Salaam! Namaste! Howdy, ya’ll! On behalf of the executive committee, I extend a warm welcome to our 16th annual conference, in Austin, Texas, my home State! Over the past year, we have been preparing for this moment. Co-Chairs Jana Fedtke and Abdollah “Abdy” Zahiri have done an amazing job! When you get a chance, please thank them.

Also, thanks to Nalini Iyer, our outstanding secretary, Umme Al-Wazedi, our adept treasurer, and to Aniruddha Mukhopadhyay, who stepped in as the web manager when Madhurima Chakraborty stepped down. Thanks to them both for their efforts to make that transition seamless. Kris Stokes continues to provide his web expertise, so that our website is useful and navigable. Summer Perverz has truly been a co-leader. Rahul Gairola, editor of salaam, has continued to shape our newsletter into informative and relevant coherence. And, thanks to Melanie Wattenbarger, for her work with the graduate caucus and a special task force. Perhaps SALA's crown jewel, though, is our beloved Professor P. S. Chauhan who manages our award-winning journal, South Asian Review. He and his associate editors and staff produce outstanding volumes.

Thank you, also, to the rest of our executive committee, who have contributed their voices, energy, and moral support throughout the last year. A special thanks goes to Amrit Singh, who has coordinated the Hamara Mushaira for many years, and serves as an associate editor of the SAR. For six years, he has also served as the SALA Advisor. As that term ends, and he moves into other forms of responsibility, we wish him well.

I am pleased to announce that we are honoring Dr. Barbara Harlow, the Louann and Larry Temple Centennial Professor of English Literature at the University of Texas at Austin, as our Distinguished Achievement Awardee and keynote speaker. Also, SALA is featuring creative writers Chaitali Sen and Roshni Rustomji at our Hamara Mushaira. What a special year of scholarly and creative writing brilliance.

We are represented well at the MLA Convention, with two sessions: 683: Censorship in South Asia [a Presidential Theme session]; and, 790: The Postcolonial-Studies Generation. Our Facebook Group Page now has nearly 7k members. We are fiscally sound. We are still working on becoming classified as a 501c3 non-profit organization. Finally, thanks to Bill King at the Wyndham Garden Hotel, and to Mark Carr-Rollitt and his Global Synergies. Mark and I are already working on the venues for Philadelphia (2017) and New York (2018).

Personally, as my second term as president is now half over, I wish to thank you for allowing me to serve you. The work is unimaginably taxing but inexpressibly worthwhile. You are all very special, and I look forward to visiting with all of you. Have a great conference!

Moumin Quazi
SALA 2016

Cultural Practices in the South Asian Public Sphere
The 16th Annual Conference of the South Asian Literary Association
JANUARY 4-6, 2016
Wyndham Garden Hotel, 3401 S IH 35, Austin, Texas

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE (for online updates, click HERE)

MONDAY: JANUARY 4, 2016

6:00-9:00 PM  MEETING: SALA Executive Committee
Lake Austin

DAY 1: TUESDAY: JANUARY 5, 2016

8:00 AM onward  REGISTRATION
Lobby

9:00-9:30 AM  CONFERENCE WELCOME: Moumin Quazi, SALA President
Lake Austin
OPENING: Jana Fedtke & Abdollah Zahiri, Conference Co-Chairs

9:30-10:45 AM  SESSION 1 (PANELS 1A, 1B, & 1C)

Panel 1A  Kashmir Unfinished: Aesthetics, Politics, and Solidarity
Lake Austin  Panel Chair: John Maerhofer, The City University of New York

The Work of Mourning: Affective Law and the Search for Disappeared Men in Kashmir
Ather Zia, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley

Emerging Kashmiri Literature: Rethinking Violence and Resistance in a “State of Exception”
Amrita Ghosh, Seton Hall University

John Maerhofer, The City University of New York

Panel 1B  Pakistan in the Public Sphere: Literature, Pop Music, Drones, and Film
“No sir! Na janaab! Ehtesaab bas ehtesaab!”: Pakistani Popular Music as Resistance
Saba Pirzadeh, Purdue University & Tehmina Pirzada, Purdue University

Drone-Zone as a Camp: A New Public Space in Pakistan
Muhammad Waqar Azeem, Binghamton University-State University of New York

“…that shithole”: A Post-9/11 Portrayal of a Public and Private Pakistan in Season 4 of Homeland
Jana Fedtke, American University of Sharjah

The Polyglot Colonial and Precolonial Translations of the Qissa-i-Kamroop-o-Kala
Zeeshan Riyaz Reshamwala, University of Denver

Pedagogy of Alienation: Epistemic Hegemony of the Mental Space and Fatal Fault Lines in the National Space
Shahzeb Khan, University of the Punjab, Lahore

The Murder of the Author: Censorship and Indian Public Sphere
Sourit Bhattacharya, University of Warwick

The Courtyard House and the City: Private and Public Spatial Consciousness in South Asian Muslim Women’s Literary Self-Representation
Diviani Chaudhuri, State University of New York at Binghamton

Let the Women Speak: Colonized Representations of Muslim Women in Media
Sobia Khan, Richland College, Dallas

Literary Public Sphere/s and the History of Pakistani Literature in English
Waseem Anwar, Forman Christian College University, Lahore

Art as Representation of Contestations within the Public Sphere: The Case of the Indian Statue of Mother Mary
Richa Raj, Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi

Hierarchies and Counterpublics in Chaitanya Tamhane’s Court
Shakti Jaising, Drew University
Volatile Virtuopolis: Contemporary Feminist Movement and Mobilization in Urban India
Shreyosi Mukherjee, National University of Singapore

Panel 2C  Alternative Publics
San Gabriel
Panel Chair: Nalini Iyer, Seattle University

Locational Counterpublics, Human Rights, and Sexuality in India
Kanika Batra, Texas Tech University

Sitthani—Verbal Porn Performed in the Public Sphere during a Pious Ceremony
Rajnish Dhawan, University of the Fraser Valley

Speaking for the 'Other': In/authenticity of Representation: A Study of Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss
Meena Sharma, Dibrugarh University, Assam

12:15-1:45 PM  LUNCH on your own

1:45-3:00 PM  SESSION 3: PRESIDENTIAL ROUNDTABLE (introduced by Moumin Quazi)

Panel 3A  “Intolerance and Challenges to Free Speech in the Indian Public Sphere”
Lake Austin
Panelists:
Josna Rege, Worcester State University
Nalini Iyer, Seattle University
Sourit Bhattacharya, University of Warwick
Amritjit Singh, Ohio University

3:15-4:30 PM  SESSION 4 (PANELS 4A, 4B, & 4C)

Panel 4A  Minorities, Diaspora, and the Digital Public Sphere
Lake Austin
Panel Chair: Moumin Quazi, Tarleton State University

Refeudalization of the Public Sphere in Relation to the Tibetan Question
Abheeshta Nath, Govt. College for Women, Kerala University

Desi Food Blogs in the Diaspora & the Transnational Public Sphere
Sukanya Gupta, University of Southern Indiana

“We Are All Untouchable Until No One Is”: Dalit Women, Dissidence, and the Digital Public Sphere
Ruma Sinha, Syracuse University

Panel 4B  Phantasms of Neoliberalism and the South Asian Public Sphere
Executive Learning Center
Panel Chair: Gautam Basu Thakur, Boise State University

Dawn of the Living Dead: South Asian Zombie Films and Social Critique
Panel 4C
Public Spaces in Novels of the South Asian Diaspora
San Gabriel
Panel Chair: Summer Pervez, Forman Christian College University, Lahore

An Ear to the Spheres: Attending to National and Transnational Political Communities in Three Novels of the South Asian Diaspora
Josna Rege, Worcester State University

Lying in Public(s): The Multiple Public Spheres of Meera Syal’s *Anita and Me*
Asha Jeffers, York University

Personalising the Public: Reading Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland*
Nasmeem Akhtar, Dibrugarh University, Assam

END OF SESSIONS FOR DAY 1

4:30-5:30 PM
GRADUATE CAUCUS
Lake Austin

5:30-6:30 PM
GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING
Lake Austin

6:30-8:15 PM
DINNER on your own

8:15-10:00 PM
*Hamara Mushaira*: Literary Arts Event
Organized and moderated by Amritjit Singh, Ohio University
Invited Readers: Chaitali Sen (Austin, TX) and Roshni Rustomji (Alameda, CA)
Featuring several readers of the SALA membership

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY: JANUARY 6, 2016

8:00- 8:45 AM
REGISTRATION
Lobby

8:00-9:00 AM
GRADUATE PROFESSIONALIZATION CAUCUS
Panel Chair: Aniruddha Mukhopadhyay, University of Florida
This panel is designed to benefit graduate student members of SALA, by providing them with professionalization advice from more experienced members of the organization. The panel eschews formal presentations and instead uses three brief 5 minute contributions from experts in the field to allow for a more robust discussion session.
1. **Aniruddha Mukhopadhyay** (University of Florida) – Panel Chair
2. **Moumin Quazi** (Tarleton State University) – will speak on the importance of service experience to a candidate’s marketability
3. **Cynthia Leenerts** (East Stroudsburg University) – will speak on the ways in which young scholars can expand their research and teaching horizons beyond their specializations
4. **Melanie Wattenbarger** (University of Mumbai) – will speak on the challenges of doing international research in the field of South Asian Studies, particularly as a woman

**9:15-10:30 AM**

**SESSION 5 (PANELS 5A, 5B, & 5C)**

**Panel 5A**

**A New Feminist Public Sphere**

*Panel Chair: Reshmi Mukherjee, Boise State University*

- The Millennial Indian Woman and an After-life of the Public Sphere
  Manisha Basu, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

- Indian Women Food Bloggers: Creating Contradictory Knowledge of "Home,” Domestic Labor and Culinary Creativity
  Nandini Dhar, Florida International University

- Cyber Rhetoric and Indian Women’s Empowerment
  Reshmi Mukherjee, Boise State University

**Panel 5B**

**Islamophobia: The Public Muslim and the Critical Muslim**

*Panel Chair: Amrita Ghosh, Seton Hall University*

- The Muslim (as) Terrorist in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s *One Amazing Thing*
  Atreyee Gohain, University of North Florida

- The Indian Interwebs, Islamophobia, and Its Counterpublics
  Afrin Zeenat, University of Dhaka

- “A Tense Terrain”: Family Mirroring Nation in Wajahat Ali’s *The Domestic Crusaders*
  Elizabeth Redwine, The Abbey Theatre

**Panel 5C**

**Sri Lanka in the Public Sphere**

*Panel Chair: Amritjit Singh, Ohio University*

- Memoir and the Public Sphere: *Running in the Family* and the Shape of its Audience
  Roger McNamara, Texas Tech University

- Bricks, Mortar, Words: Memorializing Public Spaces Destroyed in the Sri Lankan Ethnic Conflict
  Maryse Jayasuriya, University of Texas at El Paso

- Public History Embodied
  Kathleen Hewett-Smith, American University of Sharjah
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Session Title</th>
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<td>10:45 AM-12:00 PM</td>
<td>SESSION 6 (PANELS 6A, 6B, &amp; 6C)</td>
<td>Lake Austin</td>
<td>Panel Chair: Dorothy Lane, Luther College, University of Regina</td>
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<td>Literary Elites and Canon Formation</td>
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<td>and the Postcolonial Bomb</td>
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<td>Dibyadyuti Roy, West Virginia University</td>
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<td>Literary Public Culture: From AIPWS to Jaipur</td>
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<td>Michaela Henry, Brandeis University</td>
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<td>Panel 6B</td>
<td>Executive Learning</td>
<td>Panel Chair: Abdollah Zahiri, Seneca College</td>
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<td>Tossing Caste, Nation, Economics and Race into</td>
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<td>Writing the Modern, Re-writing the Social:</td>
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<td>Diasporic Agency: Deepa Mehta’s Centripetal</td>
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<td>Panel 6C</td>
<td>San Gabriel</td>
<td>Chair: Kathleen Hewett-Smith, American University of Sharjah</td>
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<td>Speaking for Diasporic Youth: Tanuja Desai Hidier’s</td>
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<td>Young Adult Novels</td>
<td>Nalini Iyer, Seattle University</td>
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<td>12:00-1:30 PM</td>
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<td>1:30-2:45 PM</td>
<td>SESSION 7 (PANELS 7A, 7B, &amp; 7C)</td>
<td>Lake Austin</td>
<td>Panel Chair: Umme Al-wazedi, Augustana College</td>
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<td>Myths, Spirituality, and the Cinematic Imagination</td>
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<td>The Cultural Manifestation of Surpanakha and Her</td>
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<td>Necessary Promiscuity</td>
<td>Devaleena Das, University of Wisconsin Madison</td>
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Cinema and Social Space: A Perspective on Images of Femininity and Practices of Viewership in Hindi Cinema
Nisha Tiwari, Independent Scholar

Urban Space and the “Uncinematic”
Pragya Trivedi, University of California, Irvine

Panel 7B  Imagining the South Asian Body
Executive Learning Center
Panel Chair: Kanika Batra, Texas Tech University

The Neo-Intimate Hindu Sphere: Sexual ‘Purity’ in the Neometropolitan Indian City
Debojoy Chanda, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Egocentric Monitoring within the Public Sphere: Imagining the South Asian Body
Mayuri Deka, The College of the Bahamas

“That Turning Blur is Me”: The Photographed Body in Mukul Kesavan’s Looking Through Glass and Hari Kunzru’s The Impressionist
J. Edward Mallot, Arizona State University

Panel 7C  Public Spaces
San Gabriel
Panel Chair: Asha Jeffers, York University

Rural/Urban Imagination
Sarika Chandra, Wayne State University

Engendering Urban Spaces in Aditya Vikram Sengupta’s Asha Jaoar Majhe
Aniruddha Mukhopadhyay, University of Florida

Spirituality and Public Space
Asha Sen, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

3:00-4:15 PM  SESSION 8 (PANELS 8A, 8B, & 8C)

Panel 8A  Theory in Contexts: Travel, Ecology, and Politics
Lake Austin
Panel Chair: Waseem Anwar, Forman Christian College University, Lahore

Disinherited Migrant Refugees: Neither the Past, the Present nor the Future Belongs to the Silenced Lives of the Tide Country
Hema Chari, California State University, Los Angeles

A Strange Encounter of Aesthetics with an Imperial Public Sphere in Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn’s Poetry of the Taliban
Yubraj Aryal, University of Montreal

Sites of Encounter - Sites of Exchange
Dorothy Lane, Luther College, University of Regina

Panel 8B  Gender in South Asia and the Caribbean Diasporas
Executive Learning Center
Panel Chair: Melanie Wattenbarger, University of Mumbai
Publicity of the Privacy of Purdah: Studying a Memsahib’s Depiction
Susmita Roye, Delaware State University

Challenging the Colonial Narrative: An Exploration of Interviews with Formerly Indentured Women
Alison Klein, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Indo-Trinidadian Women and the Indian Public Sphere: Women under the Influence?
Delphine Munos, University of Liège

Panel 8C Transnational Public Spheres
San Gabriel

Panel Chair: Sobia Khan, Richland College, Dallas

The Diasporic South Asian Public Sphere: Disconnections and Connections in Kiran Desai’s The Inheritance of Loss
Joya Uraizee, Saint Louis University

The Orient Writes Back: Hamid’s The Reluctant Fundamentalist as a Counter-orientalist Narrative
Binod Paudyal, University of Utah

END OF SESSIONS FOR DAY 2

4:30-5:45 PM
Lake Austin

RECEPTION

6:00-7:15 PM
Lake Austin

CONFERENCE KEYNOTE ADDRESS: “IN THE AGE OF UAVS: TARGETED KILLINGS, COLLATERAL DAMAGE, AND DRONES IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE”

Prof. Barbara Harlow, Louann and Larry Temple Centennial Professor of English Literature, University of Texas, Austin

SALA 2016 AWARDS CEREMONY

Prof. Barbara Harlow, Louann and Larry Temple Centennial Professor of English Literature, University of Texas, Austin
SALA Distinguished Achievement in Scholarship Awardee

8:00-10:00 PM
SALA CONFERENCE DINNER (tickets $25)
Bombay Bistro
4200 S. Lamar Blvd.
Austin, TX (512-462-7227)
MLA PANELS OF INTEREST/FEATURING SALA MEMBERS

163. African (American) Diasporic Literature
Thursday, 7 January, 7:00–8:15 p.m., 8B, ACC

A special session

Presiding: Stephanie S. Li, Indiana Univ., Bloomington

1. "Sometimes in America Race Is Class: The Erasure of Class under Race in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah,*" Alpana Sharma, Wright State Univ.
4. "Racial Contingency in *Open City,*" Molly H. Hiro, Univ. of Portland

407. (Mis)Interpreting Jihad: Literary Representations
Friday, 8 January, 5:15–6:30 p.m., 402 JW Marriott

A special session

Presiding: Umme Al-wazedi, Augustana Coll., IL

Speakers: Umme Al-wazedi; Winnie W. Chan, Virginia Commonwealth Univ.; Nouri Gana, Univ. of California, Los Angeles; Feroza Framji Jussawalla, Univ. of New Mexico, Albuquerque; Sobia Khan, Richland Coll.; Justin Neuman, Yale Univ.

Panelists address and assess how the notion of jihad has been misinterpreted by the Euro-American culture, by young people who have joined in fundamentalist activities, and by mainstream American and British as well as postcolonial authors.

Looking back at an MLA 2014 plenary in Chicago, IL (L to R): Mary Louise Pratt, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Shu-mei Shih, A. Suresh Canagarajah, and Moumin Quazi, SALA President. Photo courtesy of Rahul Gairola
MLA Panels of Interest/Featuring SALA Members

MLA Presidential Theme Session
683. Censorship in South Asia: Vernacular (Post)Colonial Contexts

Saturday, 9 January, 5:15–6:30 p.m., 205, JW Marriott

Program arranged by the South Asian Literary Association

Presiding: Nalini Iyer, Seattle Univ.

1. "Iqbal, the Figure of Spinoza, and Ahmadis," Rebecca Faulkner, Princeton Univ.


4. "Perumal Murugan and the Dishonoring of Caste," Subramanian Shankar, Univ. of Hawai‘i, Mānoa

790. The Postcolonial-Studies Generation

Sunday, 10 January, 12:00 noon–1:15 p.m., 203, JW Marriott

Program arranged by the South Asian Literary Association

Presiding: Toral Gajarawala, New York Univ.

1. "Listening to Three Stacks, Reading Gaya Spivak': Das Racist and the Postcolonial-Studies Generation," Liam O'Loughlin, Univ. of Pittsburgh

2. "The Loose Canon: Zia Haider Rahman and Self-Conscious Postcoloniality," Nasia Anam, Univ. of California, Los Angeles


Please consult the Official MLA 2016 Program and Index for additional panels of interest and/or panels which include our members and allied organizations. The SALA Executive Committee wishes you a great time in Austin at SALA and MLA 2016, and welcomes your feedback at any time this winter!
The popular idiom “like father, like son” first appeared in 1787 in the London World Fashionable Advertiser at a time during which the British East India Company had established a foothold in what would become, in 1858, British India. Then, of course, popular perceptions of what exactly constituted a legitimate person were linked to strict definitions of family, country, and belonging. On the cusp of 2016, we yet live in an age where kinship relations shape other power relations and the ways in which we experience social, political, and academic life. This is perhaps why so many academics and political figures are involved in social justice for all. Between their busy schedules, SALA pioneer and former South Asian Review Editor Professor Kamal D. Verma and his son, the Honorable Ambassador Richard Verma, J.D., took some time with us to meditate on the historical connections and familial affiliations that shape each of their careers. The following dialogue took place at Roosevelt House on the grounds of the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India, on Friday, October 23, 2015. Ambassador Verma’s hospitable staff facilitated a cultural exchange that we designed to be a public dialogue of how the academic and professional lives of both Vermas have shaped one another, and each other’s professions, over the years — like father, like son.

Rahul K. Gairola (RKG): What are some of the earliest memories that you have of each other? Professor Verma, I was also interested in knowing if there are any specific memories of Partition that you recall?

Ambassador Verma (RRV): Maybe I can start. I have talked a lot about this in India: rolling into Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in the early 1970s with five kids and my dad starting teaching at the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown. I remember a certain excitement, but also a certain trepidation, even as a little kid, about starting over in a new place and how skillfully my parents navigated all those challenges. I remember that my father was a real task-master for education — about reading, especially. I couldn’t leave the house in the summer without reading first...

RRV: You told a story the other day about how the Muslim families on your street gave the keys to their houses to your dad.

Professor Verma (KDV): What you have here first is the Partition of British-ruled India. Very sad memories. In our case in particular, my wife was an immigrant of a different sort. She was born in West Punjab, now which is a part of Pakistan. Most of the people who migrated during that period have very frustrating, bitter, whatever adjective you want to use, feelings. But the truth is that the kind of experience they would have gone through is not describable. I personally remember having seen the Partition myself, although I was not a part of West Punjab. The Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs — those memories were a part of our family for a long time.

RKG: Sounds just like my father! [laughing]

RRV: Which I always used to complain about, and now I get it, I understand a real commitment to academics the whole way through. But good! [I have] very positive, good memories of new immigrant family struggles and opportunities and a kind of new experience. Over to you.
KDV: Yes, to my father. They were friends of my father who would [say], "We will come back after two weeks or so. Please look after our house," and those two weeks never came. And I don't think they knew that. I think there were lots of ideas. We went to Jalandhar, and it became the center of the immigrants. All those people who came from Lahore, from Multan, whatever, their first places to settle were Amritsar and Jalandhar, but more or less, Jalandhar became the center. Those were very difficult days. Very, very difficult days. And I think that it has been very painful for people; some of them have not forgotten. How can you forget? What will you forget? What does it take to forget? Let me put it this way. You know, you left your people, you left your relatives. Some of them were killed. And then you come here, you live in camps and tents. You do not know where food is going to come, and all of those kinds of very, very difficult problems. And when they [migrants] came, they were and had nothing.

Amitabh Bhatt (AB): You mentioned that you were not there at the time of Partition, that you were here in independent India.

KDV: Yes, but I witnessed it all with my own eyes. I remember these were very difficult times. Very difficult.

RRV: In fact, you said that your high school graduation was delayed by a year. You were supposed to graduate in 1947 and everything stopped for one year. You graduated in '48 instead.

AB: You graduated from where, Sir?

RRV: That was high school in 1948 and then DAV College in Jalandhar.

AB: And you went to see that college, Sir?

KDV: Yes.

RRV: Yes, just last week.

KDV: We were very greatly honored. But now it is a college. It offers about 17-18 graduate degrees in different areas.
security of those first generation families that came over. I think the tendency was to go into fields in science: technology, engineering and medicine, because it provided more stability and it was what I think the parents’ expectation was. A friend of mine joked when I got nominated to be the Ambassador; he emailed me and said, "Now you don’t have to go to medical school to impress your parents. Here’s a credential that will finally take the medical school requirement off of your back" [all laughing].

RKG [teasing]: Is that true, Professor Verma? Does this credential trump going to medical school?

KDV: What he has not told you — he is being very modest — is that he topped the list at Georgetown. He did a very good job as a lawyer. He virtually ran the Senate show when he was Secretary to Harry Reid.

RKG: That makes us Desis feel happy.

KDV: Yes. Harry Reid recognized Richard’s ability, and they worked very closely with each other. This also takes us back to one of the legislators from the area where [we were living in] Georgetown, Pennsylvania: Congressman Murtha. Murtha was very much a great inspiration and mentor to him. There were a number of other factors also, but Richard did a very good job for himself. He was president of the Student Union at Lehigh University; I still remember his speech. I had never heard him speak like that. There was Carl Sagan, the well-known scientist, there and he gave Richard a warm hug.

RRV: This was at the commencement...

KDV: The commencement address.

RRV: That was quite a way to break into public speaking, to speak to 8,000 people [all laughing]!

KDV: Yes, and I think he has worked very hard. He was Assistant Secretary of State for two years and very close to President Obama and others at that time, including Hilary Clinton. As a family we were invited to The White House a couple of times. We were surprised how she depended on him for advice. Secretary Clinton told us a very interesting story. When she found out that he was leaving, she said, “I got up in the morning, and my mood was sort of topsy-turvy. Someone asked me, ‘What’s the matter? Why are you in this kind of cranky mood?,’ and I said Richard is leaving us.” I think he was on several committees that President Obama appointed him on. He’s also one of the top lawyers in Washington D.C.

AB: You are a proud father!

KDV: Yes.

RRV: This can go on for a long time [all laughing].

RKG: As you both sit and reflect together, I believe this is the first father-son interview you have done together?

RRV: Yes, that’s true. I think that’s true.

RKG: How do you see your different career paths converging, or perhaps diverging in respect to South Asian Studies because you both are deeply engaged in this field and through different mediums. Now that we have you both together, how would you meditate on this as a familial duo?

RRV: That’s a really interesting question. Well, you didn’t start out focusing on South Asian literature.

KDV: No.

RRV: And I didn’t start out focusing on South Asian foreign policy or national security. So we’ve both kind of returned to those roots a little later. But I don’t think we set out to do that. But it is interesting how you get drawn back into not only a comfort zone but what you are passionate about. So I would say that’s a fascinating
similarity even though they are different fields. Probably we both have a passion for social justice, as well as standing up for ideas and principles that matter to people through his writing and through my policy and political work as well.

KDV: I think one need not know all of these things. You probably have gone through the same thing yourself, Rahul. But you know, this is a very interesting question which you have raised. When we left India, my subject was of course British Literature. I did my PhD on Percy Shelley, and I wrote a book on him. I taught western literature, British literature. Despite how well we regarded our own culture, it was their literature we were teaching, of course. I was telling this to one of my advisors in Canada who I knew from New York (who was a better Hindu than I am, in several ways). But when we came to the U.S., some of us felt that the Modern Language Association was not fair to us: “You can teach French literature and we’ll have sessions, German literature and we’ll have sessions, Italian and so on and so forth.” But when it comes to Indian literature, there is no room. Some of us who were deeply involved with the MLA rebelled, and that is how we founded the South Asian Literary Association (SALA). I am one of the original founders of SALA. There isn’t anybody else alive from that cohort — they are all gone now. But it was a very sad and painful experience that gave us the starting point. Some of us then thought of recreating the India that we had left, or recreating the South Asia that we left. And there were people from different parts: from Pakistan, from Bangladesh, from Sri Lanka, from Nepal. Making my point, this is the part of the immigrant psychology. America is a kind of melting pot. People came from England, Germany, India; they all wanted to create their own aesthetics, social, psychological structures, and this and that. But it was a very interesting experience for us. The moment we created the South Asian Literary Association, MLA gave us two sessions. Before that they would not even talk to us.

RKG: What do you think was the major shift that allowed the MLA to finally recognize us?

KDV: It was because we were kind of a nuanced group. We threatened them, told them that we would organize separate sessions, that we would go for separate conferences. And they finally listened to us. But the people who listened to us at that time were also doing a lot of related work. So, the South Asian Literary Association is there and the "South Asian Review" peer-reviewed journal was started. I edited it for 14 years, and now Professor P.S. Chauhan is the editor.

RRV: What is interesting is it sounds like the influence of the South Asian Literary community mirrors the rise of other South Asian diaspora groups in other professions and contexts.

RKG: And it is interesting for me to hear you both talk about how important it is to think about South Asian representation on Capitol Hill and at the MLA, and how that was something new and you both are a part of that movement. It is so striking to me to hear your father talk, and this is what he has been a part of in terms of academia. In a sense, he’s an anti-colonial academic because we still fight these battles in academia. I would say that a lot of scholars still think the literature we write about is unimportant.

AB: This is very important for literary studies in and beyond India.

KDV: You see, there was a tremendous change in the university structures and in the educational institutions we were working for. Before that they would not listen to us when it came to India, or even South Asia for that matter. “You know, you want to teach something from South Asia, well, why do you want to teach something from South Asia?” So we were teaching in our own periods for which we were hired, for which we had our major specialties, where our major research was. But then there was a very dramatic shift. For example, my university financed the “South Asian Review” for all these years at a tremendous expense. It gave us all the facilities. It gave us the time off. My president, interestingly, was honored by the South Asian Literary Association. The interaction between us and the educational structures of the traditional type, you know at the universities and the colleges and so forth, marked a tremendous change, and pleasantly so. For example, Professor Chauhan, at Arcadia University, has full financial support, time off, and not only that, two to four students are given to him who work for the journal. But before that, there never was that kind of encouragement or cooperation.
RKG: What are your hopes and dreams for cultural exchange between India and the U.S. in terms of literature and international relations? This is a question for both of you.

RRV: International cultural exchange is a big part of what we do here, and it’s been a big part of our presence here in India for decades. These faculty exchanges, like the Fulbright programs, the students studying in the United States and the American students studying here that establish all these incredible connections as you are now. India now has the second highest number of students studying in the United States of any country in the world. That’s a great thing because they all go and they come back, and they have all had very rich experiences either at the graduate or undergraduate levels. Last year, we had almost 130,000 Indian students studying in the US. So it is a huge part of what we do and I am a big advocate for it and I think we can do more.

RKG: Are there educational programs here that the embassy hosts?

RRV: Yes, lots.

RKG: Well, let me know when you’d like me to guest lecture.

RRV: Ok, great! Yes [both laughing].

RKG: Professor Verma? Your hopes and dreams for our field?

KDV: I just want to add one comment. What I was saying to you was that whatever we people did over all these years had a positive impact for change on the reception of Indian literature. Of course if you look at the history, people like me, went to the U.S. They found a spot in the U.S. for Indian [academic] freedom. But the situation came to this point that most universities did create a certain, special environment for the study of Indian literature, Indian thought, and Indian religion. For example, I am talking about University of Pittsburgh where Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak was their professor of English. One of the great changes. Likewise, Carnegie Mellon. At the present time, there is an Indian who is president of Carnegie Mellon. There is now provision budgeting for example, the money for books on India, for literature on India and other things. And likewise, I believe American students became very fond of Indian literature. And culture. There’s a lot of study at the present time in Indian religions. I think, for example, the University of Chicago is one of the biggest Centers at this time, and so is Harvard University. You see a lot of interest. More than that, I think, there is the positive attitude, the acceptability, that India is a legitimate part of the syllabus. You see the books, the literature, the interest.

RKG: Ambassador Verma, how does it feel to be serving the US as the top international diplomat to the country of your parents’ birth and your ethnic ancestry? And, some junior scholars were keen to for you to share a memorable anecdote about meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama?

RRV: Sure. It is obviously a tremendous honor to be serving in this capacity. I don’t know the exact number of years, but fifty-some years since he left to come back in this capacity, as I always say to people, is a long shot of a likelihood. I am aware of how much help we got along the way from friends, from family, from all their hard work, from government, from others, and a lot — continued on p.22
AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION ON UPHOLDING CIVIL LIBERTIES GUARANTEED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Dear President Greene:

We the undersigned, members of the Modern Language Association, wish to bring to the attention of the Association the increasingly intolerant climate within India for dissenting writers and academics. As one of the largest professional organizations in the world devoted to the study of literature and culture, and the humanities more generally, and indeed an organization with an increasingly global purview, the MLA is uniquely positioned to make a positive intervention in support of besieged writers and academics who offer challenging perspectives on India in their novels, poems, plays, criticism and related writings that fall within the ambit of the MLA. We write to urge the MLA to issue a public statement taking cognizance of incidents of censorship in India and calling upon appropriate offices of that country (see below) to robustly protect freedom of speech and expression as indeed guaranteed under the constitution of India.

Our letter is most immediately prompted by recent attacks on the distinguished Tamil writer Perumal Murugan. Murugan, author of several novels and a rising star of contemporary Tamil literature, has been forced into silence by extremist Hindu organizations that have taken exception to his descriptions of ritual sexual practices within a temple in his most recent novel Madhorubagan (One Part Woman in English). These organizations have launched street demonstrations against him, made threatening phone calls, and publicly burned his book. The pressure put on Murugan has been so acute that he was forced to flee the town of his residence, offer to edit his novel, and when that was not deemed satisfactory, announce in a Facebook post his decision not to write any more. Most troublingly, news reports indicate that district level officers of the state have colluded with Murugan’s antagonists in pressuring him.

As you must know, the Murugan incident is not without precedent—most famously, the publication of Salman Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses in 1988 was greeted by similar public outcry and censorship in India. There are other more recent incidents of censorship. In 2011, extremist Hindu organizations compelled the deletion of an essay by the well-known poet and folklorist A. K. Ramanujan (“Three Hundred Ramayanas”) from the Delhi University curriculum on the grounds that it offended Hindu sensibility. In 2014, similar organizations for similar reasons compelled the withdrawal from India of Wendy Doniger’s book on Hinduism (The Hindus: An Alternative History).

Freedom of speech and expression is guaranteed by Article 19.1(A) of the Constitution of India. It is true that this freedom is qualified in the First Amendment to the constitution and that both Indian jurisprudence and political opinion have generally endeavored to strike a balance between freedom of speech and expression on the one hand and the need on the other to maintain harmony in a multi-religious, multi-linguistic country. We recognize that it might be necessary in rare and extraordinary circumstances to temporarily curtail freedom of speech and expression if great loss of life and intolerable costs to innocents might be entailed. However, the recent incidents since 2011 listed in this letter (and other incidents similar to these) do not meet the stringent criteria that must constrain any temporary curtailment of freedom of speech and expression. Instead, these incidents are symptomatic of larger, disquieting trends within India that target writers and academics, narrow the scope of public debate in one of the most vibrant democracies in the world, and generally create conditions inhospitable to independent and contrarian exercise of the imagination. Political developments in India suggest that the threats to freedom of speech and expression will only increase in the months and years to come.

In this adverse political climate, Perumal Murugan has been victimized by forces inimical to a constitutionally guaranteed freedom. Grievously as Rushdie paid for exercising his literary imagination, he had a global following that is not Perumal Murugan’s. We therefore consider it especially important that the MLA support Perumal Murugan and writers like him. As of the writing of this letter, Murugan has not retracted his vow to cease writing and there is no indication that the organizations that forced this intolerable decision on him have been held accountable. At the same time, we must acknowledge that many intellectuals and political organizations have rallied to Murugan’s cause. The Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers and Artists Association has filed public interest litigation on his behalf in the High Court in the state of Tamil Nadu. In brief, even as censorship grows so do the forces fighting censorship.
It is in this context that a public statement from the MLA would be useful. Such a statement might declare clearly the importance of ensuring freedom of speech and expression as well as take cognizance both of the events surrounding the Perumal Murugan affair and of more general fears regarding censorship in India. Aside from being publicized on the MLA website, we would like to suggest that the statement be shared with the offices of the President of India, the Prime Minister of India, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu (the state in which Murugan resides), and the High Court of that state. We provide below the necessary contact information.

Below you will also find a number of links that document and provide more information for the claims in this letter. We are happy to answer any questions that you might have and also to help draft the statement if you prefer. Please address your communications to S. Shankar (subraman@hawaii.edu).

Sincerely,

S. Shankar  
Nalini Iyer  
R. Radhakrishnan  
With the South Asian Literary Association (an Allied Organization of the MLA)

Links:
New York Times Editorial on the Perumal Murugan Case:  

Perumal Murugan’s Facebook page:  
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Perumal-Murugan/1399342420364869?sk=timeline

Interviews with Perumal Murugan can be found here:  
http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/interview/people-are-looking-to-settle-scores-with-me-perumal-murugan/article6778030.ece?ref=relatedNews


Blog by S. Shankar  

An account of events given by Perumal Murugan’s lawyer can be found here:  

Distinguished scholar of contemporary Tamil literature and culture A. R. Venkatachalapathy provides an eloquent defense of Perumal Murugan in the newspaper The Hindu here:  

Historian Vijay Prashad writes in The Guardian on the withdrawal of the Wendy Doniger book from sale in India and other attacks on books:  

On the withdrawal of the A. K. Ramanjuan essay from the Delhi University curriculum:  
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-15363181
On the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech and expression in the Indian constitution:

Contact Information for Prime Minister of India:
Honorable Shri Narendra Modi
152, South Block, Raisina Hill, New Delhi-110011
INDIA
Email: N/A. Contact through website.

Contact Information for Chief Minister of the State of Tamil Nadu
Honorable Thiru O. Panneerselvam
Chief Minister's Office
Secretariat, Chennai 600 009
INDIA
cmcell@tn.gov.in

Contact Information for the High Court Justices:
Honorable Mr. Chief Justice S. K. Kaul
Honorable Mr. Justice M. M. Sundresh
N Fort Rd, P arrys,
George Town,
Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600104,
INDIA
Email: cpc-tn@indianjudiciary.gov.in

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**Statement of Solidarity with Those Who Have Returned Their Awards**

*The members of the South Asian Literary Association (SALA) express their deep concern about the recent spate of attacks on Indian writers, artists, and intellectuals, including the silencing of Tamil writer Perumal Murugan and the murders of Kannada writer M. M. Kalburgi and Marathi writers Narendra Dabholkar and Govind Pansare. SALA applauds the writers and filmmakers who have returned their literary awards in protest and commend India’s Sahitya Akademi for having issued a public condemnation of these attacks and others like them. Such attacks have no place in a pluralistic democracy like India that is constitutionally committed to religious tolerance and freedom of belief and expression, including the right to express public dissent. We further support and echo the Sahitya Akademi’s call on the Indian government to prosecute the perpetrators of these crimes and to speak out in defense of India’s rich intellectual tradition, which includes materialist and non-theistic philosophies. This resolution does not address itself to India alone. SALA condemns all threats to freedom of expression in contemporary South Asia, including the murderous attacks on writers—bloggers, journalists, and publishers—in Bangladesh and Pakistan. We salute the courage of the writers and teachers who have rallied in defense of free speech in Dhaka.*

*We cannot remain silent as South Asian writers and artists are being intimidated and killed, and the diversity of the Subcontinent’s pluralistic culture is being undermined. These are threats to us all, including SALA members, many of whom are writers, scholars, critics, and lovers of South Asian literature currently resident outside of the Indian subcontinent. Creative expression cannot flourish in a climate of fear. We affirm PEN International’s October, 2015 statement of solidarity with the Indian writers who have returned their awards, which quoted a line of Rabindranath Tagore’s poem, “Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high.” SALA members re-dedicate ourselves to “that heaven of freedom.”*

SALA Member News

Hearty congratulations to our colleagues & allies for their impressive accomplishments over the past year!

Rahul K. Gairola published “Portable India: A Vision of Responsible Literacy in Digital Democracy” in The Advocate, The City University of New York, and “Wikipedia without the Internet” in Kulturaustausch, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Germany, with Dr. Arnab Datta (IIT Roorkee). In December 2015, he attended the annual Cultural Studies Association of Australasia conference at the Univ. of Melbourne, Australia, and after gave invited talks at Seattle Univ. and the Univ. of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Summer Pervez accepted the position of Associate Professor of English at Forman Christian College University in Lahore, Pakistan. Her primary research project will be the further development and filming of her feature film script about the effects of Partition, set in 1947-48 Lahore, with the support of the Dean of Humanities, Professor Waseem Anwar.

Moumin Quazi has served as the first two-term president of the Conference of College Teachers of English (in Texas) since 1946. He is also president of the Texas College English Association, and the Texas Liaison to the national College English Association. He continues to edit the journals CCTE Studies and Langdon Review of the Arts in Texas. He is the co-director of the annual literary and arts festival Langdon Review Weekend, and moreover edits a book series for Peter Lang publishing: South Asian Literature, Arts, and Culture Studies. This last year, his creative writing was published in Writing Texas, Volume 2: Voices de la Luna; and, Red River Review. He is also the Past-President of the Stephenville Rotary Club, and serves as the Director of the Graduate Studies in English Program at Tarleton State. In November he and wife P.J. welcomed her grandson Dexter into the world. And, on December 19, Moumin’s Abba Manzoor Quazi, celebrated his 88th birthday with his first ever surprise party (below, far right). Happy birthday, Abba!


Brian Yothers's third book, Sacred Uncertainty: Religious Difference & the Shape of Melville's Career, was published by Northwestern University Press in April 2015. He was appointed the Frances Spatz Leighton Endowed Distinguished Professor of English at the University of Texas, El Paso, in Fall 2015.

In recent weeks, tolerance has become the buzzword of public discourses in the United States and elsewhere. Guru Nanak would rather plead for mutual respect and understanding – going beyond mere tolerance...

— Professor Amritjit Singh
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 Aesthetic
- Literary Theory
- Cultural Studies
- Colonial Studies
- Postcolonial Studies
- Comparative Literature
- Women’s Studies
- Film Studies
- Transcultural 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 May 30, 2016. Articles should be sent electronically.

All correspondence pertaining to back and forthcoming 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
of good teachers, trainers, and coaches who gave me a lot of excellent mentoring. So I say to young kids all the time that you cannot forget where you came from — leadership is about remembering where you came from. It’s hard to chart a path forward without understanding where your roots are. That’s a part of the reason we’ve gone back. We were able to go back to Apra in Punjab last week, to his home town. In May, I was able to go back to Jalandhar and see my mom and my grandmother’s house, see where my grandmother taught, and speak at DAV college. All of those are very grounding, really terrific experiences...

AB: Your hometown must almost be beyond recognition now.

RRV: The last time I was there was 1974 and I was a kid. So, yes, it was beyond recognition. All the livestock and animals that were once across the street from our house are now apartment buildings. So that has changed. I met Senator Obama the very first day he was in the Senate, on the day he was being sworn in because I was working there in the Senate Leader’s office. And I remember him coming in; my desk was in the Capitol right outside Senator Reid’s office. He came in and reached his hand over my desk and said “Hi, I’m Barack Obama, a new Senator from Illinois,” and I said “I know who you are.” So that’s my first memory of meeting him. He was the most down-to-earth, approachable member of the U.S. Senate.

RKG: What lessons do you both think that India and the U.S., both large and powerful global democracies, can learn from one another? Perhaps the world’s most powerful democracy and the world’s largest democracy.

RRV: What we talk a lot about here encompasses all of the values like democracy that we share together that makes us naturally drawn to each other: respect for the rule of law, peaceful resolution of disputes, minority rights, inclusion, religious tolerance. But there are some other very interesting values too, like innovation, and learning, and entrepreneurship that also make us natural partners in so many ways. I think India and the U.S. have to stick together. It is easy to find the differences; we have some differences, and they are not big differences. They may be about the speed of development or how fast a certain economic sector opens, but on the big questions of the day we are very well-aligned because of that value system. That has a great ripple effect around the world, and this is what we’re working on to try to ensure that we stick together as a global team.

RKG: In the current historical moment in India that is shaped by such initiatives as Digital India and Make in India, do either of you have any thoughts about the ways in which these initiatives shape literary studies and/or international relations? I know in our field of South Asian literary and cultural studies, digital humanities is becoming such a big thing, isn’t it?

KDV: I think the questioning by the government, let’s say 1948 onwards...I don’t think the question of education has been addressed very fairly. India needs a lot of attention, I believe. A lot of help. I think the two major issues that India still seriously needs to address are poverty and education. I have no doubt. Sure, there are other elements which are appropriate and more important to the various governments from time to time. America has the same problem. America has to address the issues of poverty and education. Other countries need to address that problem. Take that question to Germany, Russia, Italy, France, England itself. I think these two issues would define ultimately what progress means.

RKG: What does this mean for you in terms of U.S. relations with economic programs like Make in India that really do catapult India onto the global stage?

RRV: The Vice Chancellor was interesting. He was talking about the num-

I met Senator Obama the very first day he was in the Senate, on the day he was being sworn in because I was working there in the Senate leader’s office. And I remember him coming in; my desk was in the Capitol right outside Senator Reid’s office. He came in and reached his hand over my desk and said “Hi, I’m Barack Obama, a new Senator from Illinois,” and I said “I know who you are.”

— Ambassador Richard Verma
They knew that I was a scholar of Percy Shelley. And then my book came out, *The Indian Imagination*. Have you seen that book? I was not a student of India. That was not my specialty, but it became my specialty after what I told you.

AB: All educations seem to come back to one’s homeland in interesting ways.

KDV: Yes, this is so. I became interested in India, and got deeply interested in Aurobindho Ghosh. The early Ghosh, the writer, philosopher, and politician. So much so I that I got SALA Executive Committee Member Professor John Hawley interested in him, and we began working together. It was a very interesting endeavor. I think this change in fields came to quite a few of us. Professor Amritjit Singh was also there. Professor Chauhan himself was there, as were a lot of others. There were a couple of us, even an Italian scholar. I think the change-over that came was not haunted by pressures from the outside, but rather influenced by a kind of motivation that came from within. During the SALA session in Philadelphia, soon after the keynote session, a debate emerged that some of these religious approaches which had been at the present time developed in different parts of America are not fair. They are not interpreting Indian thought, Indian ideas fairly. Again, it saw what we started. We never thought that the universities in the U.S. would be that receptive. And it happened in Canada also. If somebody wanted to do a Ph.D. on an Indian subject in the ’60s or the ’70s, it was not possible. The world was very different. But now, it is very easy; it is just like other subjects. So I think this one of the great contributions of SALA.

AB: Even the integration of Black politics had a very difficult with that. So the work that you had done...

KDV: Not only that, even for example, let’s say our relationship with Pakistan, with Bangladesh, with Sri Lanka/ Ceylon, with Nepal, with Bhutan, you know. If you look into, for example, SALA’s diversity pool, two people were from Pakistan on the Board, one from Nepal, two from Ceylon. We have brought out special issues of *SAR* devoted to Ceylonese literature, devoted to Pakistani literature, devoted to Bangladeshi literature. We have tried to bring the whole focus on South Asia, not one particular region or allow India to dominate all of the scholarship. We are not talking just about Hinduism. The way these countries can join their hearts together to achieve their basic objectives, the purpose of the people. This has not happened in this state. Our friend Professor Waseem Anwar, from

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**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 manuscripts.

Fill out the query page at http://www.peterlang.com/index.cfm?cid=95, or send your manuscripts to Michelle Salyga at michelle.salyga@plang.com.
Dear SALA Members,

I hope everyone had a wonderful grading re-treat, that is, Winter break. Kris Stokes has finished work on SALA’s responsive website. If you go to our site 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 website that much more accessible and convenient, specially before the conference in January when we see so much traffic on our site. You can also get a preview of what the different formats look like if you adjust the size of your PC window. We are continuing to optimize and improve the website and make it better linked to the newsletter and other points of interest for our membership. Please feel free to send me any feedback you may have at: animukho@ufl.edu

Best,
Aniruddha, SALA Web Manager

Lahore, for example. He is dean of FC College there. A Muslim Dean of a Christian university, a Christian missionary university in Lahore of this time, shows how tolerant Lahore. It is very interesting. Try to bring up some of these issues where India cannot go to Lahore, or why Lahore cannot come to India for that matter. What happened? You want to go to that country you should be allowed to go. You should have friends around India, in Karachi, or wherever. But that is not the case. I am not trying to be a critic of either of these countries, but these are the facts. We have tried to create a kind of revolution in the thinking of the people. That is all that you can do.

RKG: On our concluding note, something about teaching.. You have been a mentor to me for around twenty years maybe? Seventeen, eighteen years at least. I am teaching at an Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Roorkee in northern India, after teaching for many years in the U.S. I am deeply struck by the brilliance and the diverse skills of the students here. You have had this experience for a long time, far longer than I, and I wonder what your thoughts are on how college education differs between India and the U.S.?

KDV: This is what I have been talking about. I have been with the Vice Chancellor and the Dean of the University of Delhi, talking about the university and why you still have the structure of the affiliated colleges and asking why they don’t give freedom to these colleges to become universities by themselves if they want. And they should have their own freedom to do if they want to, and this is not the case. DAV College, for example, where I went — I asked them, “Why don’t you have your own university? Why do you have to be affiliated to a university in Amritsar?” This is the old system that was invented by the British of course. But now, it takes a change. If you want to really pursue knowledge, you do not need to know or be tied to the mountains. If you are affiliated, you are teaching the same courses, the same syllabi, just at different colleges — a college here, a college there, a college there, another there. Masters degrees given by all these colleges with the same syllabus. Where is the originality? Where is the research? If the universities are not given the independence, the freedom...look, America is different. Even colleges, they award M.A. degrees, and even the undergraduate colleges which give Bachelors degrees are independent. They are not affiliated to a university here, a university there, this and that. They are independent, degree granting colleges and universities. So look at the amount of research they accomplish. The amount of freedom they can do and the amount of money they have or they can raise. And I am not saying India should imitate America. That is not my point. My point is that the freedom to do research equals the freedom to impart education. Now look at Agra and Dehradun. Now Dehradun is trying to do what is dictated by Agra, the Senate at Agra. So I think this was alright. It served the purpose of the British. They simply wanted to follow the Macaulay type of policies; they did not want to promote
original or indigenous knowledge as such. They used it for a limited purpose to train clerks. That was their purpose. Macaulay was very blunt, he was very honest about that point. He did not compromise and that was quite clear. That’s why people went to England for studies and France, if you had the money you could go there. Now of course it’s different.

AB: It has happened in India. They are changing the system. There are new universities coming up and all of these universities are completely independent.

KDV: The universities that are different, for example IIT Roorkee, I was telling you, were once colleges but have now upgraded to universities. I think this is what they should try to do, go deep into research. Unless they do it, they will be simply beating around the bush doing the same thing. And India and her minds have great potential to re-shape the world.

RKG: Thank you both so much. It was so good seeing you.

RRV & KDV: Thank you very much also!

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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.

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— Kavita Daiya, Book Reviews Editor, South Asian Review

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Ranjana Sidhanta Ash (right), literary critic, born 6 December 1924; died 10 August 2015. Born Ranjana Sidhanta in Birbhum, West Bengal, not far from Santiniketan, where Tagore had founded his creative college, Visva Bharati, she was the daughter of a distinguished scholar of English literature, Nirmal Kundar Sidhanta. He taught at Lucknow University and later at Calcutta University, where he was vice-chancellor from 1955 to 1960. Her mother, Chitralekha Bannerji, was a well-known Tagorean singer. She was a leading advocate of south Asian literature. Her knowledge of the great writers of India was immense. Unusually, she had an equivalent sympathy for African writing, and for aspirational authors from many parts of the developing world. Read more in the November 2015 obituary published in The Guardian.

David Baldwin (left), husband of SALA member and novelist Shauna Singh Baldwin, and the mastermind behind Milwaukee's legendary spy-themed bar/restaurant The Safe House, has died. Baldwin had just retired this summer after nearly 50 years devoted to celebrating the spy craft. He sold the Safe House to the Milwaukee-based Marcus Corp. in June, but it remains a testament to his vision. "David lived and breathed the Safe House," said Peggy Williams-Smith, senior vice president of Safe House Restaurants. Even after his retirement, Baldwin was still known as the Safe House's "station chief." He also continued to go by his secret agent code number, "Oh-Oh7." Baldwin, 85, suffered from myelodysplastic syndromes, a group of cancers involving immature blood cells in bone marrow. He died on December 20, 2015. Read more in the Journal Sentinel here.

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