NEWSLETTER EDITOR’S COLUMN

Summer salutations from the SALA Executive Committee! This issue celebrates salaam’s move to IITR — the first time it has ever called “home” such a formidable locus of knowledge. This inaugural, long issue thus contains a wealth of useful information and also features your suggestions like more hyperlinks and a digital resource directory (p.39). Herein also is the call for papers (CFP) of our annual conference to be held with the annual Modern Language Association (MLA) convention, in Austin, TX. Co-Chairs Dr. Jana Fedtke and Dr. Abdollah Zahiri have developed an appropriate and exciting theme, Cultural Practices in the South Asian Public Sphere. This year, the SALA conference will take place 4-6 January, 2016, followed by the 131st annual MLA convention and its Presidential Theme, Literature and its Publics. Our conference consciously fuses South Asian Studies with Jurgen Habermas’ widely influential concept of the public sphere.

Of major concern to SALA members is the brutal devastation wreaked by the earthquakes in Nepal that shifted Mt. Everest, sending aftershocks as far away as New Delhi, India’s capital. We are pleased to feature a story with a poignant eyewitness account by Burhaan Kinu, who was on-site at the earthquakes’ epicenters, guest edited by Dr. Amrita Ghosh. The SALA Executive Committee unanimously voted to facilitate humanitarian relief efforts, and encourages you to donate to our preferred charities. In other news, Indian Prime Minister Modi presided over International Yoga Day by hosting a public event in Delhi which included over 45,000 attendees and is slated to make history in the Guinness Book of World Records. Following Ramadan, Pakistan has been selected as the site of historic peace talks between the Afghan Taliban and the central government in Kabul. South Asians in the U.S. have also experienced significant events that have shaped our collective identity. A group including Indian and Pakistani American students has filed a lawsuit against Harvard University, alleging admission biases against Asians. Louisiana Governor Piyush “Bobby” Jindal has become the first Indian American to run for the nation’s highest office while claiming that India is “desperate and hungry for American leadership.” While he has also stated that he will not “evolve” on the topic of gay marriage, the queer South Asian support group Trikone recently issued a statement applauding the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that gender bias in marriages is unconstitutional. Such historical events and issues are bound to spark debate, which we hope will inaugurate healthy, new dialogues and research on how we critically yet responsibly think and talk about South Asians at home and abroad — wherever that may be for each of us.

I am moreover pleased to mention a couple of milestones in the desi-American arts scene: Rita Meher, co-founder (with Farah Nousheen) of independent desi film organization Tasveer, was recently honored by The Seattle Globalist. Anirvan Chatterjee of Berkeley, CA, has recently published an article that chronicles postcolonial Afro-Asian affiliations throughout the diaspora. Please check out our latest SALA Member News to read more about our colleagues, and also feel free to offer me feedback on the feature stories and other resources herein. With our growing membership base and a Facebook page that features news and professional opportunities for more than 6,200 members, this is an exciting time to engage with SALA. Our network stretches around the globe and includes junior and senior scholars, and master’s and doctoral students. We wish you all the best, and look forward to a memorable intellectual exchange this winter at the SALA and MLA conventions. On this note, please do not forget to pay membership dues, registration fees, and send an abstract!

— Dr. Rahul K. Gairola, Editor of salaam
Call for Papers

16th Annual South Asian Literary Association (SALA) Conference
Jan. 4-6, 2016 - Austin, TX, U.S.A.

Cultural Practices in the South Asian Public Sphere

Questions regarding the public - the readership, the audience, and the recipients - are central to the production and the consumption of almost every cultural artifact and discourse. As artists produce their art, the potential audience often plays a role in determining the direction of an artwork, as do the market forces at work in our contemporary world. In addition to the well-established importance of the public, this year’s SALA conference will draw attention to the spaces of the production and consumption of public discourses in South Asia and its diasporas. The goal of the conference is to explore, within any form of art, cultural practices in the South Asian public sphere.

Expanding on Jürgen Habermas’s influential theory of the public sphere as developed in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere – An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, various theorists have explored the creation of meaning and negotiation of space in the public sphere beyond Europe and North America. Arjun Appadurai’s *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, for example, discusses cultural productions in the context of globalization; while Graham Huggan’s *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* exposes exoticist discourses within the field of postcolonial studies. More recently, Nancy Fraser and Kate Nash have examined contemporary constructions of the public sphere in *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere*. In light of these theoretical frameworks and beyond, SALA 2016 invites abstracts for papers that examine the public sphere in relation to South Asian Cultural Practices.

**Possible questions to explore include:**

What is the South Asian public sphere? How can it be defined?
Who is part of the public sphere?
What are the implications for a public sphere in the postcolonial context?
How does South Asian studies shift ideas of the public sphere offered by theorists such as Jürgen Habermas, Arjun Appadurai, Stuart Hall, Nancy Fraser and Kate Nash, etc.?
What are the spaces of the public sphere?
How does technology enhance or disrupt the public sphere?
What about the digital public sphere?
What role does gender play in conceptualizations of the public sphere?
What influence does the public sphere exert in our contemporary world?
How has the public sphere changed over time?
Is there such a thing as a “global public sphere”? How do cultural productions fit into or engage with the public sphere? What role do the arts play within the public sphere?

We call for papers on literature, film, new media, performance, cultural studies, criticism, activism, or any other field of inquiry. Topics examined may include, but are not limited to:

- theoretical examinations of the concept of the public sphere in the South Asian context
- analytical papers that examine representations of the public sphere in any form of art
- globalization of the public sphere
- the public sphere and empire
- the public sphere and agency
- the public sphere and identity formation
- the digital public sphere, the Internet, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media
- censorship and the public sphere
- the public sphere and graffiti as a social space or a means of subversion and appropriation
- paintings, murals, and statues in the public sphere
- contrapuntal theory and painting
- Orientalism and public spaces
- public spaces and cultural dispossession
- interaction between panoptic/panopticism/surveillance and art
- gender and/in the public sphere
- the public sphere in relation to LGBTQIA movements
- the public sphere and sexualities
- the public sphere and processes of democratization, examining hegemony through art
- technology and the public sphere
- the public sphere and memory, public monuments, and political demonstrations
- language and/in the public sphere
- diasporic interpretations of the public sphere
- the public sphere and postcolonial semiotics
- film, soundtracks, and movie theaters in the public sphere
- music and performance in the public sphere, concerts, recitals, readings, dance, and theater
- the public sphere and political opinion
- galleries, museums, and other spaces of/in the public sphere
- architecture and the public sphere
- the public sphere and public health
- the public sphere and education, universities, schools
- the city and public means of transportation in relation to the public sphere
- the public sphere and consumer culture, markets, and shopping malls
- religions and places of worship in the public sphere

Please submit your abstract of no more than 250 words, institutional affiliation, and a/v needs online at http://www.southasianliteraryassociation.org/annual-conference/conference-paper-proposals/ by the firm deadline of September 1, 2015. Notification of acceptance/rejection of abstracts will be sent via email by October 1, 2015.

Please note that all accepted participants will be expected to become members of SALA by October 15, 2015. For membership and other details, please visit the SALA website at http://www.southasianliteraryassociation.org/. Conference participants are expected to present their accepted papers in person. SALA does not encourage proxy presentations or Skype presentations.
It was May 12, 2015, 2pm, and I was working on a routine assignment on a hot day in Noida, at the outskirts of New Delhi, when suddenly I felt the earth shaking. It was a pretty jarring earthquake, felt strongly all across Northern India. Soon after, I was informed that the epicenter of this earthquake was in Nepal. It was the second deadly earthquake after the country was hit with a major 7.8 magnitude earthquake on April 25, 2015. Thirty minutes after the earthquake, I received a call from Gurinder Osanthe, National Photo Editor of The Hindustan Times, who asked me if I was able and prepared to cover this second devastating earthquake. I immediately agreed to travel to Nepal the second time in the same week. I had already covered the first earthquake aftermath there and had returned to Delhi only a few days ago. I had gone there personally the first time to cover the quake, and it wasn’t an official trip. I was asked by my Photo Editor to come quickly to the Delhi head office to collect camera equipment and other tools before I could leave for the airport to catch the 5:30 pm flight for Nepal. Luckily, I reached Delhi airport just in time and boarded a flight to Kathmandu, but the flight was delayed more than one hour due to the heavy air traffic of aid planes and rescue helicopters at Kathmandu airport. I reached Kathmandu around 8pm and went to a small hotel near the airport to drop off my bags. I left the hotel immediately and first went to the local hospital around 9 pm to see the state of the injured people and the premises of the hospital. I tried to get some coverage of the emergency ward of BIR hospital but the emergency staff stopped me as the hospital management had been instructed not to allow any Indian media inside the emergency or any ward. I left the hospital and returned back to the hotel. The next day, one day after the second deadly earthquake, I made up my mind early morning to go to Dolakha, the epicenter of the second earthquake, which was almost 130kms from the capital city of Kathmandu. I confirmed the routes and transportation from the hotel management to reach Dolakha. The staff suggested that I travel by taxi both sides, which would cost me 20 thousand Nepali currency, or take a passenger bus, which in a routine sched-
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Uli would leave at 7am for Dolakha. I decided to take the latter option and the hotel management guided me towards the bus stop. I left the hotel at 6:30 am to board the bus, but given the shocking state of devastation all around me, I was late and couldn’t get any seats and managed to sit on the rooftop of the bus along with other passengers.

My journey to the mountainous villages started at 7:15am on a packed bus, including a full rooftop. On the way to Dolakha, I saw colossal devastation from both the first and the second earthquakes; 90% of the houses were lying in rubble, people who had escaped and were lucky to be alive were sleeping on roads with whatever belongings they could save; some had built temporary huts, while waiting for relief materials. It was a surreal sight to have amidst that kind of destruction, but it seemed as if people had accepted nature’s fury and were strikingly resilient in their daily going ons. At many locations even our bus had a narrow escape to cross the landslide hit roads. Post the quakes, there were huge chunks of rocks fallen from mountains and they were in the middle of the roads blocking any access to either side. From time to time, we saw people clearing the roads at many junctures. All this while, I kept shooting photographs from the rooftop of the bus.

The bus crossed many remote villages where no aid was delivered or any rescue team could have any access, and these villages had been totally wiped off from any degree of reprieve or saving. There was not a human or animal in sight in these villages and all my vision could carry was an inhuman wreckage in the vista of Nepal. Often, I wondered, where I had come to and the meaning of things around me.

Finally, after a 5 hour-long journey on the rooftop of the bus, I managed to reach Dolakha in the afternoon around 12:45 pm. Before leaving the bus, I learned that the only other bus from Dolakha back to Kathmandu would leave at 2, so I had to make the best use of my time before re-boarding the bus. I started shooting pictures of the devastation at the epicenter and reached a place where a rescue team was searching for the bodies inside the rubble of many collapsed houses.
Around me, were huge, concrete buildings and collapsed houses and some were even about to collapse. The sense of danger, as if, had left me, as I moved in a daze covering the condition of people and their belongings, now left to mere dust.

I also learned that the same day an American rescue helicopter had crashed in the mountains during a rescue operation. I went to many other locations in Dolakha to capture nature’s acute wrath. I managed to capture pictures in several medical treatment tents and found injured people, mostly children and older people, receiving treatments. In the meantime, I was getting worried about my return bus to Kathmandu, and unfortunately, couldn’t reach the bus-stop to catch the bus on time. I started getting extremely anxious, wondering what to do, as there were no operational hotels left after the earthquakes. At the back of my mind, I also wanted to make sure that I could reach Kathmandu and file my photographs to the Delhi office. By then, it was already 3pm and I was losing hope of reaching Kathmandu the same day.

I found an Indian Army medical tent nearby and asked them for help. They guided me with some information and suggested that I talk to the Nepali Army. After some wait, I spotted a Nepali army vehicle and requested the commander for help. He took me on his vehicle to the Nepali army base where I could see choppers with aid material flying in frenzy to the hospitals in Nepal. There was a lot of rush and commotion outside the base; I approached the army personnel at the entry gate and narrated them my situation and that I needed to go back to Kathmandu. He gave me permission to enter the base and asked me to talk to the Lieutenant. After a short while, the Lieutenant assured me that I would be able to return to Kathmandu via the India Air Force helicopter as soon as it arrived, since it was the only chopper which could go to Kathmandu airport from Dolakha army base. It was an intense wait for the IAF chopper and finally I spotted it land at the Dolakha army base. I introduced myself to the IAF captain, but he refused, as rightly, there were many injured people to be flown to Kathmandu. I explained to him a bit later that I had no other option to go back to Kathmandu, nor of staying the night in Dolakha. To my utter relief, he eventually agreed. I boarded the IAF chopper, which was already carrying approximately 15 seriously injured people to Kathmandu for emergency treatment. All that was visible was a destruction of enormous magnitude that perhaps no words can express or convey. The skies above looked down upon miles and miles of sheer annihilation of the Nepal’s once stunning locales and generations of people’s lives.

As soon as the chopper arrived at the airport, a large number of Nepali army personnel and other rescue teams were waiting to treat and help the injured. There were also all kinds of medical treatment being provided inside the airport for the injured people. The whole relief effort was a massively coordinated systematic operation in the midst of agony and unreal devastation through a series of aftershocks that continued days after the earthquakes. I landed at the Kathmandu airport around 4:30 p.m, and heaved a sigh of relief and thanked the heavens for the immense stroke of luck. I had stayed in Nepal for a brief period of 6 days during my second coverage of the quake-hit region. Till this day, I sometimes wake up in the middle of the night, with shuddering trauma of aftershocks that I faced, for which we were directed to be prepared to flee the area. At other times, I am often haunted and reminded of the eerie silence of the villages in Dolakha and a world laden to dust by one swipe of nature.
Congratulations to our colleagues for their impressive accomplishments over the past year!

Christopher Ian Foster has been awarded a 2015 Best Graduate Student Essay Award by SALA, and graduated with a Ph.D. in English from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY) in May 2015. He also sat on the panel titled Indian Ocean Crossings: Archive & Aesthetics in February 2015 at the CUNY Graduate Center. His dissertation is titled Black Migrant Literature: Neoliberal Globalization, New African Diasporas, and the Phenomenology of Movement. He has accepted a one-year Visiting Assistant Professor position in Anglophone global literature at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He is commencing work on his first book manuscript tentatively titled Conscripts of Migration.

Anirban Bhattacharjee, Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (CSSSC), recently submitted his PhD thesis titled Philosophical Discourses of Housework in Bengal: Genealogy, History, and Practices. He is presently an Assistant Professor of English in a Government College in West Bengal and Guest Faculty at University of Kalyani, India. He has delivered a number of talks at international conferences held at the likes of Delhi University, Presidency University, Jadavpur University, and the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG), India. His articles on Naxalite movement in Bengal and gender/class interactions in the short stories of Rabindranath Tagore have recently been published in books by Cambridge University Press.

Robin Field has been appointed Director of the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at King’s College in Pennsylvania, USA.

Rahul K. Gairola accepted the position of Assistant Professor in the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences (HSS) at IITR in Uttarakhand, India. In March 2015, he delivered a talk titled "Migrations in Absentia: Multinational Digital Advertising & Manipulation of Partition Trauma" at the CUNY Graduate Center by invitation of the Postcolonial Studies Group. In April 2015, Routledge reprinted his essay “Limp Wrists, Inflammatory Punches: Violence, Masculinity, and Queer Sexuality in Shyam Selvadurai’s Funny Boy” in Mapping South Asian Masculinities: Men and Political Crises (Routledge), and he co-delivered a Google Talk with Dr. Homi Bhabha at the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University (above); Dr. Meena Alexander, Dr. Christopher Ian Foster, & Ashna Ali (at podium) hosted Indian Ocean Crossings at the CUNY Graduate Center in Midtown Manhattan (bottom left). Photos courtesy of Rahul K. Gairola
Congratulations to our colleagues for their impressive accomplishments over the past year!

Pakistani filmmaker Saad Khan on gender identity in South Asia at Google NYC Headquarters in Manhattan. In July 2015, he was appointed a Section Editor of the peer-reviewed journal, *Postcolonial Text*. Forthcoming publications include an interview with Dr. Homi Bhabha with co-author Ashna Ali (CUNY Graduate Center), “A Partition without Borders: Diasporic Readings of Anita Desai’s *Clear Light of Day* & Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan*” in an edited volume on border crossings, a chapter on the intersectionality of queer translation studies & critical race theory in a forthcoming *Feminist Translations* collection (Routledge), and "Migrations of Absentia” in a volume he is co-editing with Dr. Nalini Iyer & Dr. Amritjit Singh. In July 2015, he delivered a convocation talk on behalf of his dept. titled *The Role of Humanities & Social Sciences in STEM Fields* to +1,500 incoming students at IIT Roorkee.

Amrita Ghosh received a grant for her work on "Emerging Kashmiri Literature and Necropolitics" from the Center for Literature and Public Sphere (CLPS) at Seton Hall University. She presented her paper as a part of the colloquium series on the novel *Collaborator* by Mirza Waheed and Basharat Peer's memoir *Curfewed Nights*. Ghosh also organized a panel "Of Border Spaces and Border Crossings: South Asian Women's Narratives" at Seton Hall University's Women and Gender Conference in March 2015. She participated in the *Ferguson2MLA* event in Vancouver, and also welcomes a new member to her family — a chatty kitten named Marx.

Smita Jha attended the 27th International Conference of Humor Studies at Holy Name University in Oakland, CA, in June 2015. In March 2015, she served as Organizing Secretary for the two-day *Multiculturalism, Identity Crisis, and Belonging in Indian Writing in English* conference at IIT Roorkee. The conference featured a keynote speech by Rukmibhya Nair of IIT Delhi, and a plenary by Saugata Bhaduri of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. The event was held in association with the prestigious *Sahitya Akademi of India (Indian Academy of Arts & Letters)*, featuring the research of faculty and PhD students in the IIT Roorkee Humanities & Social Sciences Dept.
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Sonora Jha, Associate Professor at Seattle Univ., is presenting papers on feminist India at upcoming conferences: “Gathering Online, Loitering Offline: Hashtag Activism & the Claim for Public Space by Women in India,” at the annual convention of the Association for the Education of Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) in San Francisco, Aug 6-9, 2015; and “Nobody’s Daughters: Feminist India’s Response to BBC Documentary “India’s Daughter,” at the Annual Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in October 2015. She is also co-editing with Dr. Alka Kurian a volume titled Disrupting the Discourse: New Feminisms in South Asian Film, Literature, & Social Media. In addition, Dr. Jha has published three Op-Eds, one on media coverage of race in Ferguson, another on the BBC documentary, India’s Daughter, and the third on the Charleston shootings & #BlackLivesMatter. Dr. Jha was recently invited to dialogue with author Prajwal Parajuly at the Words on Water Literary Festival at the Seattle Asian Art Museum in July 2015.


Payel Chattopadhyay Mukherjee has submitted her doctoral dissertation on Cosmopolitanism and South Asian Literature at the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar in July 2015. Her paper (co-authored with Arnapurna Rath) titled “Children of the Midnight in the Maximum
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City” has been accepted for publication at the *South Asian Review*. A shorter version of this paper was presented at the annual conference of the South Asian Literary Association (SALA) held at Chicago in January 2014, and was also awarded a 2014 SALA Graduate Student Paper Award. Another accepted publication co-authored with Arnapurna Rath titled "Practicing Cosmopolitanism in Knowledge Spaces, Cityscapes, and Marketplaces" is forthcoming in the *Journal of Human Values*. Other essays (co-authored with her thesis supervisors Arnapurna Rath and Koshy Tharakan) have been published recently in *The Book Review* and *Anekaant: A Journal of Polysemic Thought*.

Summer Pervez, Vice-President of SALA, has received the following distinction for her short film *Chinese Takeout for One*: Winner, *Seattle Times 3-Minute Masterpiece Contest*, screened at SIFF (Seattle International Film Festival, 2015). The following distinctions are for her short film *Shame*: Official Selection, IFFSA/PIFF (Punjabi International Film Festival, 2014); Official Selection, *KASHISH*: 5th Mumbai International Queer Festival, May 2014; Official Selection, *Tasveer’s* Seattle South Asian Film Festival (SSAFF, 2014); Official Selection, Vancouver International South Asian Film Festival (VISAFF), Nov. 2014. Her short script *Armaan* (Desire) won: Quarter-finalist in the 2014 Shore Scripts Screenwriting Competition (UK) & Quarter-finalist in the 2015 ScreenCraft Short Screenplay Competition. Her feature script *1947* received the following distinctions: Quarter-Finalist (top 5%) in the 2015 BlueCat Screenplay Competition; Semi-finalist (top 10%) in the 2014 ScreenCraft Screenwriting Fellowship; Official Selection, 2014 Seattle International Film Festival (SIFF) Catalyst First Draft Live Script Reading Series.

Moumin Quazi, President of SALA, just completed his year-long term as President of the *Stephenville Rotary Club*, an international organization whose mission is “Service above Self.” Rotary International is the organization that is responsible for almost eradicating polio worldwide.

Alpana Sharma published the poem “Afghanistan” in the most recent issue of *Postcolonial Text* 10.1 (May 2015). In 2015-16, Alpana Sharma will be serving her fourth year as Graduate Director of English at Wright State University. In February, she delivered a paper, "From Nawab to Je-hadi: Muslims in Indian Cinema," at the 24th British Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies Annual Conference in Savannah.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak was bestowed an honorary Doctor of Humanities, Yale University (2015); an honorary Doctor of Letters (honoris}
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Bonnie Zare’s essay “Longing for Belonging: Who is a Cowboy and who is an Indian?” will appear in Weber – the Contemporary West (South Asia issue). It reviews Nina Swamidoss McConigley’s book Cowboys and East Indians.


“Still Pushing the Humanities,” Public Lecture, London School of Economics Gender Institute, June 29, 2015


Bonnie Zare’s essay “Longing for Belonging: Who is a Cowboy and who is an Indian?” will appear in Weber – the Contemporary West (South Asia issue). It reviews Nina Swamidoss McConigley’s book Cowboys and East Indians.
It is an understatement to say that Amritjit Singh is well read, well published, and well traveled. The Langston Hughes Professor of English at Ohio University and former SALA President (2000-03), Singh returned to Athens, Ohio, on July 4, 2015, after a successful Fulbright-Nehru year in India at University of Delhi (DU). On a Teaching/Research award, he taught an M.Phil. course on American Modernism in the Department of English at DU, North Campus. Singh also made considerable progress on his book project for the year, a personal and historical book tentatively titled, At Home Abroad: The Making of Minority Consciousness in India and the United States. Among other things, the book explores the meanings of being a South Asian and a global citizen from the 1940s to the present.

For Singh, culture and difference are integral elements of rigorous research production. “My narrative and analysis of literature, film, and culture will focus in particular on the challenges of improving communication between the majority communities and minorities in both India and the United States,” Singh says. He observes how minority communities in both countries have historical memories and daily experiences are often quite distinct from those of the majority community in each location. He is concerned, for example, about the widely differing reactions of white and black Americans to the recent tragic events in Ferguson, Missouri, and Baltimore, Maryland, in the wake of the #BlackLivesMatter social media movements and the connections between black and Asian oppression. “How can we bridge the gap of lived experience and perception that exists between the minorities and the majority community? What role does unacknowledged privilege – “white privilege” in the U.S. and Hindu caste privilege in India – play in our relationship to the social and economic realities surrounding us?” asks Singh.

“While deeply personal,” Singh adds, “the book is not intended as an autobiographical work. It will include well-researched commentaries on four particular historical moments – 1948, 1968, 1983 and 2001 – that are critical to my own personal and professional journey.” He notes, for example, how the 1947 Partition of India continues to have serious consequences for people’s lives throughout the Indian subcontinent as what some scholars understand to be “The Long Partition” rather than a discrete historical event located in the annals of time. An important leitmotif in Singh’s book would be how his immersion in African American history and culture since 1970 has shaped his readings of South Asian history and culture in the 20th century. As such, the research project makes central South Asian cultural identity in the formation of African American identity while...
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allowing the latter to serve as a research supplement of the former.

This is Singh’s third Fulbright since moving to Ohio University in 2006, and the fourth in his U.S. academic career. He previously conducted research in Germany at Freie University in Berlin (2002), in Austria at Graz University (2007), and in Egypt at the University of Alexandria (2010). Coincidentally, his Fulbright-Nehru Award in India returned Singh to the same university at which he first began his academic career as a young lecturer half a century ago in 1965. Singh has had a rich year of speaking and learning – during this, his longest stay in India since 1983, when he moved back to the U.S. for an ACLS Fellowship at Yale University after nine years of distinguished service at three major academic institutions in India: American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad; University of Hyderabad; and University of Rajasthan. In 2014-15, he delivered plenary/ keynote talks at several conferences and workshops throughout India on a wide variety of topics including partition and ethnic studies.***

Dear SALA members,

I am writing because our journal, South Asian Review, periodically needs reviewers from a range of disciplines - literary studies, anthropology, history, political science, and others - to submit book reviews for the many South Asia-related books we receive from presses in Europe, USA and South Asia. We are looking for folks willing to do these book reviews, ranging in length from 850-1250 words. Doing these short book reviews is a wonderful way to contribute to the processes of knowledge building on South Asia, and is a part of the peer-review process so integral to our scholarship. I also see it as a great opportunity to curate, as it were, the conversation on the issues in which you are invested.

If you would be willing to do a book review in this academic year, would you kindly write to me at kdaiya@gmail.com? Please specify which discipline or period would be of interest to you, and I can send you the list of books available for review. I will appreciate that very much. We can forward to you a free copy of the book you choose. Alternately, if there are important new books in your areas of expertise that you believe should be reviewed, please contact me and we can slot those in for forthcoming issues. Please feel free to connect me with friends in other disciplines who might be interested in reviewing books as well. Thank you in advance. — Dr. Kavita Daiya, Book Reviews Editor, South Asian Review

Got news, pictures, and/or personal milestones you would like to share with our community in the Winter 2016 issue of salaam? Please send your items in MS Word format to R.K. Gairola at rgairola@uw.edu by December 1st, 2015!
TWO YEARS LATER:
CATCHING UP WITH KSHAMA SAWANT
CO-INTERVIEWED BY ROBERT FRANCESCHINI & RAHUL K. GAIROLA

Seattle Councilmember Dr. Kshama Sawant has been busy since we last chatted. She is running for Seattle City Council, District 3, in a hotly contested battle which has once again earned her unflinching support from the city's hip alternative weekly The Stranger. Much has transpired in the past year and a half since the fiery academic/social activist experienced her meteoric, historical rise. On November 15, 2013, Sawant, an Indian American Economics professor at Seattle Central Community College, became the first Socialist in modern history to be democratically elected to Seattle’s city council. This victory dramatically unfolded far from the Council Member’s hometown in India, and was the preface to what down the road would lead to Sawant’s Socialist response to U.S. President Barack Obama’s State of the Union Address in January 2015. Sawant recently delivered an impassioned stint on Fox News as New York City follows in the footsteps of Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles towards a $15/hour minimum wage.

Sawant grew up in Mumbai (formerly Bombay), and graduated with a B.S. in Computer Science in 1994 from the University of Mumbai. After moving to the U.S. with her husband, Sawant resolved to study Economics given her interests in economic equality. She joined the PhD program in Economics at North Carolina State University, and completed a dissertation titled, Elderly Labor Supply in a Rural, Less Developed Economy. She relocated to Seattle in 2006, and became a U.S. citizen in 2011. Sawant has been an active supporter of the Occupy Wall Street movement while teaching at the college, at which she held an all night teach-in course. Her Socialist Alternative platform accomplished a minimum wage increase to $15USD/hour, and continues to focus on rent control, and an increase of taxes on the wealthy. Sawant moreover advocated for the unionization of large Seattle companies like Amazon and Starbucks, and called for the nationalization of large Washington state companies like Microsoft, Amazon, and Boeing – the latter which threatened to leave the state unless it approved a $9 billion tax cut along with a cut to workers’ pensions. At her victory party in 2013, Sawant described her platform’s success as a “political earthquake” rooted in intersecting histories of oppression with resounding consequences for the future of national and global equality. Hailing from a country that had been subjugated by British imperialism for over two centuries, Sawant recognizes masked aspects of poverty and oppression in Seattle as the inheritance of former modes of subjection. To this day, Sawant refuses corporate funding in the wake of a national movement that witnessed minimum wage increases across the U.S. and an international following in, among other places, India.

What follows is an updated interview with new questions & answers developed across two continents between Sawant (KS) and co-authors Rahul K. Gairola (RG) and Robert Franceschini (RF).

RG: My first question involves the role of Marxist literary theory in the disciplinary fields of South Asian studies, literature, theory, etc. Most SALA members are literary scholars, and we deploy Marxist and post-Marxist critical
lenses to the ways that we read literature as what Frederic Jameson has famously called “a socially symbolic act” in terms of narratives. What are the real life implications of your work for South Asian studies and social issues that pertain to South Asia?

**KS:** I encourage students of South Asian studies to not limit their evaluation of our campaign to my identity as an Indian-American immigrant woman. No doubt it is of tremendous significance to be able to demonstrate that an immigrant woman of color can play a prominent role in shaping contemporary American politics. But I think the real significance of the campaign is that it was conceived of and implemented by a Marxist revolutionary organization. It was a Marxist analysis of the present-day political situation that led us to identify the need to challenge corporate politics as an open socialist, to offer a living example of rejecting the domination of the two parties of big business, and to develop the tactics and strategies necessary to be able to win the election against an entrenched, corporate Democratic Party incumbent.

Take the example of India. There is a dizzying number of political parties, NGO’s, and philanthropists. But the reality is that most of the political parties, including the so-called Communist parties for the lower castes, have been willing perpetrators of the neoliberal reforms of global capitalism. There is no solution to the current global economic crisis on the basis of capitalism. The question that stares us in the face is – what is the way out? As a Marxist, I would say that an organized struggle of the working class, in solidarity with rural struggles, is an absolute and urgent necessity. In this process, we will need the South Asian working class to develop its own political formations independent of the neoliberal parties. So, while specific conditions and tactics will need to differ from South Asia to North America, the fundamental ideas are applicable globally.

**RF:** What do you see as the future for global governance, especially concerning global warming? For example, does the international community work within the framework of existing institutions, capturing ones such as the WTO or IMF and reforming them, or do we maybe resort to treaties enforced by economic sanctions?

**KS:** In answering this question, I am here referring to parts of Pete Dickenson’s “**Needed: a socialist plan for the environment.**” Global financial institutions such as the WTO, IMF, and the World Bank are the agents of the global capitalist class. Whenever there has been a clash between Green and trade issues, capitalist institutions like the WTO have invariably – and not surprisingly – chosen in favor of their private profits, and never in favor of the environment. Like many previous summits, the 2011 UN sponsored climate change conference in Durban, South Africa, abjectly failed to reach an agreement to tackle global warming. The failures of the Durban summit and its predecessor at Copenhagen in 2009, gatherings that were meant to correct the failings of Kyoto, showed the inability of the capitalist class to tackle global warming.

Rather than backing the market-type system discussed at Copenhagen, many activists are now calling for direct measures to be implemented to reduce greenhouse gases. These measures could include laws to establish a
ceiling in emissions by a certain date, with any breach dealt with using criminal sanctions. However, if the world’s ruling classes opposed the largely cosmetic measures proposed at Copenhagen, any new approach with real teeth would meet with even more determined resistance. As Naomi Klein says in her recent essay, “... research shows that our entire economic paradigm is a threat to ecological stability. And indeed that challenging this economic paradigm – through mass-movement counter-pressure – is humanity’s best shot at avoiding catastrophe.”

RG: The intensified, pervasive gentrification in Seattle and other urban centers in the U.S. is eliminating affordable housing for artists, students, and other vulnerable demographics that contribute to the unique characters of many neighborhoods. What can/should be done about this?

KS: While new units are continually being built, most of them are not affordable by federal standards. According to federal standards, the total cost of housing must not exceed 30% of the household’s gross income. The minimum wage in Washington was $9.19/hour, which is less than half of what a renter needs to be able to afford a two-bedroom apartment. A public mandate of rent control ensures that rents are affordable for the majority. Rent control ties the increase in rents to the overall cost of living (CPI), ensuring that low-income people are able to afford housing in the city. Our focus was a campaign to win a minimum wage sufficient enough to account for people’s living priorities.

National priorities, as they are now, are not so much the priorities of the people, but instead dictated by global capitalist interests that compete with one another for the biggest shares of the global wealth. People all over the world have numerous priorities in common: things like high quality child care, healthful and affordable food, clean water, accessible healthcare, housing, and education, opportunities to explore science, art and other creative pursuits, opportunities for leisure and recreation, walkable neighborhoods full with amenities like parks, libraries, food. Despite the undeniable need for this basic living standard, however, overwhelming numbers of people in the world live steeped in intergenerational poverty, war, violence, malnutrition, not to mention the dangers of climate change. This indicates that the people who want to fulfill these needs do not have a say in how resources are used globally. If, instead, the other 99% of people around the globe were able to have a say in the determination of their own “public interest,” we would likely see a major shift in national priorities towards that of the majority, rather than the few.

RG: It seems that many people in the U.S. have a number of misconceptions of what “socialism” is and means, while in India this was the base of Jawaharlal Nehru’s vision of an independent democracy. How would you define it, and what do you believe its implications are for South Asian diasporic and other immigrant...
communities living in the U.S.?

KS: Socialism, as we would define it, is the democratic public ownership and control of the productive resources in order to meet real human needs. A socialist society would also engender political democracy and social liberation, because real democracy comes from having a real say in the process, not having a seeming right to vote to rubberstamp the status quo. In fact, democracy and capitalism cannot coexist. Under capitalism, all workers, both foreign-born and native-born, receive only a fraction of the profits of their labor. The rest goes to corporations and their major investors, who are constantly emphasizing class divisions so as to undermine any sort of united workers movement. A global workers movement, however, is exactly what we need, and would benefit all workers everywhere. Fighting for immigrant rights in the U.S. is intertwined with the fight for workers’ rights, as both require an end to the oppression of capitalism. It is also important to clarify that democratic socialism, which Socialist Alternative advocates for, is not the bureaucratic regime that existed in the Soviet Union. Nor is it the idea of social democracy under capitalism, like in Western Europe. Social democracies were able to expand the base of social welfare to benefit a larger section of the working class. However, they still depend on global exploitation, and more importantly, social programs set up in the 1940s-1960s are being dismantled and uprooted in the post-recession austerity politics.

Advancing working class consciousness implies that Socialists like myself have a duty to engage in discussions and debates with broad audiences. It also means fighting for far-reaching reforms within the system by emphasizing the need to break from the bourgeois political parties and to build independent organizations of and for the working class, all the while highlighting the need to break from the system itself. A concrete example was the ongoing struggle for $15/hour minimum wage in Seattle, a battle that Socialist Alternative was on the forefront of, along with fast food workers, airport workers, and labor unions. The grassroots campaign that 15 now has already gained tremendous momentum and is an integral part of a national trend.

RF: Data shows that women make 73 cents for every dollar earned by a man in Seattle, giving it the distinction as the city with the widest gender pay gap in the United States. Besides changing hiring and employment practices by the city and its contractors, what would be the most effective way to remedy this issue in the private sector in Seattle and the United States at large?

KS: Laws preventing gender discrimination need to be enforced. There would be public agencies with the role of practically enforcing this, and safe avenues for women to file grievances. Right now, the laws are very much stacked against workplace organizing and the ability to form unions. The presence of a democratic and effective workers’ union will...
Navigating the quagmire that is graduate school and the job market can be daunting, to say the least. Involvement in professional organizations, such as SALA is an excellent way to not only share your work but also to build a support system of peers and advisors in the field. For this year’s GSV column, I asked a few of the senior scholars at SALA to share some wisdom with our grad students and junior scholars. Here are samples of their answers:

**What is the best career/graduate school advice you were ever given?**

One of my mentors told me, get to know people in your field, that matter to you and your work, and share your work, put it out there. This was great advice. In grad school, use conferences as a means of writing new parts of the dissertation. That is, write a proposal for a small section of the dissertation that has not yet been written. Then you have a deadline to write that 8 pages and get immediate feedback on your ideas. AND you get a line on the CV for the conference itself, in addition to the networking opportunities at the conferences.

Think of the dissertation as a canoe: it gets you where you want to go (ie, a job/career). The dissertation itself does not have to be perfect; it just has to get you to the next step. With that said, look at recently published books from presses that are strong in your area. What structure do those books use? Then try to draft the dissertation in that style, so that the revision into the book manuscript is not overly arduous. In the career more generally: Make a five-year plan. Start with what you would like to have accomplished in five years (a book? three articles? presenting at certain conferences? getting a fellowship?), and then work backward to see what you will need to accomplish in each year to meet the five year goal. Within each year, break it down by months. This way, you know that to (for example) publish three articles in five years, you need to be writing at least 5-10 pages a month. Keep an honest account of your progress toward these long-term goals.

**GRADUATE STUDENT VIEW**

Melanie R. Wattenbarger, University of Mumbai (Bombay)

Navigating the quagmire that is graduate school and the job market can be daunting, to say the least. Involvement in professional organizations, such as SALA is an excellent way to not only share your work but also to build a support system of peers and advisors in the field. For this year’s GSV column, I asked a few of the senior scholars at SALA to share some wisdom with our grad students and junior scholars. Here are samples of their answers:

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Do not expect a full-time job at the end of it. I was told to go to grad school for the experience, but to keep in mind that there are hundreds of PhD grads and far less jobs, so the market is very competitive. “In a year from now, you could be a ‘professional student’ or you could be working in a tenure-track job!” The Chair of English at the University of Pittsburgh told me this when I seemed half-hearted about finishing up the degree; it led me to see everything, including my entire life, in a different perspective. I followed his advice and in a year’s time was teaching in my first tenure-track job.

**What is one thing you think graduate students/ early career scholars should know (about the field, graduate school, publishing, tenure, etc. It could be pertaining to anything)?**

They must work hard and do GREAT work AND combine that with publishing at least 2 articles before going on the market. Also, read a lot of books out there by Germaino, the MLA and others about “How to Complete and Survive Your Dissertation,” “Mentor in a Manual,” etc. Get skills and experience teaching rhetoric and composition (a lot of hiring happening there), perhaps even 1 article about rhet-comp pedagogy published, and learn programming for digital humanities initiatives (and as a back up career!). The best way to get noticed and respected is to take on a role/task and do it well. For instance, if you agree to write a book review, do it well and submit it on time or early. The editors will remember you as a responsible person and will call upon you again. Know your foundational theorists well, the ones who have helped to create and define your field and always be able to locate the cutting edge to your field, whatever it may be.

**What is the most important thing to keep in mind when picking a dissertation topic?**

Work on what you passionately care about, but keep an eye to new debates in your field, and how your work contributes/fits in matters. You need to enjoy your topic enough to think about it for 5-10 years (getting through the dissertation and the book manuscript that may come from it). Have someone who can supervise it at your place of study.

**What advice do you have for graduate students/ early career scholars who are facing the job market?**

Have a back-up plan, whether it is coding skills, academic admin, or looking at opportunities teaching in private schools, etc. Prepare for multiple types of searches, academic and non-academic, and consider how you have skills that speak to different careers, not just academic. Apply for all jobs for which you are qualified. You never know in advance where you will flourish, so don’t set aside a school because of its location, size, or religious affiliation. Be willing to be flexible. Know the value of a generalist education, being able to place yourself in a number of fields simultaneously. It’s tough. Don’t stop trying for the first five years. If it doesn’t work out after 5 years of trying, choose another career path.

**Do you have any suggestions on how to keep motivated in the long process from graduating with a bachelor degree to obtaining a full post in the field?**

Keep perspective, stay balanced, stay healthy, exercise; work hard 9-5 pm but give yourself a chance to rest and LIVE life too. I strongly suggest keeping your eye on non-academic job opportunities as well, especially if they appear in places you want to live in. Where you live and with which people is almost as important as what you do. And above all: network: build relationships, share your work, work smart. Remember to play the “long game.” All of us who are tenured have encountered set-backs and challenges of all varieties (which we’d surely share with you if asked). Slow and steady progress – this career is like a marathon, so set a good pace and get started! Have hobbies outside of academia and allow yourself time each week to pursue those hobbies. Make friends with positive people. It’s fine to have friends who are anxious or depressed or negative, but inevitably these emotions will rub off on you. Do spend time with positive people to keep your own attitude positive as well.

Find a colleague or two to be your carrot and stick. Share your goals with these people and expect them to keep you on track. Return the favor with them. Do not resent them for reminding you of what you said you’d do. (These people do not have to be at your institution. I’ve kept a few grad school friends as readers and motivators [we use email and Skype to correspond]; I’ve also met new colleagues via conferences and organization and read their work regularly.) Just because you don’t get a full time job does not mean you are not good at what you do, though you may feel that
way. This is one of the hardest things you will ever do in your life. Make sure you always have a support system behind you, whether it is your family, friends, fellow students, or a scholarly community. You must never feel alone! Thank you to all of the ExCom members who contributed to this discussion and who serve as our mentors!

Melanie R. Wattenbarger is a Doctoral Candidate at the University of Mumbai and an Early Stage Researcher for the European Union’s Marie Curie Initial Training Network Diasporic Constructions of Home and Belonging (CoHaB) project. Her research explores issues of identity and authenticity in Indian literature and film. 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.

poverty, misery, privation, and sexual and caste violence around me left me seething with outrage and broken-hearted with sadness. But more significantly, it evoked several logical questions. Why do these miseries exist, what purpose to they serve, and why is it that even with the pinnacle of cultural and technological achievement, and an abundance of food and other goods and services, such basic problems have not been solved?

The common responses to my questions on why castes and classes exist (“it's their karma,” “it's just luck,” “poverty always existed and always will, your agonizing about it won't change a thing,” “that's just the way it is, why don't you chill and focus on your own career,” “isn't it egotistical to think you can come up with a solution for this massive issue?”) were obviously an escapism from having to carry out a logical analysis. It seemed clear to me that there was nothing inherent in human nature or in physical nature for such misery to persist. Which led me conclude that it had something to do with the prevailing economic organization. Unbeknownst to me at the time, I was recognizing capitalism as the source of these miseries & identifying socialism as the solution.

RF: What are your thoughts on the recent Indian Supreme Court upholding of Section 377, a British colonial-era law legislating consensual sex between same sex partners a criminal “unnatural offence”?

KS: The Indian Supreme Court's ruling to revive the colonial-era law is yet another attempt at furthering the oppression of the gay community, and oppression in general. We need to be vocal in our condemnation of the ruling, and help to keep building a globally-linked mass movement for LGBTQ rights. The working class as a whole should be in solidarity with the LGBTQ community and activists, and reject such oppression that is not only inhumane, but also sows divisions amongst the working class.

RG: Finally, how do you see your academic work coalescing with your personal life, on the one hand, and your work in social and political activism, on the other hand?

KS: I see most aspect of my life -- academic, political, personal -- as interwoven. All through my career in academia, I have rejected boundaries drawn across them. Not only are such boundaries artificial, but more importantly, the subtle and not-so-subtle message sent to young students is that having a political consciousness, being an activist, and speaking out against injustice and against systemic problems is at odds with the intellectual progress and academic rigor. But what that effectively means is that academics are used to provide well-credentialed cover to a deeply unjust system. My personal experience as a Marxist and activist has been that successful activism requires a serious and evolved analysis, no different than producing a thorough body of research.

RF and RG: Thanks for answering these additional questions, and all the best with your future endeavors! **
Our annual conference was held alongside the MLA’s annual convention for the first time ever in Vancouver, a scenic metropolis yet one that is notorious to South Asians for the Komagata Maru incident of 1914. Here are some snapshots of our exceptional conference program and delightful colleagues: Clockwise: Dr. Homi Bhabha of Harvard University received the SALA 2015 Distinguished Achievement Award for Scholarship; Vancouver skyline; Keynote Speaker Sadhu Binning addresses the audience; Binning with SALA President Moumin Quazi; Kasim Hussain, Christopher Ian Foster, & Asha Jeffers (L to R) received SALA 2015 Best Graduate Student Essay Awards along with cash prizes; and Dr. Bonnie Zare (Univ. of Wyoming) checks her back with a smile in the main hall (Photos courtesy of Rahul K. Gairola).
SALA 2015:
Borders, Boundaries, & Margins
Vancouver, Canada/ 6-7 January 2015

Clockwise: SALA 2015 Co-Chairs Dr. Prabhjot Parmar & Dr. Sharanpal Ruprai (L to R); Dr. Eddie Mallot with SALA President Quazi on a provocative panel (L to R); the General Membership body takes a moment to have tea and chat; Digital South Asia panelists Dr. Alex Gil, Dr. Rahul K. Gairola, Dr. Sonora Jha, Dr. Deepika Bahri, and Dr. Roopika Risam (L to R) field questions from the audience; and Dr. Nalini Iyer underscores an important point as Dr. Madhurima Chakraborty looks on. (Photos courtesy of Bonnie Zare).

A number of SALA colleagues assisted with this issue of salaam: Dr. Robin Field, Dr. Nalini Iyer, Dr. Summer Fervez, Dr. Moumin Quazi, Dr. Alpana Sharma, Dr. Amritjit Singh, & Melanie Wattenbarger. In New York City, Dr. Meena Alexander, Ashna Ali, Dr. Ian Foster, Robert Franceschini, Saad Khan, Richard Ledley, Kristen Reichardt, Dr. Kshama Savant, and Dr. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak lent a hand. At IITR, Dr. Rashmi Gaur, Dr. Smita Jha, Dr. D.K. Nauriyal, & Dr. S.P. Singh were very helpful.

Thanks for your warmth & model collegiality!
SALA Executive Committee Meeting Proposed Agenda
Listel Hotel, Vancouver, BC, January 6, 2015


Old Business:
Local Arrangements Co-Chair Report (Sharanpal/Prabhjot)
The conference was a great success despite weather problems, flight delays, and other hiccups. Many panels were enjoyed at both SALA and MLA.

President’s Report (Moumin)
Note about the process of applying for 501c3 status, creating a subcommittee, chaired by president, with Nalini, Melanie, and Prof. Chauhan. There are steps yet to be taken, which will extend beyond Moumin’s current term. We cannot use the current board (which changes every year) as our Board of Trustees. So a “permanent” Board of Trustees needs to be created for this, and THEN we can apply. Subcommittee will research this issue and provide a white paper to the SALA ExComm with a proposed membership, responsibilities, term limits for members, and organizational structure. Such a report will be circulated by email prior to the Austin conference and proposal will be made by ExComm at General Body meeting in Austin. It would work in Texas easily, and we could do this through Moumin if he is to stay on the board. We need to write our history and keep it on file. We will access our MLA report and other resources to create this. The original registration papers are from Utah, but they are lost – we are missing our registration number and the date we began. We need to think about the digital archiving of the group, and creating a board to get incorporated, and an address for the application process. This idea was accepted.

We were mandated (by the Constitution) to revisit the Advisor’s term length this year. Our current advisor’s term is over next year. In Austin, the subcommittee exploring the 501c3 will be able to propose further steps re: the shortening of the term from 6 to 3-4 years (or abolishing the position altogether, depending on how the Board of Trustees is shaped). This idea was accepted.

We had several calls for discussing the email/written documents protocol. I would like to state that all communications should remain professional and civil. Any email becomes written history, and as such, we must be very careful with our language, diction, volume, and tone. This idea was accepted.

Vice President’s Report (Moumin, for Prabhjot)
Grad Student Paper Prize Award Pool. Submissions of conference length papers needed to be made in time. Moumin, Prabhjot, and Sharanpal review submissions, attend sessions, and make final decisions. Awards will be announced at the Awards ceremony on Jan. 7.

Treasurer’s Report (Moumin, for Umme)
Wells Fargo Bank account update shows our funds in good shape and growing. Subvention funds: University of Washington? Individuals donated, but not like last year. Printing and shipping of SAR usually costs about $3000. Hotel is anywhere between $3500-10,000 (the Listel is probably going to be about $10,000). Conference revenue is probably around $8000.

Secretary’s Report (Nalini)
Update on membership rolls
About 120 paid members.

MLA guaranteed and non-guaranteed sessions
Jan. 25: SALA/MLA Calendar: proposals must be submitted to the secretary, so that the ex comm may vet them and vote, so that our cfps can be posted on the MLA website by Feb. 1

3 possible sessions: 1) Guaranteed; 2) Non-guaranteed; 3) Collaborative non-guaranteed (with whom will we collaborate?)
Feb. 10: Decisions made about sessions at the MLA, by the SALA Ex Comm
Feb. 28: Program copy deadlines for all MLA sessions

2016 MLA Presidential Theme: *Literature and Its Publics: Past, Present, and Future*
Roland Greene, the 2015–16 MLA president, has chosen Literature and Its Publics: Past, Present, and Future as the presidential theme for the MLA Annual Convention in Austin. Who is the public for literature? This question is foundational to the work MLA members do and to the state of our discipline and profession. The theme invites members to consider the public face of all of our objects of attention—not only literature and other kinds of texts but film, digital media, and rhetoric—and to consider our indispensable role in bringing texts and their audiences together. How is our work as teachers, historians, editors, and critics—above all, as interpreters—a public act? Sessions might reflect on the current public status of literature and other kinds of texts in our society; address the nature of public reception according to period, genre, author, or otherwise; or imagine different futures. To solicit contributions for a convention session that engages with this theme, you may post a call for papers on the MLA Web site between the week of 12 January and 28 February 2015. Session proposal forms for the 2016 convention will be available online by early March.

Reminder: it is unethical to propose a panel that might be competitive, if you are an officer or ex comm member.

*SAR* Editor’s Report (Professor Chauhan)

Note on this year’s issues. Several honors bestowed upon the journal. Some libraries are asking for back copies all the way back to the early 1970s.

Asked members to get their libraries to subscribe.

Applying for a TIN during the next year

Creation of a committee, chaired by John Hawley, with Professors Chauhan and Amritjit Singh, to give a report in Austin re: getting SAR digitized via an entity like Project Muse or JStor.

Graduate Student Representative Report (Melanie)

- Working on better developing and opening communication between the SALA Graduate Students and the SALA Ex. Com. Graduate Student Chair through the development of a separate Facebook page or email list
- Collaborating with other Graduate Student Chairs of EACLALS and MLA to share strategies of outreach and service
- Graduate Student Meet and Greet Agenda: Introductions; what is already offered by SALA (graduate student paper prize, informal mentoring with senior professors, contribute to SAR and the SALAam Newsletter); ask for suggestions, needs, and begin organizing volunteers for SALA 2016 conference; working towards collaboration, not competition

Her work for this up-coming year:

- Develop email correspondence with Graduate students or some other online forum (I am happy to hear any suggestions for the best platform for this)
- Develop graduate student volunteer group for the conference for on-site logistical support
  Advertising the Graduate Student Prize (on other academic organization forums, Facebook, etc.)

Web Manager’s Report: (Madhurima)

This Past Year
The web site continues to see increased traffic, going from 12,118 in 2013 to 15,980 site visits this last calendar
year. The main feeder into our site continues to be Google searches and Facebook pages. As last year, the most popular site is the CFP for our own conference, though the general CFP page attracts the most users. We are most popular with users from India (over 7.2K), followed by users in the US, Canada, Pakistan, and the UK.

The major project for the site this year, in addition to sundry updates like adding tabs here and there and cleaning up small design elements, has been the work Kris Stokes has done to transform our site into a responsive one. As I reported to the executive committee in November when the transformation was completed, if you go to our site http://www.southasianliteraryassociation.org on any device, including smartphones and tablets, the site is optimized for that screen size. This means no pinch-and-zoom, side-scrolling, etc. This makes our web site that much more accessible and convenient. Preliminary data suggests that more people are already using their android and iOS devices to access the site.

I also have to announce that Kris Stokes, our web designer, is no longer a free-lance designer and has accepted a full-time position at The Bond Group in Chicago, IL as a Front-End Web Developer. Kris has said that he will continue to host the site for free and to work with me (or any future SALA web managers) in any capacity that we may need, at least for this coming year. I expect him to also be available for other free-lance work that we might need (either paid or not), but we may need to plan further ahead of time.

Though the visits to our site are increasing, I have to admit that this year saw fewer queries and requests from other organizations to be advertised on our site than last year, though I still received many. My best guess re: this reduction is a lack of continual updates on the site. For my part, I will advertise the CFPs we do receive more aggressively on Facebook and elsewhere and will make sure to stay on top of CFPs that do come my way. I would also appreciate if SALA executive committee members and general members wrote to me with CFPs, announcements, job postings etc. that they thought might be relevant to our organization.

Future Projects
FROM LAST YEAR: working with one or more other members of the SALA exec committee, I’d like to work on a project that Moumin and others suggested—that we get a list of past keynote speakers and SALA awardees, and add their names, photographs, and short bios to our site.

I hope to add a photo slide show with some pictures from the 2014 conference and any others we’d like to add. Should we be hosting meeting minutes on our site as well as in the newsletter? The site could be updated faster. I am open to discussions about other features that the Exec Committee believes should be part of the site. For instance, could or should the site be part of fund-raising initiatives? I imagine I could come up with a wish list, and categorize them according to how feasible and/or expensive these features might be.

salaam Editor’s Report (Rahul)
Comments on this year’s newsletter, including comments about the masthead which was designed by Kris Stokes. Comments on deadlines and the importance of getting contributions to the editor by the announced date to ensure smooth production of the newsletter.

New Business:
Future Conference Co-Chair Report

2016 conference theme/ CFP
Jana Fedtke and Abdy Zahiri will co-chair, with help from Nalini and Moumin and a committee
Getting a team concept going on this (enlisting the aid of grad students who are attending, for example)

The Arts, Especially Music, Film, and Literature, in South Asian Cultural Practices
With more live music venues per capita than anywhere else in the US, Austin adopted the slogan of the “Life Music Capital of the World” in 1991. In addition to a plethora of bands and performing artists, the Texas state capital boasts two orchestras as well as a variety of music festivals such as the Austin City Limits Music Festival and South by Southwest (SXSW). This year’s SALA Conference takes Austin’s commitment to music and perform-
Salaam 39.1

ance as an inspiration to explore music, especially, in the context of South Asia and its diasporas. Cultural arts practices will be the broader scope of this call.

SALA 2016 invites you to submit abstracts for papers that examine the role that music, among the other arts, in its broadest sense plays in South Asian cultural practices. In her 2014 book titled *Music and Identity in Postcolonial British-South Asian Literature*, Christin Hoene explores the relation between music and the construction of postcolonial identity, arguing that “music can be seen as part of a socio-cultural context of production, an act of political resistance against cultural imperialism, or as an art that claims aesthetic truth and transcendence” (2). It is in this spirit of cultural production, resistance, and aesthetics that we call for papers on literature, film, new media, performance, cultural studies, criticism, and activism. Topics to be examined may include, but are not limited to:

- music and identity formation
- representations of music in cultural productions
- resistance and activism
- music in film, soundtracks
- production and consumption of music
- music and gender
- the secular and the sacred
- classical and non-classical traditions
- the colonial, the postcolonial, and beyond
- music as a “universal” discourse
- nationalism and globalization
- music in the South Asian diasporas
- performance and aesthetics
- dance
- literature
- music as a cultural artefact
- popular music
- art, movies, and musicals as social critique (especially in terms of Edward Said’s contrapuntal theory, negotiating space for what is often hidden beneath the aesthetic surface. This perspective could specially be investigated in musical works produced in an oppressive milieu.

Proposed Co-Chairs, with a conference committee:
Jana Fedtke, Ph.D., American University of Sharjah
Abdy Zahiri

2016 SALA Distinguished Awardees? Amitav Ghosh (New York, 2017?)
Submit ideas to the secretary by Feb. 1

Creating a set allocation for honoraria: Motion: $500 for Distinguished Achievement; $500 for keynote speaker (these funds are for meeting travel and hotel expenses for award recipients and not a stipend); $500 for Hamara Mushaira (increased at the discretion of the Treasurer in consultation with the President) – this would be a Constitutional Amendment that would be voted on next year at the GBM. In the meantime, we would continue as normal until then. PASSED

Motion: A person may propose a SALA MLA session for the MLA, and if it’s accepted as a proposal, the person who proposed it may choose to chair the session or read a paper in the session while asking someone else to chair that panel. Both chairing AND reading in the session are not permitted. PASSED

Election of Officers and Ex Comm Members (3):
CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

South Asian Literature, Arts, and Culture Studies

(Peter Lang International Academic Publishers)
Series Editor: Moumin Quazi

The South Asian Literature, Arts and Culture Studies series invites submissions from scholars working in the field of South Asian Studies, with a particular interest in literature, the arts (print and film), politics, religion, and society. South Asian Studies especially focuses on the Indian subcontinent, particularly India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Burma, and the diaspora of Non-Resident South Asians throughout the world. The series welcomes a variety of approaches and theories that interrogate and explore aspects and elements of South Asian thought, life, and artistic production. The series does not only focus on contemporary, but also in special cases, on the ancient or classical studies. This series welcomes a variety of analytical approaches and theories, especially postcolonial, feminist, post-structural, new historical, psychological, Marxist, and structuralist. Scholars working in related fields, such as philosophy, hermeneutics, and social theory, with a major interest in how these disciplines relate to South Asian Studies, are also invited to contribute.

Fill out the query page at http://www.peterlang.com/index.cfm?cid=95, or send your manuscripts to Heidi Burns at hburns@plang.com.

Society for Novel Studies 2016 conference

The Novel in or against World Literature

SNS at Pitt 2016

The Society for Novel Studies (SNS) invites proposals for fifteen-minute papers to be given at its biennial conference held at the University of Pittsburgh, USA, May 13-14, 2016. For more information, visit http://novel.trinity.duke.edu/sns/2016-conference. Proposals should not exceed 200 words and are due by September 7, 2015. They should be sent to individual panel organizers at the email addresses listed below. Once confirmed, all presenters must join the SNS and register for the conference. Please direct questions or inquiries about the conference to Gayle Rogers at grogers@pitt.edu.
Symposium Call for Papers
"Forms of Informality: Textual Analysis and Popular Culture in the Global South"
March 11-12, 2016

Keynote speakers: Moradewun Adejunmobi (University of California, Davis) and Juan Poblete (University of California, Santa Cruz)

We invite scholars working on popular culture in/of the Global South to submit paper proposals that interrogate the possibilities and limitations of combining formal textual analysis with the question of informal economic activity. How might literary analysis be used for the interpretation of popular culture and vernacular genres that circulate in dynamic informal markets? What is at stake when performing textual analyses of narratives crafted in various media for an immediate financial return? Can formal criticism overcome reified oppositions such as “literary” vs. “popular”? By focusing on the play between formalism and informality, this symposium aims to explore and evaluate textual approaches, such as close reading, being used by a range of disciplines—including cultural studies, literary studies, media anthropology, and ethnography—in the study of Global South cultural objects.

The resurgent regard for formalist approaches—genre criticism in African screen media, for example—suggests that these may play an increasingly powerful role in our understanding of narratives that circulate informally: pirated texts rolling off anarchist or commercial presses in Latin America, vintage cassettes for sale on the streets of Dar es Salaam, Kuduro music traded by Bluetooth in Angola, or pen-drive-circulated videos in Cuba demand criticism that evaluates both the nature of the markets in which they circulate and the formal textual strategies of those markets. What are the useful concatenations and distinctions between technological proliferation and individual sites of meaning? What can we learn about the status of popular texts by focusing on their form? Indeed, if these texts are produced and consumed in informal markets, outside the rules of corporate media industries and state institutions, is informality rearticulated through their aesthetic or semiotic features? Or, on the contrary, does it remain a category incommensurate with aesthetic analysis?

This symposium will take place at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, March 11-12, 2016. UW-Madison is home to a wide variety of Language and Literature Departments and Area Studies Programs with research interests in the Global South. It is also home to North America’s only degree-granting department in African literature, which—in its 50th year—is planning to become a department of African Cultural Studies. The largely Euro-American tradition of cultural studies may be increasingly at work in the study of the Global South, but not without substantial revision and reformulation. What can language and literature departments contribute to this process? And how do they intersect with and depart from other disciplines? Possible areas of inquiry might include, but are not limited to:
Implications of the new “Global South” forum in the Modern Language Association

Current conceptualizations of popular culture in/of the Global South

The relationship between cultural production and the informal economy

Reading practices (close reading, surface reading, symptomatic reading, etc.)

Transnational and translocal articulations of informal networks

Authorship and intellectual property

Theoretical and historical perspectives on the role of digital technologies in the Global South

“New formalist” articulations of postcolonial studies

Contemporary tensions between cultural and literary studies

The institutional implications of conducting research on informal markets in language and literature departments

Some funding is available to defray participant’s travel costs. Selected presentations in this symposium will be combined in a dossier for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Please send a CV and proposals of no more than 300 words—along with name, affiliation, title, and contact information—to Victor Goldgel-Carballo (Spanish and Portuguese) and Matthew H. Brown (African Languages & Literature) at formsofinformality@gmail.com by July 31, 2015.

Uneven Development and the Novel
Susan Andrade, University of Pittsburgh

Unevenness is a feature of all literary change. Uneven development seeks to name social and political difference in relation to literary change. For all its limits, The World Republic of Letters offers one example of how literary development is tied to social relations, particularly the literary and linguistic relations in Ireland and Latin America. This panel does not seek to challenge or extend Casanova — except that we are not as teleological about form as Casanova is. It seeks to chart unevenness more precisely, more locally, and with as much attention to the Global South. Please submit your proposal for this panel to Susan Andrade at sza@pitt.edu.

The New (Post-)Humanisms and the Problem of Genre
Elizabeth Anker, Cornell University

This panel attempts to think two seemingly unrelated debates in relation to one another: current debates about genre and about humanism in the aftermath of poststructuralism. In recent literature and theory, the status of genre is newly under negotiation. While some speak of the waning of genre, genre fiction is on the rise, as are experimental modes of writing that intentionally blur generic boundaries. At once, the mounting method wars within critical theory have, for some, entailed a return to or rethinking of humanism and its legacy. How are these two developments related? Please submit your proposal for this panel to Elizabeth Anker at anker@cornell.edu.

African Writing, the “Global Novel,” and the Question of World Literature
Magalí Armillas-Tiseyra, Penn State University
This panel proposes to explore the relationship of the contemporary African novel to the category of World Literature. African literary studies has long grappled with varying scales of nation, region (within and beyond the nation), continent, and hemisphere, as well as with the international circulations of cultural production (flowing North to South and vice versa). The success of writers such as Teju Cole, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Helon Habila, and NoViolet Bulawayo (to name a few)—African writers who do not work or live exclusively in Africa—has renewed the critical conversation about the definition of African literature and the specificity of its location. Aiming to address these questions, phrases such as “global African writer,” “post-national,” and “Afropolitan” have recently entered the critical lexicon. With this in mind, this panel will ask: what models of World Literature are possible when we take African literature as its starting case? To what extent should existing paradigms of national as well as World literature be revised? And, finally, what critical terminology is necessary to account for the complex circulations of these contemporary writers, their texts, and the novel form itself? Please submit your proposal for this panel to Magalí Armillas-Tiseyra at marmillas@psu.edu.

Assia Djebar in the World

Ben Baer, Princeton University

This panel attends to the literary works—in particular the novels—of the late Assia Djebar. A writer of the Mediterranean, of Africa and Europe, France and the Maghreb; a feminist and activist, Djebar in her writing challenges many of the identitarian or ethnocentrically cosmopolitan axioms of World Literature. The panel intends to consider the concrete detail of Djebar's fiction as a close engagement with colonial and postcolonial violence; the predicaments of women in the postcolonial state; histories of complicity; the difficulties of ethnocentrism, identitarianism, and fundamentalisms of many kinds; and the imagining of alliances across unpredictable lines. We ask how it is possible today to read Djebar as a global figure against prevailing globalizations (capitalist or Islamic); and what the place of the novel might be as the medium of such reflections. Please submit your proposal for this panel to Ben Baer at benbaer@princeton.edu.

The Novel in or against Neoliberalism

Timothy Bewes, Brown University

“Neoliberal rationality,” writes Wendy Brown, “disseminates the model of the market to all domains and activities ... and configures human beings exhaustively as market actors, always, only, and everywhere as homo oeconomicus.” As an extension or universalization of economic logic, neoliberalism functions in at least two modes, both of which are relevant to the study of the novel: as an ideology, and as a form of governance. In critical commentary on neoliberalism the difference between these two modes is often eclipsed or obscured. This panel considers the World Literature hypothesis in the light of the economizing logic of neoliberalism, and proposes a series of questions: To what extent are data-driven modes of analysis complicit with the depoliticizing economism of neoliberal logic? What is the future of the novel, or novel criticism, when all models of knowledge and experience seem reducible to algorithmic patterns of behavior (Vilém Flusser)? What would be the political significance of a literature whose origin, implications and effects were entirely programmable? What orders of significance can be said to survive the encroachment of biopolitics into our approaches and categories of reading? The substance of these questions may be summed up in a single formulation: Can any elements of novels, or the novel, be said to escape the economizing effects of neoliberalism? Please submit your proposal for this panel to Timothy Bewes at bewes@brown.edu.

The Optics of Novelization: Time, Geography, and Epistemology

Paul Bové, University of Pittsburgh

This panel will present papers that theorize the novel in relation to space and geography--national vs. world literatures; epistemology--new forms of information and the speed of their circulation as in finance; time--conditions of form that create or avoid anamorphosis in conditions of celerity. Careful considerations of how the novel functions now and how novels in their history name and embody a formal problem of perception and knowledge formation. Staging as well a contest over the priorities of space and time in novelization and novel as knowledge in relation to information. Speed and celerity inflect epistemologies, temporalities, and geographies of form. Please submit your proposal for this panel to
Paul Bové at bove@pitt.edu.

Reading Contemporary Fiction: Elena Ferrante's My Brilliant Friend
Amanda Claybaugh, Harvard University

This is one of a pair of "Reading Novels Together" panels, the other run by John Plotz and Deidre Lynch (one per day of the conference). Each novel (one in English, the other not, but both widely translated and circulating as “world novels”) to be presented by a pair of conveners to a pre-admitted seminar of up to 20 participants. Sign-up required; reading the whole novel required. No papers prepared in advance, though the two conveners will come equipped with talking points to get the discussion off the ground. No end product envisioned other than the pleasure of reading in concert with scholars from diverse fields. Please submit your request to join this panel to Amanda Claybaugh at amanda_claybaugh@harvard.edu.

The Novel across World-Literatures
César Domínguez, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

The aim of this panel is to explore the case of novels that criss-cross "world-literatures"—meaning fragments of the literary world, “autonomous” sections of the planet that seem to provide their own resources and linkages for novelistic production—through the lens of translation, which mobilizes them across diverse fields that variously unite and further fragment them. Papers might consider novels that move across different comparative contexts, from one multilingual region of the world to another, so that the novel's beginning is comparative in a relatively local way before moving out to other regional contexts. How, then, do regions and micro-worlds mediate the single-scale distinction between nation and world? Please submit your proposal for this panel to César Domínguez at cesar.dominguez@usc.es.

Print Capitalism in the (Post)Colony
Nergis Erturk, Penn State University

This panel seeks papers examining the (post)colonial novel in the context of histories of what Anderson called “print-capitalism.” Possible topics may include: the novel form and serialization, vernacularization, translation, and/or philological revolutions of the 19th century; orality and print culture; the publics of the (post)colonial novel; Bildungsroman in a gendered context; authorial sovereignty and (dis)possession. Please submit your proposal for this panel to Nergis Erturk at mue5@psu.edu.

The Sea and Atopical space
Penny Fielding, University of Edinburgh

The sea allows the world to be imagined as a global entirety seemingly without borders or geographical demarcation. Yet oceans may be superscribed with the ideological markers of war, commerce, science, or sport. The panel would address questions of fictional representation when atopical space becomes ideologically charged and would trace worldwide journeys in the development of the novel. Please submit your proposal for this panel to Penny Fielding at penny.fielding@ed.ac.uk.

The World of the Novel: Non-Eurocentric Visions of Cosmopolis in Twentieth and Twenty-first Century Novels
Ronald Judy, University of Pittsburgh

This panel explores how novels produced in periods and zones of disputed nationalism problematize dominant theorizations of the cosmopolitan world. Chief concerns are: the representation of space and time in relation to historical change (What is progress?), as well as the nature of the person articulated in the non-Eurocentric cosmopolis. Please submit your proposal for this panel to Ronald Judy at buchtnfar@pitt.edu.
The Age of the “Anglophone” Novel: World Literature and Its Mediaries
Maryam Khan, Lahore University of Management Sciences, and Aamir Mufti, University of California, Los Angeles

To extend Jonathan Arac’s idea of "The Age of the Novel" further, perhaps we can think of the contemporary moment in the history of World Literature as "The Age of the ‘Anglophone’ Novel." If in the past three decades or so, the Anglophone novel has become a sign of World Literature itself, then what place do vernacular forms hold in this fraught formation? Is the Anglophone novel ever in conversation with non-Western literary and linguistic formations? Please submit your proposal for this panel to Maryam Khan at maryam.wasif@lums.edu.pk and Aamir Mufti at mufti@humnet.ucla.edu.

Beyond English: The Non-Anglophone “World Novel”
B. Venkat Mani, University of California, Davis

In the last two decades, non-Anglophone novelists such as Bolaño, Murakami, Pamuk, Petterson and others have reimagined the novelistic form and content. With huge readerships in their homelands and abroad, their works have challenged the hegemony of the global Anglophone novel. Is there a “world novel” beyond English? How is the non-Anglophone novel reshaping our understanding of contemporary world literature? How do we evaluate the non-Anglophone novel beyond its reception and circulation in the English-speaking world? These questions are central to this panel, which seeks to shift focus from the global Anglophone novel as the only major genre of contemporary world literature, thinking about what constitutes technical, sociological, and interpretative knowledge in the study of global and world fiction. Please submit your proposal for this panel to B. Venkat Mani at bvmani@wisc.edu.

Platforms of Global Fiction
John Marx, University of California, Davis, and Aarthi Vadde, Duke University

Recent interventions in world literature, sociologies of literature, and the digital humanities suggest we rethink what counts as the content, form, media, and context of global fiction. Yet those interventions are not typically thought together. One wonders: Is this because identifying and interpreting specific instances of world literature; investigating sociological aspects of novel production, circulation, and consumption; or asking what digital humanities contribute to our knowledge of fiction on a global scale involve fundamentally antagonistic methods or because we have lacked a way of bringing them into fruitful dialog? We bet that productive conversation is possible. Inspired by the MIT Press “Platform Studies” book series overseen by Ian Bogost and Nick Monfort, we suggest “Platforms” as an organizing rubric for bringing together these seemingly divergent approaches to studying and indeed constructing the category of world or global fiction.

In that book series, “platform studies” encourages digital media scholars to examine the role that technical systems (hardware and software platforms) play in the cultural processes of video game design and in the affective experiences of users (players). Among its virtues, platform studies encourages its contributors to think of themselves as collaborating on a collective analysis of content, form, media, and machine. While literary scholars are more than familiar with a range of analytic paradigms, we are less well practiced at assessing their cumulative impact. To address this lack, we invite papers that engage with the notion of literary platforms (a list might include: print and screen hardware, language, genre or form, paratext, etc.) via diverse methodological approaches. We hope this panel will provide new ways for thinking about what constitutes technical, sociological, and interpretative knowledge in the study of global and world fiction. Please submit your proposal for this panel to John Marx at jmarx@ucdavis.edu and Aarthi Vadde at aarthi.vadde@duke.edu.

Dystopian Novels of the Twenty-first Century
Giuseppina Mecchia, University of Pittsburgh
As novelistic forms, dystopias have a long tradition in the literary world. Their ethical and political ambiguity, as well as their generic flexibility, make them a form of choice for several highly controversial authors in different national and linguistic contexts. Our panel is open to the inclusion of certain historical novels, which we will read as "dystopias of the past": in this particular form, historical events are re-written in various far-fetched ways, according to conspiratorial, reactionary or depressive modes of thinking. Ultimately, the panel wishes to re-examine the ethical and political import of the novel form in the 21st century through the careful examination of one of its most enduring and popular genres. Please submit your proposal for this panel to Giuseppina Mecchia at mecchia@pitt.edu.

**Populations and World Literature**

Mario Ortiz-Robles, University of Wisconsin

The corpus we know as “world literature” is organized according to nations, languages, and genres. What would it be like to conceive of world literature as a function of populations? Attention to the categories used to describe populations might yield new configurations that transcend the way world literature gets historicized. Rubrics such as a “literature of the poor,” “the novel of orphanhood,” or the “crowd in fiction” would certainly overlap but also go beyond traditional disciplinary fields, languages, and national literatures. Furthermore, older categories, such as the novel of adultery and the Bildungsroman, could be revitalized when submitted to the conceptual pressure of biopolitics. The point is not to privilege the sorts of rationalizations that go into making biological life the object of political organization; it is to use these categories to make visible the structures that are already in place in the creation of a corpus we call “world literature.” This panel invites papers that address the concept of population in the novel from any methodological perspective. Some of the questions that could inform the panel include: What sorts of reading practices can be used to read the populations of world literature? What is the role of the novel in understanding the world as a set of populations? Are novelistic cycles and encyclopedic fictions uniquely suited to convey population dynamics or do shorter forms offer a better perspective on populations and world literature? Please submit your proposal for this panel to Mario Ortiz-Robles at mortizrobes@wisc.edu.

**Presentism and Pastism**

Bruce Robbins, Columbia University

The manifesto of the V21 group states, among its other points, that "one outcome of post-historicist interpretation may be a new openness to presentism: an awareness that our interest in [past periods] is motivated by certain features of our own moment… Presentism is not a sin, but nor are all forms of presentism equally valuable. The variations of and alternatives to presentism as such have not yet been adequately described or theorized." There is also such a thing as pastism. Its alternatives too need to be more adequately described and theorized. The aim of this panel is to apply these considerations to the novel. Please submit your proposal for this panel to Bruce Robbins at bwr2001@columbia.edu.

**The Problematic of Connection**

Ellen Rooney, Brown University, and Khachig Töloöyan, Wesleyan University

World literature is a polemical field, in many respects still murky, ill-defined, and baggy, as is the form dubbed the global novel. The diverging models that focus on mobility, circulation, and exchange, or on the dissemination of the novel form, both offer critiques of the domination, inequality and neoliberal empire that characterize the field of world literature. Yet critics of both remain dissatisfied with their apparent reinscriptions of the logics of center and periphery, cosmopolitan and parochial. A key component of ambient notions of world literature is a celebration of connection, which seems to be an inescapable element of the global novel.

On this account, global novels are made possible by proliferating transnational, cross-border connections, by the migrant mobility of people, capital, and traveling theory, a mobility that leads to multiplicity and minority within national spaces and arguably to the global novel and its urgent ethics of connection. However, in the study of the global novel, ethics has been reduced to the problem of how to denounce and redress inequalities within a generally welcome system of new
connections. Might we change the question? We invite papers that interrogate the problematic of connection in the global novel. Can novels that dissent from the current ethic of connection and express reservations, or even hostility, towards connection, count as world literature? Do novels that inscribe incommensurabilty and untranslatablity, that lament the costs, look away from, or are suspicious of connection, offer an alternative vision of the world and world literature? Can a diasporic novel reject hybridity? Is there a logic of the sedentary or misanthropy, solitude or isolation by which a global novel might project another world? What axiomatics of connection have to be rethought by our critical discourse to accommodate such texts? Please submit your proposal for this panel to Ellen Rooney at Ellen_Rooney@Brown.edu.

**Legacies and Limits of Said**

Judy Suh, Duquesne University

This panel seeks to illuminate the legacies and limits of Edward Said’s groundbreaking critical works. Which of Said’s lines of thinking ought to be taken up and extended in discussions of contemporary and historical fiction? Which ought to be revised in light of new developments in literature, criticism, or history? Please submit your proposal for this panel to Judy Suh at suhj@duq.edu.

**Genre Fiction and World Literature**

Rebecca Walkowitz, Rutgers University

What is the relationship between genre fiction and world literature? Is genre fiction the quintessence of world literature? Or is it the opposite of world literature? How does the analysis of genre fiction change, refine, or recalibrate the concept of world literature? How does the analysis of world literature alter what genre fiction is and does? Where do the two histories intersect? Please submit your proposal for this panel to Rebecca Walkowitz at rebecca.walkowitz@rutgers.edu.

**Generations and Contemporary Fiction**

Jeffrey Williams, Carnegie Mellon University

Investigating the concept of generations and how it applies, and doesn't apply, to contemporary fiction. How does one's generational position shape identity and particular cultures? How does it show in literature? Is it primarily a national cultural distinction? or are there world generations? Please submit a proposal to: Jeffrey Williams at jwill@andrew.cmu.edu.

**Ethnohistory, the Novel, and World Literature**

Yi Zheng, University of New South Wales

Novels about place, traveling between places or historical transformations of a place can be understood as ethnohistories in fictional form. This includes the roman fleuve, regional novels, native-soil fiction, travel novels and gazetteer-style historical fiction. These narratives about local worlds, changes of world in locality and traversing different worlds are place specific and location based. They delineate the minutiae of life and feelings or moments of great change of a particular place at a particular time, record with an ethnographic eye different customs, habits, and structure of feelings, or the routes, vessels and changing mind and body between locations.

The session proposes to revisit these place-specific novels, and ask questions such as how might they work for or against the idea of a world literature, in particular how as specific stories of everyday world change and epic place history they contribute to or complicate the novel as a prototype in world literature. Or how might they compel redefinitions of the world and world literature in spatial-conceptual and formal terms. Please submit your proposal for this panel to Yi Zheng at Yi.Zheng3@unsw.edu.au.
Caste and Life Narratives:
Special Issue of Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly

Guest Editors: Dr. S. Shankar, Department of English, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, USA, and Dr. Charu Gupta, Department of History, University of Delhi, India. Submit: 400-word abstracts to S. Shankar (subraman@hawaii.edu) and Charu Gupta (charu7@hotmail.com) by September 15, 2015.

Life Narratives (biographies, autobiographies, Facebook posts, legal testimonials, personal essays, memoirs, blogs, confessional poetry—the possibilities are many) are an important site for the construction as well as dismantling of identities. This special issue of the journal Biography explores the linkages between caste identities and representations of a life in diverse modes and languages. Caste—a social category based on hierarchy, heredity and ideologies of contamination and exclusion—is often associated with South Asia and more particularly India. The recent political as well as intellectual mobilization of Dalits in India provides an important impetus for this special issue. The critiques of caste offered by Ambedkar, Periyar and other anti-caste crusaders are at the heart of this special issue. However, the special issue does not restrict itself to Dalit or similar life narratives but rather is concerned with caste in general. Accordingly, the special issue sets out to offer theoretical and critical examinations of a variety of narrations of lives lived under structures of caste but is motivated throughout by Dalit and other insights critical of caste. Papers may seek to answer:

- How have autobiographical forms such as testimonio been important in testifying to the breadth and ferocity of caste oppression?
- Why have autobiographies played such an important role in the recent boom in Dalit writing in Marathi, Hindi, and Tamil?
- What is the role of caste in biographies of Indian nationalist leaders such as Gandhi and Nehru?
- Can the visual representations of B. R. Ambedkar, ubiquitous in certain urban spaces of India, be read as forms of life narrative, and if so, what do they narrate?
- In what ways are the lives of “low caste” people narrated in folk forms (for example, the songs of Gadar)?
- How is caste (mis)represented in biopics (Periyar, The Dirty Picture, Bandit Queen)?
- How have social media, websites and blogs enabled or otherwise distorted the representation of lives marked by caste?
- What is the role of caste in literary autobiographies by writers in English such as Nirad C. Chaudhuri and R. K. Narayan?
- How do life narratives reveal or veil the intersections of caste and other social categories such as gender and sexuality?
- How do diasporic life narratives represent or ignore caste?
- Given the strong association of caste with Hinduism, how is caste represented in a Christian or Muslim life narrative (for example in the work of Tamil writer Bama)?
- Are life narratives of women different from men, and what happens when they intersect with narrativizations of caste?
- Are life narratives by Dalits as much about the individual as the community?
- When do narratives of pain and suffering come to constitute the cultural capital of Dalit life testimonies?
- How does quotidian and routine caste violence, through which stigma is perpetuated in, on and through Dalit bodies, undergird life narratives of Dalits?
- Can one discern shifts or divergent strands in life narratives about caste, whereby stigmatization has given way to a “positive” ethical assertion of life?

Although caste has come to be associated almost exclusively with India or South Asia, it is not unique to that part of the world. This special issue is open to work that explores representations of caste in life narratives from other parts of the world; and also to comparative studies that might, for example, juxtapose representations of caste and race in life narratives. Please note that Biography will arrange for contributors to present drafts of their papers at the University of Hawai‘i in Honolulu at the end of August 2016.
New Titles in South Asian Studies
Compiled by Deepa Banerjee & Avinanda Nath Datta


Olson, Grant, and Olson, Chalermsee. *A Sandy Path near the Lake: In Search of the Illusory Khemananda*. Newcastle, UK: Grant Olson, 2015. Print.

Call for Papers

The 2016 Regular Issue of the South Asian Review

South Asian Review, the refereed journal of the South Asian Literary Association, invites submissions for the 2016 Regular Issue, Volume 37, Number 2 (October/November). SAR is a representative scholarly forum for the examination of South Asian languages and literatures in a broad cultural context. The journal invites healthy and constructive dialogue on issues pertaining to South Asia, especially to its literature and the sister arts. It welcomes critical and analytical essays on any aspect or period of South Asian literature (ancient, precolonial, colonial, and, indeed, the postcolonial). SAR is open to all ideas, positions, and critical and theoretical approaches. Recognizing the linguistic and cultural diversity of the subcontinent, the journal stays interested in essays about intercultural, comparative, and interdisciplinary studies in the humanities. For periodic publications, SAR encourages essays on music, painting, sculpture, architecture, and other related fields. The following areas are of special interest to the journal:

- South Asian Literatures
- South Asian Languages
- South Asian Studies
- South Asian Culture
- South Asian Diaspora
- Comparative Aesthetics
- Literary Theory & Criticism
- Cultural Studies
- Colonial Studies
- Postcolonial Studies
- Comparative Literature
- Women’s/Queer Studies
- Film Studies
- Transcultural/Transnational Studies

Critical articles of 15–25 pages, prepared in accordance with the MLA style, accompanied by a 100-word abstract and a biographical note of nearly 50 words, must be received by November 30, 2015. Articles should be sent electronically. All correspondence pertaining to the 2014 and following issues should be addressed to:

Dr. P. S. Chauhan
Professor of English, and Editor, South Asian Review
Arcadia University
450 South Easton Road
Glenside, PA 19038-3295
Phone: 215-517-2401 | ausar@arcadia.edu
SOUTH ASIAN LITERARY ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

If you have not yet renewed your membership in SALA for calendar year 2015, please take a moment to do it now. Membership in SALA entitles you to keep receiving the SALA Newsletter, as well as to receive the refereed journal, South Asian Review.

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- Retired Faculty $45
- Assistant Professor: $45 ($5.00 of each membership for Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor goes toward SALA’s fund to assist Graduate Student travel to SALA’s yearly conference)
- Associate Professor: $55
- Full Professor: $65
- Life Membership: $400 (Life Memberships are payable in two installments, the first by 15 May and the second by 31 August, 2016)

Library Subscription fee for 2015: $90
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Checks should be made payable to the South Asian Literary Association.

Please return the above form with a check in American dollars payable to the South Asian Literary Association to:

Dr. Umme Al-wazedi, Treasurer
Department of English
Augustana College
639 38th Street
Rock Island, IL  61201

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SOUTH ASIAN LITERARY ASSOCIATION
An Allied Organization of the Modern Language Association
http://www.southasianliteraryassociation.org/

- **SALA promotes** knowledge of, and scholarly interest in, the languages, cultures, and literatures of South Asia and the South Asian diaspora. Membership in SALA is open to all individuals and libraries/institutions/organizations interested in South Asian literature, culture, languages, and philosophy, and also in comparative studies.

- **SALA hosts** one guaranteed session, one non-guaranteed session, and one collaborative session at the Modern Language Association’s annual convention and, in addition, hosts an independent annual conference during the same week as the MLA Convention, usually 2-3 days before.

- **SALA publishes** salaam: the newsletter of the south asian literary association. It carries announcements of its MLA sessions, scholarly activities and accomplishments of its members, new titles in the field, and other valuable information for those interested in South Asian literatures.

- **SALA publishes** South Asian Review (SAR), a representative scholarly forum for the examination of South Asian languages and literatures in a broad cultural context. The journal invites healthy and constructive dialogue on issues pertaining to South Asian literatures, arts, and cultures.

- **SAR addresses** a diverse audience of various disciplines, welcomes critical and analytical essays on any aspect or period of South Asian literature (ancient, pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial). SAR is open to all critical and theoretical approaches.

- **SAR Membership includes** subscriptions to salaam and the South Asian Review.

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**Helpful Hyperlinks to Digital Resources:**

- The SALA Listserve
- South Asian Journalists Association (SAJA)
- South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA)
- South Asian Bar Association of North America (SABA)
- Atlantic Council South Asia Center, USA
- South Asia Center, the U of Washington, Seattle (UW)
- Gairola Indian Art & Architecture Collection @ the UW
- Institute for Comp Literature & Society @ Columbia U
- Postcolonial Digital Humanities (#DHPoco)
- South Asian Studies dot org in Munich, Germany
- Trikone, for LGBTQ folks of South Asian descent
- Disability in South Asia, The World Bank
- API Chaya for women facing domestic abuse (Seattle)
- Tasveer independent South Asian Film (Seattle)
- Center for South Asia, U of Wisconsin—Madison
- Postcolonial Studies @ Emory U (Atlanta, USA)
- South Asian Friendship Center (Chicago, USA)

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If you have personal tributes for colleagues in our field who have passed away that you would like us to include in the newsletter, please email Rahul Gairola in time for the Winter 2016 issue of salaam.

If you have announcements/picture/stories/events/CFPs or anything else that you would like to see published in the Winter issue of salaam, please email them as MS Word and high JPEG file attachments by December 1, 2015, to:

Rahul K. Gairola at rgairola@uw.edu

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