



CENTER FOR SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

University of
Michigan
FALL 2020
Newsletter

Letter from the Director

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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As I begin to write this letter, my phone notifications remind me of tragic milestones—

over 180,000 dead in the United States and India now holding the distinction of the fastest-growing COVID-19 caseload of any country in the world. In these past few months our daily routines and everyday language have been radically transformed with zoom meetings and social distancing, our communities dramatically and tragically impacted by a virus that has both disproportionately impacted marginalized communities and made starkly visible the systemic and structural discriminations that shape our social worlds in Ann Arbor, South Asia and beyond.

As we start this unprecedented and challenging 2020-2021 academic year, I want to welcome everyone—students, community members, staff, and faculty—and hope that you are staying safe and healthy. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Leela Fernandes for her leadership in nurturing the Center over the past year. During my time on the CSAS Executive Committee, I had the privilege of working with Leela and have a deep appreciation for her vision and many intellectual and programmatic contributions, including her role in developing and strengthening our partnerships with institutions in South Asia. Leela is headed west to the University of Washington where she will

be the director of the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, the first female director in the Institute's over 100-year history. Michigan's loss will certainly be the Jackson School's gain and we wish her all the very best in her new role.

Under Leela's leadership this past year, CSAS continued its role as a generative and vital resource and intellectual home for South Asia at the University of Michigan through organizing a wide array of events and fellowship opportunities. In the pages that follow you will find brief summaries of some of these events and initiatives. Our programming, like many activities throughout the university and beyond, was drastically impacted this past spring by the COVID-19 lockdowns. Lectures and visits were canceled, and research and exchange trips put on hold. I want to recognize the countless hours and hard work that Center staff, student and faculty organizers had put into various events and look forward to welcoming you to many of these lectures and conferences that have been rescheduled for this coming year in a modified online format.

The Thomas Trautmann Honorary Lecture of Pre Modern India will be given by Professor Sumit Guha from the University of Texas, Austin this October. Our second endowed lecture, the Kavita Datla Memorial Lecture on South Asian History will be given by Professor Muzaffar Alam from the University of Chicago in April 2021. The Center will also be hosting two virtual conferences that had to be rescheduled from last year and re-envisioned for an online format—our annual U-M Pakistan conference in April, 2021 and more immediately a conference and workshop on the "Circulation of Anti-Caste Writing in Translation" in

November. Both events will entail significant participation of scholars based in South Asia. In addition, we look forward to a robust and intellectually thought-provoking virtual speaker series, beginning on September 25th with a lecture from our very own colleague Swapnil Rai in the Department of Film, Television and Media. A detailed calendar for these and other events is provided at the end of the newsletter.

As we face a number of unprecedented challenges locally and globally, the necessity to think collectively about our shared futures acquires greater urgency. The importance of fostering community and building engagements with institutions and intellectual networks is foremost on our minds as we plan events and initiatives for this coming year. One of the possibilities engendered by virtual programming is the ability to expand participation and audiences, especially with our partner institutions in South Asia. The Center will (co-)organize a number of events and webinars, including workshops that emphasize South Asia's relationships and entanglements with other world regions.

The Center will provide extra support for our undergraduate and graduate students in this moment of uncertainty and physical distancing through virtual graduate student brownbags, faculty-student reading groups and other student-led initiatives. In addition, we will also be reinvigorating our academic sharing program that provides faculty members from other higher education institutions library resources and mentorship for developing South Asia-related curricula and research.

I look forward to seeing you virtually, and hopefully in person at some point, at upcoming events.

Jatin Dua
Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology



“As we face a number of unprecedented challenges locally and globally, the necessity to think collectively about our shared futures acquires greater urgency. The importance of fostering community and building engagements with institutions and intellectual networks is foremost on our minds as we plan events and initiatives for this coming year.”

Farewell Interview with Leela Fernandez



Do you have a favorite CSAS moment from the past year? Why is it your favorite?

Meeting

all of the U-M alumni during the Presidential trip in India was a very rewarding experience. It was great to see the high level of interest from people from so many varied backgrounds and fields of employment.

Can you describe, in detail, some of your accomplishments as CSAS Director?

Over the past year, CSAS made significant strides in developing and expanding our connections with institutions and networks in India. This began with a very successful trip in November in connection with the University's presidential trip. We forged a new affiliation with Jawaharlal Nehru University, one of India's most eminent public institutions and have signed an MOU with their School of Social Sciences. Finally, we deepened and expanded our existing affiliation with Shiv Nadar University through a new faculty-PhD advising agreement that will forge relationships between faculty and students in both institutions. While a few of our events were cancelled during the last month of COVID closures we had a dynamic and full year of programming including many

co-sponsored events with units on campus.

Are there any lessons from your CSAS directorship that will remain with you as you move into your new role at the University of Washington?

Three things that I believe are critical for good leadership are ethical action, transparency and accountability. I would not say that I learned this at CSAS but that my experience in the International Institute underlined this for me. Working at CSAS was a very rewarding experience and I especially appreciated the willingness of so many faculty who generously provided their service to the center.

You have experience working and researching across disciplines. How will your backgrounds in sociology, political science, and gender studies assist you as Director of the Jackson School, which houses 21 centers and programs in international and area studies?

It will certainly be important as it will help me to engage with the rich breadth and depth of the Jackson School.

What will you miss most about Ann Arbor? What are you most looking forward to about Seattle?

I was an undergraduate student at U-M so it was a nice experience returning to Ann Arbor in a different capacity. I appreciated the perspective it gave me and enjoyed my time living in Michigan.

New Partnerships

Academic Year 2019-20 has seen the creation of two new partnerships between U-M/CSAS and South Asian institutions. Former Director Leela Fernandez facilitated/established/secured an Agreement of Cooperation with the School of Social Sciences and the Centre for Political Studies of Jawaharlal Nehru University, to promote cooperation in education and academic research.



Furthermore, she negotiated a "PhD Supervision" agreement with Shiv Nadar University (SNU), to promote opportunities for PhD students from both universities to seek faculty advisers to serve as "External Members" of dissertation committees.



Trautmann Lecture

CSAS Thomas R. Trautmann Honorary Lecture | Early Readers and Early Readings of the Mahābhārata

Christopher Minkowski, *Boden Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Oxford*

The Sanskrit Mahābhārata did not receive a commentary until the eleventh century. Well before then, however, it had become a central feature of Indian high culture, adapted by poets and dramatists, deliberated on by philosophers and aestheticians. Over the past century scholars have usefully examined these early treatments for what they tell us about the history of the Mahābhārata's text. The commentaries, some of which establish a version of the text, have been put to similar text-historical use.

In this lecture, Professor Minkowski argues for the value of the material that lies outside the boundaries of the epic proper, not in writing the history of the text, but in writing the history of that text's meaning to its readers. An interest in the history of the reception of ancient canonical texts through their commentaries and related paratexts has gained prominence in the study of the literary traditions of other parts of the world, because of its inherent interest and its utility for intellectual history. With some exceptions, the Indological field has remained hesitant about reception studies, in part because it is perceived to open the door to anachronistic readings, thereby violating a governing disciplinary principle, that of historicism. And yet built into this Indological stance is a contradiction, due to the huge extra-academic importance in the present of Sanskrit texts like the Mahābhārata.

In 1942, the founding editor of the Poona edition, V.S. Sukthankar, delivered a series of seminal lectures, 'On the Meaning of the Mahābhārata,' that is representative of the quandary. Sukthankar proposed a meaning for the epic working from within the text itself. He did not rely on the commentators, epitomizers, poets, or literary theorists, yet in ruling out possibilities he did use as an argument the brute fact of the importance of the Mahābhārata to the Indian people. The idea of the Mahābhārata as India's national epic whispers through the twentieth century scholarship, and yet its popularity in the present is neither an automatic result of its



antiquity nor an accident of modernity.

The text was composed to create a remembered past. Over time its transmitters adjusted that memory and the text itself as they performed it, codified it, and used it as a point of departure. Survivals of this process are abundant in the Mahabharata's poetic and dramatic recreations and occasional pieces, and especially in its ancillary literature: its commentaries, its versified summaries, its indices, and its 'satellite texts,' that is, marginal verses and other materials, some of which crept into the body of the epic over time.

If for nothing else, the history of the reception of the itihasa of the Bhārata clan through this material can serve as a way to confirm or disconfirm historical claims about the epic's meaning, either as invented or as original, especially when the claims are presented as justiciable only by experts, or when the claims pretend to speak for a collective indigenous understanding that is inaccessible to those not native to the culture. Special reference is made to episodes with elephants, either actual or imaginary, and to the Arthaśāstra.

Presidential Visit to India

The longstanding connection between U-M and India was highlighted by President Mark Schlissel's trip to India this past November. During his weeklong stay, he traveled to Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore to visit partner institutions, meet with industry and government leaders, and listen to panels facilitated by University affiliates and alumni.

In an interview with Global Michigan, President Schlissel said he was eager to learn about India's priorities in education for the near- and long-term future. As the world's largest democracy, the subcontinent is a hotspot not only for scholars of politics, public policy, and economics, but also for those interested in business, health sciences, and the humanities.

The trip began with Schlissel's visit to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi. Michigan Medicine has enjoyed research and education collaborations with AIIMS for about a decade. The President also met with health and human resource officials, including Vijay Raghavan, the scientific advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In Mumbai,



Schlissel participated in the TED Talks-style TATA Talks during his meeting with Tata Group executives. The Ross School of Business has shared a 25 year partnership with Tata Group, a multinational Indian conglomerate. The collaboration began with Ross's

late Professor CK Prahalad, who conceptualized a U-M program in executive education for Tata executives.

The events in Bangalore included a well-attended alumni gathering, which was preceded by a series of professional panels. Speakers and facilitators included Vice President for Technology & Chief Information officer Ravi Pendse; Ross Professor & Associate Dean for Executive Programs M.S. Krishnan; Co-Founder & Vice Chairman of SUN Mobility Chetan Maini (BE 1992); and Partner at Samvad Partners Neela Badami (LLM 2008), among others. At the end of the night, Schlissel

presented the Hermelin Award to Founder, Chairman, and Managing Director of TVS Capital Funds, Gopal Srinivasan (MBA 1983). The award recognizes outstanding dedication to fundraising efforts at the University of Michigan.



UM-UPR Symposium Report



by Brittany Puller

The Sixth Annual University of Michigan – University of Puerto Rico (UPR) Symposium was held on March 5-6, 2020 at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus. This collaborative project between U-M and UPR is provided by a Title VI grant from the US Department of Education with the intent of exchanging research and curriculum development among professors, graduate and undergraduate students, and K-12 teachers in Puerto Rico. This year’s symposium centered on integrating vulnerability into the classroom.

Graduate students from U-M’s International Institute were selected to present their research and teaching strategies for K-12 classrooms in Puerto Rico. Brittany Puller represented CSAS at this year’s event. Puller, a PhD Candidate in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, presented, “Comparative Colonialisms: Casta in Mexico in India.” This presentation modeled curriculum techniques for teaching comparative colonialisms, social stratification, caste, and racism using image analysis of trade maps and colonial casta paintings. Following student presentations, U-M’s Center for Education Design, Evaluation, and Research (CEDER) provided workshops for K-12 teachers and U-M and UPR graduate students to create world history lessons. These lessons incorporated techniques that engage with student vulnerability surrounding colonial histories and natural disasters within Puerto Rico.

WHALI

The World History & Literature Initiative is an annual collaboration between the University of Michigan’s five Title VI National Resource Centers and the School of Education. It offers K-12 history, social studies, and English teachers with area studies and pedagogical instruction to deepen teachers’ content knowledge, enhance their pedagogical practices, and acquire new resources and instructional materials that encourage students to think on a global scale.

The 2019 World History & Literature Initiative Symposium “Empire, Independence & Decolonization in Global History & Literature” was held on Dec. 6-7 and 14, 2019 at the University of Michigan. The 2019 symposium brought together 32 K-12 teachers from Michigan, Ohio, Georgia, and Puerto Rico and featured Bob Bain, WHaLI Faculty Director, as well as speakers representing each of the University of Michigan’s five Title VI National Resource Centers.

CSAS featured Professor Madhumita Lahiri, who gave a talk titled “Reading (and Teaching) After the British Empire.”



CSAS Graduate Interdisciplinary Roundtable



John Harriss, Professor Emeritus of International Studies, Simon Fraser University.

The 2020 CSAS Graduate Interdisciplinary Roundtable, *Writing South Asian History: Power, Representation and Subjectivity*, took place on Friday, January 31. The aim of the roundtable has been to showcase the work of graduate students at the University of Michigan who are working on South Asia.

Arighna Gupta, from the History Department, presented on *Digitization and Open-Access: Post-coloniality and the politics of archives*.

Swarnim Khare, from the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, presented on *Begunaah Qaidi by Abdul Wahid Sheikh - The Practice of Reading and Translating an Indian Prison Narrative*.

Shourjendra Mukherjee, from the History Department presented on *Magneto: A Universal Jew and 'Third World' from Margin*.

John Harriss, Professor Emeritus of International Studies at Simon Fraser University was the keynote speaker, with a lecture titled "Thinking About Politics in South Asian Studies," in which he reflected on the ways in which patterns of political mobilization and participation in India over the period since Independence have been understood, drawing on the work of historians and anthropologists, as well of political scientists.



Film Series

During AY 2019-2020, CSAS screened 4 award-winning documentaries from the 2020 Film South Asia film festival (Kathmandu, Nepal). The films screened were: *Indus Blues* by Jawad Sharif, *An Engineered Dream* by Hemant Gaba, *Bamboo Stories* by Shaheen Dill-Riaz, and *Swimming Through the Darkness* by Supriyo Sen.

The documentaries drew interest not only among the U-M community, but also among the local Ann Arbor public, and that of Southeast Michigan in general.

This coming term, more films from the same festival will be screened online, and on Friday, October 9th we will have a Q&A session with Mauktik Kulkarni, actor and producer of *Riding on a Sunbeam*.



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Cancelled Events



Academic Year 2019-20 has been a very unexpected and challenging one for everyone.

All the programming was proceeding as scheduled until February, but by mid-March, most, if not all events at the University of Michigan had to be cancelled.

This was the case also for the Center for South Asian Studies, whose programming calendar for the second half of the Winter Term included many big events, that had already been prepared.

Among them, there were: the 10th U-M Pakistan Conference: Religious Landscapes, and the Kavita S. Datla Memorial Lecture by Professor Muzaffar Alam, from the University of Chicago, as well as various other lectures, co-sponsored events, and international student exchanges.

K-12 Teacher Fellow



Gregory Dykhous, Black River Public School (Holland, MI)

I am grateful for the opportunity to delve deeply into South Asian studies. I teach high school History at Black River Public School (Holland, MI), with my primary assignments being “Big History,” which I explore with freshmen, and “AP European History,” which is targeted for upperclassmen.

How do K-12 teachers make the world of “South Asia” familiar and approachable to their students, most of whom will never experience this region first-hand? Courses in “Big History” and “AP European History” are two vehicles for young learners to explore the societies and cultures of South Asia.

“Big History” directs us to look at multiple scales over time and physical space. With the fellowship I look to find opportunities to consider the unique geography and geology of India and how our human species has had to negotiate major river systems. Today the people of India have to solve the challenge of supplying fresh water sufficiently for its population; although Asia is home to more than half the world’s population, it contains less freshwater than any continent except Antarctica. With a fifth of humanity living in China, and a sixth in India, only 7 percent of the planet’s fresh water is in China, and 4 percent in India. How these countries address challenges of fresh water supply, as well as energy capabilities, may assist the rest of the world in its pursuit of sustainability.

“AP European History” has more modest pursuits of scale, but they are no less interesting. I hope to illustrate the work of the Dutch VOC (“Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie,” or “East Indian Company”) and British East India Company through art work on display at the university’s Museum of Art. I intend to select works that students may analyze as historical documents, which would allow them to see “change and continuity over time” within frames of trade, exchange, and globalization. The university has been supportive of similar projects over the years with our school, such as our annual “Big History Extravaganza,” when we attempt to look at billions of years of History during one field trip (news.umich.edu/black-river-big-history-project-asking-the-how-and-why-questions/; impact.govrel.umich.edu/partnership-between-u-m-and-black-river-public-school-gives-students-a-broader-perspective-on-history/).

As a graduate of the University of Michigan (RC, 1987), I look for ways to share the resources and opportunities that are available through the university with my “young learners.” The fellowship program with CSAS provides me with new and important tools to realize this goal!

UM-India Impact Website & Newsletter

Developed by the Center for South Asian Studies at U-M, the India Impact initiative (housed at www.umindiaimpact.org) is first and foremost about connection: connecting people across the world with a shared commitment to, and interest in, the multiple ways India and the University of Michigan are making an impact in the world together. India Impact highlights the people, ideas, and research that make the multiple, ongoing connections between U-M and India what they are: strong, innovative, and oriented towards real-world problems.

In the past year, we've circulated five India Impact newsletters to a global audience of around 3,000 people. Each issue has been rich with original content, spanning topics from consumer behavior during COVID-19 to University medical partnerships in India. In addition to articles, our newsletters have included links to original audio and visual media.

Subscribe at umindiaimpact.org to receive India Impact content directly to your inbox!



About India Impact

The 'About' section of the website houses the 'why' of the India Impact campaign – that is, the purpose behind the website and consolidation of India-related material at the University of Michigan. Reasons include the University's ongoing commitment, collaboration, and the "U-M Advantage."



India Impact Podcast Series

The purpose of this series is to promote India-focused work by University of Michigan faculty, staff, alumni, & students in an accessible audio file that makes for an enjoyable walk or early-morning commute.



News in India Impact

In News, we archive written stories and profiles about India experts and Indian cultural events across campus. Our articles span categories like current events, alumni, student profiles, and collaborations with Indian universities.



India-U-M Partnerships

'Partnerships' provides a partial list of the University of Michigan's collaborations with research institutions, universities, and social service organizations in India.



Research & Teaching

In the Research & Teaching tab, we aim to empirically highlight the U-M/India connection with facts and figures about our students and faculty, including mentions of U-M affiliates in the Indian news.



Faculty and Students

The Faculty and Students tabs provide comprehensive lists of faculty members and graduate students with public facing and/or research interests related to India.

Have questions or suggestions regarding U-M India Impact News? Contact Josie Tolin, India Communications Specialist at U-M jostolin@umich.edu



Library News

by Jeffrey Martin

The University Library has acquired a new database that will be of interest to researchers in South Asian Studies. The South Asia Online Archive (SAOA) is a database that is totally open access. One of the main goals was to create a database that anyone in the world could access. The major South Asian collections librarians throughout the United States and South Asia created this database under the umbrella of the Center for Research Libraries (CRL). SAOA is hosted by JSTOR so it has a very easy to navigate interface that many researchers already know. It's taken five years for the product to be released but even though it's still in its infancy it will prove to be an important research tool.

It should be noted that the Center for South Asian Studies has been extremely supportive of this project, especially in financially helping the SAOA to come to fruition. Although the SAOA library holdings are relatively small at this time they are nevertheless growing rapidly. The holdings include English language materials but South Asian vernacular languages as well. Another important feature is that there are a number of curated collections. These features will help researchers worldwide.

Feel free to look at the database and if you have any comments/suggestions please leave them. We're still growing and would appreciate your feedback: www.jstor.org/site/saoa/

Awards

Matthew Hull, Associate Professor of Anthropology

Professor Hull received the 2019 J.I. Staley Prize for his book, *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan*.

"Cities are shaped as much by paper and rubber stamps as they are by bricks and mortar, argues Matthew Hull in *Government of Paper*. By tracing the unexpected ways in which documents travel, he exposes the secret life of paper that profoundly shapes the built landscape of the planned city of Islamabad, and more broadly, gives us new ways of understanding bureaucracy on a global scale.

Taking us behind the bureaucrat's desk, and examining the slippage between traditional and modern systems of measurement, the book shows how officials delegate agency and shape petitioners' lived environments through circulating or sometimes misplaced documents. These are the material traces of bureaucratic processes which diffuse responsibility and yet influence the ownership of property, housing, religious worship, and commerce. Developing the notion of "graphic artifacts," Hull challenges our conventional notions of administrative process: more than inert forms, papers tell stories, make new meanings, and produce relationships under the guise of imposing rationality on the disorder of a complex city." – 2019 J.I. Staley Prize Committee

Jatin Dua, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology

In August, Professor Dua received the 2020 Jack Goody Award for his essay, "Hijacked: Piracy and Economies of Protection in the Western Indian Ocean." The award is given out yearly by *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. This year, Andreas Glaeser,



New Faculty Q&A

Michael Herzfeld, and Carole McGranahan composed the panel of judges. Their comments included the following:

“Dua’s theoretical contribution is especially to explode the standard categories of formal or controlled comparison and thereby to show us how historical conjectures can be fruitfully exploited as an occasion for comparative analysis. This is comparativism at its transgressively most fruitful.”



Shobita Parthasarathy, Professor and Director, Ford School of Public Policy Science, Technology, and Public Policy Program

Professor Parthasarathy received a National Science Foundation Rapid Response Research Grant to understand how political culture shapes COVID-19 testing in Singapore, South Korea, the UK, and the US. Through her research, she hopes to understand how countries with underdeveloped testing structure can create testing and public health policies to better prepare for future pandemics. She’s also investigating the relationship between testing systems and inequalities.



Premlata Vaishnava, Lecturer in Hindi and Urdu Languages in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures

CSAS: Tell us about your research interests and what brought you to the University of Michigan.

PV: Most of my work is around Language Pedagogy and how languages evolve over time to become a part of our everyday life. Like many other things in my life, destiny brought me to the University of Michigan and I am very happy to be part of the U-M community.

CSAS: Have you discovered any good secrets about Ann Arbor yet?

PV: I am not sure if it’s a secret but there are some small shops around the campus that carry local artisan stuff and I like to window shop there. The other thing is the lemon-ginger tea at Café Royale, which is excellent. That was the place where my colleagues and I would take a quick break to relax between classes.

CSAS: What will you be teaching this year and what would you like to accomplish in your spare time?

PV: I am teaching two levels of Hindi Language this year. I would like to finish my book that I started to work on last year.



Faculty News

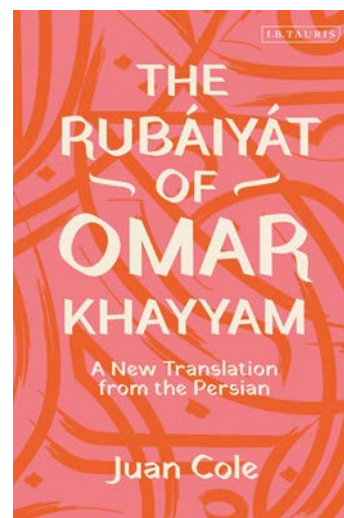
Nachiket Chanchani, Departments of History of Art and Asian Languages and Cultures

In Fall 2019, Nachiket Chanchani organized and led a week-long Transregional Academy entitled, "India and the World, New Arcs of Knowledge" in Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai in collaboration with the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangarhalaya (Mumbai), Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (Kolkata), Dakshina Chitra Museum (Chennai), Kunsthistorisches Institut-Max Planck Institute (Florence) and the Forum Transregionale Studien (Berlin) This transregional academy brought together about 50 doctoral and postdoctoral scholars, senior scholars, contemporary artists, leading cultural policy makers and museum directors from all over the world. In Winter 2020, Chanchani designed and taught a curatorial seminar centered on the Art Institute of Chicago's collections of South Asian Art in close collaboration with the AIC. Recent publications include "Museums without meaning" (The Hindu, February 17, 2020), "India, land of many masks," (The Hindu, April 25, 2020), and "The importance of art in the age of coronavirus (The Indian Express, May 17, 2020).



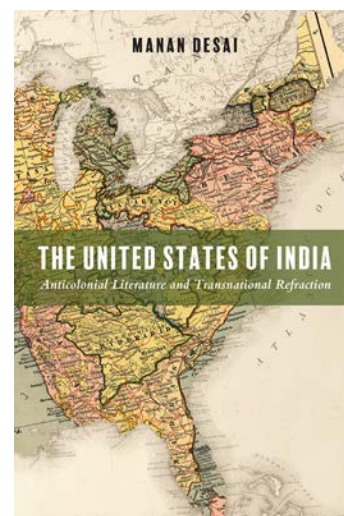
Juan Cole, Department of History

His new book, *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam: A New Translation from the Persian* was published in April, 2020, by I. B. Tauris / Bloomsbury. It has a South Asia dimension.



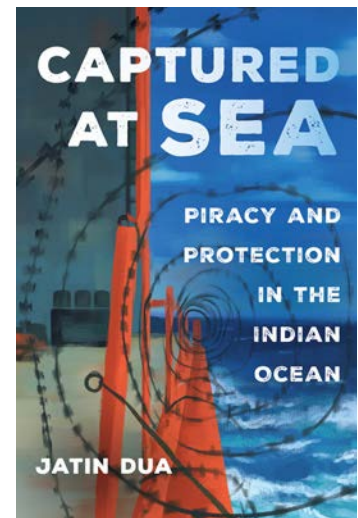
Manan Desai, Department of American Culture

Released in March, 2020 with Temple University Press, *The United States of India* centers the work of Indian and American writers in the United States in the years directly following the First World War. These writers -- Lajpat Rai, Dhan Gopal Mukerji, Agnes Smedley, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Katherine Mayo -- played a key role in developing a wave of anticolonial thought using the social and historical landscapes of India and the United States. Manan Desai considers the ways these interactions caused a "transnational refraction," or a way of imagining an anticolonial Indian future through the lens of American history.



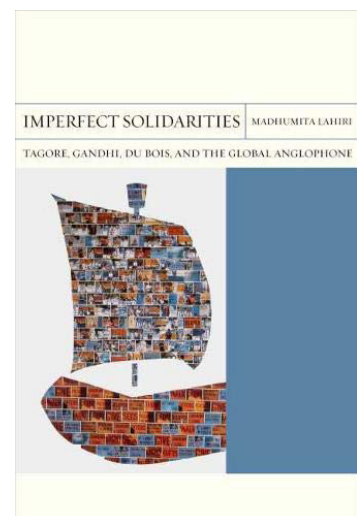
Jatin Dua, Department of Anthropology

Anthropology Professor Jatin Dua's new book, *Captured at Sea: Piracy and Protection in the Indian Ocean* was published with University of California Press in December 2019. In *Captured at Sea*, Dua investigates the unexpected rise in piracy in the twenty-first century. It is from this perspective that he's able to explore overarching questions about trade, commerce, and interconnectivity in the Indian Ocean.



Madhumita Lahiri, English Department and Department of Film, Television, and Media

Forthcoming from Northwestern University Press in November 2020, English and FTVM Professor Madhumita Lahiri's *Imperfect Solidarities: Tagore, Gandhi, Du Bois, and the Global Anglophone* tells the story of global activists who used Anglophone print media to communicate. Through the writings of figures like Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, and W. E. B. Du Bois, Lahiri theorizes print internationalism through postcolonial literary studies.



Swapnil Rai, Department of Film, Television, and Media

Assistant Professor Swapnil Rai published an article entitled "From Bombay Talkies to Khote Productions: female star switching power in bollywood production culture" in the journal *Feminist Media Studies*. Devika Rani, first lady of Indian cinema, spearheaded a studio and co-produced global films. Her contemporary Durga Khote was the first female star to produce ad films and venture into television production. Nargis, the star of Oscar nominated, *Mother India*, also produced films. While female stars have historically been central to Indian cinema's production culture and globalization, their role within it is largely ignored. Rai's article traces the marginalized history of these stars turned producers, and the impact of class, caste and gender on their ability to succeed in a male-dominated industry.

Swapnil was also a judge for the ninth annual Trinity Film Festival held virtually in May 2020. Trinity Film Festival features the innovative work of talented, undergraduate filmmakers from around the world and showcases those films every spring. Due to restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the ninth annual film festival was held virtually in May 2020: the films were screened on the festival website during the festival weekend followed by a private deliberation amongst the judges on Zoom. Swapnil Rai participated on the panel of judges who determined these festival winners. trinfilmfestival.org/tff2020-judges



Graduate Student News

Megh Marathe, a PhD candidate in the School of Information and program in Science, Technology & Society, received the U-M Institute for the Humanities graduate student fellowship for 2020-21.

She also published the article "Seizure aesthetics: Temporal regimes and medical technology in epilepsy diagnosis" in *Time & Society*.



Matt Schissler is a PhD candidate in anthropology whose research focuses on anti-Muslim violence in Myanmar and histories of inter-religious life. In 2019-2020 he completed a year of research in Yangon, where he sought out new sources and archives that bear traces of Buddhist-Muslim relations while also undertaking advanced Burmese-language study. This work was supported by fellowships from the Blakemore-Freeman Foundation and the Social Science Research Council. In Fall 2019 he was also awarded a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award to support subsequent ethnographic research on the practices of inter-religious life in two neighborhoods of urban Yangon. He hopes to complete this research, pending restrictions resulting from COVID-19.



Sriram Mohan, a PhD candidate in the Department of Communication and Media, received the 2020-2021 Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship from the Rackham Graduate School at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is currently working on his dissertation titled "Digital Defiance: Political Expression and Technological Citizenship in South India." The project relies on close readings of policy/industrial texts and ethnographic fieldwork with Photoshop artists, meme page administrators, anti-caste music producers and YouTube creators to study the links between emergent digital public cultures and statist visions of technological citizenship. Sriram has also been serving as the Secretary of the Popular Communication division in the International Communication Association (ICA) and was recently invited to be an associate editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Bioscope: South Asian Screen Studies*. In 2020, he published an essay titled "Sound Clouds: Listening and Citizenship in Indian Public Culture" (co-authored with Aswin Punathambekar) in "Indian Sound Cultures, Indian Sound Citizenship," a collected volume edited by Laura Brueck, Jacob Smith and Neil Verma for the University of Michigan Press.



Dana Kornberg, a PhD Candidate in the Department of Sociology, will be joining the Department of Sociology at University of California-Santa Barbara as an assistant professor in the fall.



Summer in South Asia

Due to the COVID-19 related measures, travel has been restricted for most of the U-M community, including our 2020 SiSA undergraduate fellows, who will be able to travel to India next summer.

Nithya Arun

Nithya Arun is a sophomore planning to major in Global and Community Public Health. She hopes to attend medical school, and integrate the fields of medicine and Public Health as a physician. Nithya will be conducting research on factors that influence mental health seeking behavior among widowed women in Vrindavan, India. She has partnered with the New Delhi based NGO, the Guild of Service, in order to do so. Apart from being involved in research, Nithya served as a Policy Advisor for Central Student Government, and works to create school-wide policy to increase accessibility to student health services at the University of Michigan.



Eliyas Asfaw

Eliyas is a junior studying public health. He will be working in the area of healthcare delivery in rural areas. His experiences in the United States have helped him to see that healthcare access doesn't necessarily inform one's experience with the system. He hopes to understand the roles of various healthcare stakeholders in India. Eliyas is a Peer Facilitator for the Research Scholars Program, Director of STEM



Cycle, and OptiMize Fellow. He hopes to work on redesigning healthcare delivery and the expansion of pharmaceutical companies in low-income countries.

Ethan Concannon

Ethan Concannon is a freshman planning on studying political science and computer science. He plans on pursuing a PhD in political science and becoming a professor, researching religion and politics in South Asia and the Middle East as well as quantitative methods. While in India, he will work with Salaam Baalak Trust in Delhi, an NGO that focuses on empowering those with a low socioeconomic status. Additionally, he will conduct research on Muslims in Old Delhi, and how their incomes and education rates relate to their non-Muslim counterparts. Through this research, Ethan hopes to increase his skills in the Urdu language and gain a deeper understanding of how religion influences the modern day Indian state.



Jacqueline Gilbert

Jacqueline Gilbert is a senior, studying English with a writing specialization. Additionally, she is pursuing a certification in TESOL. Her project will focus on education with an emphasis on language and literacy



acquisition, potentially of a second language. She hopes to examine and experiment with different methods of promoting and aiding this language acquisition. She plans to work with the Gram Vikas Trust in Bharuch, which promotes health and education for women, children, and the underprivileged. She is excited and grateful for this opportunity.

Gabrielle Hooper

Gabrielle Hooper is a junior at the University of Michigan pursuing a dual degree in Cello Performance and Biopsychology, Cognition and Neuroscience. She has a wide array of research interests that focus on the intersection of music and psychology especially in ways we can use music as a tool to combat anxiety, improve or enhance memory, and stimulate learning. Gabrielle really enjoys both working with and performing for the elderly population as they can tell us a lot about our own functioning cognition. Over the summer, she will be traveling to Bangalore, India to intern with the Music Lab at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience researching North Indian Classical Music and Attention. After undergrad, she hopes to pursue a PhD in either Neuropsychology or Cognitive psychology while fulfilling a rich career in chamber music.



Vishal John

Vishal is a junior majoring in Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience with a minor in Business Administration from the Ross School of Business. He is interested in how



to help small businesses sustainably grow. He is also very passionate about healthcare as well. After completing his undergraduate education, he hopes to pursue a master's program in either health or business administration. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his friends and family, watching movies, or doing fun outdoor activities.

Lauren Kuzee

Lauren Kuzee is a sophomore studying Art and Design and Ecology Evolution and Biodiversity. Her future plans are undetermined, but she hopes to work with sustainable agriculture and climate activism. During her time in India, she is planning to volunteer on Navdanya Biodiversity Conservation farm located Doon Valley, Uttarakhand. There, she will live and learn on the farm which is dedicated to education for sustainable living and earth citizenship. She will work as a Bijak, or "sower of seeds" and learn to care for and harvest biodiversity with the intention to take these learnings, processes, and way of being to finally sow the seeds in her own community.



Benjamin Niemann

Benjamin Niemann is a junior majoring in Earth and Environmental Sciences and minoring in English. He works in two university research labs: the Cole Climate Lab and the Michigan Geomicrobiology Lab. After graduating, Ben plans to earn a master's in environmental sciences and then go on

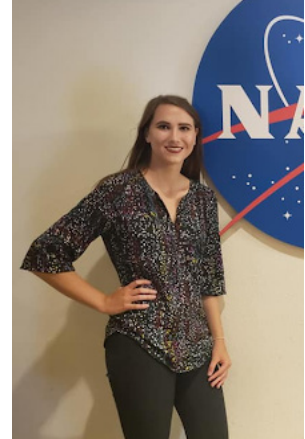


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to law school to study environmental law. Ben will be working with an NGO called Kaaya to set up and gather data on a variety of sustainability initiatives that they have been working on. This will be done in order to help the villages in the surrounding watershed better prepare for variable climatic conditions.

Samantha Schefka

My name is Samantha Schefka. I am a communication studies major and entrepreneurship minor at UMICH. Going to India has always been a dream of mine because of how different the culture is from American culture. Because I am from a small farm town in Michigan, the opportunity to go to India is something that I could never do otherwise. After I graduate, I want to go into international diplomacy and work for the US government at the US Mission to NATO and travel the world. My passion for world history and international politics will carry me through my career as a civil servant. I also love animals and hope to incorporate this into my future plans somehow.



Isabel Zuniga

Isabel is a junior double majoring in Political Science and History. After graduating, she is planning on attending law school to then achieve her dream of becoming an immigration lawyer. Isabel will be in Bangalore volunteering for an NGO that focuses on helping marginalized groups in the area with events, resources, and trainings. She plans her final project to be around the question of citizenship in India and how there are similar themes on the topic in the United States.



2020-21 Schedule of Events

Friday, September 25, 2020, 4:30pm

Networked Bollywood: Star Power and the Global Flows of Indian Cinema, Swapnil Rai, Department of Film, Television, and Media, University of Michigan

Friday, October 9, 2020, 4:30pm

Riding on a Sunbeam Q&A with Producer and Protagonist Mauktik Kulkarni. The documentary will be available online one week prior to the event

Friday, October 30, 2020

Thomas R. Trautmann Honorary Lecture, Sumit Guha, Frances Higginbotham Nalle Centennial Professorship in History, University of Texas at Austin

Friday 11/13/2020 - Saturday 11/14/2020

Circulation of Anti-Caste Writing in Translation Conference+Workshop

Thursday, January 28, 2021

EIHS lecture, William Glover, History Department, University of Michigan

Friday, February 12, 2021

Gandhi and the Claims of Indian Modernity, Akeel Bilgrami, Sidney Morgenbesser Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University

Thursday, February 18, 2021

Graduate Brownbag/reading group

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Graduate Brownbag/reading group

Friday, March 12, 2021

The Price of Acceptability: On South Asian Inclusion and Exclusion in the US, Vivek Bald, Comparative Media Studies, MIT

Friday, March 26, 2021, 4:30pm

Sunila Kale, Jackson School of International Studies, Director of the South Asia Center, University of Washington

Friday, April 02, 2021

10th U-M Pakistan conference

Thursday, April 15, 2021

Graduate Brownbag/reading group

Friday, April 16, 2021, 4:30 pm

Kavita S. Datla Memorial Lecture, Muzaffar Alam, Professor in South Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago

CSAS is also working on an Alumni Roundtable, and various other events in collaboration with institutions in South Asia

Travelling Film South Asia 2020

During the Fall Term, CSAS will make the documentaries from the 2020 Film South Asia film festival available to our community.

Following the agreement with the copyright holders, each film will be available for 12 hours, from 2 pm of the day, until 2 am the morning after.

Please register at: forms.gle/9BfAKE3QqvC5f5xi9

Friday, September 25, 2020

We Have Not Come Here to Die by Deepa Dhanraj, India, 78 mins

Friday, October 2, 2020

Scratches on Stone by Amit Mahanti, India, 66 mins + *Listen* by Min Min Ho, Myanmar, 13 mins

Friday, October 16, 2020

The Winter Tap by Aashish Limbu & Debin Rai, Nepal, 12 mins + *Badshah Lear* by Anant Raina, India, 61 mins

Friday, October 23, 2020

In Fact by Debalina Majumder, India, 51 mins + *Chai Darbari* by Prateek Shekhar, India, 29 mins

Friday, November 06, 2020

Facing the Dragon by Sedika Mojadidi, Afghanistan, 82 mins

Friday, November 20, 2020

Janani's Juliet by Pankaj Rishi Kumar, India, 53 mins + *Memoirs of Saira and Salim* by Eshwarya Grover, India, 14 mins + *And What is the Summer Saying* by Payal Kapadia, India, 23 mins