

Fall Lecture Series 2009

**September 3 - Noon - 1:00PM**  
**206 Ingraham Hall**

Fall Welcome Party!

**September 10 - Noon - 1:00PM**  
**206 Ingraham Hall**

Deepika Bahri  
Associate Professor, Department of English, Emory University  
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*What Happened to Race in South Asia? The Curious Case of Salman Rushdie*

This paper explores the silence in postcolonial studies around the question of race in South Asia. Although visible both in the historical archive and in literature, race has nonetheless failed to gain traction as significant for postcolonial theory or criticism focused on South Asia. The reasons for this are manifold, as this paper will suggest, as are the potential benefits of pursuing an investigation of the problem of race. The paper then goes on to examine racially hybrid characters in the novels of Salman Rushdie to illuminate a historically uneasy relationship to the problem of race.

Deepika Bahri is Associate Professor in the English department at Emory University. Her research focuses on postcolonial literature, culture, and theory. She is the author of [\*\*\*Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature\*\*\*](#) (University of Minnesota Press, 2003) and co-editor of [\*\*\*Between the Lines: South Asians and Postcoloniality and Realms of Rhetoric\*\*\*](#). She has written several articles on postcolonial issues in journals and book collections. She is currently working on the representation of Anglo-Indians, Eurasians, and racial hybrids in postcolonial literature.

**September 17 - Noon - 1:00PM**  
**206 Ingraham Hall**

Cynthia Packert  
Professor and Chair, History of Art and Architecture, Middlebury College

***From the Cradle to the Forest: Swings, Celebration, and Krishna***

Swings have traditionally been associated with childhood and play; and they also evoke notions of abandon, flirtation, and freedom. The focus of this

colorfully illustrated presentation will be on the symbolism of swings and their connection to the god Krishna. Examples will be drawn from poetry, miniature paintings, Krishna-lila theater performances and temple presentations. Images from popular culture and contemporary material culture will also be considered.

Dr. Packert received her Ph.D. in Fine Arts from Harvard University. She teaches courses in Asian Art and Religion at Middlebury College.

**September 24 - Noon - 1:00PM**  
**206 Ingraham Hall**

Aparna Dharwadker  
Professor, Dept. of Theatre and Drama & Dept. of English, UW-Madison  
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*Representing India's Pasts: Time, Culture, and the Problems of Performance Historiography*

Like other forms of modern history-writing in India, theatre historiography is an inherently embattled field because it seeks to reconstruct the past in a culture where "history," "historicity," "historical experience," "historical consciousness," and "the historical sense" have been, and continue to be, deeply contested concepts. To a large extent this crisis is a product of cultural difference: it registers the conflicts between Indian and Western, intrinsic and extrinsic ideas of time and history that were inevitable under the asymmetrical power relations of colonialism between the late-eighteenth and the early-twentieth centuries. In the postcolonial period, a sophisticated rethinking of Western and Indian models of historiography has thoroughly professionalized the academic discipline of history, and revisionist historians (notably the Subaltern Studies collective) have undertaken an "Indian historiography of India" that systematically critiques and displaces colonialist historiography. Theatre history, however, remains a largely amateur field fragmented by region and language, and even the more ambitious historians tend to recirculate orientalist or revivalist positions as they grapple with the challenges of constructing a "national theatre history" for a multilingual, multifaceted performance culture spanning more than two millennia. The activity of representing the past in Indian theatre historiography is therefore inseparable from the problem of the past: of how to approach, define, and order the vast performance archive of an ancient culture that allegedly lacks a sense of history, and is deeply invested in tradition even as it negotiates the ruptures of colonial and postcolonial modernity. In this talk I approach the subject of time as an ordering principle in theatre history by way of the polarized philosophical-cultural arguments that problematize the ideas of time and history, and underscore the necessity of creating desiderata for

Indian theatre historiography outside both indigenist and orientalist frameworks.

**October 1 - Noon - 1:00PM**  
**206 Ingraham Hall**

Sangeeta Desai  
PhD Candidate, Department of Languages & Cultures of Asia, UW-Madison

### ***Living the Text in South India***

This talk focuses on the Bhāgavata saptāha--the seven-day exposition of the Hindu devotional text, the Bhāgavata Purāna. The Bhāgavata Purāna, a devotional text centered upon the life of the deity Krishna, is one of the most widely circulated Hindu texts in India. Drawing upon tools from literary analysis, we will explore the saptaha as a form of reading in oral societies.

Using as a case study the 90th annual saptaha of Kolluru, a village in Andhra Pradesh, I examine the audience's role in the performance. Employing Eco's idea of the model reader, I illustrate how the saptāh's seven-day structure and concomitant rituals and austerities, in conjunction with the Bhāgavata Purāna's narrative frames, position the audience as key devotional characters in the text, thereby transforming them into performers as well. By revealing these further layers of the performance, ultimately both the multivalent layers of the Bhāgavata Purāna that are read during the saptāha, as well as of the saptāha, itself can be exposed.

Sangeeta Desai will be finishing her dissertation on the performative and textual history of the Bhāgavata Purāna over the summer and defending sometime in early spring.

**October 8 - Noon - 1:00PM**  
**206 Ingraham Hall**

Flavia Agnes  
Attorney, Bombay High Court  
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### **From Shahbano to Kausar Bano - Contextualizing the 'Muslim Woman' within a Communalized Polity**

The paper attempts to weave together two significant and seemingly isolated incidents in Indian history – the Supreme Court verdict in the *Shahbano* case in 1985 and the controversy that followed, and the more recent communal carnage and sexual violence that was unleashed upon Muslim women in Gujarat. Though apparently isolated, both these incidents bring to the center stage the subaltern Muslim woman, within a communally vitiated political arena. While

marking the period of the rising wave of Hindu fundamentalism in the country, the Shahbano stands at one end of the spectrum and Kausar Bano at the other. Within the confines of an identity that is both fixed and rigid at one end, and constantly shifting at the other, how does a Muslim woman negotiate the state structures and community dictates? What are the contradictory pulls of culture, religion, law and politics that play upon her life and how does she position herself within these contradictory pulls? More importantly, why does she enter the political arena always as a victim? Are there no moments of defiance and resistance? Who have been her allies and adversaries in these struggles? What have been her gains and losses? How do the proponents of a Uniform Civil Code view her and how does she relate to this demand? These are important questions that have haunted some of us within the Indian feminist movement. The paper attempts to address these concerns.

Flavia Agnes is a lawyer at the Bombay High Court and founder of Majlis, a legal and cultural resource centre in Mumbai, India. Flavia Agnes is a relentless advocate of gender equality through the law and a staunch critic of the Uniform Civil Code. Flavia appeared before the Sri Krishna Commission enquiry into the 1992 riots in the Indian cities of Mumbai and Berhampada. She has written and published extensively, including in the journals *Subaltern Studies*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, and *Manushi* on the themes of minorities and the law, feminist jurisprudence, gender and law, and law in the context of women's movements. She is author of the book, *Law and Gender Inequality: the Politics of Women's Rights in India*, published by the Oxford University Press (1999).

This lecture is co-sponsored by the Global Legal Studies Center under its speaker series on "Role of Law in Developing and Transitional Countries" with support from the Division of International Studies, the International Institute and Global Studies.

**October 15 - Noon - 1:00PM**  
**206 Ingraham Hall**

Preeti Chopra  
Assistant Professor, Languages and Cultures of Asia, UW-Madison

*The Native Intermediary and the Engineering of Colonial Bombay*

Bombay's Victorian architecture was built by British and Indian architects, engineers, and craftsmen however; the role of Indian architects and engineers in the making of British Bombay has been largely ignored. Macaulay's Minute (1835) articulated the aim to create through missionary education "a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern - a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect," or as Homi Bhabha notes, "mimic men." This talk examines the role of the Indian architect and engineer Khan

Bahadur Mucherji C. Murzban who was the architect of many buildings around the Fort area and might offer an early example of a "mimic man." Born in 1838, Murzban worked in the Public Works Department from 1857 to 1893, and became the Executive Engineer to the Municipality. He was responsible for the design of many examples of Gothic architecture on the Esplanade including the Indo-British Institution (1884-87) and the Elphinstone College (1889). Is Murzban the perfect "mimic man" who could imitate the architectural forms desired by the British in his designs and yet forge no independent path of his own? Or, are there other ways of analyzing the work of Murzban and others like him? This talk examines the biography of Murzban to show that his expertise as an engineer and his local engagements – as a freemason, his involvement with social reform, and the Parsi community from which he hailed - helps us to understand the meaning of his constructions.

Dr. Chopra completed her Ph.D. in Architectural History, University of California-Berkeley, in 2003, with her dissertation, *The City and Its Fragments: Colonial Bombay 1854-1918*, under the direction of Professor Dell Upton. While at Berkeley, she published "La Ville Imaginee: Nommer Les Divisions De bombay Coloniale (1800-1918)," in *Divisions de la ville*, ed., Christian Topalov (Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'hommes; collection "Les Mots de la ville, 2002)

**October 29 - Noon - 1:00PM**  
**206 Ingraham Hall**

Nicolas Magriel  
Musician and Ethnomusicologist

### ***Musical Osmosis: Growing into Music in North India***

Children who grow up in oral musical contexts such as the families of hereditary musical specialists commonly learn the body-language of music before they learn music itself. Throughout infancy and childhood they absorb the mannerisms of performance practice and the physical and social graces befitting of musicians. Learning music is accomplished by osmosis and imitation, largely without conscious intent. Children develop an unselfconscious musical confidence born of inherited or deeply-nurtured authority.

Growing into Music is a three-year project funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Board. This largely video-based project focuses on musical enculturation in the oral traditions of Mali, Senegal, Cuba, Venezuela, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan and India. Today Nicolas Magriel will be

showing exciting films about children of the Rajasthani (*manganiyar* and *langa*) and **Hindustani** (classical) musical cultures of North India—films which summarise 90 hours of video filmed in the winter of 2009

Dr. Magriel, based at the School of Oriental and African Studies, is a player of the North Indian *sarangi* as well as a psychotherapist and a scholar who has written extensively on various aspects of Indian music.

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November 5 - Noon - 1:00PM  
206 Ingraham Hall

Joyce Flueckiger  
Professor, Department of Religion, Emory University  
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### *An Aesthetics of Excess: Gangamma Jatara in Tirupati*

The purpose of Gangamma *jatara* is variously said to be to feed, satisfy, and heat the goddess Gangamma, whose *ugram* is necessary to protect Tirupati *uru* from hot season illnesses (especially poxes). However, the goddess's *ugram* also needs to be contained, once elicited, so as not to destroy the *uru*. *Ugram* is often translated as ferocity or anger, but in the context of the *jatara*, "excess" may be a better translation. Through her multiplying *jatara* forms, the goddess expands and becomes excessive/*ugra*. Her heightened needs are satisfied and her *ugram* appropriately calibrated through a wide range of rituals, creating a *jatara* aesthetics of excess. This aesthetics of excess permits a similarly wide range of individual interpretation and experience of the *jatara*.

Growing up in India, Dr. Flueckiger received her B.A. from Goshen College and her Ph.D. in South Asian Language and Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She specializes in performance studies, with a particular interest in gender. She has carried out extensive fieldwork in India, working with both Hindu and Muslim popular traditions. Her latest book is titled *In Amma's Healing Room: Gender & Vernacular Islam in South India* (Indiana University Press: 2006). The book addresses questions of religious and gender identities and boundaries in a healing practice of female Muslim folk healers in the South Indian city of Hyderabad. She is currently writing a book on the goddess tradition and *jatara*/festival of Gangamma (one of seven village-goddess sisters), based on fieldwork conducted in Tirupati, south India. Her book in progress is titled: *When the World Becomes Female: The Gangamma Goddess Tradition of South India*. She is also the author of *Gender and Genre in the Folklore of Middle India* (Cornell: 1996),

and has published numerous articles on South Asian folklore and is co-editor of and contributor to *Oral Epics in India* (1989) and *Boundaries of the Text: Epic Performances in South and Southeast Asia* (1991).

November 10 - 5:30 - 6:30PM

Location: Auditorium, Wisconsin Historical Society

Eswaran Sridharan

Academic Director, University of Pennsylvania Institute for the Advanced Study of India (UPIASI)

### *Coalition Politics in the 2009 Indian Election*

Professor Sridharan will be comparing patterns of pre-electoral coalition politics, state by state, within each pre-electoral alliance in the 2009 election compared to 2004, placing this in the context of coalition theory and the dynamics of first-past-the-post electoral systems.

Eswaran Sridharan is the Academic Director of the University of Pennsylvania Institute for the Advanced Study of India (UPIASI), (in New Delhi), from its inception in 1997, and was earlier with the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi. He is a political scientist with research interests in the political economy of development, party systems and coalition politics, and international relations theory, conflict resolution and cooperation-building in South Asia. He is the author of *The Political Economy of Industrial Promotion: Indian, Brazilian and Korean Electronics in Comparative Perspective 1969-1994* (1996); and has co-edited (with Zoya Hasan and R. Sudarshan), *India's Living Constitution: Ideas, Practices, Controversies* (2002; 2005); co-edited (with Anthony D'Costa), *India in the Global Software Industry: Innovation, Firms Strategies and Development*, (2004); co-edited (with Peter de Souza) *India's Political Parties* (2006); and edited *The India-Pakistan Nuclear Relationship: Theories of Deterrence and International Relations* (2007). Two edited volumes, one on comparative patterns of coalition politics in Asian democracies, and one on international relations theory and South Asia, have been accepted by Oxford University Press. He has published over forty journal articles and chapters in edited volumes. He is the Editor of *India Review*, and is on the Editorial Advisory Board of *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*. He majored in chemistry at St. Stephen's College, took graduate degrees in political science at Jawaharlal Nehru University, and earned his Ph.D. in political science at the University of Pennsylvania.

***This lecture is co-sponsored by the India Initiative with funding from the Division of International Studies and WAGE.***

November 12 - Noon - 1:00PM  
206 Ingraham Hall

Robert Linrothe  
Associate Professor, Art History, Skidmore College

Anxious Fascination: Yogis in Mughal, Company, and Raj-Period Paintings and Photographs

The Mughals and the British, who ruled most of South Asia for several centuries, were in equal measure outsiders to those lands. They saw its natural and social environments as foreign and exotic, and developed certain overlapping fascinations. One of these was with Yogis, naked ash-covered Sadhus with dreadlocks who were perceived as having magical powers. In Indian society Yogis derived religious and even political authority from asceticism. The reactions of the Mughal and British elites to these charismatic renouncers mingled attraction, scepticism, and unease with a tinge of fear. The mixed responses they generated surfaced in paintings and photography. In this talk I will explore the enduring stereotype of the Yogi as perpetuated in elite arts and photographs used variously for political surveying, missionary work, souvenirs, and for the tourist market. I will also look at cases where the photographer's gaze was returned, when the making of a photograph turns from being a moment of objectification by these outsiders to that of subjective self-expression on the part of the Yogi.

Dr. Linrothe is an art historian (Ph.D., Chicago, 1992), who has worked extensively on Buddhist and Himalayan art. His book *Holy Madness* (on traditions of 84 Siddhas) has attracted much scholarly attention. Last year he was at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, is teaching at Skidmore College presently, and will join Northwestern University's Art History Department in January 2010. His research interests include representations of yogis and sadhus in 19th/20th century photographs and in earlier painting.

This lecture is co-sponsored by the University Lectures Committee and the Department of Art History.

November 19 - Noon - 1:00PM  
206 Ingraham Hall

Bhavani Raman  
Assistant Professor, Department of History, Princeton University  
[MP3 Download](#)

***The Duplicity of Paper and the Problem of Attestation in Early Colonial Madras***

This paper traces the relationship between graphic culture and the making of a colonial regime through the remaking of attestation practices. The emergence of forgery and perjury points to an unresolved crisis in the East India Company's Madras government in the early nineteenth century. Attestation was essential to the Company's juridical sovereignty and yet, the source of its greatest vulnerability to unauthorized duplication, as different sections of society grappled with this new ideology of governance. The paper examines how proliferating duplicity and Company efforts to control it, created the basis and limit of a new evidentiary paradigm in the Madras region. Raman is currently Assistant Professor of History at Princeton University, specializing in modern South Asian history. Her research focuses on scribal culture, education and bureaucracy under East India Company rule in early nineteenth century South India. Her teaching interests include colonialism and language politics, textual practices in South Asia, post-colonial criticism of historiography, and historical anthropology. She joined the history department at Princeton in the fall of 2007. She is currently working on a book based on her dissertation.

November 20 - Noon - 1:00PM  
5230 Social Sciences Building

Paul Craddock  
Emeritus, British Museum, Department of Conservation, Documentation and Scientific Research  
[Download CV](#)

***"Perceptions and Reality: The Fall and Rise of the Indian Metals Industry Through Three Millennia"***

'Glorified rabbit holes' was typical of the pejorative descriptions of the local mining operations observed in the 19th century by the colonial administrators. Yet, recent excavations have revealed mining and smelting operations in South Asia as extensive and technically sophisticated as their contemporaries in Greece and Rome.

This lecture, as well as describing some of these ancient mining and smelting operations, will on a broader scale, attempt to address how such misunderstandings arose as well as why India's sophisticated mines and smelters succumbed to European imports. The latter is in itself a global phenomenon.

If the 19th century failed to appreciate the technical sophistication of the earlier periods, then the 20th century up to the present, has perhaps been

unduly harsh on the Imperial powers for discouraging metal production in India. In fact there were numerous attempts to establish mines and furnaces, both private and by the government, usually with disastrous results. Some of these will be described, together with the real sustained rise of the metals industry from the end of the 19th century.

***This lecture is sponsored by the Center for South Asia, Anthropology, Art History, Classics, Cultural Heritage Preservation Research Circle, Global Studies, Division of International Services, and International Institute.***

December 3 - Noon - 1:00PM  
206 Ingraham Hall

Aminur Rahim  
Fulbright Scholar and Honorary Fellow

*"The Political Economy of Policy Failure in Post-Independence States"*

The paper aims to show that the concept of neo-patrimonialism will not necessarily reveal the inner logic of inherent contradictions with the principles of formulating and implementing pro-poor policy in the global south. Instead of neo-patrimonialism, the multiplicity and interconnectedness of the politics and class interests will be used to demonstrate how the appropriation of surplus through the commodification of economies created arrays of social interests, and the effect of this has on the function of the state and society as well as on the relative position of the different social classes. In the process, a distinction will be made between the hegemonic class and the counter hegemonic class and how the range of nuance in their social relationship articulates in the sphere and practices of the state. This may explain as to why policy analysis has to be moved from "what" to "who" benefits in policy formulation and implementation.

Aminur Rahim graduated with a PhD from the University of Toronto in Sociology of Education and is Associate Professor in the Department of Development Studies at the University of Fort Hare, Eastern Cape, South Africa. He has taught at the University of York, Ontario, Canada and Zimbabwe, Harare. He is the author of the book *Politics and National Formations in Bangladesh* and has published articles on education and class formation, international politics, political development and multiculturalism and ethnicity.

December 10 - Noon - 1:00PM  
206 Ingraham Hall

End of Semester Party!