need to revise post-colonial theories of identity politics to adequately address the issues of a neo-liberal knowledge economy that continues to discriminate on the basis of religion, caste, gender and language. Though intellectual methodologies and critical validation of this new or alternative nationalism is inextricably tied to the scholarly field of subaltern historiography they also mark the shortcomings of the post-colonial political rhetoric. The speeches underscore a “crisis of hegemonic historiography” through scathing criticisms of the current political and governmental regime in India. Subaltern resistance, in the context of this student movement, is conceived as a burgeoning social mobilization that simultaneously critiques the dominant theories of nationalism, islamophobia, saffronization of education and caste-based social and educational discrimination.

Shreyosi Mukherjee is a doctoral candidate in the Theatre Studies programme at the National University of Singapore. She is also a research scholar at the Asian Shakespeare Intercultural Archive (A|S||I|A). She has presented a number of research papers at international conferences including the 19th annual conference of the Performance Studies International (Psi) in Stanford, USA (June 2013), the inaugural conference of the Asian Shakespeare Association in Taipei, Taiwan (May 2014) and the annual conference of the South Asian Literary Association in Austin, USA (January 2016). Her scholarly articles have appeared in academic journals including the Shakespeare Review and Confluence.

Aniruddha Mukhopadhyay, Texas A&M University-Kingsville

“What’s in a Name? Imagining the Impossibility of the Postcolonial Radical”
This year’s conference theme opens up a timely return to the idea of the postcolonial in an effort to explore how its boundaries are constituted and how we can imagine “radical discourses that can lead to transformational politics.” In an unpublished paper, John Leavey addresses an earlier argument between Michael Negri and Jacques Derrida on deconstruction’s “incarceration” within the bounds of ontology. Haunting our current theme, this argument centers on Negri’s call to move beyond the limitations of deconstruction. Derrida’s response to Negri focuses on the function of the word “ontology” (in our case, the word “postcolonial”) as a “shibboleth”—a “password” that serves as “test” of South Asian critical discourse. Drawing upon this previous argument, I build on this notion of the “shibboleth” to address an important question—how to resist a similar test of postcolonial radicality?

In the process, I look at what I believe to be an issue central to this important theme raised by SALA—what is our responsibility “as newer generations of those who write on South Asia” towards a transformational politics? How do we imagine or recognize radical alterity and how do we situate it? This question brings us back into conversation with Spivak’s identification of the “double bind” faced by the critically vigilant intellectual—to avoid, on the one hand, serving as gatekeepers, and on the other, create institutional conditions for the subaltern to “synechdochize themselves without identitarian exploitation.” My paper thus revisits important conversations on the discursive limits of the radical, and addressing the borders of postcolonial theory, in conjunction with border theory (as articulated by Walter Mignolo), seeks to imagine the impossibility of the postcolonial radical.

Aniruddha Mukhopadhyay is Assistant Professor of English in the Department of Language and Literature at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. He completed his Ph.D. from the English department at the University of Florida. He also serves as Web Manager on the Executive Committee of the South Asian Literary Association. His research interests include postcolonial literatures, subaltern studies, diaspora theory, globalization theory, film studies, and animal rights/representations.

Sarah Elizabeth Newport, University of Manchester
“‘Unnatural Offences’, Postcolonial Problems: The Ambivalent Position of Hijras in Contemporary Indian Law and Literature”

‘Unnatural Offences,’ Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (1860), forbids ‘carnal intercourse against the order of nature’. Introduced under the British Raj, it sought to inculcate Victorian sexual mores in the Indian population. S.377 is commonly seen as criminalizing homosexuality and is routinely used against transgender and homosexual people. A report undertaken in 2013 testified to it being commonly used by the police to threaten, abuse and blackmail hijras. A major campaign launched in 2001 led to the reading down of S.377 in 2009 such that it could no longer be applied to consenting adults acting in private. However, in 2013 the supreme court reversed this decision, and petitions against this are still pending. Whilst S.377 is often referred to as a hanger-on of the British Raj, it is my contention that this seeks, dangerously, to evade the issues at hand, and that the tumultuous status of the law in the present day reveals it as very much a current concern.

In this paper I explore the social positioning of the Hijras through Jeet Thayil’s booker shortlisted 2012 novel Narcopolis. Released during temporary decriminalisation, Narcopolis foregrounds the hijras’ traditional status in Indian society but morphs it into association with the Mumbai underworld of prostitution, drugs and violence. The novel’s Hijra characters reveal a working through of their precarious, contradictory status in Indian law, using characters who are simultaneously pitiable and repulsive, both victims and perpetrators of criminality. The spectre of S.377 continues to hang over Indian gender and sexual alterity, but it is a dangerous misnomer to call it a postcolonial spectre. In reality, hijras are facing an incredibly volatile situation which is reflected in the literature, in which pitiable and socially deviant Hijras occupy liminal spaces in society, being positively presented as a theoretical category, but negatively as individuals.

Sarah Newport is a final-year Ph.D. student at the University of Manchester, UK. Sarah is co-supervised between the departments of English Literature and History. Her thesis, Theorising Alternative Sexualities: An analysis of textual representations of the Hijras of India and the biopolitical implications of these representations, examines the literary production of Hijra figures in Indian literature set in the periods of pre-imperialism, Islamic imperialism, British imperialism and post-1947.
Namrata Pathak, Dibrugarh University
“The Culture of Location of the “Global”: Interrogating a Discourse of “Localism” in the Tribes of North East India”
In North East India in this era of globalization, we discern a tendency to homogenize the contours of the land. The tribal cultures are marked by a drive to “document, preserve, cultivate, and re-interpret the customary practices and beliefs with a view to justify their (tribal) continuance with a form that is relevant from community point of view” (Das, 2008: 32). The modes and modalities of globalization create standardized, identical products for diverse market demands and the paradox being the global multinational giants that cater to the local scenarios. In a tribal society, the intra and inter social differences are somewhat more dependent on what a tribal buys than what s/he grows or prepares (Ritzer, 2007: 338). Such a trend has a direct reliance on revelation of global authority in establishing cultural morality. Through the oblique affirmations of the “general,” such cultural locations of the global also aims to exhaust the “indigenous” and the “exotic.” The profound mystifying force is the exclusion of some people from the realization of such political dynamics. Globalization perversely keeps some people away from the restorative belief of creating an alternative social system. This alternative universe is based on the raised expectations of poor countries, their inadequate social welfare programmes and infrastructure, inept governments etc. Ironically, such states crippled by violence, exploitation, epidemics, drugs etc. consider themselves outside “globalization” and looks for other avenues. This paper aims to read the constantly-evolving nature of cultural products in the North-East; the locus of exchange; and the types of wasteful and expensive consumption in tribal societies. But the question is, to what extent a tribal subject has the freedom to exercise choices that are “culture-free”? In both territorial and non-territorial networks, how specific cultural items and symbols mark a tribal identity as insular and singular?

Dr. Namrata Pathak teaches in the Dept. of English, Dibrugarh University. Her book, Trends in Contemporary Assamese Theatre (2015), maps the contours of experimental theatre in Assam and highlights the significance of dramatic representation, semiotics, visual culture and cross-disciplinary methodologies in the field of performance-making. Her writings are published in journals like Aneekant: A Journal of Polysemantic Thought, DUJES, Muse India, North-East Review, Protocol, Ruminations, Negotiations etc. Currently she is working on NEHU, Women’s Writing series, Writing from the Periphery: Women’s Writing in the North-East.

Binod Paudyal, University of Utah
“Rethinking ‘the Politics of Invisibility and Unreadability’ in Desai’s The Inheritance of Loss and Parajuly’s Land Where I Flee”
This paper examines issues of what Robert Young calls “the politics of invisibility and unreadability” in Kiran Desai’s The Inheritance of Loss (2006) and Prajwal Parajuly’s Land Where I Flee (2014) in order to explicate alternative ways of reading Asian American literature across “disciplinary and areal boundaries,” as well as to investigate new ways of thinking and understanding about contemporary Asian American identities informed by global cultural citizenship and migratory politics. Young, in his seminal essay “Postcolonial Remains,” characterizes the politics of invisibility and unreadability as contemporary issues of postcolonial studies that involve the struggles of “refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, asylum seekers, economic migrants, illegal migrants, irregular migrants, undocumented migrants, illegal aliens.” Although illegal immigrants, refugees, and invisible class are an important fabric of the contemporary South Asian diaspora, their presence and experiences are simply ignored in both academy and in public at large. Considering Young’s argument that versions and legacies of the classic paradigm of anticolonial struggles “operate in a dialectic of invisibility and visibility” in the 21st century, this paper explores how the narratives of the invisible and voiceless subjects, both in the United States and South Asia, interact with the contemporary global world. I argue that Desai’s The Inheritance of Loss and Parajuly’s Land Where I Flee not only depict class spectrum in the South Asian diaspora by exploring the politics of invisibility, but also broaden the thematic, geographical, historical, and political scope of Asian American literary studies by challenging the traditional classifications of literature based on the national identities of the authors.

Binod Paudyal is currently a Ph.D. candidate in English and Associate Instructor at the Ethnic Studies Program at the University of Utah. His research and teaching interests include ethnic American literature, specifically Asian American literature, postcolonial studies, and transnationalism. He is now completing his dissertation, Negotiating
Identities: Reframing South Asian American Writings in Asian American Literary Studies, which examines contemporary South Asian American literary works, including post-9/11 literature, written by writers of South Asian descent living and writing in the United States, and explores to what degree these works reflect or challenge the premises of an Asian American literary tradition.

Tehmin a Pirzada, Purdue University

“The Graphic Turn: The Pakistani Girl as a Narrator and Citizen”
The graphic narrative in the Pakistani context is an emergent form providing Pakistani artists a distinct grammar and visuality that re-contextualizes their historical and social reality. I use the word, “graphic narrative” instead of graphic art because it tells a story that synthesizes a formal narrative structure with cultural dispositions, idiomatic expressions, visual markers, and identities. Focusing on the role of graphic narrative in the Pakistani context, I will be looking at Gogi Comics (2009), Burka Avenger (2012), and Sarah: The Suppressed Anger of the Pakistani Obedient Daughter (2015) in my research paper. I argue that these graphic narratives offer a glimpse of Pakistan’s sociopolitical and historical trajectories from the perspective of its most vulnerable population—namely young girls. The foregrounding of these girls as narrators and citizens is also relevant in Pakistan’s current situation in which so much of the public discourse surrounds the girl figure. This discourse entails the complicated position of the girl activist Malala in the Pakistani imaginary, the newfound debates around films like A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness (2015), and the proliferation of popular girl forums such as Girls at Dhaba.

Keeping in view the complicated discourse surrounding the Pakistani girl figure, I argue that the girls in Gogi, Burka Avenger, and Sarah represent Pakistani girls fighting for their citizenship rights through education and employment. Drawing upon Pramod K Nayar’s concept that the graphic narrative humanizes postcolonial citizenship, I argue that the fictional girl figure humanizes the day-to-day struggles of Pakistani girls for their citizenship rights. Moreover, the "newness" of the graphic genre in the Pakistani sociocultural and creative context has the potential to generate new modes for the depictions of female adolescent agency.

Tehmina Pirzada is a doctoral candidate at Purdue University, Indiana. She is currently working on her dissertation entitled, Watch me Speak: Understanding Muslim Girlhoods Through Fiction and Film. Her conference paper is a part of her dissertation project.

Masood Raja, University of North Texas

“The Postcolonial Novel and Cosmopolitics: Teaching Rohinton Mistry's A Fine Balance”
Currently in the US Universities, world literature is increasingly mobilized to normalize the self-presentation of the metropolitan West. Against this powerful imperative to teach the world, we, the postcolonial critics and scholars, must instrumentalize the texts to teach the possibilities of a different and more just world. This implies that one aspect of going beyond the postcolonial theory could be to incorporate theory and praxis from the fields of radical and critical pedagogy.

In this paper, I aim to discuss critical pedagogical strategies for Rohinton Mistry’s A Fine Balance through a basic theoretical framework about the nature of radical pedagogy within the context of postcolonial studies. My reading, I must admit, would be mostly symptomatic and would also be geared toward mobilizing the novel for a more tolerant and cosmopolitan worldview as informed by the major works on globalization, cosmopolitanism and critical pedagogy. The novel, as well as many other such novels, I suggest, can be a wonderful tool in teaching precarity and need for empathy in this precarious world being created by the neoliberal economic policies. As a theoretical scaffolding of my inquiry, I will be relying on Mark Bracher’s explanation and discussion of the role of radical pedagogy and I will apply his model, albeit with a few modifications, to the importance of using Mistry’s novel as a didactic tool in creating a more cosmopolitan and compassionate view of the world.

Masood Ashraf Raja is an Associate Professor of Postcolonial Literature and Theory at the University of North Texas, and the editor of Pakistaniana: A Journal of Pakistan Studies. He also wrote The Religious Right and the Talibanization of America (Forthcoming Palgrave, 2016) and Constructing Pakistan (Oxford UP, 2010).

Shoba Sharad Rajgopal, Westfield State University

“Reclaiming as Revolution: Revisiting Indian Mythology through the Perspectives of the Marginalized”
Many Hindu festivals have their own stories of the “triumph of good over evil,” at the center of which is an Asura, a “demon” who is killed by a Deva, a “god.” However, this narrative is now constantly being challenged by dissenting voices which claim that these stories are actually about Brahmanical groups conquering the indigenous populations, including Adivasis, Dalits and those belonging to other indigenous faith traditions. But it is not only the issue of the Aryan-Dravidian conflict that takes center stage in the Ramayana. It is also the representation of woman and sexuality in the epics, and a plethora of books have emerged in the country in recent years, unearthing the forgotten or marginalized herstory of many female characters of the Hindu epics, such as Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s Palace of Illusions, a reworking of the tale of Princess Draupadi, the polyandrous wife of the Pandava princes, and The Outcast’s Queen, the tale of Uruvi, the wife of Prince Karna. One would imagine that the rising tide of intolerance of the non-mainstream representations of the Hindu epics would deter new authors from exploring these forbidden realms. Instead, one perceives a sea of writings from the Subcontinent, which challenge the dominant paradigm, from Periyar’s Ramayana of the 1960s to Wendy Doniger’s The Hindus: An Alternative History of this decade. I trace in this paper the evolution of movements against the hegemonic traditions of caste hierarchy, often stemming from books that have challenged the dominant paradigm.

Dr. Shoba Sharad Rajgopal is Professor of International Feminist Studies, at Westfield State University in Massachusetts, where she teaches courses on Gender, Race, and Sexuality. Her doctorate is in Media Studies from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Prior to her arrival in the United States, she worked for seven years as a broadcast journalist for the Indian TV networks based in Bombay (Mumbai), India, and has also done in-depth news reports for CNN International. Her journalistic work focused on the struggles of women and indigenous people in the postcolonial nation-state. Her work has been published widely, in academic journals as well as newspapers in the U.S and India.

Palbi Rastogi, Louisiana State University
“Postcolonial Disaster: Narrating the Catastrophe in the 21st Century”
This paper proposes using disaster as a way to talk about post-colonialism in the 21st century. In discussing poetry written about the Sri Lankan Tsunami in 2004, I raise some key questions about literary renditions of catastrophe: what can we learn about how disaster is narrated? Is literary narration not only a way of coping with disaster but also offering a reason for, and a resolution to, post-colonial crisis? How can reading about disaster teach us to live our lives in the best possible ways? How are trendy terms such as hybridity, globalization, and cosmopolitanism, especially in their manifestation in/as texts that are hybrid, globalized and cosmopolitan, altered when confronted with catastrophe? What is the value in conceding that some lives must be played out against a perennial state of disaster? Can the wholeness of those lives be adequately depicted in the never-fading shadow of catastrophe? This paper explores how writing about the Tsunami generates a productive discord between the sublime pleasures of literature and the didactic agenda of managing catastrophe by circulating knowledge about the crisis. This tension is beautifully crystallized in Sri Lankan writer, Indran Amirthanayagam’s collection of poems The Splintered Face (2013). While Amirthanayagam often uses poetic form attempts to escape the ideological obligations that crisis imposes on his work, the images of the catastrophe short-circuit any evasion, or even diversion, possible through style. Yet, the mere possibility of aesthetic diversion also short-circuits the ideological obligation even while staging its own negation. The poems discussed in this paper all use the language and metaphors of the environment as well as of biological futurity to underscore and undercut the diversion provided through the aesthetics of poetic form. The Tsunami, or what I call The Oceanic Disaster, continually reappears through natural and biological imagery even when the text dances around disaster in an attempt to talk about something else.

Pallavi Rastogi is an associate professor in the English department at Louisiana State University where she teaches classes in Postcolonial and South Asian literature. She has published widely on South Asian culture and literature, including her first book: Afrindian Fictions: Diaspora, Race, and National Desire in South Africa.

Dibyadyuti Roy, Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Indore
“Tactical Fabulations: Disrupting Nuclearization through Postcolonial Ecologies”
The self-reflexive relationship between white militarized masculinity and nuclearization is not configured into “the wiring diagram [of nuclear bombs]” (Wellerstein). However, the fallout of such a nexus has consistently targeted soft spaces: inhabited by individuals “not recognized as people in Eurocentric eyes” (Paul Williams). Not
surprisingly, both in USA and India, nuclear bomb tests were first carried out and continue to be implemented in marginalized sites—Native American reservations and Bishnoi territory—that do not cater to privileged and normative bodies. Consequently, this prediscursively gendered nuclear technology has facilitated Anglo-American strategic science in soft spaces, which denies both indigenous knowledge and identities through epistemic and physical violence. My paper juxtaposes Native American perspectives on the bomb, represented by Leslie Silko’s *Ceremony*, with socio-legal artifacts from the Bishnoi community in Rajasthan to show how tactical storytelling can interrogate the ideologies of whiteness and masculinity implicit in nuclearization. By recovering minoritarian perspectives on nuclearization, I argue that these texts create postcolonial ecologies, which disrupt the hegemonic narrative of Anglo-American strategic science. I further emphasize that by not trying to represent the Other, both the Bishnoi texts and *Ceremony* belong to the domain of planetarity (Spivak) and question the globalizing narrative of disciplines like Postcolonialism and Ecocriticism. The alterity found in such regional activism provides “a means to think through—but not necessarily to represent that which is rendered invisible” (DeLoughrey) and allows for alternative discourses that can lead to transformational politics.

**Dibyadyuti Roy** came to Indian Institute of Management Indore by way of West Virginia University, where he earned a doctorate for his dissertation entitled *Radioactive Masculinity: How the Anxious Postcolonial Learnt to Love and Live in Fear of the Nuclear Bomb*. He completed his postgraduate degree in Modern Literature, Theory and Culture, with Distinction, from the University of Glasgow and his undergraduate degree in English from Presidency College, Kolkata. He has current and forthcoming publications on varied fields ranging from Video Game Studies to British Theatre. In 2016 he was awarded the SALA Conference Graduate Student Paper Prize.

**Naila Sahar, University at Buffalo, SUNY**

**“Neo-colonialism, Elitist Discourse and the Silent Subaltern in Kamila Shamsie’s Novels”**

The world in Kamila Shamsie’s novels is a post-colonial world where neo-colonialism reigns supreme. Here the past and present forms of resistance, oppression and exploitation exacerbate and perpetuate. Ania Loomba, in *Colonialism/ Postcolonialism* states that colonialism is not just something that happens from outside a country or people but a version of it can be duplicated from within. In the novels *In the City by the Sea*, *Kartography*, and *Salt and Saffron*, Shamsie’s main characters are the elite class, the politicians that wallow in opulence; there are details of magnificent palaces in the pre-partition India, of women in heavy gold jewelry, of sumptuous grand meals. Shamsie becomes an accomplice in the project of Orientalism by portraying East as outlandish and exotic and people living in East as self-indulgent, extravagant and ostentatious. Her characters are stereotypical mock-up of Macaulay’s ‘class of interpreters’ Lacan and Bhabha’s ‘mimic men’. The working class in Shamsie’s novels is nothing more than necessary artefacts in the setting of a scenario and the common man remains the common noun in her narrative. According to Spivak, “To ignore the subaltern is, willy nilly, to continue the imperialist project.” Shamsie continues following the imperialist project and her object construction and thingification of working class further intensifies by lack of logical transaction and communication between the rich and poor class. Shamsie does not cater for universality in the experiences that she narrates and there are plenty of dark areas which she fails to penetrate and fill up. Using theoretical framework of Spivak and Bhabha, this paper will examine how class divisions in Shamsie’s novels have silenced the critical voice of the marginalized in the elitist discourse, implying that the Third World elites have absorbed white supremacist thinking and hierarchical paradigms will never end.

**Naila Sahar** is a Ph.D. student at University at Buffalo, State University of New York. She came to the US after winning a Fulbright for her doctoral studies. Before coming to the US, she was teaching at Forman Christian College, Lahore, as an Assistant Professor. These days she is working on her dissertation, which is about Muslim Women’s rights in culture and literature.

**Shivaji Sengupta, Boricua College**

**“Meaning-Making and Second Generation Immigrant Experience in 21st Century Immigrant Novels in the U.S.”**

Desire is pure energy, a prime motivator in novels, mitigating the protagonists’ journey, negotiating between opportunities and obstacles, triumph and tribulations, life and death. In immigrant novels Desire causes Displacement, provokes conflict and Control. In immigrant novels, the second generation, whom I call Neo-Settlers, live in the interstices of Desire, Displacement and Control, finely balanced between the colonial and post-colonial. Just as the post-colonial dismantles the trappings of power and privileges of colonialism, but can never quite
transcend its hold, so too the second generation immigrants try to break away from the first generation, only to realize that they are not quite able to do so that their assimilation to America may be complete, but there is an emptiness to life when they are finally on their own. Their parents may have been "resident aliens" in this country; they are aliens to themselves.

I examine these above concepts -- Desire, Displacement and Control-- through a reading of two very contrasting novels: Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2005) and Junot Diaz' *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007). The first one is calm, almost lyrical, quietly poetic, yet critical and ironic in an indulgent and forgiving way. The second one is caustic, tortured, sometimes hilariously funny and at other times full of anger and frustration. The language of each novel is similarly contrasting. *The Namesake* is written mostly in the present tense, its effect cinematic, picturesque and serene. The language of Oscar Wao is belligerent, bitter, challenging and aggressive, full of buffoonery, street. Yet amidst all those curses and foul language, emerges - to the reader's sheer surprise - poetry of its own kind - "gaudy tulip raised in dung." Oscar, the second generation expat, can forgive neither his own country, the Dominican Republic, nor his adopted one, the United States.

**Shivaji Sengupta** is Professor of English and V.P. for Academic Affairs at Boricua College, New York City. He holds a Ph.D. in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University. Apart from courses in English, American Literature at Boricua, Professor Sengupta has given a course on Modern Indian Novels and Cinema at Barnard College, and has taught graduate courses in Eighteenth Century English Literature and on Contemporary Literary Theory. He has written on English, American and Indian literature.

**Mallika Shakya, South Asian University**

"Crossing Disciplinary Borders to Comprehend the Poetics of Nation and Region: Parijaat as a Feminist Icon of Colour"

This paper concerns the poetics of nationalism in South Asia. Mainstream theories on nationalism constructed nations as central edifice of modernity and portrayed the violence generated in its protection as a necessary evil, thereby giving rise to a social science that that lacks the tropes to criticize the categories of pain and suffering built into Westphalian nation. I propose an interdisciplinary reading of poetry and fiction from South Asia to engage with multiple imaginations of nation.

An anthropological classic, *Writing Culture*, emphasized poetics to be the crutch of social ethnography. I lean on to the anthropological movement among the women of colour to suggest that poeticism may “bridge” various worlds instead of simply providing data for analysis or phenomena for theorising. Can this offer a more meaningful conversation on nation without having to tow the baggage of Westphalianism? In raising this question, I am informed by Ashis Nandy’s argument that postcolonial world is interpolated into Westphalianism, ironically, through its investments into anti-colonial movements of the past.

In this paper, I will read the novels penned by a left-leaning Nepali writer Parijaat and will listen to her conversations with friends and collaborators from within and outside South Asia. I then compare her work with a liberal socialist BP Koirala who founded Nepali Congress but who also authored legendary novels and short stories thus constructing an imaginary nation where female protagonists openly challenged a masculine-rationalist take on what it meant to be a citizen. In reading this corpus, I engage with a Tagorean vision of a borderless globe as Ashis Nandy interpreted it as well as a Rastafarian lens of pan-nationalism as Peter Abrahams articulated.

**Mallika Shakya** is an anthropologist with a Ph.D. from LSE, and postdoctorals from Oxford and Pretoria. I joined South Asian University (SAU) in Delhi in 2013. My current research examines the public meaning(s) of South Asia, including issues of nationalism and borders, and its interface with the Global South. I lead a flagship project at SAU’s Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS): the Poetics of Nationalism and Regionalism in South Asia. Prior to joining academia, I worked for the World Bank and UNICEF for about fourteen years. I am working to translate some of the Pablo Neruda’s poems into Nepali.

**Java Singh, Jawaharlal Nehru University**

"Materialities of the Non-human Animal and Post-colonial Remains in Contemporary Writing"

The paper engages with the *politics of the invisible* by attempting to discern the "invisible visible" in selected contemporary depictions of the man-animal interaction. Thus, the paper explores zones of pertinence for the
project of post-colonialism in a sub-continent marked by globalization. Post-colonialism as an autonomous textual object has its own materiality comprised of several potentialities, any one of which becomes visible in a given context. Some actualizations privilege the issue of exoticization of the non-western, others focalize fluid identities, yet other, linguistic deference. Each local manifestation reveals some singularities through a "regime of attractions," nonetheless, no context or an assemblage of contexts exhausts the full materiality of the autonomous object. Post-colonialism, much like Graham Harman’s well-wrought hammer, does not exist because it can be used, it can be used because it exists.

The well-wrought hammer of post-colonialism is worked upon on the selected contemporaneous but disparate narratives, Vicki Croke’s *Elephant Company* (2015) and Tania James’ *The Task that Did the Damage* (2015) to crack open the narratives in order to examine the extent to which as-yet invisible but already-present traces of former imperialism remain embedded in the texts. Though Croke’s andro-centric account is more obviously revelatory in its projection of the colonial war hero, even James’ emphatically anti-correctionist standpoint does not appear entirely free of the colonial gaze. Additionally, discrepant local manifestations of the non-human animal-- Core’s elephant is the loyal servant in a mystic relation with a loving master whereas James’ is the enraged subaltern in rebellion against the abusive one-- establish "relation[s] of allusion" between the sensible, perceptual qualities of the object and its inscrutable materiality. Juxta-positioning of the materiality of the non-human animal and the materiality of post-colonialism provides a fertile ground for seeding a hybrid of the post-colonial approach and object-oriented theory.

Java Singh is a Ph.D. Scholar in the Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, JNU. Her Ph.D. dissertation is in the areas of gender studies and Latin American studies. She completed her B.A. and M.A. in Spanish from JNU in 2012. She also has a BA in Economics from Lucknow University (1991) and an M.B.A. from Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (1994). Her areas of academic interest include, Spanish Romanticism, Post-boom literature, and literary criticism. Two of her papers have been accepted for publication by University of Navarra Spain and JNU.

Ruma Sinha, Syracuse University

“Against Postcolonial Appropriation?: Navayana’s Anti-caste Stance and the Politics of Publishing”

Much like the dissemination and consumption of postcolonial texts written in English for national or global audiences, the politics of public and translation of Dalit literature is also dependent on the demands of the national or global markets. Who and what gets published and translated? What kind of literary productions are privileged? Who are the consumers of this literature? Is translation in the Indian context essentially an upper-caste phenomenon? In an interview, Dalit scholar Ravi Kumar observes: “...where translation into English plays mischief is in the politics of selection the norms are set by non-dalit theoreticians, non-dalit publishers and non-dalit translators whose choices are inflected by what they find to be the least threatening” (Touchable Tales 8). The presence/absence of Dalit translators and publishing houses can have a profound impact on the circulation of works by Dalit authors, even those who are immensely popular at local and national levels. This becomes a pertinent issue when viewed in the context of the iconoclastic nature of Dalit literature with respect to postcolonial studies. This paper explores the work of the publishing house Navayana, India’s first independent publishing house “to focus on the issue of caste from an anti-caste perspective” (“Navayana”). I study Navayana’s efforts in advancing the cause of the anti-caste struggle by making Dalit writers visible at the global level. What marks Navayana’s unique approach to reach an international market? Does it necessitate collaboration with well-known postcolonial figures? Do such collaborations empower or undercut the idea of Dalit literature’s ability to make it on its own? I examine these questions in the context of the controversy surrounding Arundhati Roy’s book-length introduction “The Doctor and the Saint” to Ambedkar’s *Annihilation of Caste* (1936) reprinted by Navayana in 2014.

Ruma Sinha is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English at Syracuse University. She is currently working on her dissertation that examines how Dalit women assert their presence and challenge their exclusion from the regional, national, and global forms of political and aesthetic representations. Her research and teaching interests include postcolonial and anticolonial studies; critical race and gender studies; Anglophone and vernacular literature, and narrative theory.
Fatima Syeda, Forman Christian College University
“Body, Power and Gendered Identity: Inscribed Bodies of Men in Partition Fiction”
A widely-held perception which has developed through and within the Postcolonial theoretical framework is to analogize the colonized land to a female body raped by the colonizing powers. The semblance qualifies the female body as an impetus for objectifying the interrelation of power and identity formation. During the Partition of the sub-continent as well, the gendered coloration of the instances of violence has historically foregrounded the case of women. My research aims to study the colonized land as a male figure castrated by the colonizers, and the male body as an omphalos for relations of power and a site on which systems of discourse and power inscribe themselves. My investigation is supported by the work of Judith Butler (2004, 2005), a feminist who challenges the idea of the ‘body’ as a strong marker of identity and sees it instead as a surface for social inscriptions. My study digs into the consistent denial in Butler’s work on being involved in any identity politics in order to make the following inquisitions: Is Butler’s belief in a shared identity in terms of ethnic, racial, and sexual existence equally valid for the other ethnic, racial or sexual groups? When Butler says that body is a site for cultural and political inscriptions, which violently imprint the body to give it a meaning, does she mean a specific gendered body, i.e. a female body, or can it also be the body of a man? As with women, can the bodies of men also be seen as vulnerable in the face of the violent markings engraved by the coercive power representations? Can the mutilation of a male body, as presented in novels such as Bapsi Sidhwa’s Cracking India, be regarded as just as powerful a symbol of colonial and ethnic assertion of power and identity as that of the molestation of the female body?

Fatima Syeda is an Assistant Professor in the English Department at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) since September 2005. She has done her M.Phil in English Language & Literature from The University of Punjab. She has completed her course work for Ph.D. in English Language & Literature from The University of Punjab and is currently working on her Research Thesis for Ph.D. Her field of interest is Critical Theory, Drama, Fiction & South Asian Literature in English. She has devised and taught courses to the students majoring in English at Baccalaureate & Masters level.

José Sebastián Terneus, Arizona State University
“'Keeping this Damn Country in the Black': Illicit Economies and Subversive Commercial Space in Hanif Kureishi’s My Beautiful Laundrette”
In a 1978 television interview, Margaret Thatcher warned that unchecked immigration levels would make white Britons hostile towards “people of a different culture.” As Prime Minister, Thatcher’s prediction would come true, as racial discord intensified due to financial troubles and widespread labor strikes. The metropole’s dominant population blamed immigrants for this situation and attempted to prevent minorities from settling in the city. Thatcher’s implementation of neoliberal policies worsened conditions for foreigners, as government aid was eliminated in favor of economic individualism. Without access to space or financial opportunities, immigrants were prohibited from entering London’s neighborhoods and economic networks.

Past scholarship recognizes that marginal groups used modes of cultural production to challenge the Thatcherite agenda; however, none have considered how entrepreneurship reconfigured London’s power structures and race relations. Left unanswered, then, is the question; in a setting where capitalism rules, how can South Asian immigrants work within and outside neoliberal confines to build a more inclusive urban space? This essay examines Hanif Kureishi’s screenplay My Beautiful Laundrette to explore how its protagonist destabilizes urban spaces by operating in overt and illicit economies. Although Omar ascribes to Thatcher’s Conservative dogma, his peripheral identity and sexuality forces him to challenge Britain’s traditional meritocracy. Kureishi’s text subsequently reveals how marginal groups manipulate neoliberal systems to build resistant spaces. By analyzing My Beautiful Laundrette through similar subversions, my essay responds to postcolonial studies’ recent call for emergent critical approaches by joining postcolonial thought with economic and spatial theory.

José Sebastián Terneus is a doctoral candidate at Arizona State University. His dissertation examines the intersections of contemporary multicultural British literature, postcolonial theory, and consumer culture. By bringing these interests together, his work explores how consumer practices and products continue the work of colonization across the Anglophone world.
Pennie Ticen, Virginia Military Institute

“Swirling Tales and Questioning Theories: Reading Rushdie’s Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights via R. Radhakrishnan”

As the field of South Asian literary studies enters the second decade of the 21st century, it is perhaps fitting that its practitioners should be entering a reflective turn. In the last decades of the 20th century, South Asian studies, along with vibrant and provocative new disciplinary formations such as post-colonial theory, area studies, world literature, and an exciting expansion of literary theory itself, seemed to be revolutionizing the very field of literary studies. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, in a canonical 1989 overview of post-colonial literatures, argued that the “‘privileging norm’...enthroned at the heart of the formation of English Studies...[was] a template for the denial of the value of the ‘peripheral,’ the ‘marginal’, the ‘uncanonized’” (3).

Nearly 30 years later, in many classrooms, publishing houses, bookstores and conference venues, the peripheral, the marginal, and the uncanonized have arrived. In his 2015 novel, Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights, Salman Rushdie weaves a tale in which various peripherals, margins, and canons, bridging the binary worlds of east/west, swirl together in retellings of old tales in new locations which have the capacity to show us how “location complicates and enables the politics of representation” (R. Radhakrishnan, 2003, p. 131). In my presentation I will use R. Radhakrishnan’s theories of location and culture as lens’s to analyze Rushdie’s most recent work, demonstrating both the possibilities and pitfalls of hybrid texts and theories which work to build connections across entrenched national and representational boundaries.

Pennie Ticen is an associate professor at Virginia Military Institute, where she has taught for 13 years. She was fortunate enough to do her M.A./Ph.D. work at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in the 1990’s, where South Asian writers and theorists were studied alongside post-colonial, Marxist, feminist, and post-structuralist theories. Her research interests include the place of the essay in post-colonial literature and issues of pedagogy in the world literature classroom.

Maya Vinai, BITS, Pilani – Hyderabad Campus

“Beyond Spice Trade and Temple Conquests: Palimpsest Memories of Colonial Regimes along the Malabar Coastline in the Native Imagination”

Territories along the coastline are of prime interest to the colonial powers; not just due to accessibility to trade via sea routes but also due to the pleasant climatic conditions and food patterns. Malabar, the northernmost tip of Kerala (India) has been a site of great intrigue and engagement for four major colonial powers- British, Dutch, Portuguese and Arabs who boisterously warred against each other for monopoly of trade contracts. In this process of multiple invasions, the coastline also popularly called the pepper-highway became a conglomerated socio-cultural matrix. The Malabar coastline in Kerala deserves serious attention and serves as an important case study of the process of “glocalization”- the interaction between the local and the global, creolization and identity formation.

Although at war with the rulers of Travancore, it was the Dutch who managed to occupy a soft corner in the people’s heart along the Malabar coastline with their reforms, liberal policies in terms of faith and unusual interest in the indigenous system of medicine. Even though they were highly criticized for their inclusion-exclusion policies which were porous in drawing and defining boundaries and temple conquests; they still managed to leave behind a lingering presence in popular imagination.

My paper would attempt a comparative study of the impact and negotiations of Dutch and Portuguese along the Malabar coastline and its representation in literary works. I would draw upon The Litanies of the Dutch Batteries by N.S Madhavan and Johny Miranda’s Requiem for the Living as an important postcolonial contribution to new ways of imagining the pepper-highway (Malabar) to propose that that such zones may teach us about new modes of ethical living and being in the world.

Maya Vinai is currently working as Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS, Pilani – Hyderabad Campus. Her research interests are in the area of Gulf diaspora and fiction, Literature of South Asia,
Representation of matrilineal communities in fiction, Contemporary Indian Writing in English and Food and Temple Culture.

**Melanie R. Wattenbarger, Independent Scholar**

**“When Person Becomes Problem”**

Terrorist fiction or Political fiction? Why is Fleming’s James Bond an international spy and Hamid’s Riz Ahmed a possible terrorist? How are novels are placed in genres and named by critics and educators affects the perception of the texts and in some cases may force the reader’s perspective concerning heroism and villains in the works. This paper explores how cross-disciplinary violence theories such as that by Arjun Appadurai, Martha Nussbaum, and Cathy Caruth may be applied to contemporary South Asian fiction to bring out the ambiguities between innocence and guilt, hero and villain, and terrorist and political protestor. Karan Mahajan’s 2016 novel *The Association of Small Bombs* is used as the touchpoint to ground these discussions of genre, theory and storytelling. Postcolonialism is stretched beyond discussions of former colonizers and colonized to the greater degrees of complication in acts of political violence where the nation and global trajectories of power become the targets of critique and human lives the force and fodder for disruption as a creative force. This paper reads in the fiction and theory individual lives as symbols for communities, political collectives, and the monolithic forces of militaries and markets. Both victims and perpetrators are made abstract, the bodily becoming poetic and political. Ultimately, the problem referenced in this paper’s title is found to be not the perpetrators of violence, but the assumption of an Us/Them philosophy which is applied to characters, authors, and individual works in the construction of “terrorist fiction” as a genre and the recent international state of violence to which these fictional works speak.

**Melanie R. Wattenbarger** graduated from the University of Mumbai with her Ph.D. in English. She earned her M.A. in Liberal Studies from Ohio Dominican University and a B.A. in Religion, Pre-Theology, and Humanities-Classics from Ohio Wesleyan University. She specializes in contemporary South Asian and Canadian literatures, Diaspora Studies, and Gender and Sexuality Studies. Her publications include articles for the *South Asian Review*, *Symbolism: An International Annual of Critical Aesthetics* and the edited collection *New Perspectives in Diasporic Experience*. She serves as the Editor of *salam*, the newsletter for the South Asian Literary Association.

**Abdollah Zahiri, Seneca College**

**“Beyond the Spectre, beyond the Ethnoterritorial”**

This paper seeks to undo “the imbrications between postcolonial theory and South Asian studies” The goal of this paper is to go beyond the “ethnoterritorial”. It argues that the continued marking of time and space in postcolonial theory should be centripetally redrawn as the imperial-colonial project moved from the subcontinent to west Asia, during the British Empire, to accommodate countries such as Afghanistan and Iran. Spatially that’s beyond the ethnoterritorial. This repositioning problematizes the ‘supposed’ homogeneity of postcolonial theory, further it begets to redraw it geographically and conceptually. This fresh conceptual and geographical perspective would serve to be inclusive, it would make possible to charter new territory never thought to have anything to do with south Asia. A case in point would be the Sikh diaspora in Afghanistan and Iran who have settled in these ‘post’ the outposts of the Empire since the nineteenth century. By the same token, this spatial reconfiguration brings in focus the global politics since the Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan (1980), the Iranian Revolution (1979) where the Sikh diaspora still reside, they go far beyond the scope of south Asia. Hence this intervention brings in a host of local histories in Afghanistan and Iran, countries that were the bone of contention between the Soviet Empire and Britain that started in the nineteenth century and continued well until almost mid-twentieth century when Hitler’s Germany also harboured imperial designs in west Asia vis-à-vis Soviet Union, Britain, the United States. All in all, this theoretical intervention seeks to expand the domain of postcolonial theory from the subcontinent and connects it to the areas never imagined to be a part of India. These outposts have contained the diaspora whose grandparents made west Asia home in the 19th century. Some second or third generation Sikh diaspora have left west Asia for Europe, North America. Their writings would be examined in this context, they exemplify the diasporic trek that spans from west Asia to places like New York city, past the outpost.

**Abdollah Zahiri** teaches at the School of English and Liberal Studies, Seneca College, Toronto (King Campus). He has published articles on V.S. Naipaul, Hollywood and Diaspora, translation theory and postcoloniality, diaspora and the law. He is currently working on Sikh communities in Iran and Afghanistan.
President’s Forum: “Mentoring and The Job Search”
This panel on early-career professionalization plans to address the following:
a) Mentoring a junior colleague as that colleague negotiates the job market
b) I’ve gotten a phone interview. Now, what do I do?
c) I’ve been invited for a campus visit. Now, what do I do?
d) I’m a finalist! Now, what do I do?

Aniruddha Mukhopadhyay, Co-Chair of Forum, is Assistant Professor of English in the Department of Language and Literature at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. He completed his Ph.D. from the English department at the University of Florida. He also serves as Web Manager on the Executive Committee of the South Asian Literary Association. His research interests include postcolonial literatures, subaltern studies, diaspora theory, globalization theory, film studies, and animal rights/representations.

Moumin Quazi, Co-Chair of Forum, SALA President, is Director of Graduate Studies at Tarleton State University. He has also served as SALA’s newsletter editor, conference co-chair (twice), vice president, treasurer, councilor, and web manager. His first book, Migratory Words, was just published in 2016. He hosts a weekly radio show, called “The Beatles and Beyond.” Moumin mentored Ani in his successful job search.

Prathim-Maya Dora-Laskey teaches English and Women’s Studies at Alma College (MI) after graduate school on three continents. An alumna of Stella Maris College in Chennai (India), her awards include scholarships from the Pennathur foundation, the FSA board at the University of South Carolina, and a Violet Morgan Vaughan award at the University of Oxford (UK). A poetry editor at Jaggery (A DesiLit Arts and Literature Journal) and a moderator at SAWNET (sawnet.org), she has published work in Contemporary South Asia, Interventions: A Journal of Postcolonial Studies, and South Asian Review.

Priya Jha is Associate Professor of English at the University of Redlands. Her work is interdisciplinary, aligned with postcolonial cultural studies, transnational feminisms, and design and film studies. She is currently working on a memoir, Not That Kind of Indian, and a monograph on postcolonial design. Priya mentored Prathim-Maya in her successful job search.

Roundtable Panel: “Mid-Career Professionalization Panel”
This panel on mid-career professionalization plans to speak on issues of:
a) Balancing increasing administrative duties with teaching and scholarship
b) Where does the next big idea come from? How to know if it’s any good?
c) How to be allies with communities on and off campuses other than your own

Madhurima Chakraborty is Assistant Professor of Postcolonial Literature at Columbia College Chicago. With Umme Al-wazedi, she is the editor of Postcolonial Urban Outcasts: City Margins in South Asian literature (Routledge, 2106). Also with Dr. Al-wazedi, she guest-edited a special issue of South Asian Review on “Nation and Its Discontents.” Her monograph The Literary Politics of Mahasweta Devi is currently under contract at Brill|Rodopi. Additionally, she has also been published in Journal of Postcolonial Writing, Literature/Film Quarterly, South Asian Review, and Journal of Contemporary Literature. Her teaching and research interests include Postcolonial, South Asian, Indian Diaspora, and British literature.

Kavita Daiya is Associate Professor of English and Affiliated Faculty in the Women's Studies Program and Global Women's Institute at George Washington University. In 2015-2016, she held the NEH endowed Chair in the Humanities at Albright College, focusing on Global Migration and Asia. She is Associate Editor of the MLA-Allied Association journal South Asian Review She has written numerous articles on the 1947 Partition, South Asian literature and culture, South African Literature, gender studies, and transnational cinema, and her first book was published in the US and India: Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender and National Culture in Colonial India (Philadelphia: Temple UP, [2008] 2011; New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2013).
Pranav Jani is Associate Professor of English at The Ohio State University, specializing in postcolonial and ethnic studies. His book, *Decentering Rushdie*, was published in 2010, and he’s currently working on the legacies of the 1857 Revolt in the Indian political imagination. Pranav is also on the Executive Committee of SALA and a social justice organizer in Ohio.

Nalini Iyer is Professor of English at Seattle University. She has co-edited/ co-authored three books, including most recently *Revisiting India’s Partition* with Amritjit Singh and Rahul K. Gairola. She has served as Secretary of SALA since 2013.

Amritjit Singh, Langston Hughes Professor of English at Ohio University (OU) and past President of MELUS and SALA, was Fulbright-Nehru Visiting Professor of English at the University of Delhi in 2014-15. He received the MELUS Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007 and the SALA Distinguished Achievement Award in Scholarship in January 2014. His previous books include *The Novels of the Harlem Renaissance* (1976, 1994); *Postcolonial Theory and the United States* (2000); *The Collected Writings of Wallace Thurman* (2003); *Interviews with Edward Said* (2004); and *The Circle of Illusion* (2011, Second Edition, 2015).

Roundtable Panel: "Long Partitions: Comparative Divisions in and Beyond South Asia"

In her acclaimed study *The Long Partition & the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (Columbia University Press, 2007), Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zaminder introduces the term “the long partition,” which arguably provides an urgent lens for re-thinking settler colonialism, forced displacements, and refugee crises spanning from the end of World War II to the current global refugee crisis. In developing this notion, Zaminder argues that the chronological limitations of 14 and 15 August, 1947, respectively, are historical points of origin that contradict, even undermine, a panoramic understanding of the everlasting trauma of partition. South Asia’s bloody division was partly based upon a “two-nation theory” that viewed religious exceptionalism as the organizing principle of partition. It shares a violent legacy of naturalized differences based on religion mixed with the ongoing land dispute/unrecognized nationhood of Palestine and its hostile neighbor. The global BDS (Boycott, Divest, and Sanction) movement galvanized against Israeli academic institutions and this year’s 70th anniversary of India’s macabre mass migration demonstrate today the urgency and importance of revisiting post-World War II partitions whose faultiness continue to run through blood lines today. Historical affect has caught up with us and materialized throughout socio-political eruptions in the swathe of land, much of which was colonized, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Bay of Bengal. Though the “most relevant” moments of territorial division are ostensible relics of August and November 1947, respectively, ongoing humanitarian crises yet exist. Combined with regional concerns of shared natural resources and impending climate change in the Global South, they compel us to reconsider India’s “long partition” in a comparative lens of “long partitions” that erupt through, like China’s proposed CPEC pipeline, disputed territories and annals of history. This panel roundtable unites both junior and senior scholars to comment on and engage dialogue with SALA members with a key question: what can we make of the lasting legacies of colonial-era partitions, be they of Palestine-Israel or Pakistan-India? How can we read these with respect to current dialogues of global refugee crises, disputed homelands, unsettled national borders (as in Palestine and Kashmir) and unsettling urban borders (as in Jerusalem and Jammu), militant violence (including gendered violence like martial rape, honor killings, etc.) etc.? We would forward that since colonialism, as exploitative and expropriative violence, existed in a global network, we must reckon with the notion of “long partitions” and their postwar impacts and affects in an ongoing crucible of global unrest. New questions arise in this framing. For example, how might strategies of pink-washing in Israel or gas-lighting in India suggest hegemonic strategies of containment that can be historically traced, as per Gramsci, through deathly violence? How can we together read – and critically move towards reconciliation of – such traumatic hauntings which, like restless specters, sabotage visions of peace in and beyond Western and South Asia?

Rahul K. Gairola is author of *Homelandings: Postcolonial Diasporas and Transatlantic Belonging* and co-editor with Nalini Iyer and Amritjit Singh of *Revisiting India’s Partition*. His current book project is titled *Digital Homes: Identity and Agency in Postmillennial India*. He has been affiliated with SALA for several years, and has served as editor of *salaam*. 
Amrita Ghosh has a Ph.D in Partition Studies and is a lecturer at Seton Hall University. She co-edits a bi-annual journal titled Cerebration and is the associate editor of Feminist Modernist Studies. She is a published scholar in the field of postcolonial studies and is currently working on an anthology on the Bengal Partition.

Nalini Iyer is Professor of English at Seattle University. She has co-edited/co-authored three books, including most recently Revisiting India's Partition with Amritjit Singh and Rahul K. Gairola. She has served as Secretary of SALA since 2013.

Debali Mookerjea-Leonard is Associate Professor of English and World Literature at James Madison University. Her work examines literary representations of the Partition of India, chiefly, the impact of the Partition on the Bengal region. She is the author of Literature, Gender, and the Trauma of Partition: The Paradox of Independence.

Masood Raja is the author of The Religious Right and the Talibanization of America (Palgrave 2016) and Constructing Pakistan (Oxford 2010), Masood Ashraf Raja is an Associate Professor of Postcolonial Studies at the University of North Texas.

Amritjit Singh, Langston Hughes Professor of English at Ohio University (OU) and past President of MELUS and SALA, was Fulbright-Nehru Visiting Professor of English at the University of Delhi in 2014-15. He received the MELUS Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007 and the SALA Distinguished Achievement Award in Scholarship in January 2014. His previous books include The Novels of the Harlem Renaissance (1976, 1994); Postcolonial Theory and the United States (2000); The Collected Writings of Wallace Thurman (2003); Interviews with Edward Said (2004); and The Circle of Illusion (2011, Second Edition, 2015).

Conference Co-Chairs:

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Melanie R. Wattenbarger graduated from the University of Mumbai with her PhD in English. She earned her MA in Liberal Studies from Ohio Dominican University and a BA in Religion, Pre-Theology, and Humanities-Classics from Ohio Wesleyan University. She specializes in contemporary South Asian and Canadian literatures, Diaspora Studies, and Gender and Sexuality Studies. Her publications include articles for the South Asian Review, Symbolism: An International Annual of Critical Aesthetics and the edited collection New Perspectives in Diasporic Experience. She serves as the Editor of salaam, the newsletter for the South Asian Literary Association.

2017 SALA Distinguished Achievement Awardees:
P. S. Chauhan (Special Recognition for Scholarship and for Service to SALA)
Robert Young (Conference Keynote Speaker)

Featured Writers at the Hamara Mushaira:

Sohrab Homi Fracis (www.fracis.com) won the Iowa Short Fiction Award for his collection Ticket to Minto, being the first Asian author to win this award. Of his hard-hitting new transnational novel, Go Home, National Book
Award winner Bob Shacochis writes, "Given the cultural moment, I’m grateful to Fracis for his highly topical reexamination of the American Dream."

Waqas Khwaja, professor of English at Agnes Scott College, has published three collections of poetry, *Six Geese from a Tomb at Medum*, *Mariam’s Lament*, and *No One Waits for the Train*, as well as a literary travelogue, and compiled and edited several anthologies of Pakistani literature in translation. He served as translation editor and contributing translator for *Modern Poetry of Pakistan* and has guest edited a special issues on Pakistan for the *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Literature* and *Atlanta Review*. A new collection of his poems titled *Hold Your Breath* is forthcoming from The Onslaught Press, UK, in March 2017.