

**The Nation and its Discontents**  
**2014 South Asian Literary Association Conference**  
**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**  
**January 8-9, 2014**

2013 sees twenty years since the publication of Partha Chatterjee's influential book *The Nation and its Fragments*. Keeping an askance eye on this anniversary, the South Asian Literary Association's 2014 annual conference will be centering the theme "The Nation and its Discontents." Aside from marking out the differences between European nationalism and postcolonial ones, Chatterjee's book indicated the ways in which an elite nationalism spoke for the "fragments" of the colony, such as women, peasants, and other outcasts. Decades after the formation of independent South Asian nation-states, national governments in the region continue to transmit deeply structured and powerfully conflicting expectations from its citizenry of belonging and allegiance to the nation-state. The tensions surrounding these national-statist expectations as well as the shifting nature of globalization and geopolitics since the publication of Chatterjee's book can be seen in a myriad cultural expressions that require a reassessment of marginalization and privilege.

In our conference, we will investigate the cultural longevity of South Asian nation-states in a time of increased trans- and postnational creativity, and ask how they continue to speak for or against; accept the citizenship of or deny citizenship to; and embrace, co-opt, or abandon the above mentioned and other fragments or marginalized communities in order to sustain their own legitimacy. We solicit papers that include, but are not limited to, responses to the following questions regarding South Asian (national, transnational, diasporic, and postnational) cultural productions such as fiction, poetry, drama, music, theater and film:

- What communities continue to be ignored by the nation-state, and how do the cultural productions of and about these communities affect our understanding of the nation?
  - Dalit Communities
  - The Vanishing People: Anglo Indians, Parsis, South Asian Jews
  - Caste/ Class/ Race and the Denial of Citizenship
- How does the gendering of citizenship and nationhood as well as the tensions between such gendering and the universalist ideals of gender equality and human rights affect the modernizing project in South Asia? What new ways of thinking about gender and gender roles vis-à-vis the nation are expressed in recent literary, theatrical, filmic, or musical endeavors?
  - Gender, Sexuality, and Citizenship: LGBT/Queer/Hijras/Third Gender
  - Feminism and Nationalism or Feminism Vs. Nationalism
  - Hindu/ Muslim Women
  - Women in Kashmir
  - Masculinity Studies

- How have South Asian cultural products dealt with the role of religion in building and challenging the nation?
  - Islamic fundamentalism
  - The rise of Hindutva
  
- How has culture participated in human rights discourse's challenge to state sovereignty, patriarchal structures, and ethnic discrimination in South Asia?
  - New directions in Subaltern Studies
  - Human rights, nationalism, and religious practice
  - Communal and interethnic conflicts
  
- How do cultural artifacts from South Asian diasporas destabilize or sustain nationhood? How has the politics of citizenship in South Asia affected the diaspora, particularly in terms of cultural exchange?
  - Transnationalism, Transculturation, and the Fragments of the Nation
  - Gender performance and Academia
  - Gender, Religion, and US Nationalism
  
- How do postnational texts derive and establish their legitimacy in the face of nation-statist publication paradigms?
  
- In what ways do certain South Asian nations express their own marginalization from dominant nations in the area?

Please upload a 250-300-word abstract of your paper to our new online submission form at <http://www.southasianliteraryassociation.org/annual-conference/conference-paper-proposals/> by August 15, 2013. You can also find the form by visiting the SALA site at [www.SouthAsianLiteraryAssociation.Org](http://www.SouthAsianLiteraryAssociation.Org) and following the links for the Annual Conference.

In addition to your abstract, please expect to provide your name, contact information, and a short biographical note (no more than 100 words) during the submission process, as well as to declare your audio-visual requirements.

Note that all accepted participants will be expected to become members of South Asian Literary Association by October 15, 2013.

Please feel free to email the conference co-chairs Umme Al-wazedi and Madhurima Chakraborty at [sala2014chicago@gmail.com](mailto:sala2014chicago@gmail.com) with any questions you might have.