**Jaffer ABID, ‘Rethinking Muslim Self and Society in Colonial India: The Politics of Shibli Nu’mani’**

Historiography on the transition of Indian Muslims from a religious community to a political minority has often characterized it as a shift driven by their separatist aspirations and come to understand Muslim nationalism and Indian nationalism, whether in its Hindu ‘religious’ or ‘secular’ composite forms, as distinct ideas. Scholars analyzing Indo-Muslim political debates during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries have offered valuable insights into how the implementation of modern practices of liberal democracy facilitated the conversion of Muslims into a minority community. In this paper I turn to the writings of the Indian Muslim intellectual Shibli Nu’mani (1857-1914) to complicate our understanding of Muslim nationalism as a separatist project arguing that his thought challenges the dominant responses of Muslims to the political problems they faced. Focusing primarily on his poetry this chapter argues that Nu’mani sought to bring together ideas of pan-Islamism with Hindu-Muslim unity to fashion a politics of Muslim belonging in India. Analyzing his responses to political events at home in India and throughout the Muslim world I demonstrate how his writings offer a cosmopolitan vision of a Muslim identity and community rather than a national one. In doing so it shows how Nu’mani belonged to the transregional tradition of anticolonial thought that Seema Alavi has called the ‘Muslim cosmopolis’, a world in which the lives and ideas of Muslim individuals “problematize selfhood and identity, political subjecthood, and religious affinities.”

**Maliha AHMED, ‘Bangladesh’s Path to Recognition, 1971-1975’**

My research will aim to discover how Bangladesh – represented by political leaders, representatives, and international supporters – consciously navigated the path and pursuit of recognition by the international community as an independent state between 1971 to 1975.

On 25th March 1971, the Pakistani military regime launched an armed conflict to crush political dissent in East Pakistan, which arose due to years of social, economic and political disenfranchisement. This marked the start of the Bangladesh Liberation War. The conflict ended in December 1971, following the surrender of West Pakistan’s armed forces, signalling Bangladesh’s independence. But Bangladesh was not immediately internationally recognised as an independent state. Whilst countries such as India, Burma and Nepal were quick to recognise Bangladesh within days of its independence, Britain and the United States delayed until 1972. Pakistan withheld until 1974, and finally China in 1975. Although historians have shed light on how and why the ‘Great Powers’ came to recognise Bangladesh, serious engagement with *Bangladesh’s* navigation of the path to recognition remains overlooked.

The larger consideration of this research project is the navigation of the ‘grey area’ between independence and recognition. Further questions emerge such as *why* the international community (i.e., fellow states and international organisations) delayed recognition between 1971 to 1975? What were the obstacles to Bangladesh achieving its sovereign status in the eyes of this community? How did the Bangladeshi government and its representatives (official and unofficial) overcome these barriers? How did the international community react, facilitate, or hinder this process?

**Heena ANSARI, ‘Mobility and Servitude: Domestic Servants during the Nawab-ruled Awadh (1720s-1850s)’**

This paper explores the mobility/immobility of domestic servants, especially their efforts to carve out an influential standing within the Awadh royal household during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Awadh kingdom’s prosperity and extravagance was reflected in not only its architectural buildings, craft industry, and cultural activities but also in its service industry. An enlarged servitude culture and servants’ closer proximity to elites generated possibilities for them to become influential in everyday politics. Many moved up in the service hierarchy i.e., from a small palanquin bearer to the chief of her/his group or from a tiny eunuch servant to a chief advisor of *begums.* While some rose to occupy positions of political importance, others used their privileges to acquire financial benefits and better social status. Servants who enjoyed prestige and command such as seamstressesandastrologers were also accused of deceiving their masters. My paper investigates the fluid socio-occupational mobility of servants and incidents of the misuse of positions by servants under the Nawabi rule and how the rule responded to such incidents. This paper contributes to the historiography of mobility in the pre-colonial era which has so far concentrated on issues of inter-caste movement and migration patterns and has studied itinerant groups like *banjaras* or artisan groups like weavers. Shifting the focus on household servants, who have received scholarly attention in South Asian historiography recently, my paper probes the emerging early modern patterns of servant-occupation hierarchy and elite’s growing reliance on servitude culture which continued in colonial and post-colonial India.

**Jaffer Ali BASHIR, ‘Land, Blood, and Water Relations in Canal-Irrigated Baluchistan’**

In this paper, I argue that the kinds of political organization and electoral participation at the village level in the canal-irrigated Baluchistan are based on land, blood, and water relations. I will show through my case studies of big landlord, small-landlord, and peasant proprietor villages how all of these factors come together to influence the nature of the political organization and participation of voters in the area. I show that small-landlords and peasant-proprietors employ kinship relations to increase their chances of accessing state resources in contrast to big-landlords who use land relations to coerce their peasants to vote for their candidate. I add to my argument by maintaining that even though kinship and land relations are fundamental to the (non-) existence of political organization at the village level and success of voters in accessing state resources, yet they are not sufficient to explain diverse forms of political participation in all villages. Therefore, I will also focus on water to explain how closeness to the source of water and who one shares it with has an impact on the village and union council level political organization, which subsequently affects the chances of a particular vote block to successfully access state resources.

**Matt BIRKINSHAW, ‘“Mafia” Means People that do *Qabza*: Water, Land and Local Authority in South Delhi’**

Around half of India’s urban water supply is groundwater, often illicitly extracted and one in three of Delhi’s 20 million residents uses private ground water supply. Despite repeated attempts at reform, this informal economy of water remains resilient. Similarly, despite widespread criticism, urban informality as a concept shows remarkable persistence. My paper considers water (mis)management in ‘unauthorised’ urban areas of Delhi to develop a critique of informality using ideas from infrastructure studies. Responding to calls for a new vocabulary of urbanisation, I develop the alternative vernacular concepts of ‘*paani mafia*’ [water mafia] and ‘*qabza*’ [capture/grab].

The paper discusses different ‘water mafia’ practices in tanker and tubewell water in Delhi’s largest cluster of unauthorised neighbourhoods. I show how these practices link to histories of urbanisation, caste dominance and migration in the area, and the challenges they present to reform initiatives. The paper is based on qualitative fieldwork in South Delhi and draws from semi-structured interviews with over 100 individuals, including political party representatives, water vendors, and residents. I argue against claims that informality is state produced or that non-state actors embody ‘infrastructural’ state power. Instead, I suggest that these unruly infrastructures generate alternative centres of power from below - ‘infra-power’ - that both support and destabilise state actors and projects. I use the progress of government reform projects in the area to illustrate this idea.

**Ida Roland BIRKVAD, ‘Encounters of the Uncanny: Aryanism in Ninteenth-Century Indian Occultism’**

This paper constitutes part of my PhD research, which aims to write a conceptual history of Aryanism in British India. My thesis looks at Aryanism as an inter-elite concept which cannot be understood as either ‘European’ or ‘Indian’, but rather as a mutually constituted concept created and sustained by a heterogeneous set of European and Hindu Indian elites, grounded in shared (albeit always contested) notions of hierarchy and difference. These ideas of inter-elite exclusivity are articulated through the intersecting categories of race, caste, and gender.

In the paper, I focus on Aryanism in 19th century occultist networks in India, primarily in encounters between European occultists and Hindu upper-caste reformers through the Theosophical Society. I’m interested in how Aryanism facilitated ideas of connection between these elites through the language and infrastructure of the global occult (Green 2015; Bogdan and Djurdjevic 2013). The notion of a disembodied, astral link between Aryan Europeans and Aryan Brahmins facilitated ideas of a shared civilisational-spiritual history which simultaneously functioned to demarcate its own limits, namely that of racial miscegenation (Strube 2021; Judge 2018). I argue that what I call the Astral Aryan, imagined through the words and work of the Theosophical Society’s first President Madame Blavatsky and her Hindu upper-caste interlocutors, principally *Arya Samaj*’s Dayananda Saraswati and the Bengali Spiritualist Shihshir Ghosh, offers insight into colonial history as well as larger theoretical questions of postcolonial theory. By bringing nuance to our ideas of power within the periphery itself, the paper asks fundamental questions about how notions of hierarchy and difference can intersect across and between imperial hierarchies.

**Samraghni BONNERJEE, ‘Regulating Difference, Policing Care: Indian Soldiers and Access to Healthcare during the First World War’**

In 1914 the colour bar was lifted on the recruitment of soldiers of colour to fight for Britain in British Armed Forces during WWI and millions of combatants and non-combatants of colour from the British Empire served the British in various Fronts of the War. As these personnel got wounded or sick, strict colonial regulations controlled their access to medical treatment based on race, which were captured in official documents; while those giving and receiving care recorded their thoughts about these policies in uniquely resonant personal documents. This paper examines how the colonial biopolitics of care affected the medical treatment of Indian combatants during WWI by close-reading a range of official policy documents regulating access to healthcare of Indian soldiers by the imperial state.

My use of ‘India’ in this paper and in my project includes undivided India under the British, comprising the contemporary nation-states of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Gurkha Regiments, comprising Gurkha soldiers from the Kingdom of Nepal and North East India also served for the British in the world wars and are of particular relevance to our understanding of colonial military experience. This geographical focus brings to the fore complexities of identities (race, religion, caste, class, ethnicity) to theorise the biopolitical prerogatives at the heart of the imperialist state. This paper argues that any analysis of the experiences of the colonised should consider the multiplicity of identities (religion, caste, class, ethnicity, origin) in addition to race, and its major originality claim is its acknowledgement of the diversity of the backgrounds of colonised Indian combatants and non-combatants of the War and how these multiplicity of identities were mobilised by the imperial state in their formulation of policies of healthcare access.

**Laila BORRIE, ‘Indo-lranian Diasporas of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Traders, Wives, Border Runners and Citizens’**

In migration and diaspora studies, the movement of people from the Global South to North has tended to receive disproportionate attention. My research redresses this, by centring mobilities and formative identities structures, based on settlements via a South- South axis. This is achieved by focusing on 19th- 20th century Iranian migration to India, showcasing how these entanglements lead to the formation of a unique diaspora, combining various Indo- Iranian elements. Many among this diaspora would and still are moving to different parts of the world, predominantly the Global North, making them twice or thrice migrated. During these migrations out of India, this diaspora seems to retain a distinctive socio –religious polity, including a cultural understanding that subsumes the categories of class, caste, sub continental plurality and politics.

At the crux of this research is the role played by identity, in its varied constructions, contestations and negotiations. Taking Pratt’s ‘Contact Zone’ as a useful departure point, I trace migratory journeys across generations, spanning the colonial and post-colonial periods. Moving away from a narrow nation-state centric focus, a ‘transcultural’ (Juneja) and “inter-Asian” (Ho) theoretical approach, will privilege mobility itself, allowing the hybridity of cultural formations to take centre stage.

How are Indo-Iranian diasporic identities performed, perceived, and discursively produced? Considering lifetimes as instructive, this central question will be scrutinized with the aid of interdisciplinary research methodologies, including archival work from colonial and post-colonial sources, vernacular photography, and biographical interviews.

**Leoni CONNAH, ‘How Do the Kashmiri Diaspora Community in the UK Relate to the Conflict?’**

This paper focuses on the Kashmiri diaspora in the UK to examine the extent to which they are directly affected by the ongoing conflict. Methodologically, the paper takes a bottom-up approach, as the findings are data-led by the interviews conducted with the Kashmiri diaspora community. Their views and opinions are integral to understand the sense of *belonging* that Kashmiris still have to their homeland. It will unpack if *Kashmiriyat* best explains this feeling of belonging, or if the diaspora community have taken on a new identity in recent years. Further, the paper explores the complex ways in which the diaspora community get involved in the situation, from financing separatist groups, to getting involved with charities and NGOs. By way of conclusion, the paper argues that younger generations of Kashmiris, although removed from the conflict entirely, have found new ways to connect to the situation.

**Claire CRAWFORD, ‘Navigating New Colonialities: The Feminist Movement and Digital Governance in India’**

There is a growing body of work considering the coloniality of digital governance; in particular the economic imperialism of US-based multinational technology companies operating in the Global South (Kwet, 2019), the surveillance and exploitation present in the extraction of data (Couldry & Mejias, 2018), and technology infrastructure projects sponsored by Global North and supranational powers (Bhuiyan, 2008). Considering Indian feminism through a social movement lens, this paper argues that it is important to develop an understanding of governance “from below” (after Scott, 1985) through a greater focus on the experiences of the political actors navigating new mechanisms of digital governance. The state and corporate actors design and implement architectures of digital control, but movement actors are able to identify, navigate and subvert these systems. Feminist social movement organising sheds light on the co-constitutive digital coloniality of tech companies and the Indian government. The paper offers empirical detail based on extensive digital ethnographic work and interviews, examining how feminist actors have navigated new modes of digital governance, in particular internet shutdowns in Kashmir and Delhi, shadowbanning of social media accounts by moderators, and doxxing of individuals by pro-government activists. These insights have utility both for social movement theorising on digital politics, and understanding contemporary relationships of (post)coloniality in India.

**Shreyashi DASGUPTA, ‘Tax Collector as a “Street Level Bureaucrat”: Property Tax, Low-Income Housing, and Urban Governance In Dhaka’**

Cities continue to rely on property taxes as an important measure for economic growth, building revenue and financing municipal services (Joshi and Ayee, 2008; Prichard, 2009). The understanding of ‘property’ in cities of the Global South can be varied given the complicated land ownership and the paradoxical typologies of low-income housing that are often hard to classify. In this presentation, I will discuss how are properties defined, on what basis is the tax collected and under what conditions? Based on interviews with revenue officials including the tax collector, this paper revisits Lipsky’s (1971) concept of a ‘street level bureaucrat’ to understand routine decision-making processes in Dhaka’s rental accommodations. In doing so, it engages with debates on the practice of governance, the blurred formal and informal nature of tax collection, speculative strategies of enforcement, and the role of the everyday state (Cirolia, 2020; Goodfellow and Owen, 2018).

**Kavita DATTANI, ‘*Data*bility: Endogamous Social Intimacies on Digital Dating Apps in Mumbai’**

In this paper, I draw on interviews with heterosexual and non-heterosexual women and gender minority datingapp users and company executives in Mumbai to argue that how dateable individuals are on dating apps relies on data. This comes to constitute a new socio-technical order of what I call data-bility. Departing from discussions on ‘Big Data’, I follow Mertia (2020) in considering the broader social ‘lives of data’ on and off the dating app. This grounded perspective helps to illuminate how dating app users engage with, experience and co-produce data, alongside the algorithmic infrastructures that determine its flows. Building on the concept of endogamy which is most often discussed in relation to caste and marriage, I suggest that algorithms mediate the matching of, and users seek to match with, those from similar class backgrounds. I call these processes ‘endogamous social intimacies’, a concept which captures the more fleeting encounters of dating.

I discuss first how dating app algorithms are coded in ways to facilitate endogamous social intimacies. Second, I draw on Nakamura’s (2003) concept of ‘cybertyping’ to show how my interlocutors engaged with others’ digital data on profiles and through message chats, ultimately deciding who to match/reject through partly through processes of identifying class. Some of my interlocutors were themselves cybertyped as a result of their nonnormative gender and sexual identities. Finally, I show how users and algorithmic infrastructures together form new ethico-political regimes of verification, deeming some users ‘real’ and others ‘fake’ along class lines. This renders working-class men, most often referred to by my interlocutors as ‘creeps’, unbelonging on the dating app.

**Shikha DILAWRI, ‘On the “Worldmaking” of Vernacular Capitalists: Tracing Entanglements Between Race, Caste, and Capital’**

Following recent calls to “deprovincialize racial capitalism” (Ince 2021), this paper traces the colonially-inscribed spread of global capitalism through the lives and legacies of “vernacular capitalists” (Birla 2008) in the Indian Ocean region during the early-to-mid twentieth century. It asks what their itineraries reveal about the connected histories of racial capitalism and struggles against it. Informed by methodological insights from global historical sociology, the paper turns to autobiographical and other archival sources to illuminate occluded projects and practices of “worldmaking”(Getachew 2018) of Indian merchants and industrialists circulating between the sub-continent and East Africa.

Through homing in on figures who shaped and challenged the infrastructures and outcomes of empire and advanced visions of ‘unity’ which transcended the nation but were predicated on forms of hierarchical differentiation – between capital and labour, and across race and caste – this paper makes two main interventions. First, it complicates existing literature on ‘worldmaking’ by highlighting figures in a register distinctive from sometimes-romanticised internationalisms associated with the Bandung moment. Second, it builds on interventions showing material and ideational entanglements between race, caste, and capital, by examining processes through which local hierarchies have been formally subsumed into the differentiating logics of colonial capitalism. Following vernacular capitalists helps stretch beyond spatial and temporal impasses which contribute to a reading of racial capitalism as a ‘Atlantic phenomenon’ and caste as a subcontinent-bounded, feudal residue. Ultimately, this paper complicates a binary reading of postcolonial difference and underscores the importance of deprovincializing both racial capitalism *and* caste in our postcolonial present.

**Jennie DOYLE, ‘Interrogating Wills as Financial Intermediaries: The Emotional Politics of Documents in the Context of Inter-Generational and Transnational Wealth Transfer’**

This paper focuses on the inheritance practices of people of Indian origin living in the UK. Inheritance practices of transnational migrants have received relatively little academic scrutiny, with existing research often focused on the micro family level and contained within nationally bounded silos (for example in the UK Finch et al 1996, Izuhara & Koppe, 2017; in India Deininger et al 2012, Roy 2015). This paper broadens that focus to examine the inter-generational and transnational wealth transfer of individuals and families with roots in India. By drawing on six interviews with both professional intermediaries (solicitors focusing on will writing, asset management or contentious probate), 24 people of Indian origin and a sample of 300 wills held by the UK Probate office the paper elucidates attitudes to post-mortem bequests and inter vivos transfers. Specifically, it explores the use of human and material/financial intermediaries to support wealth transfer. It reconceptualises the Last Will and Testament as a financial intermediary, a way of structuring asset transfer between generations in a bureaucratic and organisational instrument imbued with emotional context. Whilst paper may appear banal it is not neutral, rather it can carry, contain, and incite emotions (Hull, 2012; Mathur 2015;). The paper thus contributes a particular view on the emotional politics of (financial) documents in the context of intergenerational and transnational wealth transfer.

**Koonal DUGGAL, ‘A Movement of Images in the Political ‘Underground’: Communist Periodicals and Visual Practices in 1960-90s Punjab’**

This paper proposes to critically study the imbrication of politics and aesthetics by looking at the historical movement in/of images and ideas in relation to their (re-)configuration in Communist periodicals, particularly from the Naxalite movement in the Indian state of Punjab. Historically, Naxalite movement started from West Bengal in 1967. But soon it spread to other states of India. The period from the late 1960s to the mid-1990s is also marked by Emergency, declared by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, followed by the emergence of the Khalistani movement demanding a separate Sikh nation.

By periodicals, I refer to literary and political (little) magazines, considered underground or prohibited party literature inspired from Maoist ideology cheaply printed and circulated in various towns and cities of Punjab. One of the primary objectives of this paper is to understand the dynamics of the process(es) that undergirded the generation of these images in such periodicals and to theorize these images as agents in the political sphere. My examination will focus on how the ideological and aesthetic affiliations from communist movements play out in print by focusing on visuals [including magazine covers, photographs, illustrations, caricatures, reproductions of artwork, etc.] from different regional and transcultural locations. And how the Naxalites responded to state oppression and emerging religious militancy alongside a larger critique of capitalism and geopolitics from this historical time to understand its importance, extents, and limits in the context of Punjab.

**Nandita DUTTA, ‘The Politics of Diasporic Placemaking in South Asian Beauty Salons in London’**

Drawing on an ethnography of two beauty salons in London run by first-generation migrant women from South Asia, I argue in this paper that the beauty salon is produced as a secular workplace that is sacred at the same time. A diasporic South Asian female space can rarely be understood as a neutral or secular space devoid of religious markers. Reflecting over how a study of beauty salons finds itself entwined with religion and politics, I argue that intimate diasporic communities are created based on religion and religiosity. The two beauty salons I study are produced as Hindu and Muslim spaces respectively through how religious actors act upon them. Here, I focus on experiences of ‘lived’ religion, or the ways in which religion shapes everyday lives, conversations and practices. In doing so, I look at how caste and sectarian identities manifest themselves in the salon whilst forging new religion-based solidarities that defy the boundaries of the nation-state. This paper illustrates how the politics of South Asian countries can be evidenced in transnational spaces by how upper-caste Gujarati customers belonging to the Swaminarayan sect react viscerally to the smell of ‘non-veg’ being consumed by a lower-caste beautician or how the Sunni Muslim owner of a beauty salon refuses to hire a beautician she suspects is an ‘Ahmadiyya’ from Pakistan. This paper draws on a chapter from my PhD theses that I am currently writing.

**Parshati DUTTA, ‘How to Murder a Metropolis. Lessons In Urbicide from The City Of Srinagar: Analysing State Sanctioned Urban Re-Organisation and Citizens’ Reactions in the Summer Capital of Occupied Kashmir’**

The ‘bare life’ of Srinagar’s citizens and their state of perpetual imprisonment was proved indisputably between August and October 2019, in the aftermath of the Abrogation of Article 370. The swiftly orchestrated, absolute, and indefinitely sustainable lockdown that the Indian government was able to impose on the city to suppress dissent was a culmination of more than three decades of the state’s practice in the act of military urbanism. Just as the conflict in Kashmir can be understood as a phenomenon of spatial re-organisation of the territorial nation state, the siege of Srinagar as a capital city too symbolized the state’s dominance over the entire region, thereby being a definitive exemplar of ‘urbicide’. But while urbicides have been widely studied, particularly in the context of Israeli occupation, as substantial contributors to human rights crises as they continue to dictate the daily life of a people over extended periods of time, it has largely been overlooked in scholarship on Kashmir’s struggle for freedom as a secondary cultural compromise while primary focus is retained instead on more direct and tangible assaults on human life. Based on primary urban design surveys, community consultation with 20 Kashmiri respondents from relevant fields of work, and built upon the theoretical frameworks of urbanism, its spatial qualifiers, and military modifications as discussed by Lefebvre, Sassen, Harvey, Lynch, Graham, and Foucault, this paper attempts to address exactly this gap. Discussed across three themes – surveillance and prohibition, fracture of historic routes, and rupture of traditional lifestyles – it hopes to familiarise its audience with markers of oppression in the built environment, while also demonstrating ways in which the same strategies can potentially be subverted in popular resistance, as demonstrated by the Srinagar model.

**Sunayana GANGULY, ‘Discard and Donation: Throwing away among the Middle Classes in Bangalore’**

Middle class practices of thrift and their understanding of ethical consumption are shaped by cultural context and socio-location. Using qualitative data from 127 interviews, conducted among new middle classes in Bangalore, this paper focuses on practices around donation and disposal of food and kitchen appliances in Bangalore. Specifically, it explores the entanglements of everyday ethics with thrift. Domestic workers in households are important conduits of waste disposal in Bangalore. The designation of particular kinds of waste to domestic workers is embedded in culturally specific understandings of ethics that privilege proximity and care, rather than environmental sustainability. Giving away does result in reduction of kitchen waste but the particularities of what is discarded and to whom is rooted in historical and social power asymmetries.

**Pradyumna JAIRAM, ‘Crafting Privileged Narratives of History’**

This paper analyses how the Bharatiya Janata Party, through processes of decontextualization and omission, crafts a narrative of history in-line with the broader ideology of Hindutva. Using school history textbooks prescribed by the erstwhile state BJP government in Rajasthan (2013-18), it uncovers how historical events and personalities are reinterpreted to craft what Krin Thijs calls a ‘master narrative’, that showcases which communities enjoy intellectual hegemony in textbook spaces. It examines how figures such as Ashoka and Ambedkar are ‘Hinduised’ through exclusion of their more radical identities to ensure their sanitisation and inclusion into the Hindutva narrative. Further, through the re-interpretation of the Battle of Haldighati, it assesses how two antagonistic identities of the ‘local hero’ and ‘external villain’ are created through the homogenisation of communities, ignoring contradictions among them. The case of the Rajputs is discussed, considering the BJP’s need to regionalise its ideology to suit the state context. The dichotomy so created is needed to ensure that belonging to and defending the ‘Indian’ nation is a privilege bestowed upon the unified ‘Hindu’ community, fighting Muslim aggression.

**Hussain S. JASANI, ‘Muslim Religious Lyrical Literature from South Asia: Translating Emotions across the Indian Ocean Region’**

*Jannatpuri* is the title of a long poem written primarily in Gujarati and attributed to Sayyid Imām Shāh (1430-1513 CE), a religious figure of Persian origin. The title *Jannatpuri* is a combination of the Arabic word *jannat* meaning paradisiacal gardens, and *puri* meaning city, in many Indian languages. *Jannatpuri*, fashioned from the Indian word *Amrāpuri* (City of Eternity, Abode of Vishnu), commonly used to represent paradise, is an account of Imām Shāh’s journey to paradise. The poem provides a vivid description of *Jannat*. The striking feature of the poem is that the description, although different from the Quranic description, still evokes similar emotions and inspires the listener to walk on *Satpanth* (adaptation of the Arabic phrase, *aṣ-Ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm,* the difficult yet “right path”).

There are numerous religious texts of Sunni, Shia and Sufi communities which employ this method of going beyond mere *tarjuma* (translation). The paper explores the idea that the two different cultural contexts (Arabic and Indic) required the religious figures of Arbo-Persian origin to not only translate an idea of the Quranic *Jannat* linguistically but to also transpose notions and symbols from one culture to another. This was done to ensure that the imagery of *Jannat* would resonate with the locals, invoke similar feelings and inspire the listener to action. Using verses from *Jannatpuri* and other Sufi literature from South Asia describing paradise, the paper will highlight how the ideas and symbols have been adopted and translated through such cultural encounters and exchanges across the Indian Ocean region.

**Mallika LEUZINGER, ‘Archival Traffic: Crowdsourcing History in South Asia’**

This paper engages with the efflorescence of South Asian history wrought by the rise of ‘citizens archives’, ‘picture libraries’ and ‘memory projects’. I first encountered these crowdsourced platforms, which mobilise visual and material artefacts and a language of civic participation, and range from purpose-built websites to Instagram handles and Facebook groups, whilst researching the development of amateur and domestic photography in the subcontinent. I learnt, for instance, of Haleema Hashim, a woman from the close-knit Kutchi Memon community in the port city of Cochin who commandeered a camera gifted to her husband and taught herself how to use it, and began tracking how her intimate portraits of the children and women were not only tenderly stored in albums but also sent to magazines and pen-pals living in Lahore and Rangoon, lost in the family’s moves across the city, burnt by relatives who objected to them on religious grounds, and most recently, digitised and distributed by her artist great-grandson, becoming sites of public, and arguably, global inquiry and contestation.

Here, I move beyond the ebb and flow of Haleema’s photography to think through this will to ‘crowdsource’ the past. I probe the curatorial strategies, demographic entities, funding structures, political ideologies, and concerns around data collection and protection attached to emergent archives, and how and where they take off from older, institutional and/or stubbornly analogue exercises, activist forums and initiatives in other regions. In providing an ethnography of archival imaginaries, I hope to deepen our understanding of history as everyday matter.

**Chakraverti MAHAJAN, ‘Sufis, Sufism and Shared Sacred Spaces: Violence and Limits of Conviviality in Jammu and Kashmir’**

Based on ethnographic fieldwork in the mountainous town of Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir, this paper aims to understand the cultures of conviviality in an area known for periodic episodes of violence. Tolerance and mutual respect for diverse faiths, interests and lifestyles are critical to the idea of pluralism. At the level of local and everyday, shared sacred spaces where people from varied religious and caste backgrounds can subsist with a difference, accommodate each other's religious needs, and negotiate otherness in public emerge as the positive archetype of pluralism. Recent literature indicates that shared sacred sites are increasingly becoming a source of religious conflict. However, the focus of this paper is to bring to the fore cases of accommodation and coexistence to identify the local discourses and practices that work best in sharing sacred spaces. It is crucial to examine the conscious decisions arrived at jointly by members of different religious communities to increase common access and decrease conflict in shared sacred sites. The paper argues that Sufism and its coexistence with locally rooted Hindu traditions have created a convivially sacred ecology between Muslims and Hindus, which helps these communities endure bouts of violence.

**Debolina MAJUMDER, ‘The Capital Under Construction: Creating Labour Informality and Privatizing Everyday Life in Late Colonial Delhi (1911-46)’**

In this chapter, I consolidate an account of the working-lives of the wageless and “casual” contracted migrant labourers involved in the construction, maintenance, and repair of high colonial Delhi. In focussing on this deployment of infrastructural labour in the production of urban space in Delhi, this paper offers one possible means of historicizing the origins and reproduction of labour informality in Delhi’s urban landscape. Deploying a conception of labour informality as the “privatisation of regulation” in the coconstituted realms of reproduction and production, this paper asks three questions: how and under what conditions was New Delhi, the capital of imperial modernity, built? How did relations of informality permeate the working-lives of the labouring classes involved in its construction? And lastly, where did this army of casual labourers then “fit” into Delhi’s landscape, one that became dominated by petty-commercial production, and speculation in real-estate rather than large-scale industrialization? I consider the making of the informal working-class through an analysis of five aspects of the living and working conditions of construction and maintenance workers in high colonial-era Delhi: multi-causal migrations of peasants and agrarian labourers from Rajasthan, Punjab, and the United Provinces; dynamics of labour control through the contracting system; concerns of housing and settlement; social dimensions of the wage and wagelessness; and subsequently, questions of labour agency. Through these themes, I demonstrate rather than an ahistorical “cultural” feature of labour relations or the effect of dysregulation, the informality of casual labour emerged as a relation constructed by the modern colonial state and indigenous elite’s explicit attempts to cheapen, discipline and control casual labour at the point of production and to privatise the reproduction of everyday urban life in Delhi.

**Munira MUTAHER, ‘South Asian Creative Counter-Culture in London: Belonging and Solidarity’**

The South Asian creative space in London has had a boom in since 2019 with the introduction of organized music events by Dialled In and collectives such as Daytimers, No ID and Chalo. Despite years of involvement in the creative industry, South Asian creatives had not come together as effectively. Now, this space has seen thousands of South Asian diaspora participating in the events, and finding a sense of belonging and solidarity.

“There was a warm kineticism, openness and positivity everywhere, and the power and possibility of community and solidarity felt so tangible and beautiful.” – excerpt from a post-event article.

This is an ethnographic study of how counter-culture or underground movements within the South Asian diaspora challenge mainstream media, the notion of the token South Asian creative, and building sustainable frameworks for inter-generational knowledge exchange. It looks at the creative space as one of political and social (un)making, and of building transnational networks of solidarity between the diaspora and the subcontinent.

Using participatory and multimodal methodologies, the research will focus on female and non-binary identifying music producers and of POC (people of colour) media actors, such as photographers, writers and content creators within these movements.

**Shankar NAIR, ‘Development of Unorganised and Small-Scale Industries in Late Colonial India (1900-1945)’**

This paper studies the development of unorganised and small-scale industries in late colonial India (1900-1945), and in doing so calls for a more historically situated analysis of India’s industrialisation. Taking the case study of the ‘bidi’ cigarette production in the Central Provinces, this paper studies the forces and relations of production, labour process, and diverse geographies of raw material production that underpinned this unorganised industry. The paper argues that a robust engagement with the political economy of non-factory production paints a different picture of technological modernity and native capitalism than has been prevalent in much of the historiography. This literature is preoccupied either with historic parallels with a notional European model of industrialisation, or in establishing forms of artisanal deindustrialisation. While the important critique of ‘deindustrialisation’ by economic historians has focussed on handloom weaving, the force of the critique stems from the development of market infrastructure and market segmentation rather than at the techniques and heterogenous forms of production that were instrumental in their survival (Douglas Haynes’ work being the exception). Historians of technology for their part have focused on large-scale techniques of imperial power or the acculturation of imported ‘everyday technologies’, ignoring productive worlds that lie outside this particular understanding of technological modernity. Focusing on industries like the ‘bidi’ and its relationship to the colonial economy and the state, the paper argues, brings to light the uneven nature of capitalist development in India, and allows for a richer understanding of British imperialism, capitalism, and indeed, nationalism in the subcontinent.

**Mohona REZA, ‘Modernism, Politics and Search for Identity’**

This paper explores a nation’s search for identity through the built environment designed and constructed by the first Bangladeshi architect Muzharul Islam during the cold war period of East Pakistan (now known as Bangladesh). Whilst India inherited majority of British infrastructures, the divided wings of Pakistan hoped to start a social system in which religion of Islam can be applied both in ideology and practice. The Pakistani government managed funding from various Western organisations as well as scholarships for the natives to be trained in different sectors.

Scholarship under the post-war development in the 1950s brought Muzharul Islam the window of opportunity to be the first-generation native architect of East Pakistan. The first phase of developing Pakistan was full of possibilities to establish an Islamic nation, however, its Eastern counterpart fell into an identity crisis that generated a hostile environment. The paper will attempt to investigate how Islam’s designs created a dialogue for Bengali Modernism within these geopolitical complexities between East and West Pakistan from 1947 to 1971.

**Surajkumar THUBE, ‘Satyashodhak Jalsas: A Musical Awakening’**

Lower caste assertion in Modern India has been a topic of critical interest for several researchers in the recent past. The Satyashodhak movement spearheaded by Jotirao Phule in 1873 is one such important movement. However, the movement has largely been studied in a teleological manner, from its birth as a social movement to its culmination into a political party. Through this paper, I argue the central role Satyashodhak Jalsas played in sustaining the growth and expansion of the movement across Western India in early 20th century.

The movement had a vibrant performative aspect to its assertion, which till date remains an untapped ‘resource’ of the non-brahmin movement. This paper will attempt to do a textual and performative analysis of Satyashodhak Jalsas – a form of musical social awakening which was unprecedented in Modern India. Through this paper, I seek to trace the journey of how Satyashodhaks reformed the structure of a Tamasha, which was seen primarily as a leisurely, ribald activity, to a form of conscious mass deliberation, especially on issues pertaining to Brahmin supremacy in everyday life. I will focus on pioneering Satyashodhak Jalsa texts in Marathi like Bhimpurana, Jasla Shikshak, Jalsa Prakash among others to show how performative sphere was an equally significant medium of social awakening for the Satyashodhak movement. This exercise will explore the intimate connections of vernacular print and performance to confront Brahmin domination to reshape and reimagine the ‘Marathi Public Sphere’.

In a deeply segmented society across caste and class categories, I argue how the mobility of Jalsas and their usage of unifying themes governing the lives of farmers and workers negated the potential barriers of communication. I seek to argue how the Jalsas empowered the unlettered lower castes by sustaining the rise of local Marathi registers and local forms of consciousness.