Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference on the Middle East, South Asia and Africa

Columbia University, April 15 – 17, 2010

Hosted by the Department of Middle East, South Asian and African Studies (MESAAS)

Conference Schedule

Thursday, April 15

4:10 pm   Opening remarks and faculty panel: *Balancing the Humanities and Social Sciences in Area Studies* (208 Knox Hall)
Prof. Sudipta Kaviraj, Chair of Dept. of MESAAS, Columbia University
Prof. Rashid Khalidi, Dept. of MESAAS, Columbia University
Prof. Anupama Rao, Dept. of History, Barnard College

6:10 pm   Student panel: *Literature Crossing Borders* (963 Schermerhorn Hall)
"Individuation in Early Modern Travelogue" – Ishan Chakrabarti
"Why Did Shāh Ḥātim's Collected Works Spawn a Child?" – Arthur Dudney
"The Autobiography of Muḥammad Shukrī: Modern Ṣulūk" – Levi Thompson

Friday, April 16

All events in 501 Schermerhorn Hall.

9:00 am   Breakfast

9:30 am   Student panel: *The Politics of Religion I*
"After The Sepoy Rebellion: South Asian Sufism and the Reassertion of Indo-Muslim Identity" – Daanish Faruqi
"Qur'anic Exegesis in East Africa: Circulation of Knowledge and Tradition" – Anja Pfeffermann
"Two Seas and Two Sides: Bahraini Women's Religious Activism" – Nova Robinson

11:00 am   Student panel: *Conceptions of Law and Legality*
"Sovereignty Beyond Boundaries" – Yuval Kremnitzer
"Weapons Out of Control: Israel's Use of Cluster Bombs and the 2006 War in Lebanon" – Vasiliki Touhouliotis
"Imperial Justice? Free Trade on Trial: Justification Narratives and Experiences of (In–)Justice in the British Colonies of the 19th Century" – Verena Steller

12:20 pm   Break for Lunch

1:30 pm	Student panel: *Area Studies?*
	"Not Death of a Discipline but Birth of a Refuge: A Post-Philological Image of the Department" – AJAY SINGH CHAUDHARY
	"Islamic Intellectual History and the Methodological Question: Toward an Analytical Avicennism?" – A DAVID K OWEN
	"Situating Jewish Studies" – SUZANNE SCHNEIDER REICH

3:00 pm	Student Panel: *South Asia(s)*
	"Obscene Geographies: The "Item Region" in Contemporary Hindi Film" – RAJIV MENON
	"Bollymizwid and Bollyraï: Digital Mashups of Hindi, Tunisian, and Algerian Popular Music" – PORTIA SEDDON

4:30 pm	Student panel: *Building Identities*
	"Anatomy, Androgyny and Performative Politics in Early Colonial South Asia, 1780–1830" – MARIO D'PENHA
	"Colonial Legacy Faultlines as Mindset Frontiers" – MOHAMMED LAKHDAR GHETTAS
	"Dynamics of Changing National and Ethnic Identity Concepts of Sahrawi Refugees" – JUDIT SMAJDLI

6:10 pm	Keynote address by Professor Aamir Mufti of UCLA

Saturday, April 17

All events in 501 Schermerhorn Hall.

9:00 am	Breakfast

9:30 am	Student panel: *The Politics of Religion II*
	"Stemming the Saffron Tide: Populism versus the Hindu Right in India" – SOUNDARYA CHIDAMBARAM
	Untitled paper on Early Modern South Indian Intellectuals – ELAINE FISHER
	"The Role of Religious Belief in the Formation of Political Opinions: Proposal for a Study in Delhi, India" – RACHEL WAHL

11:00 am	Faculty panel: *Cosmopolitanism and Identities*
	PROF. EMILIENNE BANETH-NOUAILHETAS, New York University
	DR. GHAZZAL DABIRI, Dept. of MESAAS, Columbia University
	PROF. HLONIPHA MOKOENA, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University

12:30 pm	End of the conference
	Anyone with an interest in Hindi or Urdu literature is invited to join us at the annual Hindi-Urdu workshop after the conference. The topic this year is the role of Fort William College in the history of Hindi/Urdu literature and linguistics. It will be held in 208 Knox Hall until 3:30 pm. More information, including registration (which is required for non-Columbia affiliates) is available at: http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00urduhindilinks/workshop2010/index.html

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Abstracts

Individuation in Early Modern Travelogue

Ishan Chakrabarti, *University of Texas at Austin*

Faced with both the erosion of Eurocentrism within the traditional disciplines and the rise of geographically-centered area studies departments, scholars seeking to work *across* geographic areas continue to find themselves at a difficult impasse. Whereas Europe once centered scholarly discourse, today we find multiple centers: South Asia, East Asia, Africa, the Middle East, etc. Yet what happens when the object of one's study moves freely across these areas? The replacement of a European center with a non-European center is of little avail.

I seek to understand the exchange of ideas across South Asia and Europe in the 16th-17th centuries through the genre of autobiographical travelogue. In this time period, merchants began publishing hugely popular narratives of their travels containing autobiographical anecdotes, descriptions of foreign lands and anthropological information about their inhabitants. As these travelers roamed across Europe, the Middle East and South Asia, situating their literary work within any one of these areas confines their legacies.

To adequately understand this nomadic literary genre, we must abstract ourselves from the geography and examine the thematic aspects of our roaming objects. Hence, I suggest it is imperative to look at the new *modes of life* being formed by these author-merchants: the philosophically-rich questions of the categories that structured their lives.

Specifically, my paper examines the *Viaggi* of Pietro Della Valle (an Italian traveler in Turkey, Iran and South Asia) and the *Ardhakathānaka* of Banārasīdāsa (the first Indian autobiography, comprising the records of a Jain merchant roaming South Asia). Significantly, I find that the accounts of these travelers trace an arc that emphasizes individuality as an ethical concept. Ejected from all geographical confines and thrust into a world of constantly changing places, the travelers confront their individuality. Autobiographical writing becomes an ethical practice by which they reflect on and build this individuality: I seek to annotate this process.

Not Death of a Discipline but Birth of a Refuge: A Post-Philological Image of the Department

Ajay Singh Chaudhary, *Columbia University*

Over the past 2 to 3 decades and especially in light of such critical works as Said's *Orientalism* and Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak?* a great deal of ink has been spilled in trying to reform various disciplines which once came under the rubric of "Oriental Studies." New understandings have been proposed to reform or update philological and anthropological approaches to peoples, texts and geographies ascribed to the former field of study. This paper proposes a far different understanding of what unites a department like MESAAS in an extremely historically and materially contextualized way. Using both theoretical texts and documents like our actual, existing course catalogue offerings, I would like to discuss the idea of "Area Studies" departments, particularly ours, as a "Refuge" for both people and ideas marginalized by either (and often both) the notions of geography and/or discipline. The paper proposes that to take seriously the critiques of orientalism, philology and culture that have been so central to many post-colonial writers and hopeful former-'orientalists', we instead look at the fact that it is not only Middle Eastern, South Asian and African texts and languages that find a home within this kind of department but also such disparate "disciplines" as continental philosophy, radical sociology, psychoanalysis and countless others. Is this just a happy accident or is there actually a scholarly rubric through which to understand this phenomenon? This paper aims to deal with both the impossibility of meaningful philological reform and to propose instead this exploration of the rubric of "refuge" as a possible alternative.

Stemming the Saffron Tide: Populism versus the Hindu Right in India

Soundarya Chidambaram, *The Ohio State University*

Why do sectarian Hindu nationalist organizations succeed in some states within India? There is no compelling explanation about why, despite similar "welfare" tactics and service provision, right-wing Hindu organizations are not able to penetrate civil society and mobilize support equally in all places. Within South India, their ability to polarize communities or provoke violence by manipulating religious symbols is much weaker in Tamil Nadu than in Karnataka. The explanation is threefold. Using interviews & data gathered during six months of fieldwork [July-December 2009] in the two states:

(A) I argue that the differential level of provision of public goods explains differential success. State failure in service delivery pushes the socio-economically disadvantaged Hindus in Karnataka into the clutches of these organizations. In contrast, the efficient functioning of the populist state and its patronage machine in Tamil Nadu eliminates the need for alternative service providing organizations. Here, the historically unique linguistic nationalist movement rejected the rigid Hindu social order in favour of an indigenous "Tamil" identity that co-opted all marginalized communities, including Muslims & Christians, through populism. Thus, no adversarial "Other" could be constructed by the Hindu nationalists to cement a "Hindu" identity.

(B) The significant role played by other civil society organizations in Tamil Nadu, particularly the Left trade unions and film clubs, is very striking. They mobilize the working class/slum youth in a big way and provide channels for upward mobility, thus acting as a bulwark against the right wing organizations. This phenomenon is largely absent in Karnataka, where the right wing is able to appropriate civil society space and co-opt both disadvantaged youth as well as middle-class professionals.

(C) Lastly, I argue that the mode of operation of Hindutva organizations in the two states differs in fundamental ways, thus resulting in different outcomes.

Anatomy, Androgyny and Performative Politics in Early Colonial South Asia, 1780-1830

Mario D'Penha, *Rutgers University*

In the late eighteenth century, the colonial encounter generated a fundamental shift in epistemologies of gender in South Asia. Before this period, ambitious and influential monarchs, from the Mughal emperor Shah Alam to Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore, recognized androgynous individuals as being exceptionally gifted and powerful. Androgynous individuals helped widen these monarchs' spheres of influence by establishing trans-local relationships with markets, temples and shrines through ritual. By cultivating relationships with a variety of androgynous individuals, these monarchs made androgyny central to the constitution of their courts and polities. Several Europeans traveling within South Asia in the eighteenth century were unable to fathom these ritual expressions of androgyny and were often instrumental in creating discourses that likened androgyny with castration. With their elevation to political power in South Asia in the late eighteenth century, British officials of the East India Company increasingly described androgynous individuals as marginal and passive. Unable to appreciate the ritual power of androgyny within indigenous courts, British officials ignored the high status of many androgynous individuals, based on ties of intimacy, slavery and loyalty to the monarch. By assuming anatomical difference and not ritual power as the foremost measure of androgyny, British officials ossified androgyny as a form of embodiment and effectively created the unique body of the eunuch, under which all forms of androgyny could be classified. The creation of the eunuch body represented the encroachment of European epistemologies of, and cultural practices around the body, gender and status into diverse South Asian contexts. Epistemologically, this reflected a momentous shift from an understanding of androgyny linked to ritual functionality to one linked to corporeal dysfunctionality. Furthermore, through

a circumscription of androgynous individuals from positions of authority within indigenous courts and their criminalization in 1871, British officials secured enduring material legacies for androgynous individuals in the subcontinent.

Why Did Shāh Ḥātim's Collected Works Spawn a Child?

Arthur Dudney, *Columbia University*

One of the celebrated Urdu poets of the eighteenth century was Shāh Ḥātim (1699-1783), who is regarded as particularly influential because he abandoned the prevailing style of Urdu composition, which freely mixed indigenous Sanskrit-derived words with Persian and Arabic ones, in favor of a style in which the technical vocabulary was purely Perso-Arabic. Uniquely in the annals of Urdu literary history, Shāh Ḥātim changed his mind about his diction after publishing his Collected Works [*dīwān*] and so prepared a new *dīwān*, entitled *Dīwānzādah*, or Child of the Collected Works, to reflect his new sensibilities. Many Persian and Urdu poets published multiple *dīwān*s, but none are so radically different from one another as Shāh Ḥātim's.

This paper examines the *Divānzādah*'s preface, which is beguilingly short and simple at just two printed pages, and considers the larger context of Shāh Ḥātim's aesthetic choices. I will argue that his desire to Persianize Urdu is a reflection of a sociolinguistic landscape in which vernacular literatures were becoming more assertive but Persian remained a high prestige language which was perceived as capable of elevating vernacular composition. Although Indian literatures had drawn on Persian tropes and vocabulary for centuries, what appears to be new in the mid-eighteenth century is a sense that Persian could be a vehicle by which vernacular literature could be made more respectable. Shāh Ḥātim provides us with perhaps the only self-reflective prose on Urdu composition from the eighteenth century, and it is a window on how the torch of literary production was passed from the classical language, Persian, to the vernacular, Urdu.

After The Sepoy Rebellion: South Asian Sufism and the Reassertion of Indo-Muslim Identity

Daanish Faruqi, *Washington University in St. Louis*

The Great Mutiny (or Sepoy Revolt) of 1857 fundamentally changed the trajectory of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. The swift British response to the uprising officially ended the declining Mughal Empire, successfully obliterated the remaining vestiges of India's Mughal legacy, and set the stage for direct British colonial rule in India. With the last Mughal emperor Zafar exiled to Rangoon, and with the great Mughal cities of Delhi and Lucknow in ruins, mere shadows of their former selves, Islamic civilization in India had been dealt a near deathblow.

In response, Indian Muslims were forced to protect their Indo-Muslim culture and identity against British imperialist incursions. Under the yoke of colonialism, Muslims refused to succumb to British advances and instead took up efforts to radically reassert their subjectivity. Under these auspices they spearheaded several reform and revival movements, all with the putative goal of emphasizing a distinctly South Asian Islamic identity. Sufi orders, moreover, featured prominently in this revival movement.

This paper sets to trace the impact of the Great Mutiny of 1857 on the development of South Asian Sufism. An exercise in intellectual history, this study uncovers a tendency for Islamic revivalist movements following the Mutiny to increasingly couch *tasawwuf* under a legalistic framework, insisting on a *Sharia*-compliant Sufism. *Tariqat*, thus, became merged with *Shariat*. Furthermore, this paper explores the implications of the legalization of Sufism on South Asian Islamic identity.

Title to come (Paper on Early Modern Intellectuals in South India)

Elaine Fisher, *Columbia University*

In recent years, scholarship has made great strides in excavating the intellectual history of early modern Sanskrit knowledge as well as its socio-political significance in various regions of the Indian subcontinent. Among those early modern polymaths whose works and influence have yet to be documented systematically is Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, royal minster and public celebrity of seventeenth-century Madurai. Nīlakaṇṭha is best remembered today for the irreverent, urbane wit of his courtly satire, the *Kaliviḍambana*. Nevertheless, as with his intellectual predecessors in South India such as Appayya Dīkṣita and Vedānta Deśika, Nīlakaṇṭha's local influence was felt as strongly in the domain of theology and hymnology as in that of formal Sanskrit poetics. Moreover, his political role as prime minister to Tirumala Nayaka led him to a sustained literary and religious engagement with the Mīnākṣī-Sundareśvara Temple at Madurai.

This paper contends that a sustained philological engagement with the work of prominent Sanskrit intellectuals can provide new perspectives on the social and religious role of intellectual production in the early modern period. I make this case through a preliminary exploration of a little known work of ritual theory and practice, Nīlakaṇṭha's *Saubhāgyacandrātapa*. The *Saubhāgyacandrātapa* is a treatise of the Śrīvidyā school of Śākta tantrism, an esoteric face of South Indian Śaivism closely associated with the Śaṅkarācārya lineages of Sringeri and Kancipuram. The present work examines the surviving portions of the *Saubhāgyacandrātapa*, focusing on Nīlakaṇṭha's adjudication of the significance of esoteric practice within the larger sphere of South Indian Vaidika orthopraxy. By examining Nīlakaṇṭha's valuation of his own esoteric project within a broader cultural framework, we can gain a clearer understanding of the multifaceted social role of the early modern South Indian intellectual.

Religion, Nation and Politics in Ideological States: Religious-Political Parties in Pakistan and Israel

Malte Gaier, *University of Erfurt (Germany)*

The modern states of Pakistan and Israel share common concepts in regard of state and nation just as in regard of civic and religious identity discourses. In addition to this they show significant parallels within those historic processes which led to their creation in 1947 and 1948 and thus provide an adequate basis in terms of a cross-country comparison. In spite of the secular visions of their founding movements a fertile ground based on religion provided the cultural basis for nation- and land-oriented ideologies. The creation of a homeland for a religious community and the thus connected civic identity of its citizens as a religious and nationalist synthesis form a contrast to the common character of the international community of states and reflect the search for a national identity. In terms of an intellectual exchange, basic ideas of the Jewish enlightenment influenced the claim of Muhammad A. Jinnah's Pakistan Movement for a sovereign Muslim statehood.

Since both states offer a broad ideological platform which includes both, secular as well as religious interpretations, the project focuses on religious parties which try to implement theo-political models of a religious state parallel to the contemporary discourses on nation-building existing in these two states. The complex nucleus of nation, religion and politics demands an in-depth analysis of the concepts of partition, border and ethnicity and how they contradict the state's ideological core.

Based on research data conducted in field-research in Pakistan, India and Israel this paper emphasizes the transformation of traditional religion-state tensions and cleavages, illustrated by a cross-country comparison within an institutional and sociopolitical framework of analysis.

[This will not be presented at the conference due to the presenter's absence, but it will be available in the online publication of the conference proceedings.]

Colonial Legacy Faultlines as Mindset Frontiers

Mohammed Lakhdar Ghettas, *London School of Economics*

The recent Algerian-Egyptian row in the run up and then later in the aftermath of the world cup play offs game has awakened dormant aspects of the Maghreb-Mashreq division in the geographical zone referred to as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The purpose of this paper is to explore the various forms of the geographical division and its implications for the study and understanding of the MENA region for ultimately better engaging with its societies and elites.

Indeed North Africa as an area has presented a tricky challenge to the Middle East studies departments, especially in the UK. While the Middle East region came out as a straightforward unit of research and study, thanks mainly to the fact that English is the means of expression among the Middle Eastern intelligentsia, North Africa had a different colonial experience which not only resulted in French being the lingua franca of the Maghreb intellectuals and leaderships but also marked significantly the nature of the Maghreb societies' ways of thinking, practices, perceptions of themselves and of the other. This other included also the Mashreq.

Recent international affairs security challenges and globalisation did in a way forced a convenient grouping of the region's sub-zones under the umbrella of MENA. The clear-cut argument being that the societies of the said region share a single cultural identity. In my opinion, this argument lacks rigour in that it underestimates the impact of the different colonial experiences, group ethnic identities, and the whole cultural heritage resulting from that, which eventually called for the Maghreb / Mashreq division in the first place. It is a cultural faultline, exacerbated by markedly different experiences of colonisation, decolonisation, Cold War, and the circumstances of the birth of the new state, which explains the division perception. This reality has created mindset frontiers which need be taken into consideration for any serious study of the MENA zone, especially the Maghreb.

Sovereignty Beyond Boundaries

Yuval Kremnitzer, *Columbia University*

In this paper I will discuss the amendment of the Israeli Penal Code in 2008 following the killing of a Bedouin burglar by a Jewish farmer, whose farm the burglar had infiltrated. I will analyze the discourse accompanying the amendment as a case study shedding light on the zionist notion of a special time, time outside time, exceptional time -- the time of the state of exception. I will argue that in Israel, exceptional time and exceptional space go in tandem, highlighting a unique, perhaps foundational aspect of the cosmology of Zionism. I wish to demonstrate through an analysis of the discourse that accompanied the amendment that Israeli sovereignty is to be considered in the context of its particular historical cosmology, focusing on the relationship between the concepts of time and boundary, both spatial and legal. In Israel, where the physical borders do not overlap with the legal ones and a constant state of emergency is legally in effect since its foundation in 1948, it is nearly impossible to distinguish between a normal state and a state of exception—as is commonly done in Western theories of sovereignty. Whereas the European model views a state under the rule of the law as the norm, and the state of exception as sometimes necessary or inherent, but ultimately, well, an exceptional state, I propose viewing the Israeli model in temporal terms that are not based on a conflict of normative time under law with the deviant event. In this state of affairs we must focus our attention not on the deviant moment of exclusion, nor on he who decrees it to be such a moment (The Schmittian sovereign), but rather on those who maintain the daily routine of this "state of exception". As opposed to most commonly held theories of law and sovereignty, I find Benjamin's "critique of power", especially the distinction made between divine and mythic violence, an especially useful lens through which to explore Israeli authority structure and its means of exercising power. The Israeli application of force, I propose, is closer to the model of law abolishing force associated by Benjamin with divine violence, rather than to the mythic one, usually connected with the institute of the state.

Obscene Geographies: The "Item Region" in Contemporary Hindi Film

Rajiv Menon, *The George Washington University*

This paper examines the conceptual category of the "region" in the Hindi film industry and the processes by which many Hindi films marginalize "regional" spaces from cinematic constructions of the "nation." While I propose that the "region" is a space marked by perpetual cultural exchange that extends beyond geographic boundaries, I will argue that "regional" Indian spaces are portrayed as the antithesis to the purportedly cosmopolitan, "national" spaces of the urban North.

In order to examine the rare occasions in which Hindi films depict "regional" spaces such as those of South or Northeast India, I will unveil a discursive overlap between the cinematic contrast of "nation" and "region" and the opposition of the "heroine" and the "vamp." In popular Hindi films, an "item number" is a song-and-dance number that briefly allows for expressions of female sexuality that are otherwise deemed too "obscene" to carry out throughout the film. These scenes allow for the visual consumption of a female performer, while providing an image of femininity that contrasts with the "good womanhood" of the heroine. Extending this vocabulary, I propose that spaces outside of the urban North are relegated to the role of "item regions" in popular Hindi films, as their inclusion in these films is largely for visual consumption and the demonstration of a purported alterity. The brief appearances of these "regional" spaces acknowledge their existence, but define them through their supposed insularity, tropicality, and difference from the "national" spaces of the urban North. Just as the "item girl" reinforces idealized conceptualizations of womanhood, the "item region" affirms romanticized and simplified constructions of the "nation." By analyzing popular Hindi films like *Dil Se*, *Parineeta*, and *Meenaxi*, I will convey how the "item region" demonstrates a cinematic marginalization of "regional" India from wider constructs of "national" identity.

Islamic Intellectual History and the Methodological Question: Toward an Analytical Avicennism?

A David K Owen, *Harvard University*

Historians of Islamic philosophy and theology have shown that Hanbalis, mutakallimun, and falasifa exist along a continuum with regard to the primary criteria for philosophical argumentation, i.e., demonstrability of premises, valid inference, and internal consistency. Partly as a result, no party to credal dispute in Islamic intellectual life has a monopoly on "iman" or "`aql". But as long as the awkward problem of the sources for premises is avoided, locating a particular `alima somewhere on the continuum of philosophical defensibility and isolating her contributions to philosophy are both probably impossible. Rather than avoiding truth claims through an exclusive focus on sociology and discourse analysis, or anachronistically leaning on the crutch of relativism, the historian of Islamic philosophy and theology owes to Ghazali or Ibn Taymiyya et al. what Ibn Rushd knew he owed to Aristotle: the best possible interpretation, that is, the interpretation that is most philosophically defensible. This essay argues that the construction of an analytical Avicennism is both desirable and possible, and that the principles of this method can be abduced from the scholarship of El-Rouayheb, Hallaq, and Street. Furthermore, if the very recent history of analytical Thomism is any indication, we have good reason to believe that an analytical Avicennism can be constructed on its own merits, and in so doing fortify the very sciences for which Ghazali devised his synthesis of philosophical tools and Islamic learning. The work of Fatima Hamyani, to name just one neglected example, shows that in Arabic this task is already under way.

Qur'anic Exegesis in East Africa: Circulation of Knowledge and Tradition

Aɴᴊᴀ Pғᴇғғᴇʀᴍᴀɴɴ, *BIGSAS Bayreuth (Germany)*

Circulation is the main drive when it comes to the Swahili people of East Africa. The monsoon winds circulate around the Indian Ocean and thus helped develop a close-meshed transnational trade network that linked the various coastal areas. From the early 13th century on, East Africa played a major role in this network. But it was not merely a circulation of goods such as ivory, animal skins and gold, but also a circulation of people, ideas and concepts. What circulated besides goods was a whole package of ideas and concepts: Islam.

My research project, however, centers on Qur'anic Exegesis in East Africa since the early 20th century, more specifically: Muslim interpretations and translations into Swahili. Included in the research project are different Muslim communities present in East Africa and their respective interpretations. These are the predominant Sunna as well as minority communities like the Shia, the Aḥmadiyya, or even the Ibāḍiyya.

East Africa, with its centers Mombasa and Zanzibar, is part of an old transnational scholarly network. In this network, great movements of people and ideas took place: Migrants from Ḥadramaut brought Islam with them to the East African coast around the turn of the first millennium. Scholarly works from Java are found in Zanzibari libraries as well as works from the Indian sub-continent.

Essential Questions are: How were tradition and knowledge conveyed? How did the oral society change to a scripture oriented society? Who translated the Qur'an and why? Which main concepts were transferred into Swahili?

All these questions will be answered in my presentation with my research on Sh. Abdallah Saleh Farsy's work. He was the first Sunni Muslim to translate and interpret the complete Qur'an into Swahili. He was thus a turning point in Swahili Muslim scholarship.

Situating Jewish Studies

Sᴜᴢᴀɴɴᴇ Sᴄʜɴᴇɪᴅᴇʀ Rᴇɪᴄʜ, *Columbia University*

My paper examines the issues involved in expanding the boundaries and methodological foci of "Middle Eastern Studies" to include Jewish studies. The contemporary political situation weighs heavily on where to locate the modern Jewish experience academically—particularly as it relates to Zionism and the Israeli polity. Some, including the United States military, have taken Israel's claim of being "European" to its natural extreme: study of Hebrew at the Defense Language Institute, for example, is completed within the context of the European languages department. Universities remain split as to whether to include Israel and Jewish studies within the broader Middle Eastern Studies framework or to house them in separate Hebrew and Judaic Studies departments. Lurking behind these categorizations is a highly politicized debate regarding whether the modern Jew "belongs" to the Middle East.

In addition to exploring these debates, my paper highlights the theoretical benefits derived from approaching the study of the modern Jewish experience through the post-colonial lens usually reserved for Europe's external (as opposed to internal) others. I argue that studies operating in the traditional "Jewish studies" framework often neglect the clear parallels between processes of "modernization" forced upon European Jews and Arab, Indian and other colonized peoples. The bulk of my analysis addresses World War One as a watershed movement in Jewish colonial mimicry, focused specifically around the transformation of the "Jew" (read: feminized, scholarly, passive) into the modern "man." Through an analysis of the Jewish soldier, I argue that the war experience offered the tantalizing promise of equal citizenship to Jews who were willing to remake themselves in the image of the idealized European male. Finally, my paper addresses both the limitations involved in this approach and the role of the contemporary political situation in generating resistance to understanding the modern Jew as a colonized subject.

Two Seas and Two Sides: Bahraini Women's Religious Activism

Nova Robinson, *Rutgers University*

The starting point of this history is the inception of the first women's organization in Bahrain in 1955, which marks the beginning of formal women's activism in the country. This historical case study ends with a rally in early 2006, in which thousands of Bahraini women came together to challenge a legislative attempt to codify Bahrain's Family Law. In the intervening half-century, how Bahraini women conceptualize their rights has changed. Bahraini women went from using rights based-rhetoric to justify their claims for social and legal rights to employing religiously inspired rhetoric to define their rights in society. This paper will attempt to trace this history through this shift in theoretical framework, with particular emphasis on how agency is understood in the post-Iranian Revolution, religious-rights era. Bahrain presents a case study of women coming together to advocate for their rights within a religious, legal framework. While this approach eschews liberal, feminist conceptualizations of how rights should be defined and defended, it expands the means through which women, and men, can advocate for their rights. Instead of casting religious rights as ineffectual, women's activism in Bahrain brings religious rights to the fore and in doing so, challenges the dominant trope that agency must challenge conformity and tradition. Women in Bahrain, like their peers in other Muslim-majority countries, weave activism and religion together to defend their definition of freedom.

Bollymizwid and Bollyraï: Digital Mashups of Hindi, Tunisian, and Algerian Popular Music

Portia Seddon, *CUNY Hunter College*

The transnational consumption of Hindi popular cinema (referred to commonly as "Bollywood") and its narrative film music figures prominently as an element of globalized cultural production through popular media. While scholars have noted the importance of Hindi films in defining local and global identities and aesthetics both in India and abroad, little attention has been given to the animations of Bollywood within transnational digital social networks, especially via popular music genres and highly accessible media, such as YouTube and music blogs. This paper analyzes how Bollywood is re-signified and attuned to popular and underground music in Tunisia and Algeria in its contextualization on the Internet. My research focuses on the relationship between Hindi film songs and Tunisian and Algerian styles of popular music (mizwid and raï, respectively), as well as the implications behind the digital "mashups" (or mixing) of these genres. The majority of mizwid and raï music videos on YouTube, for example, are visually represented not by the original performer, but by well-known scenes from Hindi films. These juxtapositions (referred to informally as Bollymizwid or Bollyraï) – as well as the re-arrangements, fragmentations, and redefinitions representative of Hindi film songs, of mizwid, and of raï – represent a critical juncture in the creation of cosmopolitan identities and counter-public spheres through the digital manipulation of a transnational musical and visual medium. Indeed, the transnational flow of popular music genres within digital public spheres redraws lines of selfhood and nationhood, complicating the ways in which individuals access and perform cosmopolitanism. Encompassing the transnational movements of digital media, this study examines the routes by which Bollyraï and Bollymizwid access and correspond to South Asian popular culture, as well as the dialogues of cosmopolitanism between Algerians and Tunisians both "at home" and in the Francophone diaspora.

Dynamics of Changing National and Ethnic Identity Concepts of Sahrawi Refugees

Judit Smajdli, *Goethe University Frankfurt (Germany)*

My paper examines the constant changes of national and ethnic identity concepts within Sahrawi refugees. These dynamics are closely related to the political situation of the refugees and the altering circumstances of their long period of exile. My aim is to analyze the *constructedness* of different identity concepts.

In conjunction with the occupation of the former Spanish Sahara by Morocco in 1975, more than 100,000 Saharawi refugees, led by the liberation movement Frente Polisario, fled across the border into Algeria. Since then the refugee camps in the harsh Algerian desert have been home to several generations of displaced Saharawi families. After 17 years of war a ceasefire agreement was established 1991 under the auspices of the UN. The agreement foresees a referendum by the Sahrawis on the future of their homeland. This process, however, has been delayed by the Moroccan government until the present day. A 2000 km long wall crossing the former Spanish colony, protected by Moroccan military, makes most cities and resource-rich regions inaccessible to the refugees until today.

My paper discusses the dynamic changes of collective identity concepts within the Sahrawi refugee society during the last 30 years. Before and during the Spanish colonization of the region the population was organized in a tribal system of app. 20 big tribes of desert nomads. Since the beginning of the independence movement the Polisario Front strictly negates these tribal structures in order to establish a national identity within the Saharawi population thus fortifying their claims for an independent Saharawi state. Such a state, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, was already proclaimed in 1976 in Exile. It consists of a one party system resting on basic democratic principles. During the war, it was mainly Saharawi women, who established and coordinated the administrative and social structure of the camps (schools, hospitals). The survival of the refugees in the camps is assured by international aid, consisting of free food, medication and other products from foreign countries. Moreover, in the beginning of the 1990's an expanding aid project was created, which enables Sahrawi refugee children to spend two months every summer with families in Europe (currently about 10.000 children participate each year). Sahrawi traditions and lifestyle, based on nomadic existence, is in a process of constant changes since the beginning of the exile. Relating to these changes I would like to discuss the growing importance of a new national identity within the refugee society, the symbolic importance of material culture and the influence of local adjustment strategies related to the new contexts of Sahrawi everyday life in the refugee camps.

Imperial Justice? Free Trade on Trial: Justification Narratives and Experiences of (In-)Justice in the British Colonies of the 19th Century

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In the nineteenth century, Free Trade played a crucial role in Victorian visions of global order and was of paramount importance for the self-perception of Britishness. The implementation of Free Trade with its core conceptions of liberty and justice did not render state intervention redundant. On the contrary, it became a crucial part of British jurisdiction and concepts of governance in the British colonies.

In fact, Free Trade and the Rule of Law evolved side-by-side, as competing principles. The research project focuses on the tension between these two conceptions. It proposes to analyze two forums of justification:

The first is the arena of local Indian courtrooms of the Raj. Here, conflicts of normative orders that implied moral, legal and religious pluralism occurred on a regular basis. In this forum, experiences of (in)justice might be articulated and laws of difference be negotiated. How were the (legal) subject & subjectivity, the individual & identity formed in this arena?

Secondly, questions about the legal validity and legitimacy of law vis-à-vis the colonial rule provoked 'scandals of Empire', i.e. major discursive events, in the British public about law and justice, justification and Britishness. The project is interested in the impact of these debates: In how far did they not only affect the transformation of the legal order in India, but also the style of legal reasoning in Britain? By linking these two forums of justification, this research project strives to bridge the gap between ideas and cultural practice, text and *practice* and to mediate between oftentimes opposed conceptions of discourse and action theory.

The Autobiography of Muḥammad Shukrī: Modern Ṣuʿlūk

Levi Thompson, *University of Pennsylvania*

In Arabic literature, the autobiographical works of Muḥammad Shukrī (1935-2003), *al-Khubz al-Ḥāfī* (*For Bread Alone), Zaman al-Akhṭāʾ* (*Time of Mistakes*), and *Wujūh* (*Faces*), fit into a liminal, mythological space first populated by the pre-Islamic *ṣuʿlūk* (rogue or vagabond) poets, such as Taʾabbaṭa Sharr, ʿUrwah ibn al-Ward, and al-Shanfarā. By reading Shukrī's autobiographical trilogy as a modern version of al-Shanfarā's wholly liminal *Lāmīyat al-ʿArab* (*The "L" Poem of the Arabs*), the borders between traditional society and that of its ostracized validation, the *ṣuʿlūk,* can be elucidated. This study is further called for due to the problematic history of Shukrī's most popular work, *al-Khubz al-Ḥāfī*, first published in an English translation by Paul Bowles in 1974. Due to its frank descriptions of alcohol and drug use, sexual exploration, and abject poverty in pre- and independence-era Morocco, this first work of his three-volume autobiography was banned in Morocco until 2000 and remains so at the American University of Cairo ever since a 1998 row over its place on an Arabic literature syllabus there.

Shukrī's autobiography provides further opportunity to explore the notion of social borders in 20th century Morocco. In *al-Khubz al-Ḥāfī*, the author's—the main character's—quest for literacy and deliverance from an impoverished life drives the narrative. In this pursuit, the narrator encounters numerous obstacles facing poor, homeless youths in 1950s northern Moroccan cities. His situation is further complicated by the fact that Shukrī himself learned to speak his native tongue—Rīffian Berber, Spanish, Moroccan dialectical Arabic, and even some French prior to learning the modern standard Arabic in which he ended up writing. Shukrī's two sequels offer an inversion of the narrator's initial quest for aggregation with society through acquiring literacy instead retreating into a life of seclusion, a rejection of social norms, and, at times, complete exile.

Weapons Out of Control: Israel's Use of Cluster Bombs and the 2006 War in Lebanon

Vasiliki Touhouliotis, *The New School for Social Research*

During the final 72 hours of Israel's 2006 bombardment of Lebanon, the South of the country was deluged with cluster bombs that released an estimated two to four million submuntions. Compounding this excessive use, the cluster bombs with which Israel barraged South Lebanon failed to explode at alarmingly high rates. Although considered a conventional weapon sanctioned and regulated by International Humanitarian Law, cluster bombs have come under scrutiny for their failure to detonate upon impact thereby turning into land mines. The case of Lebanon not only generated outrage over the weapons but fueled an international proposal to ban the types with the greatest failure rates. This paper focuses on the language and depictions of technological failure in the humanitarian reports on Israel's cluster bomb use in Lebanon and in the Convention on Cluster Munitions. What is meant by and assumed in this notion of failure? Is failure just an unintended consequence? Who is responsible for it? Why is failure appealed to when the unexploded bombs fulfill military and strategic objectives? By interrogating this discourse of failure, this paper exposes the relationship drawn by humanitarian organizations and international governing bodies between technologies of warfare and morally and legally acceptable practices of warfare. It will bring together critical literature on "just war" with scholarly interest in non-humans to show how the unexploded cluster bombs in Lebanon illustrate that the failure of a technology to function as intended can mean the difference between what is deemed "just" and "unjust" war.

The Role of Religious Belief in the Formation of Political Opinions: Proposal for a Study in Delhi, India

Rachel Wahl, *New York University*

Liberal political theorists such as John Rawls (1993) maintain that citizens engaging in political discourse should not rely on religious rationales. However in the last several decades religion has emerged as a driving force behind social movements, revolutions, and debates regarding national laws (Casanova, 1994; Applyby, 2000; Philpott, 2002; Habermas, 2006). One explanation for the global resurgence of religion is that it is a response to the factors that were predicted to secularize, such as modernization and the disorienting changes that accompany it (Huntington 1996; Fukuyama 1992). Research further suggests that religiosity does not represent a static resurgence of tradition, but rather is a dynamic response to the modern world (Casanova, 1994). India is experiencing social and economic changes brought about by a rapidly developing economy and the globalization of communication, work and education (Delong, 2001; Nandy, 2002). As a location of rapid change with high levels of religiosity, Delhi is an ideal setting to understand the way people draw from their religious beliefs to form judgments about what is just, as they negotiate tensions between inherited beliefs and the pressures of contemporary life. This paper proposes dissertation research that investigates the salience of religion for how religiously engaged citizens in Delhi, India judge what is right in their own lives, their families, issues at work and in school, in national policy, and in international issues. Particular attention will be paid to how people view the distinction between 'public' and 'private' matters, and within which spheres religion is most salient for how people make moral and political judgments.

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