

Rutgers Annual Conference on South Asia

**BEYOND NATION-STATES: NETWORKS,
COMMUNITIES AND DIASPORAS
March 24th & 25th, 2011**

**All events to take place in Traves Hall A, Douglas Campus Center,
Rutgers University, 100 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901**

Opening Note: Basharat Peer, (Columbia), **Kashmir's Forever War**

Keynote: Dr. Daud Ali, (UPenn), **Cosmopolitanism, Articulation and the Problem
of History: Sanskrit in the Early Indonesian Archipelago**

Panel Participants: Dr. Lisa Mitchell (UPenn), Dr. Bhavani Raman (Princeton), Dr. David Buchta (Rutgers), Dr. Sumit Guha (Rutgers), Dr. Laura Ahearn (Rutgers), Dr. Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi (Rutgers), New York Taxi Workers Alliance and Rutgers Graduate Students from various departments.

Mission: In South Asia the nation-state has been foundational to all narratives of modernity. This conference is dedicated to contesting such narratives. We aim to re-examine South Asia as a region historically inhabited and shaped by multiple networks, communities and diasporic populations over time. Such an understanding allows us to probe the processes by which communities, societies and regions were, and continue to be, forged along the axes of cultic traditions, economic relations, short and long distance migration and linguistic practices. The panels and individual papers look at such networks and communities, texts, practices and objects that were formed by and circulated within the interlocking processes of labor migration, development and/or a new global economic order both within and outside South Asia.

Committee:

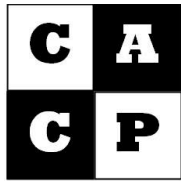
Co-Chairs:

**Rochisha Narayan
Sanjog Rupakheti
Sonja Thomas**

Faculty Advisors:

**Sumit Guha
Triveni Kuchi**

Sponsored by: South Asian Studies Program and CACP Grant



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**Committee to Advance
Our Common Purposes**

Co-Sponsors: Department of Anthropology, Department of History, Department of Political Science, Department of Women and Gender Studies, Center for Race and Ethnicity.

March 24th, Thursday, 2011

1:00pm-3:00 pm **Round Table: South Asian Americans in 2011**
Organized by Rutgers Undergraduate Students

3:15pm-4:45pm **From Behind the Wheel to the Front Lines of Struggle: The History of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance**

Organizers will talk about building the largest organization of South Asian workers in the United States, with a membership of 15,000 drivers primarily from Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan. NYTWA holds a multi-ethnic unity among drivers representing 100 different countries and remains an independent, growing force of labor at a time of union decline and despite being outside of traditional labor laws. Co-founder and Executive Director Bhairavi Desai, co-founder and Organizing Committee Member Javaid Tariq and Staff Community Health Worker Mohammad Asim Akhtar will present on the taxi industry, which NYTWA coined as the sweatshop on wheels, NYTWA's history from inception to today, organizing challenges and current campaigns.

Moderator

1. **Sonja Thomas**, Rutgers

Panelists:

1. **Bhairavi Desai**, Co-founder and Executive Director NYTWA
2. **Javaid Tariq**, Co-founder and Organizing Committee Member
3. **Mohammad Asim Akhtar**, Staff Community Health Worker

5:00pm-6:00pm

Opening Note:

Basharat Peer, Columbia

Kashmir's Forever War

Basharat Peer will also read excerpts from his book **Curfewed Night: One Kashmiri Journalist's Frontline Account of Life, Love, and War in His Homeland**

6:00pm-7:30pm

Reception & Dinner at the venue

March 25th, Friday, 2011

10:15am- 11:55am **South Asian Inter-Subjectivity and its Shifting Subject**

This panel engages with what makes “South Asia” abroad, taking serious the insight that national as well as subjective imaginaries do not emerge in isolation, but are product of relationships that can be studied in space and time. Through the lenses of ethnographic encounters—the experience of scholars who either study or originate from South Asia—these papers are attentive to how fieldwork becomes inflected in various relationships: misunderstandings, disappointments, projections, transference, and counter-transference.

Panel Organizer & Moderator

1. **Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi**, Rutgers

Panelists

1. **Chelsea Booth**, Rutgers
India(na): Anthropological reflections on multilingualism and monolingualism
2. **Shruti Devgan**, Rutgers
Through the Crevices of Memory: Alternate Modes of Commemoration and the Sikh Diaspora
3. **Meghana Joshi**, Rutgers
Don't you want children?" : Herr Doktor and other Germans on Infertility
4. **Kartikeya Saboo**, Rutgers
Coming to America: Estrangement in a Strange Land

Discussant: **Laura Ahearn**, Rutgers

1:10pm-2:30pm

Foregrounding Politics of Gender, Caste and Class in Colonial and Post-Colonial India

The papers in this panel cover different temporal contexts stretching from colonial to post-colonial India. The panel engages with a range of interrelated themes. Presenters elaborate how processes of state formation and nationalism were constitutive of caste, class and gender hierarchies even as they were based upon the critical use of lower-caste, working-class and gendered labor and capital. This panel will show too how such inherent tensions within processes of nation-building and the consolidation of state power have critically informed social movements in India.

Moderator

1. **Sanjog Rupakheti**, Rutgers

Panelists

1. **Rochisha Narayan**, Rutgers
Enterprising Sisters and Interloping Brothers: Gendered Networks of Kinship and Caste in Land-Revenue Settlements in Banaras, 1790-1811
2. **Sonja Thomas**, Rutgers
Saris and Salwars: Communal Boundaries and Women's Clothing Practices in South India
3. **Sourabh Singh**, Rutgers
Tracing a Leader's Trajectory in the Field of Politics: The Case of Indira Gandhi in Postcolonial India
4. **Manjusha Nair**, Rutgers
Informal Workers' Uncertain Response to Neoliberal Transition in India

2:45pm-4:15 pm

Literary Practices, Textual Traditions and Record-keeping: The Production of Histories, Identities, Place and Power in Polyglot South Asia

The papers in this panel illuminate how literary productions and record-keeping practices were underpinned by specific historical processes. The papers show too how- as cosmopolitan and vernacular forms of knowledge- narratives, linguistic practices, representations and documentation were integrally connected to the creation of identities and accumulation of political-economic and social power. The panel will draw attention to networks and communities of scribes and scholars that engaged in the construction of such knowledge systems and thereby shaped their political and cultural milieu. Panelists will engage with a range of other interrelated themes- how did specific genres lend themselves to the consolidation of bureaucratic power in pre-colonial and colonial India? How were those genres in turn shaped in the process? How did narratives representing place and urban centers during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period centrally inform identity formation?

As an interdisciplinary panel with a trans-regional scope and focus on vernacular and cosmopolitan language and textual practices, the panel will provide critical insights on literary cultures in South Asia.

Moderator

1. **Rochisha Narayan**, Rutgers

Panelists

1. **Sumit Guha**, Rutgers
The Scribe Imagines the Past: The Bakhar of Rakshas-Tagdi
2. **Bhavani Raman**, Princeton
Documentary Dissonance in the Early Colonial Cutcherry
3. **David Buchta**, Rutgers
From Bhārata (India?) to Āśreyaska (Asia): Cosmology and Continents in Colonial India
4. **Lisa Mitchell**, UPenn
Cosmopolitan Centers vs. Linguistic State Capitals: The Changing Role of Cities Within Representations of Collective Identity and Trans-Local Networks

4:30pm-5:45pm

Keynote Address

Daud Ali, UPenn

*Cosmopolitanism, Articulation and the Problem of History:
Sanskrit in the Early Indonesian Archipelago*

6:00pm-7:30pm

Reception & Dinner at the venue

Schedule of Events

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1:00pm-3:00pm	Round Table: South Asian American in 2011
3:15pm-4:45pm	From Behind the Wheel to the Front Lines of Struggle: The History of the NYTWA
5:00pm-6:00pm	Opening Note: Basharat Peer, Kashmir's Forever War
6:00pm-7:30pm	Reception & Dinner at the venue
Friday, March 25th, 2011	
10:10am-11:50pm	South Asian Inter-Subjectivity and its Shifting Subject
12:00pm-1:00pm	Lunch: On your own
1:10pm-2:30pm	Foregrounding Politics of Gender, Caste and Class in Colonial and Post-Colonial India
2:30pm-2:45pm	Tea Break
2:45pm-4:15pm	Panel on Literary Practices, Textual Traditions and Record-keeping
4:15pm-4:30pm	Tea Break
4:30pm-5:45pm	Keynote: Daud Ali, Cosmopolitanism, Articulation and the Problem of History
6:00pm-7:30pm	Reception and Dinner at the venue