

A SASNET Online Conference

Rethinking the Politics of Memory in South Asia

9-10 December 2020



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SWEDISH SOUTH ASIAN
STUDIES NETWORK



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Introduction

The current debates around the politics of memory and memorialization reinforce that the act of remembrance and forgetting in the present does not exist in isolation from the past that informs them. This mnemohistorical continuity becomes even more apparent in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic which has highlighted, like never before, the structural and systemic nature of privilege and inequality. The groups and categories of people who have been most adversely affected by the pandemic are also those who have been at the receiving end of historical injustice and oppression and in turn also the most likely to fall through the cracks of the meta-narratives of history and collective memory. Further, what makes the on-going discourse on memory politics immensely relevant is its universality in that it resonates with and speaks to experiences and histories of marginalization, exploitation and exclusion across national borders and cultures. For example, in the US the murder of George Floyd and the world-wide protests in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement that it sparked, has brought questions of race, historical injustice, the institutionalised remembrance of difficult pasts, construction of 'national memories', their silences and how they are contested into sharp focus. It is not as if these are novel concerns that have suddenly erupted as a response to the current tragedy. How and what we choose to remember and forget as collectives and individuals has always been a politically fraught issue as it is intricately connected to notions of power, belonging and exclusion.

Ironically, in India and South Asia in general, the global BLM protests received considerable traction, especially across the various social media with numerous posts expressing solidarity with it, including those from prominent public personalities, celebrities and film stars. And yet, the globally significant discussion on race and prejudice assumes myriad hues and dimensions in the South Asian context and needs to be acknowledged as such. This is so on account of a socio-political fabric deeply enmeshed in and shaped by religion, region, caste and class and their intersectionalities. How, and to what extent, do these play into and inform the processes of crafting and curating national histories and memories in South Asia? What are the silences that exist within it and how are they contested? What are the alternative modes of remembering, marking and accounting for 'difficult pasts' beyond the confines of state regulated memorial projects? Also, what events constitute dominant and rightful entry points into the field of memory studies and what are ignored? These are some of the questions that constitute the focus of this conference that calls for a rethinking of memory studies in South Asia beyond the analytical lens of the Partition that has tended to (and deservedly so) occupy centre stage in scholarship on the politics of memory in the region.

Conference conveners

Isha Dubey (Post-doctoral Fellow, SASNET)

Andreas Johansson (Director, SASNET)

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Schedule

DAY 01 – Wednesday, 09 December 2020

09:30 – 10:00 CET	OPENING REMARKS (Dr. Isha Dubey & Dr. Andreas Johansson)
Panel 01 – Cultural production and heritage politics	
10:00 – 12:00 CET	1. Shabana Ali <i>Evoking public memory and re-writing histories: Memorials within the anti-caste struggles</i>
	2. Pragnaparamita Biswas <i>Politicization of Memory: Transforming the Personal Recollections into the National History in Maati</i>
	3. Moumita Sen <i>The 'Demon' of Vanquished Histories: Memory and Myth in the Mahishasur Movement</i>
	4. Anna Stirr <i>The Politics of Remembering Nepal's Cultural Martyrs: The Anekot Commemorative Gathering as Political Critique</i>
Panel 02 – Heritage and the construction and contestation of national memory	
10:00 – 12:00 CET	1. Shahul Ameen KT <i>The Making of a Heritage City: Conservation as Development and Social Exclusion in Ahmedabad</i>
	2. Debadrita Chakraborty <i>Biopolitics, Necropolitics and Nostalgia in the making of the nation: Race, Citizenship and Gender politics in India in times of Covid-19 (working title)</i>
	3. Bidyarthi Dutta & Anup Kumar Das <i>Digitized Collections of India's Memory Institutions: A Socio-Historical Perspective</i>
	4. Hamari Jamatia <i>North-East India and the Imaginations of Sacred Space</i>
	5. Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman & Edward Boyle <i>Borders of Memory at India's Northeastern Edge</i>
Panel 03 – Violence, collective memory and trauma	
10:00 – 12:00 CET	1. Runa Chakraborty Paunksins <i>Reclaiming Identity: Memory as Mechanism of Protest in The Blood Island and Shikor Chhera Jibon</i>
	2. Sujeet Karn <i>"Grief arising out of Violent Death is like swallowing a hot Chilli" A Nepali Case</i>
	3. Greeshma Mohan <i>Remembering and Responsibility: A study of Dalit life narratives</i>
	4. Sumit Saurabh Srivastava <i>Remembering collective violence: Interplay between caste and gender in a north-Indian rural hinterland</i>
	5. Marvi Slathia <i>Collective violence, state machinery and communities: A study of Hindu and Muslim survivors of Jammu and Kashmir</i>
12:00 – 13:00 CET	LUNCH BREAK / ZOOM LOUNGE ROOM FOR SPEAKERS

Panel 04 – Navigating sites of memory in urban spaces

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| 13:00 -
15:00 CET | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pamela Das
<i>Living Memory: Remembering War-time Calcutta</i> 2. Moulshri Joshi
<i>Un-building the Memorial for Bhopal Gas Tragedy</i> 3. Zehra Kazmi
<i>'Golden Hour': Nostalgic Reflections on the Demise of the Muslim Urban Space in Twilight in Delhi and Sunlight on a Broken Column</i> 4. Sarunas Paunksnis
<i>Haunted Memories: Transforming Urban Space and Neoliberal Futures in Bengali Cinema</i> 5. Ved Prakash
<i>Locating 'Home' through Memory: A Study of the Tibetan Settlement Camp 'Majnu Ka Tila'</i> |
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Panel 05 – Remembering displacement

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| 13:00 -
15:00 CET | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Priyanka Bhattacharyya
<i>Existential Mobility, Nostalgia and Narration: Unwrapping a family journal's account on escape from Japanese air raids in Burma in the years 1941-1942</i> 2. Trina Bose & Punyashree Panda
<i>Cultural Memory of Human Displacement in Amitav Ghosh's Gun Island</i> 3. Mohini Mehta
<i>Are You What You Eat?: Food as Memory among the Partition survivors</i> 4. Priscilla N. Rozario
<i>Tracing Enclaves through Memory: The Bengali Catholic Enclave of Calcutta</i> 5. Sreya Sen
<i>Social life of documents: Narratives of social remembrance of home-ownership in Bengal</i> |
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Panel 06 – History writing and the politics of memory in South Asia

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| 13:00 -
15:00 CET | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anisa Bhutia
<i>The Shifting Meaning of 'Miles' - Metric System, Roads and Colonialism</i> 2. Silje Lyngar Einarsen
<i>Sanskrit Memory Politics</i> 3. Manoj Parameswaran & Aiswarya Sanath
<i>Event, Memory, Erasure: Remembering the Malabar Rebellion</i> 4. Deepa Pawar
<i>Memories of and about nomadic and denotified tribes of India: a site of criminalization and invisibilization</i> 5. Mohammad Waqas Sajjad
<i>Shah Ismail and Fazl-e-Haq Khairabadi in Deobandi-Barelvi Polemical Histories in Pakistan</i> |
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15:15 – 15:30 CET	ROUND-UP & CLOSING REMARKS DAY 1 (Dr. Isha Dubey & Dr. Andreas Johansson)
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DAY 02 – Thursday, 10 December 2020

09:30 –
10:00 CET

OPENING REMARKS (Dr. Isha Dubey & Dr. Andreas Johansson)

Panel 07 – Historical injustice and collective memory

10:00 –
12:00 CET

1. **P.M. Antony**
Appropriating Collective Memory, De-politicising (erasing) Historical Injustices: Accelerated processes of pauperisation at the margins, cases of Adivasis and Dalits in central eastern states of India
2. **Kritika Chettri**
The Experience of Memorialisation and Reconciliation in Post War Nepal
3. **Dixita Deka**
The social memory of deaths, disappearances, and deaths squads in North East India
4. **Boniface G. Kamei**
Sovereignty and Literature: A study of exceptional power
5. **Shruti Mukherjee**
Widowhood as Memory Making Activist Work Under Militarization

Panel 08 – Memorial landscapes of the South Asian Diaspora

10:00 –
12:00 CET

1. **Gajendran Ayyathurai**
The Cultural and Communicative memory of the Casteless: Castefree Tamil Religious Traditions of South India and the Caribbean
2. **Sohni Chakrabarti**
Remythicalizing violence as transformation: Nostalgia and the politics of belonging Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Mistress of Spices
3. **Clelia Clini, Emily Keightley, & Jasmine Hornabrook**
Questioning silence in the Bengali diaspora
4. **Unnati Jain & Nupur Tandan**
A study of Diasporic memory, Postmemory, and Trauma in Gaiutra Bahadur's Coolie Woman and Peggy Mohan's Jahajin
5. **Anjali Singh**
Reading Indenture Narratives as Inherited Records of Memory

Panel 09 – Negotiating otherness and belonging

10:00 –
12:00 CET

1. **Anindita Chakrabarty**
Public Histories and Narratives of Victimhood: Revisiting Migrants-Indigenous Dichotomy in Assam
2. **Sumallya Mukhopadhyay**
Remembering 'Legacy' and Establishing 'Linkage': The National Register for Citizens and Memory Politics in Assam
3. **Papia Sengupta**
Invocation of transcultural memory(s): Alternative towards restoring peace in Northeast India
4. **Chetna Sharma**
Contesting Citizenship in India: Reflections from past policies, politics and narratives

12:00 –
13:00 CET

LUNCH BREAK / ZOOM LOUNGE ROOM FOR SPEAKERS

Panel 10 – Identity, subjectivity through the filter of memory

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| 13:00 –
15:00 CET | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ankita Banerjee
<i>Rabindranath Tagore's 'personality': Memory in negotiating belonging and otherness</i> 2. Mohit Joshi & Niraja Saraswat
<i>Indian Sign Language, Literatures, and Construction of Able-Identity</i> 3. Radhika Kumar
<i>Sculpting an Identity: Music and Memory amongst Dalits in Punjab</i> 4. Bhawna Shivan
<i>Undoing the Past in 'Identity' framework: Narratives of Social History of Dhanaks in Haryana</i> 5. Sucharita Sen
<i>Gendering the Domestic Space, Engendering Domestic Duties – Popular Memory and Implicit Politics in Colonial Housekeeping Manuals</i> |
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Panel 11 – Articulations of memory through the literary

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| 13:00 –
15:00 CET | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Violina Borah
<i>Qissa: A Study of Identity, Home, and Belonging through Memory</i> 2. Priyanka Datta
<i>Collective memory, the otherness and the belonging in Tagore's Gora</i> 3. Mehreen Jamal
<i>Theorizing "Belonging" in a New City: Gender and Memory among Immigrant Pakistani Women Writers from 1947 -1950</i> 4. Jaya Yadav
<i>Muhajirs as Alternating Margins: An Analysis of Kartography and Marigolds and Martyrs</i> |
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Panel 12 – New Media as an arena of memory work

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| 13:00 –
15:00 CET | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sridhar Krishnan
<i>Can the Screen Speak?: Museum Material Memory and the Politics of Display</i> 2. Sylvia Sagolsem
<i>Phungawari in the digital space: Folkloric identity expressions and new media</i> 3. Sweta Singh
<i>(In)visibilization of Covid-19 migrants: When mainstream failed, digital and social media emerged as alternatives</i> 4. Palak Taneja
<i>Sites of Partition's Memory: Seventy years later</i> 5. Harshita Yalamarty, Sabika Zaidi & Yasir Hameed
<i>'The Jigsaw Puzzle of Hindutva': Using New Media for a Memory Work and Political Education Project</i> |
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15:15 – 15:45 CET	ROUND-UP & CLOSING REMARKS DAY 2 (Dr. Isha Dubey & Dr. Andreas Johansson)
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Panel 1: Cultural production and heritage politics

Shabana Ali

School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

Evoking public memory and re-writing histories: Memorials within the anti-caste struggles

Memorials are symbolic representations of histories; a tool for evoking public memory. Memorials not only induce remembrance of historical events and people; they also provide legitimacy to such histories. Since history has always been written by those in power, its representation too becomes precisely selective in its remembering, fulfilling a socio-political agenda of the powerful.

But just as there has been a history of dominance and oppression in societies, there has also been instances of resistance and struggles by the oppressed. Public memory can not only get impacted by the powerful but also be affected by the everyday activities of communities through creation of alternate histories that challenge the mainstream notions of history.

Memorialization and the transformation of public memory within the anti-caste tradition has happened in two manners- by reclaiming historical pasts of the Dalit-Bahujans and by creating new histories and public memories. Thus, the politics of memorialization which had till now been used to invisibilising the Dalit-Bahujan communities had now been inverted and used for the upliftment of the downtrodden, giving new dignified meanings to their identities, and radicalising the conception of representational politics.

This paper will attempt to study memorialization process undertaken by the anti-caste tradition in the post-Ambedkar period in Uttar Pradesh, focussing upon the memorials produced by the Mayawati-led BSP government. Even though BSP government is long gone from power the monuments continue to evoke public memory of Dalits and the upper castes alike. These monuments have given a radical shape to the cultural histories of the Dalit-Bahujan societies, making visible the historical personalities of the anti-caste tradition. Emerging from histories of the Dalit-Bahujans, they have created an immovable and undeniable visibility to the anti-caste movement; marking its presence and importance in the cultural history of India.

Shabana Ali is a research scholar at School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She is pursuing a PhD in the field of Dalit visual culture, the title of her thesis being "Visuality in the Dalit Movement: A Study of Visual Culture and Iconography in the post-Ambedkar Period". In her thesis she attempts to study iconography in the field of visual representations in the form of posters, pamphlets, statues, and architecture as modes of representation and assertion of a Dalit identity, though a Phule-Ambedkarite tradition.

Praggnaparamita Biswas

The Asiatic Society, Kolkata & Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India

Politicization of Memory: Transforming the Personal Recollections into the National History in *Maati* (2018)

The triangle relationship between memory, history and nation is fluid and complicated but characterized like natural currency to maintain a reciprocal symbiosis. Though history is able to highlight myriads of memory but without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep them away. The memory-nation is the last incarnation of the unification of memory and history. Though memory stands as a primitive or sacred form opposed to modern historical consciousness, but memory has become a pressing problem for history itself as historians focus on the interplay between collective memory and national identity. Again, cinema studies history to re-create in the present the past as it has originally been imagined. Juxtaposing the discourse of Memory Studies and Cinema Studies together, the present work tries to examine of how the multidimensional memories (i.e. archival, curatorial, monumental, and architectural etc.) have been politicized to revisit the personal and national pasts in a 2018 Bengali movie *Maati* (dir. Leena Ganguly). Grounding on the historical event of Bengal Partition, the movie includes individual memories, evidences from the past era and the heritage buildings that interweave the personal reminiscences of the protagonist Meghna to that of the partitioning history of Bangladesh, her ancestral home. Following the arguments of *lieux de mémoires* by Pierre Nora, the protagonist explores the symbolic places of the city as it describes three senses – material, symbolic and functional for making the nation. Thus the paper will seek how the historical buildings including her ancestral home, memorials and heritage edifices transmit unspoken historical narratives to unwrap the implications of heritage politics and national memory; connecting the collective trauma and violence with public history through which she negotiates her ‘otherness’ and ‘belonging’ in Bangladesh.

Graduated from Banaras Hindu University (2013), **Dr. Biswas’s** Doctoral work was on the Indian Feminist Theatre focusing upon the women dramatists and their works. She is currently working as a Research Fellow of Indology at The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, India. She has published with IJFS, IUP, Muse India, Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities, Atlantic Critical Review, The Criterion, etc. and few of her papers are in pipeline. Apart from Indian Feminist Theatre and Indology (Max-Muller and Mahabharata), she is interested in Gender Studies and Film Studies. She is also in the editorial board of two UGC listed journals.

Moumita Sen

MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion, and Society, Norway

The 'Demon' of Vanquished Histories: Memory and Myth in the Mahishasur Movement

Since 2011, following a national controversy around the alleged "worship" of the Hindu demon Mahishasur as blasphemy by the Hindu nationalist party, there have been public commemoration rituals dedicated to Mahishasur in various states in India. Indigenous and oppressed caste activists claimed that not only is Mahishasur not a demonic figure, he was a historical person, a benevolent king, and a powerful 'non-Aryan' ancestor of the oppressed caste and indigenous peoples of contemporary India. This countercultural movement to reclaim the 'real' history of Mahishasur, the vanquished non-Aryan hero of the oppressed caste, from the annals of official Brahminical (priestly caste) History and hegemonic popular culture came to be known as the Mahishasur Movement. It is not simply historical veracity, but the dignity of the oppressed caste and indigenous peoples of India that is at stake in their radical hermeneutic act of finding the historical Mahishasur from the scriptural accounts of Mahishasur in the medieval Sanskrit puranas. This presentation will analyse the theoretical import from the work of activists to navigate the interface between official history, indigenous oral narratives, Sanskrit Hindu scriptures, and extant archaeological sources to rebuild the image of their venerable ancestor and political icon.

Moumita Sen is Associate Professor of Culture Studies at MF, Norwegian School of Theology, Religion, and Society, and PI for the NFR UTENRIKS grant MYTHOPOL 2020-24. Her forthcoming monograph *The Mahishasur Movement in India: Caste, Religion, and Politics* is based on her postdoctoral research which focuses on the intersection of aesthetic discourse, popular religiosity, and organized politics in caste activism India. Her larger research interest is in the field of Indian visual culture. Her doctoral dissertation (2016), received the Norwegian king's gold medal for 'outstanding research' in 2017. She is the co-editor of *Nine Nights of the Goddess: The Navaratri Festival in South Asia* (SUNY, 2018).

Anna Stirr

University of Hawaii at Manoa, US

The Politics of Remembering Nepal's Cultural Martyrs: The Anekot Commemorative Gathering as Political Critique

During Nepal's People's war (1996-2006) between Maoists and state security forces, there were nearly 200 cultural groups performing for the Maoist cause. Performing artists were recruited primarily from rural populations and represented the most deprived sections of society, such as Dalits, indigenous ethnic groups, and women. Their visibility as performers made them easy targets; in Anekot, Kavre district, in 1999, seven members of a Maoist cultural group were massacred by police. Since the Maoists joined parliamentary politics, there have been several official moves to commemorate these and other artists' ultimate sacrifices. The Anekot group were declared martyrs, and Anekot was designated a Peace Village. The day of the massacre was designated a party holiday, "cultural day," with a yearly commemorative gathering at Anekot. Yet cultural workers feel that they have been used and marginalized as their party came to power, and that they deserve greater recognition as a group, and greater attention to the dreams that motivated them to join the war: equality for their own marginalized sectors of society. Here I analyze the 2019 Anekot gathering in the context of Nepal's current communist unity government. With attention to the perspective of the artists' and writers' organizations, through their speeches and performances, and in dialog with scholarship on martyrdom in Nepal and in related movements, I examine how martyrdom retains strong political force among Nepali Maoists. The party's "duty to fulfill the martyrs' dreams" remains not only a highly emotional subject but also one that can sway political will. I argue that because of this, cultural commemorative events have become public platforms for artists and writers to criticize party policy, and sites for significant symbolic action toward influencing political decisions. For Nepali Maoist cultural workers, the revolution to transform society is ongoing, and commemorative events are a significant battlefield.

Anna Stirr is Associate Professor of Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii Manoa. She is the author of *Singing Across Divides: Music and Intimate Politics in Nepal* (Oxford, 2017), which won the Association for Asian Studies' Bernard S. Cohn Prize for first books on South Asia. She holds a BA in music and religious studies from Lawrence University in Wisconsin, and an MA, MPhil, and PhD in ethnomusicology from Columbia University. She has also taught at Oxford, Leiden, and the New School. Her research focuses on music, dance, language, intimacy, and politics in South Asia, particularly in Nepal and the Himalayan region.

Panel 2: Heritage and the construction and contestation of national memory

Shahul Ameen KT

School of Livelihoods and Development, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad Campus, India

The Making of a Heritage City: Conservation as Development and Social Exclusion in Ahmedabad

This paper explores the acceleration of heritage-based development discourses and practices in post-riot Ahmedabad to propose the contemporary production of heritage as a specific form of exclusionary practice. Tracing the emergence and trajectories of heritage assemblages—an interlinked network of architects, real estate agents, lawyers, Pol residents, NRIs and administrators—and its modes of circulation, in the media and through newly invented practices like the now popular heritage walk, this paper examines the ways in which a new cultural elaboration gains traction amongst a wide variety of social actors. At the heart of this elaboration, this study finds out a curious absence. Most of the material sites that give credibility to the city's claims to heritage belong to a minoritized and/or migrated other, whose specific histories and ways of belonging are divested in the very act of heritage inclusion/inscription. The creation of heritage, therefore, becomes a specific form of violent exclusion that is premised on forgetting rather than remembering. Elaborating the discursive muteness on the dynamic and contesting voices/presence of the communities, this paper examines the new performative effect of the state and its apparatus in the divided city of Ahmedabad. The creation of Ahmedabad World Heritage City, the paper argues, becomes a specific form of development the practice that is premised on forgetting rather than remembering the dynamic and contesting voices/presence of certain communities.

Shahul Ameen KT is an Assistant Professor at the School of Livelihood and Development, Tata Institute of Social Sciences Hyderabad Campus. His research interest includes Cultural Heritage and Development, Traditional Knowledge/Livelihood System(s), Sociology of Religion, and Ethnographic and Participatory Research. Previously he has taught at the Centre for Heritage Management of Ahmedabad University (2014-2019). During his tenure at Ahmedabad University, he worked as the founder Assistant Editor of the Journal of Heritage Management (Sage Publication). He obtained his doctorate in Sociology from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur in 2015.

Debadrita Chakraborty

Cardiff University, UK

Biopolitics, Necropolitics and Nostalgia in the making of the nation: Race, Citizenship and Gender politics in India in times of Covid-19

Writing about the structural and political state of affairs in India post the lockdown that was replete with chaos, injustices and inequalities, author and actor Arundhati Roy concludes her article in The Financial Times with the hope that like previous pandemics the coronavirus pandemic too will “force humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew.” Like the rest of the world, India too awaited for its transition into a new order – its population having retreated to from mobile realities into small pockets of isolation limited to ‘immediate family’ units and individual dwelling spaces. However, when it came to choosing between “carcasses” “prejudice” “hatred”, “avarice” and walking through the transition with “little luggage” the Hindutva nation state chose the latter thus widening the socio-cultural and economic divide between castes, classes and ethnic minorities. To this divisive politics should be added the gender gap that became ever-widening with daily reports of domestic violence and abuse among both upper and lower caste and class women.

Using a Hindutva national rhetoric, the Hindu nation state at large and the Modi administration in particular have fallen back on the powerful dominant memory of cultural and gender hierarchies, segregating the population using the dual technologies of biopolitics and necropolitics, and devising the good citizen/bad citizen narrative to relegate the lower classes, castes and ethnic minorities below the biopolitical hierarchy. Further in an attempt to revive the mythic past the state has also heralded a new Hindutva world order by laying foundation to the Ram Mandir (temple) on a site which was home to a 450 year old mosque until its demolition in 1992 by Hindutva mobsters. Whilst the Hindutva think tank and its political leaders view this new order as an alternative form of western modernity, addressing this nostalgic rooting/routing for/towards the (mythic) past as India’s ‘decolonial turn’ it becomes imperative to question what actually consists of India’s gateway to a new post covid-19 order? Using the framework of cosmopolitics including the tropes of cosmopolitan memory (as a mnemonic resistance against Hindutva rhetoric), empathy and cultural ambidexterity as opposed to national memory and dominant state narrative, in this paper I propose a ‘decolonial cosmopolitan’ turn that the Indian political and cultural counter-resistance movement could head towards in a post-covid-19 era. In doing so the repressed and marginalised can oppose majoritarianism and the nation state’s tactics of using biopolitics/necropolitics as a way of sustaining brahmanical homogeneous hierarchies.

Debadrita Chakraborty is a final year PhD research scholar in Literature, Gender and Culture Studies at Cardiff University and an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK. Her PhD project examines the shifting nature of the construction and performance of South Asian masculine identities catalysed by major political and socio-cultural events from the 1980s until the contemporary period in Britain employing race, culture and gender theories. She has contributed papers in the fields of postcolonial theory, decoloniality, diaspora literature and culture and subculture narratives.

Bidyarthi Dutta & Anup Kumar Das

Department of Library and Information Science, Vidyasagar University, West Bengal, India

Centre for Studies in Science Policy at Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Digitized Collections of India's Memory Institutions: A Socio-Historical Perspective

Memory institutions essentially comprise libraries and museums, which convey knowledge and inventiveness across the spatial borders crossing temporal boundaries, in diverse language and custom, towards various tribes and individuality. As individual identities as an institution, they have their own memories, preserved in their collections and buildings, and as mutable as human memory. Those memories echo through the institutions, which cause the shaping of expectations and possibilities. Besides, libraries and museums, galleries, and archives also convey experience and creativity across the borders of time and space, language, customs, and people. As memory institutions, they range from personal archives and local museums, and libraries to great collecting institutions like the National Library, National Archives, National Museum, et al. This paper explores the socio-historical discourses for forming the National Archives of India. Beginning with the Records Committee formed in April 1861 by the British Raj and headed by historian James Talboys Wheeler, which recommended a Central Muniment Room, i.e., a central record office. Instead of a central muniment room, the Records Committee Chairman Mr. Walter Scott Seton-Kerr of the British-Indian government recommended decentralized record-keeping in different departments. Seton-Kerr also disagreed with allocating financial resources to appoint a record keeper and archival staff for the Central Muniment Office. Thus, a failed attempt was made immediately after the Indian Rebellion of 1857 (or Sepoy Mutiny) in establishing a Central Muniment Office. Later, the Imperial Record Department (IRD) was formed on 11th March 1891 that would serve the purpose of National Archives. IRD was later shifted from Calcutta to New Delhi in 1911 and its present location in 1926. IRD also became the National Archives of India (NAI) after India's independence in 1947. The paper further explores the national policies and strategies to facilitate online access to digitized collections available in NAI and different state archives to remote users, including the historians and social scientists.

Dr. Bidyarthi Dutta is a Faculty Member at the Department of Library and Information Science, Vidyasagar University, West Bengal, since 2012. He received a master's degree in Physics from the University of Kalyani, Associateship in Information Science from NISCAIR, CSIR, Govt. of India and a master's degree in Library and Information Science from IGNOU. He received a Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) from Jadavpur University, Kolkata, in 2008. Currently, he is working as Principal Investigator of a DST-sponsored research project on scientometrics.

Dr. Anup Kumar Das is an avid academic researcher and information specialist working with the Centre for Studies in Science Policy at Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, since January 2007. His research interests revolve around open science, open access, open research data, digital inclusion, information policies, knowledge societies, and scientometrics. He is an Editor-cum-Book Review Editor of the Journal of Scientometric Research (JSCIRES), and an Associate Editor of the African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development (AJSTID). He was awarded Ph.D. from Jadavpur University, India, in 2009. He is an alumnus of the CODATA-RDA Schools of Research Data Science.

Hamari Jamatia

Department of English, University of Hyderabad, India

North-East India and the Imaginations of Sacred Space

The nineteenth century was a time of great upheaval in North-East India. The instruments of colonization and proselytization hastened the emergence of modernity and nationhood through the rearrangement of history and politics. My paper seeks to engage with one such element of colonial creation—that of “sacred” spaces—that was promoted in missionary narratives as a necessary alternative of “heathen” spaces. Space theory by Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja has established that all spaces are to a large extent produced and imagined. Through my paper I seek to analyze the new spaces that were produced in this corner of Asia—churches, mission stations, and schools—understood to be the opposite of local spaces of barbarism, filth, superstition, and ignorance. I wish to draw attention to the way in which foreign missionaries claimed their imagined spaces to be an imitation of western enlightenment and hence more civilized. Their objective in doing so was to justify their presence in foreign lands in the fulfilment of the kingdom of God.

In the past few decades as more indigenous writers have emerged from the area and tried to retell their histories, they have also reassessed sacred spaces in the backdrop of militancy and identity-formation. Seasoned writer Temsula Ao has used markers of missionary architectural emblems—graveyards and churches—to question the establishment, whereas young writer Janice Pariat has engaged with the idea of missionary schools as a site for sexual awareness among young girls. My paper, therefore, shall trace the evolution of missionary spaces from nineteenth century to current time and try to understand how contemporary writers have come to terms with it (if at all). In the process, I shall also seek to identify zones of conformism and dissent where “heathen” spaces are remembered, reworked, and assimilated to the narratives.

Hamari Jamatia is pursuing a PhD in English Literature at the University of Hyderabad. The topic of her thesis is ‘Colonial Modernity in North-East India’. Through her thesis she analyses missionary narratives produced on the area in the nineteenth and twentieth century and the way they shaped discourses on history, population, and gender. She completed her graduation and post-graduation in English Literature from the University of Delhi. She also worked as a journalist from 2007 to 2014 in major dailies such as The Indian Express and The Hindustan Times.

Mirza Zulfiquir Rahman & Edward Boyle

Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi, India

Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan

Borders of Memory at India's Northeastern Edge

This paper traces the short course of the Stilwell Road through from the easternmost fringes of Assam and eastern Arunachal Pradesh in order to reflect on the politics of heritage and memory occurring at the edges of the nation-state. The Stilwell, or Ledo Road was constructed during the Second World War as a means to supply Chinese forces fighting the Japanese, and ran for over 1000 miles through northern Burma and China's Yunnan province to the city of Kunming. The continued social and political presence of this route, despite its material disintegration, is thanks to the route's ambiguous presence in both national and local memory, of local communities who live in these borderlands, spread over the past centuries.

The Stilwell Road itself is positioned in a landscape understood at the end of India, a last frontier before the Indo-Myanmar international border. Nevertheless, the road's meaning cannot end here, for its fame, and the reason for its construction, is broader than the body of the nation. In extending out beyond the frontier, efforts to commemorate its transborder role, and the state's obsession with the maintenance and sanctification of a cartographically-anxious nation offer a heritage that pulls in two distinct directions.

Deployment of this long-redundant road in broader narratives has made the restoration of cross-border connectivity a political imperative for sections of the population. This allows us to emphasize the role of borders as not merely spaces of contestation, demarking the point at which competing collective memories meet, but also of connection. The narratives through which we attempt to make sense of these mnemonic sites like the Ledo road will continue to be framed through our contemporary political imagination, which remains a distinctly bordered one. Yet the presence of such sites, where borders of memory become visible, enable the political work of articulating and contesting the narratives within which they are situated, of memories, connectivity, migration and ethnic belonging across such borders.

Mirza Zulfiquir Rahman holds a PhD in Humanities and Social Sciences from the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, Assam, India, and is a Visiting Research Associate at the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi, India. His research specialization is on border studies in Northeast India and transboundary rivers in the Himalayas, and water sharing and management issues between China, India, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

Edward Kieran Boyle is Assistant Professor at Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan. He researches borders and borderland spaces in Japan, the Asia-Pacific, and Northeast India, focussing on maps and representation, scalar governance, territoriality, infrastructures, memory and heritage, and history.

Panel 3: Violence, collective memory and trauma

Runa Chakraborty Paunksins

Faculty of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Kaunas University of Technology, Kaunas, Lithuania

Reclaiming Identity: Memory as Mechanism of Protest in *The Blood Island* and *Shikor Chhera Jibon*

While volumes have been written about the Partition of India and its aftermath, little is known about the impact this cataclysmic event had on the Dalit community in Bengal. This paper not only examines the trauma endured by Bengali Dalit community in the wake of the Partition, but it also observes how memory works as a mechanism of protest and enables Bengali Dalits to assert their distinct identity. The question of caste in the everyday life of average Indians has always been a complicated one. It is more problematic in West Bengal since the dominant Brahmanical State-sponsored propaganda has been able to “successfully” disseminate the myth that caste is a non-existent and irrelevant social category in Bengal. A long tradition of disavowing caste issues in mainstream discourses, that reiterate the *Savarna* ideologies of the elite Bengali *Bhadralok* society, eventually consigned the voices of Bengali Dalits to the abyss of oblivion. This paper analyses the socio-political and cultural factors that were responsible for relegating an otherwise vibrant Bengali Dalit cultural heritage to the periphery. Furthermore, it exposes the selective amnesia of the dominant Brahmanical system with the help of two texts: *Shikor Chhera Jibon/ Uprooted Life* by Jatin Bala (2012) and *Blood Island: An Oral History of the Marichjhapi Massacre* by Deep Halder (2019). Situating the argument within the debate around the politics of “fact-creation”, this paper evaluates the power of Dalit subaltern memory in denouncing the hegemonic Brahmanical Truth. Finally, it shows how Bengali Dalits reclaim their identity through recollection of their fractured past and thus reinforce the notion that “memory, remembering and recording are the very key to existence, becoming and belonging” (Garde-Hansen, 2011).

Dr. Runa Chakraborty Paunksnis teaches at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities in Kaunas University of Technology, Kaunas, Lithuania. Her research interests include Dalit Studies, Subaltern Literatures, Gender and Media Studies. She presented her research in numerous international conferences and seminars. Her academic articles have been published in peer-reviewed journals. She is also a creative writer and translator.

Sujeet Karn

Martin Chautari, Kathmandu, Nepal & Department of Social Work, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal

“Grief arising out of Violent Death is like swallowing a hot Chilli” - A Nepali Case

The most outstanding and obvious of death is its power to inflict extreme emotional impact on the bereaved. The case of politically inflicted death during Maoist's war in Nepal indicates that the reasons for such deep emotional reactions to death can be of numerous types. For instance, shock due to death of a loved one, fear of one's own death induced by comparison to the deceased, anger towards an unknown and invisible power, external threat due to political positioning and the struggle of everyday life can be seen as the overriding characteristics of grief and bereavement in post-conflict Nepal. The unexpected circumstances in which family members had lost their loved one and the conditions in which they were left to cope and memorialize in the aftermath of the death further complicated the process of bereavement. This paper builds upon the ethnography that was conducted in the villages of Rukum and Bara districts during May 2009 - July 2010 (PhD research) and a post PhD research conducted during 2016 - 2018 in Nepal.

The proposed paper builds upon the experiences of the bereaved, their disenfranchised continued memory of the loss and the processes of bereavement that adopted. The narratives of the grief reactions as experienced and reflected by the bereaved in their daily interactions are discussed. This is articulated broadly in the way in which the bereaved re-imagined their daily life in the absence of a loved one. Many dealt with grief by engaging themselves in a set of multiple bereavement processes including daily experiences, pre-designed socio-cultural and religious practices and individual reflections to make meaning out of loss.

This leads to the assumption that the process of bereavement in which a recovery from loss is possible remains case specific. Drawing from bereaved individual's narratives, an attempt is made to present different constructs and to discuss the complications, challenges and hopes that constitute the process of bereavement and grieving that is not free from politics of death as conceived by the people in post-conflict Nepal.

Dr. Sujeet Karn is a senior fellow at Martin Chautari, and a faculty member in the Social Work Department, Tribhuban University, Nepal. His continued research focuses on anthropology of violence, trauma, death and bereavement and death memorialization, borderland livelihoods and security in South Asia, and everyday religion in the Himalayas. Most recently (2016 - 2018) Sujeet has completed an ESRC funded research project, *'Borderlands, Brokers and Peace building in Sri Lanka and Nepal: War to Peace Transitions viewed from the margins'*, SOAS/UK and Martin Chautari in Nepal. He also contributes regularly to national daily.

Greeshma Mohan

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, India

Remembering and Responsibility: A study of Dalit life narratives

The upsurge in Dalit life narratives in recent years indicates the discontents of a monologic national history that has been institutionally and pedagogically disseminated. In my paper I look at how two critically acclaimed dalit autobiographies—Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* (2003) and Sujatha Gidla's *Ants Among Elephants* (2017)—both structured as a reconstruction of episodes from the past, force us to contend with caste being an essential part of the modern nation and the individual's self-fashioning. Autobiographies bear the burden truth telling and authenticity and are often seen as "dredging up ... ugly stuff" (Gidla 10), however we must remember that this reconstruction of the past is a result of a series of choices underwritten into who and how the person/community is remembered, and what affective experience such remembering is to create in the reader. In a sense, the question of responsibility always haunts the act of remembering.

In my paper I will use two concepts from the field of memory studies: firstly, Ross Poole's idea of "conative memory" to understand the role of responsibility in the transmission of private (individual) memories, and Marianne Hirsch's theorisation about post-memorial retelling: of the past being known only "by means of stories, images and behaviours" which then becomes the basis of witnessing and self-fashioning (Hirsch 339). Valmiki and Gidla's memoirs not only present us with caste as an everyday reality, which manifests in the form of spatial and social segregation, but also reflect on their responsibility as the bearers of others' traumatic narratives. In my paper, I will look at how public reconstruction of private memories is always underwritten by the demands of authenticity and responsibility.

Greeshma Mohan has an MA and MPhil in English Literature from the Centre for English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. In her MPhil thesis she explored how Dalit life narratives in Indian languages while shoring up identity, also reimagined aesthetics for the readership. She's currently finishing up her PhD from JNU on comic aesthetics in the Indian English novel, while working as an adjunct writing tutor. She currently lives in Bangalore.

Sumit Saurabh Srivastava

Centre for Development Studies, University of Allahabad, India

Remembering collective violence: Interplay between caste and gender in a north-Indian rural hinterland

The objective of the paper is in response to the singular question raised by Paul Farmer that how to define the existing suffering, violence, and misery. This question in different hue and colour still reverberates both in violence studies and memory studies. Using a structural violence framework, this paper responds to this perennial question through gender, caste and violence intersectionality. Locating itself in the conceptual and theoretical domains of history and memory on one hand and memory and gendered caste identity on the other, the paper engages with the empirical issue of how both individual experience and collective meaning and identification of everyday violence, oppression and suffering emerge among the violence-affected Dalit women in rural hinterlands in Bihar. Here the nature of violence is dual – physical and symbolic. The aim is to arrive at gender-mediated subjective meaning of violence. The findings of the research/ study being exploratory qualitative in nature are based on case studies and unstructured interviews with the Dalit women during 2015-16 in and around villages of Patna and Jehanabad, Bihar. Thematic analysis was undertaken to identify emerging themes related to strands of 'violent memory'. It emerged from the narratives from the 'field' that the violent and traumatic past crystallised either in the events of violent massacres against Dalit women and children in particular (physical violence) and/or 'Dola Pratha' (symbolic violence manifesting in 'social suffering') is an unalienable part of Dalit women's individual persona and habitus shared collectively. In their varied responses, it becomes evident that these events related to both structural and symbolic violence which itself emanates from the sub-human caste system. The paper concludes by arguing that in the process of experiencing collective trauma and remembering collective violence, Dalit women in rural Bihar points to caste as its axial variable.

Dr Sumit Saurabh Srivastava, Assistant Professor at the Centre for Development Studies, University of Allahabad is Ph.D. in Sociology from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and is associated with the Indian Anthropologist, the bi-annual journal of Indian Anthropological Association, New Delhi in the capacity of Assistant Editor. He has been awarded the Indian Sociological Society's Prof M N Srinivas Memorial Award for the Young Sociologist (2015). His research interests include gender and caste intersectionality and development issues.

Marvi Slathia

Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

Collective violence, state machinery and communities: A study of Hindu and Muslim survivors of Jammu and Kashmir

The memories of partition vary among communities but the underneath story of trauma, pain, agony and losses have similarities among the survivors who have experienced the havoc of communal brunt in the Indian sub-continent. The present paper is focused in Jammu and Kashmir, an erstwhile Muslim majority princely state ruled by a Hindu Dogra ruler till 1947. The case of Jammu and Kashmir attains significance given its independent character under Hindu Maharaja, an ongoing agitation by Muslim subjects against the feudal regime, coupled with the circumstances, making Muslims reluctant to join Muslim majority Pakistan as per partition plan and Maharaja's decision to accede Jammu and Kashmir with Indian dominion, a Hindu majority secular nation. As in other parts of mainland India and Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir didn't witness the same type of communal clashes, loot, plunder, killings during the August 1947 partition but in the later days of October 1947 the communal fire spread in various areas of Jammu province.

The communal frenzy led to the killings, loot, plunder and migration of several thousand families of Hindus from the Muslim majority regions of Poonch. The perpetrators of violence and plunder were some Muslim men mostly retired from Army, who had revolted against the Maharaja's Hindu Wazir in Poonch. They were supported by Pakistan's state machinery as well as some irregular forces. Similarly in Jammu region, killings and migration of several hundred thousand of Muslims in the Hindu majority regions of Jammu were orchestrated by communal elements and were supported by state machinery of Maharaja Hari Singh. The communal riots led to bloodbath and massacres of both the communities, altered the demography of areas along with creating terror and hostile relations among the communities.

The paper intends to draw a comparative analysis of the collective violence experienced by these Hindu and Muslim survivors of 1947 through the oral narratives of the survivors. The paper will also try to locate the victimisation and the marginality of the minority groups, acts of violence committed by communities against each other as well as the role of state machinery in the collective violence during the days of communal violence. The paper will also attempt to situate the experiences, historical narratives, political and social atmosphere of the respective areas of the survivors in the year 1947 with the present social and communal atmosphere of the region.

Marvi Slathia is currently a Ph.D. researcher at the Centre for Political Studies Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi, India. Her topic of research is "Living at the Borders: A Study of West Pakistan Refugees in the Akhnoor and Suchethgarh areas of Jammu". In this she is doing ethnographic study of both these border areas in different time interval of conflict. She holds a BA and MA in Political Science from the University of Jammu. She has also completed her MPhil in Political Science from Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Panel 4: Navigating sites of memory in urban spaces

Pamela Das

Independent researcher in the urban heritage and policy sector in Kolkata, India

Living Memory: Remembering War-time Calcutta

In the 1940's, the city of Calcutta suffered through repeated bombings by the Japanese military force for two years and a devastating famine engineered by a neglectful colonial government. Occupying a cursory reference in textbooks, World War historiography and in the 'official' historical narratives of the city, collective public memory of these events eventually atrophied. However, at present, several collectives within the city conduct Heritage Walks where there is an attempt to address these events and animate collective memory about them, recognizing its significance as a part of the city's history and identity despite its 'difficult' and 'unsettling' nature. Heritage Walks like these are premised on a participatory and almost a visceral remembrance of the 'past'; visiting and interacting with sites which are the material manifestations of a specific memory. It seeks to establish itself as an alternative way of remembering, deploying a rather particular understanding of memory itself. Following Sharon Macdonald's (2009) understanding of 'difficult heritage' and drawing on in-depth interviews and ethnographic analysis conducted in 2019, along with auto-ethnographic accounts of my own participation in these walks, this paper seeks to critically engage with heritage walks as a distinct way of navigating and engaging with sites of collective memory pertaining to the 'difficult heritage' of World War 2 in the urban spaces of Calcutta.

Pamela Das holds a MSc. Sociology from The London School of Economics and Political Science and is currently an independent researcher in the urban heritage and policy sector in Kolkata, India.

Moulshri Joshi

SpaceMatters, New Delhi, India

Un-building the Memorial for Bhopal Gas Tragedy

Through this autobiographical, reflective piece I want to attempt to unpack the 15 years of efforts towards (un) building the memorial for the Bhopal Gas Tragedy. Commissioned in 2005 and selected through an open national design competition, efforts to build a public memorial at the contaminated land of former Union Carbide factory site have not been successful. A deeply problematic status quo continues since 1984, one where the site of pain and shame remains inaccessible to the city while chemical dumps inside continue to leach into the soil and water and find their way into the city.

Bhopal Gas Tragedy of 1984 is a tragedy that breached many boundaries. 35 years on, a boundary wall with fresh paint – worked over regularly to erase graffiti that remembers 1984- and scores of security guards, is what the ground zero of the disaster has received. As an architect, concerned with meaning of brick and mortar, paint and its colour (white, of course), this scanty tribute is of interest to me. This is a testimony to what the memory politics in Bhopal has sanctioned, it is carefully crafted to speak to no-one and satisfy the aesthetics of everyone who sanction commemoration to take place in Bhopal, those who paint and those who paint over. Yet or perhaps therefore, the factory structures have almost entirely disappeared without trace, sold as scrap and lost to the elements. The intent to preserve the site, with walls and guards is as dogged as the speed of decay. This preservation by destruction of the physical remains of the tragedy is symbolic of how the city performs remembrance – by forgetting.

Memorials to tragedies around the world have been projects of conflict, often extending the very process of healing and closure that they set out to contain. When built, architecture of memorials become testimonials how societies choose to remember. In Bhopal, the proposed memorial seeks to preserve the industrial ruins as the monuments to the tragedy, a concept embraced by the government and supported by survivors groups. And yet dilapidation and contamination of the site is heavily guarded by both sides that control the authorised discourse of memory. Both sides seem to derive power from the abandonment of the factory that is at once the evidence of a tragedy and effluence of a continuing disaster. This is the story of the un-built memorial to the Bhopal Gas Tragedy – a forthright commentary on the architecture of memory and its public performance.

Moulshri Joshi is an architect and academic leading the award-winning design practice SpaceMatters in New Delhi. She has taught architectural design and theory for over decade at the School of Planning & Architecture, New Delhi as Assistant Professor and has served as visiting faculty at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology's Urban Ecological Planning program. Moulshri has been involved in the preservation, remediation and revitalization of the post-industrial, post-disaster site of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy where she combines two emerging fields of practice – industrial heritage preservation and sustainable remediation. She is the editor of the Inventory of Industrial heritage in India – a long-running, privately supported, documentation initiative that has mapped 400+ historic landscapes across the country.

Zehra Kazmi

School of English, University of St Andrews, UK

'Golden Hour': Nostalgic Reflections on the Demise of the Muslim Urban Space in *Twilight in Delhi* and *Sunlight on a Broken Column*

My paper explores how changing cityscapes of (post)colonial urban transition contribute to the creation of nostalgic longing in Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) and Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961). Its primary focus is on the memorialization of nostalgia both affectively and materially, and the manner in which narrative memory frames the perception of urbanization in the plot. Further, I also examine the cultural location of this nostalgia and how these two novels have contributed to the categorization of a specific Muslim nostalgia which comes from the recognition of the anticipated political and social othering of the community in contemporary India.

Borrowing from Svetlana Boym's analysis of nostalgia and urban space in *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), this paper contextualizes the cultural location of, what I call, 'Indo-Muslim nostalgia'. Via a close reading of each text, it focuses on the manner in which nostalgic longing and narrative memory frame the perception of urbanization, allowing us to recognize how these noted texts of Indo-Muslim writing in English take distinct approaches in their nostalgia—one more restorative and the other, reflective. Boym's seminal work on nostalgia and cityscapes, though widely cited and read, has not been applied to much South Asian writing. Her ability to connect urban architecture with affect and memory have, in my eyes, a strong literary correlation with these two novels of social transition and loss.

Zehra Kazmi is a PhD candidate at the School of English, University of St Andrews. For her PhD thesis, she is using affective and materialist frameworks to examine nostalgia, memory and loss in South Asian Muslim writing in the 20th century. Her research interests include South Asian literature and cinema, feminism, affect and memory. Zehra holds an MPhil in English Studies: Criticism and Culture from the University of Cambridge and a bachelor's in the same discipline from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Delhi University. Alongside her PhD, Zehra also works as a Teaching Fellow at Ashoka University, where she has taught for the past 2 years.

Sarunas Paunksnis

Institute of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania

Haunted Memories: Transforming Urban Space and Neoliberal Futures in Bengali Cinema

The paper focuses on imagining sociocultural amnesia as a symptom of neoliberal globalization and its critique in Bengali cinema, looking at the on-going urban transformations in Kolkata. The paper takes gentrification, proliferation of new urban developments and decline of heritage sites as an important starting point for a philosophical inquiry into relationship between past and present in neoliberal times. The paper, by focusing on the uncanniness of such spaces in a horror comedy *Bhooter Bhabishyat* (Eng. *The Future of Ghosts*, Anik Datta, 2012) claims that the haunted house about to be demolished to make way for a shopping mall, and the anxiety of ghosts facing homelessness is a metaphor for gentrification and forgetting. The paper claims that a metaphor of a haunted house and ghosts in horror genre films usually represent history, past and/or heritage resisting the social transformation, in the case of this paper - neoliberal urban development. Spectrality, or ghostliness can be seen as a critical metaphor in analyzing urban development but at the same time it embodies spaces as sites of struggle between memory and development. The paper, following Jacques Derrida's concept of hauntology, argues that *Bhooter Bhabishyat* presents a spatiotemporal collapse out of which attempts to negotiate the past, the present and an uncertain future emerge.

Sarunas Paunksnis is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Kaunas University of Technology in Lithuania. His main research areas include but are not limited to media theory, Indian cinema, postcolonial theory, globalization, cultural theory and digital humanities. He studied and did his research at SOAS, London, Columbia, New York, JNU, Delhi, among other places. He has edited and published a book titled *Dislocating Globality: Deterritorialization, Difference and Resistance* (Brill, 2016), and in 2019 Oxford University Press has published his book *Dark Fear, Eerie Cities: New Hindi Cinema in Neoliberal India*.

Ved Prakash

Department of English School of Humanities and Languages Central University of Rajasthan, India

Locating 'Home' through Memory: A Study of the Tibetan Settlement Camp 'Majnu Ka Tila'

Displacement of communities and cultures has become a significant phenomenon across nations at present. The politics of incarceration and exclusion has become more relevant than ever. Moreover, the quest to erase any sign of heterogeneity has resulted in the formation of states which are intolerant when it comes to the minority. One community which has been living in exile for decades is the Tibetan community of India. During the 1959 Tibetan uprising against the Chinese People's Liberation Army, thousands of Tibetans were killed, and many along with the 14th Dalai Lama fled to India in order to save their lives. From 1959 to 1960, more than eighty thousand Tibetans came to India through the Himalayas.

The Tibetan community is spread over forty-four residential settlement camps across ten states in India. India has been welcoming towards Tibetans, yet, they are recognized as 'foreigners' in India and not as 'refugees', which means Tibetans cannot own any property in India, and neither can they apply for government jobs. Moreover, they have to pay a huge tuition fee to access the Indian education system. This leaves the whole community in a limbo and uncertainty. Tibetans are perpetually caught up between home and homelessness. Many young Tibetans desire to go back to their homeland but they are aware that asserting their Tibetan identity in Tibet can be fatal.

The present paper will focus on one of the settlement camps of Tibetans, located in Delhi. 'Majnu ka Tila' is home to the second generation of Tibetan refugees and it is also known as Samyeling or Mini-Tibet. 'Majnu ka Tila' houses a small monastery and from Buddhist chanting to walls adorned with Tibetan paintings, everything about the place evokes reminiscence of a lost homeland. The present paper will look into the domain of food, clothes, wall paintings, artefacts, and everyday socio-religious practices of the people of Samyeling to locate how sites of memory contribute in creating a sense of existence in an urban alien space like Delhi. The paper will also look into the fleeting nature of memory; can one rely on memory to recollect the past? The paper will examine how effective the tools of memory can be in archiving and documentation especially when it comes to the second and the following Tibetan generations?

Dr. Ved Prakash is Assistant Professor of English, School of Humanities and Languages at the Central University of Rajasthan. He completed his PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He has been teaching Cultural Studies, Film Studies, Life Writing, and Ethnomusicology to PG and PhD students. He has supervised dissertations on Films, Obituary Writing and Gender related issues. His book titled *Marginality and Resistance: Cultural and Literary Perspectives* is forthcoming.

Panel 5: Remembering displacement

Priyanka Bhattacharyya

Heidelberg University, Germany

Existential Mobility, Nostalgia and Narration: Unwrapping a family journal's account on escape from Japanese air raids in Burma in the years 1941-1942

"The 20th century even more than any age before is the age of the refugee" (Tinker, 1975) and simultaneously works on migration seem incomplete without looking into the migrant experiences (Köhn, 2016). In fact, to study migration more holistically would mean to study objective analysis of migration along with lived experience of the migrants (Maurice Merleau-Ponty 1964, p.119 cited in Köhn 2016, p. 53), which is made possible through the oral histories of migration. The paper attempts to engage with my family's journal of their migration from Burma into Dacca in the years 1941 and 1942 as an attempt to escape Japanese air raids during the second world war. However, what is interesting to know is that the journal was not written during the migration process but was written 70 years later. The author, Gayatri Gupta (born Gayatri Bose), who happens to be my father's aunt, was only eight years old during the migration. However, it was only in around the early 2000s did she pen down her memories of the migration. The paper attempts to deal with the lived experiences of the Bose family from a critical and analytical point of view and attempt to thus bring oral histories of migration under the focus of "new mobilities paradigm"¹. The critical treatment of the journal would be done from the point of view of using "nostalgia", "existentialist mobility" and "memory" as being driving forces behind the narration and thereby to understand experience of the migration coupled with the role played by images in recollection. The journal and the interviews also show selective remembrance and nostalgia and how it shows contestation with "difficult pasts" and that led to an existential tone to the narration of events.

Priyanka Bhattacharyya is a master's student in Heidelberg University with her focus on Medical Anthropology in South Asia. She also holds an undergraduate degree in History from Presidency College, Kolkata and a postgraduate degree in Modern History from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She is currently on her master's Thesis journey and is focussing on the rehabilitative outcomes of the reforms of 1992 in the West Bengal Correctional Facilities. Her academic interests are wide ranging, from urban anthropology to spiritual healing. Her hobbies include cooking and mountain-biking and she has always aspired to become a Chef and own a restaurant.

¹ The term "new mobilities paradigm" used by Mimi Sheller. The main themes of the paper include the various concepts as seen in the New Mobilities Paradigm such as Mobility freedom and connected to this the idea that one person's mobility is always at the cost of the other person's immobility as argued by Mimi Sheller and Tanu Priya Uteng and how such freedoms are internalized as capabilities leading to well-being as argued by David Kronlid. Thereby a point of convergence being that mobility is not holistic unless influenced by accessibility and capability. Intrinsic to this thought is the idea of immobility and how immobility is not only socially produced but also self-imposed as seen in the works of Lems and Moderbacher and Schwarz. The paper also investigates existential mobility and nostalgia and how it affected the experiences of the Bose family and the subsequent narration of the events.

Trina Bose & Punyashree Panda

School of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Management at Indian Institute of Technology Bhubaneswar, India

Indian Institute of Technology Bhubaneswar, India

Cultural Memory of Human Displacement in Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island*

Human displacement, a biological phenomenon of the past, is considered a socio-political act in contemporary times, which refers to the enforced movement of people across an international border or within a country, resulting from diverse social, ecological, political, economic and religious factors. According to Mecklein, "memory is dynamic and connects the three temporal dimensions: evoked at the present, it refers to the past, but always views the future" (n.p.), and hence the archetypal saga of human displacement is transmitted from one generation to another with the help of cultural or collective memories. The Jnanpith Award-winning Indian writer in English Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) undertakes an exploratory voyage into the seventh-century world with the legendary story of the Gun Merchant while simultaneously being rooted to the socio-political and climatological crises of contemporary times, blurring the boundaries between the past and the present, the human, the non-human, and the natural. The story of Gun Merchant, whose origin is in "the very infancy of Bengal's memory," (Ghosh 6) portrays how the occurrence of the nature-induced catastrophe caused conspicuous transformations in society, settlements and population across the continents in the seventeenth century. Thus mass dislocation in the twenty-first-century from the Sundarbans in India due to sea-level-rise ensuing from anthropogenic climate metamorphoses is not a new occurrence, stemming from the memory of the land. This paper intends to examine how cultural memory translated in the form of the legend of Gun Merchant contemporizes an ancient legend, depicting a similarity between the parallel journey of displacement of the legendary Gun Merchant and the poor of Sundarbans and the world.

Trina Bose is a Research Scholar in the School of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Management at Indian Institute of Technology Bhubaneswar, India. She completed her Masters in English Literature from Banaras Hindu University. Her areas of interest include Postcolonial World Literature and Migration Studies.

Dr. Punyashree Panda is an Assistant Professor of English at Indian Institute of Technology, Bhubaneswar, India. Her areas of interest include Postcolonial World Literature and Cross-Cultural Communication. She has more than thirty national and international research paper and book publications to her credit.

Mohini Mehta

Uppsala University, Sweden

Are You What You Eat?: Food as Memory among the Partition survivors

Food provides a link between social actors and their cultural past. Its presence is cherished, and its loss is lamented in the narratives and the memories of people (Gabaccia, 1998 cited in DeSaucey 2010: 434). Food also comes across as a strong medium of assertion of agency for the groups whose history is rarely discussed in the popular discourse. My paper explores how the memories of food and culinary practices from the pre-Partitioned Indian subcontinent influenced the everyday dynamics of gender and labour for the women of the displaced Punjabi community in the post-Partitioned Delhi. Using inter-generational narratives from the octogenarian Partition survivors and their descendants, I have tried to relook at the memories of 'bantwara', and the post-memory of survival and rehabilitation through the lens of food. I have attempted to look into the assertion and reclamation of agency by the women, from the very kitchens where the gendered division of labour often relegates them to. The argument is twofold—contextualizing the creation of a new cuisine which neither was the part of the displaced community nor was consumed by the previous inhabitants of Delhi, but later went on to become synonymous to the quintessential 'Punjabi' food, making national and global presence, and; exploring the simultaneous evolution of food and identity of the displaced Punjabi women as a character. While the former aspect is understood through the ethnographic vignettes from famous eateries in Delhi dating back to 1950s, the latter part of the argument is tackled by attempting to deconstruct the collective memory of the women survivors of the Partition and their families "to analyse its operations in the formation of identity" (Passerini, 1996 cited in Epp, 2016: 369) of the Punjabis as a cultural group in the independent Indian state. The argument that women have been the "gastronomic ambassadors" (Jhala, 2008 cited in Ray & Srinivas, 2012: 50)—bringing a part of their culture to their hearth in an attempt to retain their individual identity and agency—is contextualized to access the role they played in adopting and adapting their cuisine—much like their life—in accordance with the culture of Delhi, the city they sought refuge in. The oral narratives (mapping the period from the 1940s to the present times) look into the voices of the women reflected in the recipes they had written, narrated or prepared in a bid to preserve, and adapt to the changing idea of 'home'.

Mohini Mehta is a doctoral candidate at the department of Sociology, Uppsala University. Her research interests include culinary anthropology, gender, social memory and oral narratologies. She has previously worked in the development sector in the fields of gendered non-formal education and life skill training. She is interested to explore the discursive histories of women and their negotiation with patriarchal structures through recipes and stories around food. She holds a master's degree in Sociology and Social Anthropology from Central European University (CEU), Hungary, and a Master's in Social Work (specialization in Women Centred Practice) from Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS), India.

Priscilla N. Rozario

School of Social Science at CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore, India

Tracing Enclaves through Memory: The Bengali Catholic Enclave of Calcutta

The borders of Bengal were redrawn several times: first when Curzon partitioned the British Province of Bengal, secondly with Indian Partition in 1947 and finally when Bangladesh came out from the dominance of Pakistan. Of these, the Partition in 1947 was marked by large-scale migration along the borders.

If we look at the works of Partition history of Bengal region there is an attempt to understand the process of migration from East to West Bengal in the first two decades after Partition of India. For another, there is an effort to locate the uniqueness of the Bengal experience in the context of the self-rehabilitation of the refugees and political activism of their movement, to see how it impacted the social and political milieu of West Bengal in the decades following the Partition. However, these works solely focus on the migration of the Hindus from East Pakistan (East Bengal) to that of West Bengal in India. What is left unsaid is the parallel migration which took place of the Catholic population of East Pakistan (East Bengal) to West Bengal, India. Following 1947, the Catholic population of East Pakistan (East Bengal) also started migrating to West Bengal making Calcutta and its suburbs their new home.

This migration led to well-marked Bengali Catholic enclaves of Taltala, Entally and its surrounding areas in Calcutta where the main bulk of the Catholic population having roots in East Bengal settled. Apart from Calcutta, major settlement activities also took place in the districts of Krishnagar and Ranaghat lying north of Calcutta where the Catholic Church also played a major role in helping the Catholics from East Bengal to resettle themselves in the Western part of Bengal.

This paper would trace the story of the Bengali catholic families who had their roots in East Bengal (East Pakistan, post 1947) but migrated to West Bengal, India following 1947. The paper, on the basis of interviews which were held with the Catholic families of these enclaves will showcase the reasons as to why they migrated to West Bengal, India, post 1947, whether they were subject to 'refugee problems' post migration and how the character of these enclaves have developed from the post 1947 period till the recent times.

Priscilla Namrata Rozario is an Assistant Professor of History in the School of Social Science at CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore. For her doctoral thesis she has worked on the Catholic Community of Bengal in the 20th century from the Department of History, University of Calcutta. She has also completed her M.Phil. from the aforesaid University, the title of her thesis being Trial By Faith: James Long and the Neel Darpan Affair. Her research interest included missionary studies, cultural, community and identity studies. She is also the recipient of the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Fellowship for Minority Students, India 2013-14. She resides in Bangalore, India.

Sreya Sen

Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

Social life of documents: Narratives of social remembrance of home-ownership in Bengal

We live not in a world without documents but exactly the opposite. On one hand, documents and documentality occupy a significant place in our everyday lives, aids in the process of remembering while its absence leads to other consequences. On the other hand, acts of remembering and forgetting sometimes help to generate documents and in the formation of social identities. It is at this intersection that the present paper positions what can be referred to as the 'social life of documents'. As we investigate different ways in which individuals attach meaning to home-ownership in Bengal, the role of memory and the process of remembering entails reflexivity on the part of the individual as well as communities. We note that 'the main assumption of the intersubjectivist sociology of memory is that, while it is the individual who remembers, remembering is more than just a personal act' (Misztal, 2003:6). This being indicative that the process of remembering takes place in a social context, it does not happen in social vacuum. As the family plays a crucial role in the practice of recalling and co-memorizing, the home becomes an important site around which several mnemonic accounts are produced, maintained and even contested. Additionally, there exists a long history of the role of memory and social remembering in the processes of inheritance, appropriation, and recognition that an individual or a family attaches to a house. This paper focuses specifically on the documents of home-ownership, their presence and their absence; and touches upon how it shapes the ideas of belonging, generation after generation among refugees and displaced individuals who moved to West Bengal from East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Here the social dimension of documents will be unpacked based on middle-class respondents' narratives of social remembrance of home-ownership collected through fieldwork in 2017-2018 in Kolkata.

Sreya Sen is pursuing Ph.D. at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Coming from disciplinary training in Sociology, she is enthusiastic about the multifaceted nature of spatial transformation of cities, especially in the Global South. In her Ph.D. through mixed methods research, she explores debates pivoting around class and housing; and changing spatial imageries of the city Kolkata. To that end, her dissertation focuses on the practice of making sense of home and belonging in Kolkata, exploring values and meanings that are cultivated and performed within families.

Panel 6: History writing and the politics of memory in South Asia

Anisa Bhutia

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

The Shifting Meaning of 'Miles' - Metric System, Roads and Colonialism

This is an essay on units, roads and colonial infrastructure. It helps us rethink the idea of knowledge creation through archives. Taking the case of the unit of measurement miles, I explore the social life of the archives that are entangled with the roads. The word miles found in the records in institutional state archives and spoken by the people, at present are two completely different things. The usage of miles in the hilly region of Kalimpong started with the colonial expansion of the British empire. Greater the number of miles, greater their reach and settlement in the land of the unruly. It was the infrastructure in the form of roads and the numbering of miles that gave an order to the so-called uninhabited space. But this order is now taking different shapes and forms when newer structures around roads are getting built. Through the new usage of the term miles, people are subverting measurement controls by the colonial as well as the post-colonial state.

As the essay progresses, I show how the miles potentially becomes a living archive. On one hand, it captures the moments of when the British ruled this region and fixed the space and on the other, it creates new meaning for the same. Further, exploring the 10th Mile, which was supposed to address just the position i.e. one that can be considered as an ordinal number has now slowly transformed over the period of time to a nominal number as denoting the place, an idea where Tibetan markets take place. Additionally, being from the region, writing on my hometown and through my lived experiences of the narratives of the miles, even I am participating in the knowledge creation and potential archiving of the different meanings of miles.

Anisa Bhutia is Doctoral Scholar at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. Her research work lies at the intersection of infrastructure, economy and place-making in the Eastern Himalayan town of Kalimpong. She has also been working on the entanglements of Islam and Tibet since 2012. Her MPhil dissertation looked at the intricacies between the relation of Islam and Tibet through the so-called 'Tibetan Muslims' settled in Srinagar, Kashmir. She is a recipient of Fulbright Visiting Fellowship at Brown University, Inlaks Research Fellowship to King's India Institute (London) and DAAD Exchange Scholarship to the University of Münster. As an anthropologist, she is interested in the study of trade routes, borders, interconnected histories and post-colonial cities.

Silje Lyngar Einarsen

MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, Norway

Sanskrit Memory Politics

It is well-known that Hindu nationalists for decades have tried to turn Sanskrit-Brahminical mythology into the history of the Indian nation, and Sanskrit has been crucial in the Hindu nationalist agenda of recasting secular India as a Hindu *rashtra* since BJP came to power in 2014. Speaking at the Samskrita Bharati World Conference 2019, Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu proclaimed that everyone should learn Sanskrit to maintain a living link with the past and truly understand what it means to be an 'Indian'. Sanskrit has become a powerful symbol of the greatness of the Hindu civilization. Politicians present it as a key to unlock the greatness of the Hindu past, but also a solution for a better future. Sanskrit is fronted as a language of technology and education, holding the solution for a more sustainable future through remembrance of a glorious past, working not only as a "model of" an ideal society, but also as a "model for" contemporary and future sociocultural realities. Since BJP came to power, Sanskrit has also been a key component in translating this Hindu nationalist ideology into concrete policies. A recent example is the controversy over the new National Education Policy (NEP2020), which proposes Sanskrit to be "mainstreamed" in school, which critics deem as discriminatory and unconstitutional, and as the government's attempt to "impose a single identity on the various people of India". This presentation will look at the politics of Sanskrit and disentangle Sanskrit as collective memory and political myth. It answers to the call themes *History writing/teaching and the poitics of memory in South Asia* and *Heritage Politics and national memory*.

Silje Lyngar Einarsen is a postdoctoral fellow at MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society on the project Mythopolitics in South Asia. She works at the intersection of classical Indology and contemporary South Asia studies. She is interested in the relationship between textual worldviews and lived religion and the role of Sanskrit in India historically and today. Her wider research interests include Hindu Goddess traditions and yoga, and she is currently managing the Śākta Traditions research programme at the Oxford Center for Hindu Studies.

Manoj Parameswaran & Aiswarya Sanath

Indian Institute of Technology Madras, India

Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, India

Event, Memory, Erasure: Re-membering the Malabar Rebellion

The year 2021 marks a hundred years of Malabar Rebellion¹; a contentious event often perceived as an anti-colonial revolt by the Mappila community of southern Malabar. Though historiographies of the event spanning over a century have explored anti-colonial, agrarian and communal elements, there is a perceptible void in understanding the event from a memory studies perspective. Majoritarian regimes around the world have been resorting to memory wars, and rewriting history to attain legitimacy. Hence it becomes pertinent to evaluate how the Hindu nationalist regime in India reconstructs the public memory related to Malabar Rebellion and to pose significant questions which historiography fails to address.

The politics of memory often view memory construction as a rearrangement of collective memory by political agents. It prods us to recognize and critically analyse the nexus between the State and its institutions in the construction of memory.

The paper seeks to comprehend the politics of public memory concerning the Malabar Rebellion. The work in its entirety attempts to archive the contesting accounts of post memories of the second-generation survivors, evidence from 'various sites of memory' and inquiries into the alternative memories of the Malabar Rebellion. How do the Hindu nationalist discourses around the historical event and its leaders like Variyankunnathu Kunjahammed Haji contribute to a violent and forced reimagination of collective memory? How does marking the event as a mere communal genocide affect the secular fabric of Kerala and its consistent resistance to communal polarization? How does it systematically alienate the Mappila Muslims of the region from their rightful role in Indian national history? In the context of the BJP led Indian government facing consistent allegations of attempting to rewrite history, a memory studies perspective on Malabar rebellion will be able to provide significant insights into these questions.

The research employs ethnography and archival research methods to address these concerns.

Manoj Parameswaran is a PhD scholar at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras. He is currently pursuing his research in religion and development.

Aiswarya Sanath is a PhD Research Scholar working at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT-Kharagpur. Her research interests include the frameworks of Memory and Trauma Studies. She is also a recipient of the Junior Research Fellowship. And she has done her graduation and post-graduation from the University of Calicut.

¹ The official figures estimate that 2337 rebels were killed during the Malabar Rebellion. Although unofficial figures put the numbers at 10000. One of the most tragic events of the Malabar Rebellion, Wagon Tragedy resulted in the death of 64 prisoners.

Deepa Pawar

India

Memories of and about nomadic and denotified tribes of India: a site of criminalization and invisibilization.

The politics of memory in regard to marginalized and discriminated communities renders the memories of these communities to either be invisibilized, criminalized or to be seen with sympathy. This is especially true for those who most strongly oppose the most powerful system, which is the casteist capitalist patriarchal systems in India; these have historically been the nomadic & denotified tribes (NT-DNTs) in India.

For these communities, their histories could not be invisibilized easily, since they were powerful warrior tribes. Their stories were instead *criminalized*, or later, made into an object of mockery and sympathy.

In memory politics, international pressures play an important role that impact national and local creation of memories. This impacted NT-DNTs' histories specially, because they very strongly opposed and defeated British armies right at the beginning of their rule in India. Therefore, even during Indian freedom struggle and anti-caste struggles, the case of NT-DNTs was never taken up by these movements because there must have been British colonial pressure to not take up their issues. The strategies of British rulers of criminalizing them by law, forcefully displacing them, were not only to weaken a strong enemy, but to wipe out their memory.

Today, this wiping off of the NT-DNTs' memories of a strong independent past, has been manipulated by the dominant castes, to feed the NT-DNT communities themselves false memories of being a part of the dominant religion or caste, and use them as foot soldiers in caste wars.

There are many examples of where the NT-DNTs' memories have been manipulated: in how sexual minorities are viewed, single women are viewed, in appropriation of their skills by the capitalist system, etc., all of which serve to further control them economically, mentally, socially, politically. The current Citizenship Amendment Act of India shall further serve to en masse criminalize them; sadly, the communities themselves largely remain unaware of this, having been denied memories of their own histories for so long.

Deepa Pawar is one of the first and few post graduate women from the Gadiya Lohar nomadic tribe of India. She has been working as a social activist since she was 14. In almost 20 years since, Deepa has worked with grassroot youth, communities, local and state governments from an intersectional feminist and anti-caste perspective. She is the Grand Prize winner of the University of California's Tell Her Story contest 2018. She is the founder president of Anubhuti, a feminist organization. Hers is one of the very few young women-led activisms with the highly discriminated NT-DNT communities of India, neglected even by civil society.

Mohammad Waqas Sajjad

Institute of Liberal Arts, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Shah Ismail and Fazl-e-Haq Khairabadi in Deobandi-Barelvi Polemical Histories in Pakistan

The Deobandi-Barelvi polemic in Pakistan is conventionally regarded as a conflict over religious beliefs and contentious statements of certain *ulama* of the late nineteenth century. However, it also has an earlier dimension, encompassing the early nineteenth century theological debate between Shah Ismail and Fazl-e-Haq Khairabadi within the scholarly world of the Shah Waliullah tradition. Deobandi and Barelvi polemicists now rewrite this history to establish their own tradition within what they see as the normative Islamic tradition. Thus, the Barelvis are keen to portray their founder, Ahmed Raza Khan, as belonging to the tradition of both Shah Waliullah and Fazl-e-Haq Khairabadi, while being against Shah Ismail. Deobandis on the other hand either downplay this conflict or highlight Shah Ismail's orthodoxy as well. In writing this history, both sets of polemicists have rewritten the past, and in doing so included figures of the past into the Deobandi-Barelvi polemic more deeply. This is done, firstly, to enable them to construct religious identities that suit perceptions about them as orthodox, and secondly, to enable them to fit their narratives within the nationalistic narratives of Pakistan. As a result, when elaborating on this history of the later Ahmed Raza Khan and his Deobandi competitors and their spiritual, intellectual, and political engagements with the earlier Shah Ismail and Fazl-e-Haq Khairabadi, the Deobandi and Barelvi polemicists construct suitable narratives that have now become axiomatic in these traditions. The ensuing truth effects are evident repeatedly in their polemics, so that perceptions about the other – as religiously and politically un-Islamic – have become part of the collective memories of the followers of these traditions. This paper will examine these parallel histories, the implications for these traditions and their followers, and what this means for nationalistic narratives affecting historical memory in Pakistan.

Mohammad Waqas Sajjad is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Liberal Arts in the University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan. He completed his PhD at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, where his dissertation focused on Deobandi-Barelvi polemics and the role of religious leaders in Pakistan. His research interests are in Islam in South Asia, Sufism, Hindu-Muslim interactions, engagements between intra-Sunni traditions, and the role of reformists in South Asian Islam.

Panel 7: Historical injustice and collective memory

P.M. Antony

Director of City and Railway CHILDLINES Ranchi, India

Appropriating Collective Memory, De-politicising (erasing) Historical Injustices: Accelerated processes of pauperisation at the margins, cases of Adivasis and Dalits in central eastern states of India

The geographical areas of entire Jharkhand state and a few districts of its neighbouring states – Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh – where the population of India's indigenous peoples (Adivasis) have been in greater concentration – was termed as “greater Jharkhand”. The meaning of the term ‘Jharkhand’ is forest-tract since these places were thickly forested and have been undulated with hills, valise and waterbodies with abundant deposits of coal, and a host of mineral deposits such as iron and copper ores, bauxite, gold, etc., accounting for nearly 40 per cent of India's total mineral resources. Historically, people, who had escaped the oppression and exploitation obtruded by the caste or brahmanical ideology-based state-system of the plains, took refuge here. The decadal census enumeration process since 1881 categorised these people, who took refuge in these hilly and forested regions, as Scheduled Tribes (STs), Scheduled Castes (SCs), Other Backward Castes (OBCs) and Forward or General Castes. These categories were introduced from a developmental perspective with a number of positive discrimination policies, programmes and schemes to enable the STs, SCs and OBCs who suffered historical injustices to ‘catch up’ with the so called “forward” Castes. However, there have been several other complex and conflictual processes in realms of caste and class dynamics: disproportional and unjust appropriation of resource, resistance, and depoliticising real political issues by a heightened sensitisation of populace on the basis of their religious affiliations contributing to blurring of boundaries between various traditional caste and class divided social formations while deepening socioeconomic inequality and strife for the majority.

This paper is a modest attempt to highlight these processes, analysing them critically to understand these dynamics and outcomes in the context of deepening inequality, accumulation by dispossession (corporatisation of commons), resistance to dispossession, militarisation and increasing inter religious hatred leading to recurring incidents of conspicuous violence and insecurities. All these processes will be placed in the context of the ongoing religious nationalism based on a specific reconstruction of collective memories and neoliberal capitalist agenda being laid out nationally and globally. The discussion will be based on primary (field-based) and secondary sources of information.

Dr. P.M. Antony is a Jesuit priest working among the Adivasis of Jharkhand for last three decades. He has obtained a PhD in political science from University of Ghent Belgium in 2014. Presently, he is the director of a skill training centre for Adivasi and Dalit women from rural areas of Jharkhand and director of City and Railway CHILDLINES Ranchi.

Kritika Chettri

Department of English, University of North Bengal, India

The Experience of Memorialisation and Reconciliation in Post War Nepal

This paper will examine Tara Rai's memoir titled, *Chapamar Yuwati ko Diary* (2010), that records her experience as a young guerrilla girl in army captivity during the Nepalese civil war (1996-2006) between the Maoists and the state. Nepalese women constituted forty per cent of the Maoist troops during the civil war. However, their position after the war, with the Maoist victory, revealed their exclusion at the constitutional and social level. The new constitution relegated them to a second class citizen status while they were also boycotted for their 'transgression' by the feudal Hindu Nepali society. How does Rai's memoir challenge the narrative of 'victory and empowerment' of women propounded by the Maoist regime? As the experience of gender becomes a cause of anxiety for Rai, one needs to see how her memoir negotiates and reframes traditional understandings of femininity, to allow for her rehabilitation into post war Nepali society. Does this desire for rehabilitation reconcile with Rai's framing of her 'self' in relation to other excluded groups like the *janjatis*—indigenous communities—who formed the majority of Maoist troops while continuing to be led by upper caste Hindu men? How does Rai reconfigure and reconcile her relationship with the army who were her 'captors and the enemy?' Why does Rai's 'positive' experience under captivity become more popular than other accounts by Maoist women who suffered atrocities under the army? Does the widespread reception and acceptance of Rai's account contain its own politics of reconciliation in post war Nepal? While answering these questions, this paper seeks to address the larger issue of the politics of memorialisation in relation to the external narratives of reconciliation and rehabilitation in post war Nepal.

Kritika Chettri works as an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, University of North Bengal, India. She completed her MPhil from Delhi University with a dissertation titled, 'Utopias and their Conflicts: A Literary Study of the Maoist Movement in Nepal.' Her research interests lie in Nepali literature, Translation Studies, Comparative Literature, South Asian Studies, Autobiography and Memory. She has presented on Nepali literature at various conferences in India and abroad.

Dixita Deka

Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Guwahati Campus, India

The social memory of deaths, disappearances, and deaths squads in North East India

This paper takes up the case of *secret killings* in Assam that occurred between 1998 and 2001 when insurgency was at its prime in North East India. During these killings, the family members, close aides, and suspected sympathizers of the insurgent organization, United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) were killed, tortured, or have remained disappeared. The judicial commission constituted in 2005 to investigate the killings pointed out the involvement of the police and the surrendered insurgents where the army was kept in the loop. Few families were compensated. However, no one is convicted for the crimes so far.

India's independence ignited the struggles for self-determination in its North East region. The armed conflict between the insurgents and the Indian state militarized the region where the civilians bore the brunt of suspicion and violence. Under the draconian laws like the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, the armed forces continue to commit human rights violations with impunity. The extrajudicial killings like fake encounters, custodial deaths, enforced disappearances, or the secret killings need to be located in this backdrop.

The secret killings carried out by the unofficial and state-sponsored death squads are not only a blot on the democratic ethos of the country but memorializing the same has not been inclusive. Two aspects in representing the secret killings stand out. One, these are confined to footnotes in academic pieces. Two, there is little to no reference to its impact upon women and their memories. In this paper, I examine how the survivors and the families of victims remember and narrate about these killings that are not yet acknowledged by the state. I use memory as data to understand the ideas of martyrdom and *karma* through which the dead and the disappeared are mourned, and the death squads are cursed in seeking closure.

Dixita Deka is a doctoral candidate at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Guwahati Campus, India. She holds her BA and MA degrees in Political Science from Cotton College and Gauhati University respectively, and MPhil in Social Science from TISS, Guwahati. Her writings are published in Asian Ethnicity, Economic & Political Weekly, International Journal for Intersectional Feminist Studies, South Asia@ LSE, and Seminar, amongst others. She has received the Zubaan-Sasakawa Peace Foundation Grant for Researchers from Northeast India in 2019. Her interests rest in gender studies, insurgency in Northeast India, and in the politics of memory in understanding violence.

Boniface G. Kamei

Department of English, University of Hyderabad, India

Sovereignty and Literature: A study of exceptional power

The Indian state is a popular sovereignty defined by the tenets of democracy, rule of law, secularism, and fraternity. Taking a leaf out of Foucault's governmentality we can explain modern state as a power in which the "conduct" of the population is managed through techniques of security and discipline to make them "docile". However, the postcolonial period has witnessed many political uprisings that threaten the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India. States like Nagaland, Mizoram, Punjab, Manipur and Jammu and Kashmir have challenged that state's attempts at choreographing the conduct of its people. Instead, these states have demanded complete independence from India. The Indian state has responded to these demands with a backlash and suppressed the voices of the dissents through the declaration of "exception" which is the suspension of rule of law and the transfer of sovereign power to the army.

This paper seeks to understand how the practice of state of exception in India is intelligible through literary study. The exceptional power of the state will be studied in the context of Kashmir, Nagaland, and Mizoram through the literary works of Shahnaz Bashir's *The Half-Mother*, Malsawmi Jacob's *Zorami* and Temsula Ao's *These Hills Called Home*. Set in postcolonial times, these literary works represent the plight of the people in the armed movements against the Indian state. Here, the rule of law is replaced by military crackdown, indefinite curfew, and regulation of the people in interrogation centers. The sovereign power, which is temporarily delegated to the army, "misconducts" its power and commits many untold violence on the people. This paper will draw its theoretical framework on sovereignty and exceptional power from Giorgio Agamben's theory of sovereignty which he developed in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign and Bare life* (1995), and *States of Exception* (2003). The paper will focus on the way in which "exception rule" produces bare life, how people cope and counter exceptional power, and how collective memory creates alternate narrative of history?

Boniface Gaiguilung Kamei is a doctoral student in the Department of English, University of Hyderabad. He is currently working on his doctoral thesis on the relationship between law, sovereignty and literature. He finished his MPhil from University of Hyderabad and master's from Ambedkar University Delhi.

Shruti Mukherjee

Department for Women's, Gender, and Sexuality studies, SUNY Stony Brook, US

Widowhood as Memory Making Activist Work Under Militarization

Drawing from Sara Ahmed's¹ 'Cultural Politics of Emotions', I analyze widowhood in Manipur as a gendered performative space where women who are seeking justice for their husbands killed in extrajudicial encounters by the Indian army inhabit their gendered subjectivities through everyday negotiations with militarization. The death marks a catastrophic rupture and is remembered almost every day in activist work done by the women's collective by revisiting the traumatic memory of the encounter killing not just of their family member, but also of other people in the community. This collective remembering and care work makes visible the forgotten and calls into action the political aspirations of living without the threat of the gun. Public display of widowhood therefore becomes an iterative act and the space from where mobilizing the community becomes possible for seeking support in the ongoing Supreme Court case of 1528 encounter killings. I build on Ather Zia's² 'Resisting Disappearance' to look at how the daily routine of activists is born out of the politics of mourning, a constant invocation of justice, and memory. The focus of my paper is on the affective and everyday care work done by widowed activists who tirelessly do unpaid work of community organizing seeking justice for extrajudicial killings, with very little support.

In writing this paper, I draw upon my ethnographic fieldwork in 2019 with Extra Judicial Execution Victim's Families Association Manipur and, archival research at the Human Rights Alert office in Imphal.

Shruti Mukherjee is a doctoral candidate in her dissertation writing stage at SUNY Stony Brook in the Department for Women's, Gender, and Sexuality studies. Her dissertation is an ethnographic study of grassroots women's activism in the state of Manipur, in North East India, as a response to militarized nationalist patriarchy operationalized by the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. The dissertation disrupts the narratives of Indian liberal democracy, problematizes liberal feminism, theorizes ideas of community-led social justice and how they are negotiated in everyday life, in the context of forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and state-sponsored violence.

¹ Ahmed, Sara. 2004. *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*. New York: Routledge

² Zia, Ather. 2019. *Resisting Disappearance: Military Occupation and Women's Activism in Kashmir*. University of Washington Press

Panel 8: Memorial landscapes of the South Asian Diaspora

Gajendran Ayyathurai

Centre for Modern Indian Studies [CeMIS], Göttingen University, Germany

The Cultural and Communicative memory of the Casteless: Castefree Tamil Religious Traditions of South India and the Caribbean

The memory of caste-based oppressed communities in India and in the Indian diaspora is an unexamined field. If caste was an imposition of the privileged, then, how do we understand the memory (and history) of the subalternised communities in their own terms and for their own sake? Likewise, if untouchability is a brahminical invention, then, in what ways the marginalized Indian communities *remember* and sustain their intrinsic cultural, religious, and historical identities? Do they present alternative perspectives about their memory and history beyond caste? This paper aims to address some of these questions by focusing on the Buddhist movement of the Tamils, who had been marginalized as outcastes, Parayars/*Pariah*. Through ethnographic and archival research in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka it argues that the Tamil Buddhist cultural and communicative memory affirmed their being and becoming Buddhists in colonial and postcolonial India. Furthermore, this paper argues that a direct consequence of the retention and revival of memory of castefree religious traditions was that those Indians who were subordinated as untouchables and lower castes but *emigrated against caste* could sustain alternative ways of identifying, representing, and centering themselves beyond brahminical valorisations of caste. Based on fieldwork research in the Kali and Mariamman temples and among worshippers of the Indian diaspora in the Caribbean (Guyana), this paper shows the interconnections between memory, history, and castelessness of the marginalized in India and in the Indian diaspora.

Gajendran Ayyathurai PhD is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies [CeMIS], Göttingen University, Germany. His forthcoming book *Deep Resistance: Buddhism, Caste, and the Marginalized in Colonial India* is on the history of Tamil Buddhism in South India.

Sohni Chakrabarti

School of English, University of St Andrews, UK

Remythicizing violence as transformation: Nostalgia and the politics of belonging Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Mistress of Spices*

Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Mistress of Spices* both explore the impact of dislocation and displacement on South Asian diasporic women. Essentially, at the heart of both texts is the diasporic female desire for refashioning and transformation. The novels reimagine mythology to narrate the specific social, political and cultural conditions and lived experiences of South Asian diasporic women. Furthermore, mythology is used as a narrative strategy to explore the nostalgia experienced by South Asian women in America. The lost home is narrated as a mythic space in these novels, producing a complex and ambiguous notion of home and belonging. Mukherjee and Divakaruni's fabulist imagination depict the experience of migration as an act of violence to tease out the intersections of gender, race and culture. Many critics have rightly pointed out that Mukherjee and Divakaruni's texts deliberately erase the role caste plays in shaping South Asian diasporas. Undoubtedly, the use of mythology further problematizes the construction of South Asian diasporic womanhood. I argue that, despite its problems, Mukherjee and Divakaruni's novels productively weave together mythology and violence to create narratives of transformation. Their mythic and fabulist approach enables them to creatively employ nostalgia to reimagine home and belonging for their diasporic female subjects. In this presentation, I will draw links between the transformative potential of mythology and violence to critically examine the gendered memories of and nostalgia for home and belonging in *Jasmine* and *Mistress of Spices*.

Sohni Chakrabarti is a final-year PhD candidate in the School of English, University of St Andrews. Her thesis cross-culturally examines the construction of narrative spaces in contemporary American diasporic women's writing. Her research analyses space and time through the intersections of gender, race, social class, and nationhood. She has an MA in Modern and Contemporary English Literature from the University of Bristol, with an additional emphasis on gender, feminism and modernism. She also has a BA in Psychology with First Class Honours from the University of Pune, India.

Clelia Clini, Jasmine Hornabrook & Emily Keightley

Loughborough University London, UK

Questioning silence in the Bengali diaspora

Silence has been a prominent feature in the remembering of the 1947 Partition of Bengal. Set against its prominence in Punjab, it has been common to claim that the 1947 partition has been erased or is absent from Bengali vernacular cultural memory. These claims are often made largely due to the prominence of the violent 1971 war of independence in the Bangladeshi national narrative (Menon 2003) but also the distinct ways in which displacement and communal violence at the Bengal and Punjab borders took place and have been subsequently remembered in public discourse (Roy 2010; Bagchi and Dasgupta 2005).

In this paper, we explore the ways in which memories of the 1947 Partition have been inherited, mediated and communicated in British Bengali communities in London and in the East Midlands and question the perceived silence surrounding the Bengal Partition. We argue that the polarised positioning of Bengal and Punjab in terms of remembering the Partition needs to be nuanced. We complicate the idea of this silence or absence in cultural memory and argue that it is comprised of a continuum of memory where, for some, 1947 looms large and for others it does not, and this varies in degree. Based on qualitative empirical data from the Migrant Memory and Postcolonial Imagination (MMPI) project, we illustrate the differences and complexities of remembering 1947 among British Bengali individuals and groups and go on to explore how different ways of remembering Partition are linked to particular forms of national, regional, class, diasporic and ethnic identities in contemporary Britain. The MMPI project explores Partition as part of the wider process of decolonisation and investigates the ways that this process links to contemporary community identities.

Clelia Clini is a Research Associate on the project Migrant Memory and the Postcolonial Imagination at Loughborough University London. Her research interests include migration and diaspora studies; race, gender and postcolonial studies; South Asian diasporic literature and cinema; forced displacement, health and wellbeing. She has taught Media, Cultural and Postcolonial Studies at the American University of Rome and at John Cabot University and has worked as a postdoctoral researcher on an ESRC GCRF project at UCL.

Jasmine Hornabrook is a research associate on the Migrant Memory and the Post-colonial Imagination project at Loughborough University. She is an ethnomusicologist focusing on music, diaspora and the facilitation of belonging through musical performance in South Asian diasporas. Her research interests include music, migration, religion and devotional practices, and the politics of belonging in transnational music scenes. She completed her doctoral thesis at Goldsmiths, University of London, and has worked on AHRC-funded post-doctoral projects at Goldsmiths and Newcastle University.

Emily Keightley is Professor of Media and Memory Studies at Loughborough University. Her main research interest is memory, time and its mediation in everyday life. She is particularly concerned with the role of media in the relationship between individual, social and cultural memory. In 2017 she was awarded £1m Research Leadership Award by The Leverhulme Trust (2017-2022) for the project "Migrant Memory and the Postcolonial Imagination (MMPI): British Asian Memory, Identity and Community after Partition".

Unnati Jain & Nupur Tandon

MNIT Jaipur, India

A study of Diasporic memory, Postmemory, and Trauma in Gaiutra Bahadur's *Coolie Woman* and Peggy Mohan's *Jahajin*

With the abolition of slavery, Indians were employed in British Plantations from 1830s to about 1920 as cheap labour. Over half a million Indians were taken to the Caribbean colonies to work on the sugarcane plantations. The labour that was transported had neither any rights nor the knowledge to demand their rightful wages. The indentured workers were known as "coolies" and "girmityas", most of them knew no legalities of contracts they had signed.

This paper will apply Marianne Hirsch's concept of "Postmemory" to Peggy Mohan's *Jahajin* and Gaiutra Bahadur's *Coolie Woman - The Odyssey of Indenture*. Postmemory is the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma, which they anticipated from their ancestors' stories, images, and behaviour. The nostalgia, traumatic experience of Indian indenture and diasporic memory will also be explored.

Gaiutra Bahadur's *Coolie Woman* is an engaging tale of how Indian women navigated the unfamiliar terrain of indenture and life afterwards. Peggy Mohan's *Jahajin* examines the author's great grandmother's voyage to Trinidad. In *Jahajin* and *Coolie woman*, the "girmityas" and the "coolies", respectively, sail through the dark waters to find home and work in the foreign land. The novels elucidate the tales of survival and the burden of memory. These "girmityas" and the "coolies" disappeared into history, being rigorously silenced, their voices being eradicated from official versions of both Trinidadian and Indian migratory histories. The deployment of folktales in these novels becomes the vehicle through which women narrators make sense of their lives, freezing conclusively the memory of homeland, which kept blurring in the foreign land. Both these novels profoundly bring together various narratives of migration and transformation, celebrating the triumph of the human will and the power of unflinching courage.

Unnati Jain is a Research Scholar in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Malaviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur. She has completed her graduation and post-graduation in English Literature, with meritorious record. She has also served as an assistant professor of English at S.S. Jain Subodh College, Jaipur. She has presented various papers on research areas like Gender studies, Indian modern theatre, Women's writing, and Cyberfeminism.

Dr Nupur Tandon is Professor of English at the Malaviya National Institute of Technology Jaipur. She has been teaching English for the past twenty-five years at MNIT Jaipur and has been Head of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences for two terms. She has organized several short-term courses, faculty development and training programs. She is guiding research scholars for the PhD degree in aspects of modern drama, English language teaching, literature of the diaspora and contemporary fiction and has contributed several articles in reputed national and international journals.

Anjali Singh

Department of English, Mohanlal Sukhadia, University Udaipur, India

Reading Indenture Narratives as Inherited Records of Memory

Indenture literature written by the third and fourth generation descendants of Indian migrants forced into indenture (1830 to 1920) under the colonial rule attempts to give a concrete shape to the real and imagined worlds. However, as Salman Rushdie points out in *Imaginary Homelands*, “it is obliged to deal in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been lost”. Such literature then, exemplifies the epistemology of the hyphenated Indian diaspora, of the rootless subject who has been lost along the route, the one who belongs to no particular landscape and who has arrived, but not to his ‘home’. Indenture narratives function as inherited records of memory, or what can also be described as (re)memory or rather, postmemory. Marianne Hirsch’s work on postmemory examines how the trauma transcends the situation of the generation which witnessed it to relate to the experience of their children and grandchildren. The trauma is passed down in stories of the indentured diaspora with such an impact that it becomes a memory, a personal experience for the generation that did not witness it. This trauma, witnessed through a memory that is not their own, is lived as a deferred experience. Revisiting it through these writings becomes a source of regeneration, a way of connecting the past to the present and confronting it to analyse ongoing and repetitive patterns emerging from it. The writings precipitate a sense of nostalgia which helps ease the pain and suffering of oppressed groups, and instead, creates a comforting memory of the past. Thus, the memory of a shared past has supplied the descendants of the indentured Indians across the globe with a collective identity and shared consciousness.

Anjali Singh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur, India. She holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. Her research was on Indenture Literature from Fiji and the Caribbean, and her areas of interest include Indenture Literature, Migration Studies, Postcolonial Literature, Women’s Writing, and Gender and Queer Studies. She has travelled widely and has also presented her research papers in Australia (2017) and in Fiji (2019).

Panel 9: Negotiating otherness and belonging

Anindita Chakrabarty

Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, India

Public Histories and Narratives of Victimhood: Revisiting Migrants-Indigenous Dichotomy in Assam

The paper locates itself in the North-east Indian state of Assam and revisits the mainstream engagements in partition studies and how these shaped public histories of dispossession and displacement. While there are dominant discourses surrounding nostalgia and memory of migrant populations from erstwhile East Bengal and later East Pakistan, such knowledge has been consistent to silence the narratives of not only the subaltern migrant populations located at relative locations of caste, class, gender, ethnic, and religious hierarchies, but also assertion, interests, and memories of oppressions triggered on indigenous populations at the destination by the population exodus in the aftermath of partition of India. The paper in highlighting such silenced memories of indigenous populations moves on to unpack the category of indigenes. This is in order to unravel how the rhetoric of the migrant-indigenous dichotomy aids in concealing the anti-marginal stance of dominant narratives that comprise documented history. Such public histories of suffering and victimhood influence statist interventions. The contemporary exercise of documenting 'authentic citizens' through the National Register of Citizens (NRC) is one of the statist initiatives that weaves from documented histories/recognised memories of victimhood, and undermines the untold histories/unrecognised memories of peripheral populations of both indigenous and migrant communities.

The paper therefore explores how public history evolves from memories of struggles and negotiations of the privileged, which in turn shapes documented history. Who writes these histories become a crucial point of departure, as there is a simultaneous interplay of subnational tendencies that aims at homogenising experiences of victimhood and presenting a collective history of deprivation. It addresses how these dominant paradigms as part of brahminical and/or mainstream imagination of history becomes forgetful of peripheral experiences in its statist exercises. The paper engages with the related notions of memory, historicising, and silences, and how these determine belonging, legality, and citizenship.

Anindita Chakrabarty is presently a doctoral candidate at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. Her doctoral research unravels the contestations around identity and citizenship in contemporary Assam. Prior to this, she completed her M.Phil. research from TISS, Mumbai wherein she carried out ethnographic work to understand the notion of undocumentedness of Bangladeshi migrants in West Bengal. Her disciplinary training is in Sociology and Anthropology, and her interest areas comprise citizenship, governance, and migration studies.

Sumallya Mukhopadhyay

Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, New Delhi, India

Remembering 'Legacy' and Establishing 'Linkage': The National Register for Citizens and Memory Politics in Assam

Leaning on fieldwork experience, the paper studies the family history of Soham Das—a resident of Jorhat, Assam—in order to examine the exigency of remembering one's 'legacy' and establishing 'linkage' with the forebears against the backdrop of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam. While the legal-official definition of the 'Indian' citizen is increasingly being moulded to support the rhetoric of Hindu majoritarianism, in Assam, the demand for institutional scrutiny of the right to citizenship has ethnic connotations (Baruah 2019). As a result of it, Bengalis, in general, live under the perpetual threat of disenfranchisement. The first section of the paper briefly introduces the complexities inherent in NRC and the associated memory politics in Assam. The next section places Das's family history at the intersection of the memory politics and NRC in Assam and argues that the family's memory of the past is not accidentally revived; instead, it is contingent on its interaction with the politics of the period. The paper proposes that the documents, which the family has preserved, provide a discursive methodological framework to understand, what Marek Tamm calls, the mnemohistorical reading of the past (2013). Each document acts as a medium of remembrance, as a mnemonic signifier that sheds light on the arbitrary character of the process of scrutiny and the family's negotiation with its mechanism to establish the citizenship credentials. Variegated stories emerge from the documents, creating a polyphonic, 'multidirectional memory' (Rothberg 2009) that is 'entangled' in varied socio-cultural frames (Feindt *et al.* 2014). The paper establishes the argument that rather than overlapping with the memory politics in Assam, the family's memory of the past creates its own sense of belonging that contradicts and contests, disrupts and deviates from the collective memory of post-partition Assam.

Sumallya Mukhopadhyay is a doctoral student in the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, New Delhi, India. He is a former archivist in the Partition Museum, India, working on documents related to Assam, West Bengal and East Pakistan/Bangladesh. The 1947 Partition Archives, in association with Stanford Libraries, supported his fieldwork in 2016 and 2017. In 2020, he was awarded the International Oral History Association (IOHA) Scholarship to facilitate his research. His area of interest includes, among other things, refugee narratives, migration literature, oral history, memory studies and narratology.

Papia Sengupta

Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Invocation of transcultural memory(s): Alternative towards restoring peace in Northeast India

Northeastern region of India, earlier known as Assam and later reorganized into seven provinces have become synonymous with 'disturbed', with many locations being declared 'active armed conflict' zones, suffering from state and non-state violence. In post-independence era, Assam was marred initially with the identity-politics establishing Assamese as the rightful occupants against Bengali dominance and later by the issue of marginalization of indigenous people due to illegal immigration. While the movement ended with the signing of the treaty called Assam Accord in 1985 between the All-Assam Students Union and Government of India, Assam's agony did not cease to end. The demand for a separate state of Bodoland erupted in 1990s and new conflicts emerged thereof. Government's tendency to negotiate and appease the insurgent groups resulted in dual-discrimination of the common-people trapped in violence between the insurgent organizations and the state. Assam has been studied from ethno-nationalism and ethno-federalism approaches and conflict-security studies as well, but the field of memory studies has mainly remained underrepresented. The present article while initiating memory study method investigates transcultural memories in northeast India from colonial times to contemporary period through critical examination and subsequent politicization of the issue following a checkered colonial-reconstruction of the past and provocation by the mediatization of selected narratives and the continuous state-backed militarization of the region. By doing so, it raises the question of disturbance as dividend in relation to northeast.

Dr. Papia Sengupta teaches in the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her research interests include minority studies, gender, violence, memory, power-sharing, discrimination in higher-education, language policies and multiculturalism. She was awarded fellowships in reputed universities such as Brown University, Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities Edinburgh, University of Fribourg Switzerland and Queens University. Her first monograph *Language as Identity in Colonial India: Policies and Politics* (2018). She has published in reputed national and international journals. Dr. Sengupta has been actively engaged with issues of gender justice, domestic violence, memory studies and trauma. For her efforts, she was awarded the Distinguished Teachers Award from Delhi University and recently the Solidarity Award by International Association for Applied Linguistic, Netherlands.

Chetna Sharma

Department of Political Science, Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi, India

Contesting Citizenship in India: Reflections from past policies, politics and narratives

Unsettling the logics and practices upon which citizenship is built this paper is an attempt to discuss how politics and memory is not an inalienable inheritance, but an active constituent in renegotiating the boundaries between citizens. How through idioms and practices of memory, politics and policies citizenship are reworked and grounded in attempts to transform dominant historical norms and narratives. How at each historical moment the earlier thread coincide, keeping active the tensions and uncertainties over practice and content that decides future course of action. A careful study of the policies and laws related to citizenship, adopted since independence substantiate the assertion that citizenship in India has always been based on an implicit belief that India is for Hindus. The partition of Indian subcontinent in 1947 was a momentous event that signified the end of colonialism, the birth of two new nations and also influenced significantly, the identities of its residents. Cartographic solutions of post-colonial countries have transformed the language of citizenship, as each state in the South Asian region has to regulate the movement of people from territories that are at once contiguous and porous. Borders that emerged after partition of India in 1947 changed the nature and principles of mobility for people. There developed a perpetual reinforcing logic that argued, demand for a Muslim homeland culminating with the creation of Pakistan, brings with it an implicit understanding that Muslims would identify with Pakistan, while Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and others would automatically become part of India. This narrative was sustained by constant assertions of Hindu pride, badly bruised by centuries of alleged dominance and loss that Hindus and the nation suffered due to Muslim invasions. Partition was seen as a link in this chain of events, the culmination and the last straw that tore the nation. In continuation of this logic how the citizenship amendment act 2019 that recommended citizenship on the basis of religious identity was not an attempt to redefine citizenship, but rooted in a narrative and practice that has a long and well established historical precedent from the time of partition.

Dr. Chetna Sharma is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science, Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi, India. She broadly engages with interdisciplinary synergies between political Theory and conflict studies. She was awarded Junior Research Fellowship and Senior Research Fellowship by University Grants Commission, India. In 2017 she was awarded fellowship of Brown International Advance Research Institute (BIARI), Brown University, USA. She has co-edited book Comparative Government and Politics (2019) published from Sage, India. She regularly contributes research articles in peer reviewed journals and books.

Panel 10: Identity, subjectivity through the filter of memory

Ankita Banerjee

King's College London, UK

Rabindranath Tagore's 'personality': Memory in negotiating belonging and otherness

Rabindranath Tagore wrote ardently about a concept of 'personality' which he posited as a structural opposite to what is commonly understood as 'identity' – a sense of group belonging emerging from a strict separation of the 'self' from the 'other.' In this paper, I explore Tagore's notion of 'personality' by drawing an analytical distinction between the conceptual categories of 'identity' and 'personality' to understand what Tagore's specific critique against the former was. I argue that the memory of his schooldays made Tagore dismiss his bhadralok background as well as his class belonging. In charting this critique, Tagore worked out an alternative politics, one that was societally engineered and not institutionalised through protests and agitations as endorsed by the swadeshi leaders of Bengal.

I then explore what the concept of personality meant for Tagore and discuss how scholars have hitherto interpreted Tagore's notion of personality. Deviating from the available understanding on the subject, I argue that Tagore's idea of 'personality' emanated from his memory and was carefully designed by him to dodge the sense of 'otherness' embedded in the notion of identity. Analysing Tagore's essay entitled 'Personality', the paper argues that at the heart of Tagore's opposition to identity was his affiliation to universal humanism which engendered a sense of appreciation of people irrespective of where they belonged – i.e., their nationality, caste, class, ethnicity. Despite historians having warned against the use of memory as a tool of historical evidence, my paper shows how in this case, memory becomes the principal tool for Tagore to negotiate 'belonging' and 'otherness.' The unpleasant memories of Tagore's schooldays recovered from various pieces of his writing, are shown to be foundational in shaping his political stance during the nationalist struggle.

Ankita Banerjee is currently finishing her PhD. She is based at the India Institute, King's College London. Funded by the Tagore Centre studentship, her research focuses on the educational ideas of Rabindranath Tagore as the expression of his political will. As an intellectual historian her study engages with the competing notions of nations, nationalisms, freedoms and identities by setting them in the context of the nationalist struggle for independence. Currently she is a graduate teaching assistant at the School of Global health and Social Medicine at KCL.

Mohit Joshi & Niraja Saraswat

MNIT Jaipur, India

Indian Sign Language, Literatures, and Construction of Able-Identity

Oral mode of communication, that is, use of speech-sound, is the normal, i.e., statistically established as the norm. And since it is followed by the majority, it has been taken as the only natural and granted medium, leading it to enjoy a hegemony over all other, sometimes even more effective, modes of communication, like sign, that are primarily dependent on visuals. Our cultural history, through literatures, institutions and mythology, has also established 'sound' as the centre, which can be referred to as 'phonocentrism'. Besides marginalization and hegemonic disadvantages, sign languages (SL) have had to struggle for recognition to the status of language. Today, SLs are considered natural as well as complete, yet Indian Sign Language (ISL) fails to find footing in larger part of the deaf and hard of hearing community. Factors like lack of awareness, low number of SL teaching schools, compulsive oralist approach to teaching, and overall low literacy rate amongst persons with hearing impairment are some of the major reasons. This paper aims to address the potential of literatures in ISL to advocate ISL and the deaf community itself. The study will focus on how literatures produced in ISL can challenge colonial hegemony of the hearing world. It will also attempt to give a counter narrative for the taboos associated with deafness in Indian society that act like collective memory, so that a sense of identity can be envisioned that is free from a sense of disability.

Mohit Joshi is a Research Scholar in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences of Malaviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. He graduated as an engineer from LNM Institute of Information Technology, and pursued masters in English literature from University of Rajasthan. He has qualified for National Eligibility Test (NET) twice. He has presented research papers on themes like Digital Humanities, comparative literature, and In-yer-face Theatre of Sarah Kane. His research interests include: Existentialist literature, Modern Drama and Theatre and Visual Arts in literature.

Radhika Kumar

Motilal Nehru College, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India

Sculpting an Identity: Music and Memory amongst Dalits in Punjab

Recovering memory is salient to building non-mainstream narratives of identity. In India, the Dalit discourse on emancipation has particularly drawn on memory to recover, create and convey a rich social and cultural inheritance. It has also simultaneously drawn on a history of resistance to upper caste oppression and marginalization to recast its politics. Memory makes use of both visual and aural tools. The memory of protest and of seeking identity through the aural has been particularly strong amongst Dalits in Punjab. Yet there also exists a vast repertoire of forms and instruments of music typical to the multiple sub castes and groups amongst the Dalits; suggestive of the fact that there is no singular or linear aural tradition that may be leveraged to understand memory-making. From devotional music to singing about the virtues of individual patron families; professional musicians in Punjab have overwhelmingly been drawn from amongst the marginalized communities. This connection between music, memory and marginalization has of late seen a renewal in what is called “mission singing.” Young singers from amongst the Dalit community are fashioning a new identity through the genre of “*Chamar pop*.” Pertinent to this process is how these singers embrace and valorize their Dalit identity while simultaneously recasting Dalit saints and leaders such as Ambedkar to create a rich iconography. In doing so, the identity that Dalit music creates is driven by the twin vectors of the popular and the political. These vectors do not coalesce and even separately are complicated by multiple narratives. This paper aims to flesh out the layered and complex nature of Dalit identity formation as fostered by popular Dalit music and singers. It does so by interrogating the role that Dalit memory/memories of the aural both in the recent past and historically have played in shaping the contemporary moment of Dalit assertion through music. It also explores how these memories vary across spatial contexts such as the local and regional and traverses the realm of the popular to that of the electoral and the political.

Radhika Kumar is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science, Motilal Nehru College, University of Delhi. She completed a bachelor's in political science from Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi. Thereafter she pursued an MA, MPhil and PhD from the Centre for Political Studies (CPS) Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her doctoral research work is a comparative sub-national study of Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh in the post liberalisation period. Radhika is interested in political economy and how it relates to electoral politics. Her other area of interest is political communication and elections in India.

Bhawna Shivan

Bharati College, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

Undoing the Past in 'Identity' framework: Narratives of Social History of Dhanaks¹ in Haryana

Identity is characterized as something being about yourself, something which is being internal to each of us. Identity also determines how different roles and expectations need to be fulfilled at family (personal), community and society level. Hence, we all are acquainted with multiple identities and their roles need to be fulfilled in one's life span. Identification is something, which is external to us that is being observed by others, often in a position of power and authority. Or it can be said observed at different spheres by our family members, teachers, colleagues, peers or friends, and so on. Gender, Caste, Race, Religion, etc can be one aspect of identification of one's identity in the social sphere.

In contemporary times, the quest for identity and identification primarily deals with uncovering the question of "misrepresentation" of marginalized groups. The politics of articulation is seen as the active negotiation between the essentialist form of one's identity and the discourse of subjective experiences of self-identification. A 'self' is rooted in cultures, social histories, and languages. My research work will focus on the first-hand records of the social life of Dhanaks and the quest of self-identification on the contrary, to what the past defined them.

Memorising the past while writing it down is something that act as both mirror and lamp: a model of and a model for a society. These narratives are personal and collective remembrance of one's social and cultural understanding of one's identity². *Dhanaks'* self-identification is based on the stressing of 'in-group identity formation' where the emphasis is on similarity, belonging, and consonance at community level. After creating this 'in-group affiliation', they distinguish themselves from 'out-group' with emphasis on non-belonging and dissonance³ at societal level. For *Dhanaks*, their neighbourhoods/localities, caste-based organizations, religious and cultural processions, and *Choupals*⁴ create a sense of belongingness and distinguish them from other castes. According to Bourdieu⁵ (1992: 225), 'Habitus' is defined as individual dispositions through which one perceives, judge, and act in the world. 'Habitus' is something through which one forms the condition of one's life and shapes one's possibilities and impossibilities. Applying the same concept of 'Habitus' we will understand the in-depth underpinnings of one's subjective properties how one thinks and shape their identity in one's location?

Bhawna Shivan is an Assistant Professor at Bharati College, Delhi University at the Department of Sociology. She is a convenor to the dramatic society 'Chilman', Bharati College and handles content writing on social media pages of the college. She is also a registered member of North West Sociological Association, India. She is pursuing a PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. The topic of her PhD is 'Socioeconomic Mobility and Identity: A Study of Two Scheduled Castes in Haryana'. She owns an

¹ One of the 37 Scheduled Castes of the state of Haryana.

² Packard, J. (2005) *Sociology of Memory: Papers from the Spectrum*, New York: Sage Publications.

³ Tajfel, H. and Turner, J. (1979) 'An Integrative theory of intergroup conflict', In W. Austin and S. Worchel (Eds.) *The Social Psychology of intergroup relations*, (pp. 33-47, Monterey: CA: Brooks/Cole.

⁴ *Choupals* is that piece of land allotted to *Dhanaks*, which they can convert for the personal use of their community. Choupal is a general word, I think its explanation can also be general.

⁵ Bourdieu, P. (1992) 'Identity and Representation' In P. Bourdieu (Ed.) *Language and symbolic power*, (pp. 220-228), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

academic blogsite named as 'Value Neutral Stuff' and has a keen interest in part time blogging about her travel stories across the globe.

Sucharita Sen

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Gendering the Domestic Space, Engendering Domestic Duties – Popular Memory and Implicit Politics in Colonial Housekeeping Manuals

In 1884, Flora Annie Steel, a school inspector and wife of an Indian Civil Service officer, co-authored a colonial housekeeping manual. In the years that followed, the book earned its fame and went into multiple reprints and editions. Steel's manual portrays the Memsahib as a domestic administrator, comparing her work in the household to her husband's contribution in running the Empire. Steel encourages Memsahibs to hire European servants for their children. Such suggestions smack of an overwhelming attitude of racism. Majority of the books written within this genre became subservient to Steel's monumental work and considered the latter as a reference point. In this paper, I argue that the way in which colonial housekeeping manuals have been memorialised in contemporary discourse, essentially lends itself to a limited understanding of the politics of domestic supervision. Consequently, it also contributed to a very pessimistic view of the white woman in colonial India. An analysis of various housekeeping guides written in colonial India, reflects the subservient position of the white woman in India. The ever-increasing fame of the household guides could be explained in terms of the implicit contribution the manuals made to the perpetuation of the empire. Little emphasis in the household manuals was given to elaborate on the power that was to be enjoyed by the women in her household. Rather the household manuals were overwhelmingly concerned with the duties entrusted to the women. My paper, by an analysis of the housekeeping manuals written in colonial India and the memoirs of the Memsahibs, argues for the less than optimal conditions in which the Memsahibs survived in India, where the disadvantages of her gender affiliations surpassed the advantages of belonging to the class of the colonisers.

Sucharita Sen is a PhD student at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Her PhD looks at diaries, letters and memoirs of the British men and women in India to argue for a parallel discourse of social exchange of interpersonal relationships between the colonisers and the colonised. It challenges the dominant ways in which colonial discourse has been memorialised either in terms of civilizing mission or in terms of uniform hostilities and animosities.

Panel 11: Articulations of memory through the literary

Violina Borah

Department of English, Daulat Ram College, Delhi, India

Qissa: A Study of Identity, Home, and Belonging through Memory

The largest human mass migration known to history is the Partition of India, 1947. Glossed over as the “independence” of India, this tragic and controversial event forced an *estimated* ten million civilians to lose their homes and an *estimated* one million to lose their lives. The statistics with their definite tone conceals the complexities, the tragedies and the trauma of Partition. Both literature and film have become powerful mediums for re-visiting this time in history and *Qissa* (Director Anup Singh) is one such film. Overflowing with raw emotion, perfect performances and a plethora of questions, *Qissa* is a rare gem of a film that has the capacity to shake one up and ask what *identity* and *belonging* related through *memory* truly mean. The fear of a displaced father to carry on in a new set up without a male progeny and the consequences that led to the story of *Qissa*.

Indian psyche is haunted by the partition that happened more than seven decades ago. The division of Punjab and its aftermath has been drawn beautifully by Anup Singh who gives shape to the ghost through a fable that makes us look at the divisions within, the division in a household, the division between the genders, elder and younger, new and old. It can be considered as one of the most violent stories to have come across in recent times. “*Qissa*” is an Arabic origin word which means folk tale or interesting stories which migrated from the Gulf into the Punjab region, still connected by the ancient oral narratives handed down in communal settings.

This paper is going to look into the exploration of Identity, Home and Belonging in *Qissa* through the assumed and imposed identities of the main characters in the film of the ghost and of Kanwar who is forced to live the life of a boy without her knowledge of gender and sexuality. The paper will further analyse the trauma of the past that is lived through the generations that comes next to the lived experiences. How the memory of a fractured past is accommodated to create an ideal image of the present and in the process leaves the present even more fragmented. The quest to retain some semblance of the harmonious present through memory leads to the further crisis both individual and collective.

Violina Borah has completed her master’s degree in English literature from Jawaharlal Nehru University and has finished her M. Phil after submitting the dissertation titled “Of Boyz and Men: bell hooks and black feminist agenda on maleness.” She has been awarded her PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru university under the supervision of Professor Saugata Bhaduri with the topic: The Traveling Stage and its Tales: A Critical Study of Bhramyomaan Theatre of Assam. She is currently teaching at Daulat Ram College in Delhi University as an assistant professor.

Priyanka Dutta

The English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Lucknow Campus, India

Collective memory, the otherness and the belonging in Tagore's Gora

Languages and Literatures are always complementary. The world views, the traditions, customs, beliefs and ideologies of each linguistic group are created through the Language and Literary influences. The concept of the Universal unity of Humankind and the complex facets of the slowly churning and emerging Indian Identity are portrayed in Tagore's Gora.

In the article, I will analyse the original Bengali novel Gora by Tagore. I have read the original Bengali text. Language is Reality and each language has a different unique reality. The world views, notions about the different facets of identity in Gora will be analysed. I have theorised on the ideas of the emerging Indian Consciousness of 1900s, the dichotomies of identity, the Hindu identity and the reformist Brahma Samaj identity. Tagore sketches a wholesome portrait of the emerging National consciousness as Gora was written and then published in 1909. Through Tagore's genius; the novel unravels as a timeless creation where the prevailing questions of the Modern Industrial Reality of nationality, personal identity, purity of race and culture all have been probed and investigated.

In the whole article I have analysed the multifarious facets of Indian identity and how the modern Indian identity was imagined and conceptualised by Tagore in his creations. The special unique feature of the novel Gora is the enduring and seamless intermingling of the two contrary outlooks; the real India where the orthodox outlook is lives on amidst the changing and revolutionizing times alongside the reformist outlook.

Priyanka Dutta is a Research Scholar and currently pursuing PhD from The English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Lucknow Campus. Her core areas of interest are translation, transcreation, South Asian narratives, South Asian histories and trauma studies. Her objective is to always have a critically active curious perspective and through constant searching and researching for problems and their probable solutions I have acquired my passion. Currently I am also interested in the virtual learning space. I am always planning and thinking about newer ideas of Researching and Learning and hope to be a life-long learner.

Mehreen Jamal

University of Arkansas, US

Theorizing “Belonging” in a New City: Gender and Memory among Immigrant Pakistani Women Writers from 1947 -1950

The city of Karachi drastically changed after the migration of 1947 when the linguistic and ethnic make-up shifted to largely Urdu speakers after the independence of Pakistan. Migrant Urdu speaking women writers envisioned belonging to their new homeland in women’s periodicals, such as *Tahzib-i Nisvan* (Women’s Reformer) and *Ismat* (Modesty). Reminiscing the precolonial past of the Indian Muslims, these women writers demanded to expel colonial “otherness” from Karachi, which was the capital city until 1960. One writer in 1948’s issue of *Tahzib-i Nisvan* praised the city’s modern urban landscape, diversity, and entertainment districts but was also apprehensive about the city’s linguistic landscape and the public life. For example, the excessive use of English, the language of the colonizer, in Karachi’s public domain was perceived as a hindrance in the creation of a national identity. The writers attempted to initiate a movement for the creation of a modern Pakistani woman from Karachi and expected it to be emulated by the rest of the country. These texts offer an insight into women’s relation to the public sphere after the independence of Pakistan. The writers displayed gender-neutral public domains and attempted to reshape the urban space into a modern Pakistan. The most recent 2017 census of Karachi, however, shows a linguistic shift: only 8 percent of the population identifies as Urdu speakers. Even though these periodicals lost their popularity with time (*Tahzib-i Nisvan* published until 1949 and *Ismat* until 2018), the Urdu speaking interviewees who subscribed to these journals after migrating to Karachi still recall these periodicals. According to them, these texts shaped their lives both domestically and professionally.

Mehreen Jamal is a PhD candidate of History at the University of Arkansas. Born in Karachi, Pakistan, Jamal moved to the United States for her graduate studies. Currently, she is finishing her dissertation on women’s Urdu press in Pakistan during 1947-1960 with Dr. Joel Gordon. Her teaching and research interests include Modern South Asia and the Middle East with emphases on gender, class, and memory.

Jaya Yadav

University of Delhi, India

Muhajirs as Alternating Margins: An Analysis of Kartography and Marigolds and Martyrs

*"Darling, if you hold everyone accountable for what they said and did in '71 hardly anyone escapes whipping.
The comfort of collective guilt."*

Kamila Shamsie, *Kartography* (2001)

Contextualising Partition in the sphere of comparative studies, William Van Schendal, argues for a nuanced reading of the paradoxical independence and fragmentation of British India. Instead of using the notion of Partition as a "unique event" (Schendal and Rahman 551), locating the central axis within Punjab, more recent studies of Bengal have pluralised readings of the role memory in historiography. Yasmin Saika's work has shed light on the sexual violence that took place in the 1971 war referring to both sides as perpetrators through the exploration of issues of identity vis-a-vis language, ethnicity, gender and class in the region. In my paper, I analyze two texts, namely Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography* and Aquila Ismail's *Marigolds and Martyrs* (2011) to (re)locate concerns echoing Saika's work. Questions of 'belonging', collective memory and its expression in public history, continues to contribute to monolithic discourses on nationalism, often based reconstructing the 'Other.' In these novels one sees a parallel inversion of the migration of the *Muhajir* community and their problematic placement in both East and West Pakistani society.

Analyzing the absence of Bengali perspectives in Pakistani literature are significant of the exclusionary process in which remembering or rather choosing not to remember, takes shapes. *Kartography* becomes an interesting text to study the personal and political history of upper class members, who do not escape the trauma of this 'long partition.' At one moment, the *Muhajirs* are seen as the "ungrateful" Other who have migrated to Pakistan from Muslim minority states in India. During the 1971 war, there was jingoistic fervour which attacked the Bengalis living in West Pakistan. Veena Lydia Lobo has written extensively on *Muhajirs* as a diasporic community in the novel. For my paper, I use the theoretical springboard of Lobo and Saika, to extend a reading of the *Muhajirs*, who in Bangladesh during and after 1971, become stateless, in spite of having citizenship. Using Kamal Sadiq's book, *Paper Citizens: How Illegal Immigrants Acquire Citizenship in Developing Countries*, I shall also be looking at the other side of the border, placed in the East, where in *Of Marigolds and Martyrs*, a similar form of discrimination and violence is pushed onto the Urdu speaking minority, who are now seen as conspirators with the Pakistani army. The complex relationship of the *Muhajirs*, who were also the founding members of the nation state of Pakistan, is problematised as they are placed at the margins of both wings of the new nation in different moment of history. The silences prevalent in collective memory have gone on to shape neo-nationalisms of the hegemonic dominance of Punjab in Pakistan, as well as the rise of ethnographic violence in Bangladesh.

Jaya Yadav is a PhD scholar of the University of Delhi, working on contemporary South Asian Literature. Her M.Phil. Thesis was on fiction, titled 'Seas and Cities: Exploring the History of Trade, Colonialism and the Scientific Enterprise in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome* and the *Ibis Trilogy*'. She has done her bachelor's from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, and master's as well as M.Phil. from the University of Delhi. She possesses a deep interest in the interdisciplinary aspect of literature and its role in questions of identity, history and politics. Her work also focuses on issues of class, race and gender, especially in conflict zones. She is currently teaching undergraduate students at Janki Devi Memorial College in New Delhi.

Panel 12: New Media as an arena of memory work

Sridhar Krishnan

South Asian University, New Delhi, India

Can the Screen Speak?: Museum Material Memory and the Politics of Display

The virtual is now the 'new normal'. The pandemic that began in a city in China has wrapped the whole world in its clutches. As people seek to go about with their jobs and day to day lives, virtual spaces have come to take centre stage in our everyday lives. Many who were previously unfamiliar with internet and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have now become reliant on them. As museums across the world have closed its doors — many for months, heritage too seems to have moved virtual. This paper seeks to examine the politics surrounding a virtual museum on South Asian histories. It explores the dynamics of a museum space that is not built of brick and stone but codes. Founded in 2017, Museum of Material Memory (MMM) is an electronic museum. The museum defines itself as a 'digital repository of material culture of the Indian subcontinent' that aims to flesh out family and social histories of ordinary South Asians.

I aim to explore the interface of museums and cyberspace and how they both transform our understanding of the pasts, and, the display of pasts through MMM and its work. I argue that the virtual platform has enabled the MMM to break free from the several moulds within which we situate museums. This includes aspects of ownership and possession of objects, categorisation, making virtual museums a participatory initiative. However, there are limitations to it. Inherently unequal access to cyber technologies is one of them. This initiative is also gendered in nature – most of those who have contributed are women. In this manner the paper probes into circulation of memories in an inherently circulatory museum.

Sridhar Krishnan is currently a PhD Candidate in International Relations at South Asian University, New Delhi (a university established by SAARC). His areas of interest include international cultural politics, postcolonial studies and politics of South Asia. Currently, he is working on the interface of museum display and memory politics with reference to Partition Museum, Amritsar as part of his doctoral studies.

Sylvia Sagolsem

University of Delhi, India

***Phungawari* in the digital space: Folkloric identity expressions and new media**

Myths, legends and oral narratives are representative of the collective memory from which one may derive a sense of belonging and identity within one's community. From such a repository, various aspects and understanding of identity can be sourced, traced and resonated. Folktales and identity therefore remain intertwined and derivable from each other. In my work the concept of 'identity' is located within the context of the Meitei, one of the indigenous communities of Manipur. The advent of Hinduism in Manipur subsequently led to multiple changes, dilution and erosion of various elements within the traditions, institutions and cultural practices of the region. Since folklore serves as the repository of the culture and traditions of the people, it subsequently proves as an essential asset in the process of 'revivalism' since the integral part of an (ethnic) identity is embedded in and derived from these bodies. This paper will discuss the roles, functions and uses of the Phungawari or folktales of Manipur, from the perspective of how identity can be interpreted, understood and reasserted; and more importantly, how Phungawari have been brought into creative spaces of new media. With new media the adaptations have diversified and expanded into dynamic and accessible platforms, and which additionally serves the dual purpose of documentation and popularisation of such content. These new contents, created and sourced from ethnic knowledge systems, have recently seen a rise in popularity in the form of animated short films, comics series based on folktales, digital content creations in general, for instance through Instagram and YouTube. This paper will therefore explore folklore, i.e. folktales, through the perspective of 'identity' in the context of the current Meitei society and its attempt at 'revivalism', which then gets converted and meaningfully reproduced through contemporary new media.

Dr. Sylvia Sagolsem is an Assistant Professor of English Literature at Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi. Her work centres on Folklore Studies, Translation Studies, New Media and Culture. She has done her Ph.D. from Centre for English Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Sweta Singh

University School of Mass Communication Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi, India

(In)visibilization of Covid-19 migrants: When mainstream failed, digital and social media emerged as alternatives

News media plays an important role in documenting reality. However, there are occasions when the media fails to mirror the happenings, by commission or by omission, thus contributing to the process of memory and erasure through their selective coverage. When the lockdown was announced, the government maintained that the migrant workers were not adversely affected as they were not visible on the streets. The mainstream news media, especially television, did not cover this mass exodus of the migrant workers from cities back to their homes in other states. However, the digital and social media platforms captured their plight and a few journalists followed their stories unendingly for months. They were termed as 'vultures', implying that the journalists were exploiting the misery of those adversely affected for their own gain.

This paper critically analyses the news media's discourse about the migrants to argue that mainstream media failed to depict different dimensions of the crisis whereas digital and social media platforms brought forth their hitherto uncovered stories, thus creating a pressure on the mainstream media. In the process, they added to the collective memory about their experiences, otherwise invisibilized by the mainstream.

Sweta Singh is working as Assistant Professor at the University School of Mass Communication, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi. She started as a television journalist with Doordarshan News, New Delhi and has also worked with digital news ventures. She has published research papers and book chapters in the areas of Journalism. Her areas of interest include New Media, Development Journalism and International Communication. She has been a recipient of international and national research grants. She studied Radio and Television Journalism at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi.

Palak Taneja

English Department, Emory University, Atlanta, US

Sites of Partition's Memory: Seventy years later

Each year 14-15th August marks a celebration of Independence in Pakistan and India respectively. The official ceremony takes stock of the progress the nation has made in the seventy plus years of freedom and doubles as a display of the rich culture, military strength, and hope for the future. Such acts called 'remembrance celebrations' push the traumatic event of the past from the center to the margins in the name of future. However, does the silencing of Partition from the main narrative help us in moving forward?

I will briefly analyze the official 'remembrance celebrations' but the main part of the paper will look at a different kind of commemoration. Digital humanities and globalization have ushered us into a "memory boom" which results in as Hoskins puts it "[the emergence of] a more publicly and visually explicit 'new memory'", a memory that gets mediated and recreated by the influence of technology and mass media. In accordance with the boom, Partition studies too have taken a new turn which has resulted in the emergence of the Partition Museum in Amritsar and various online archives¹ that act as repositories of the material and personal memories of Partition. As the silences begin to be filled with the overflowing personal memories of these archives, it is important to understand the nature of such a remembrance which I see as another form of commemoration. As Giaccardi and Plate tell us, in these social media archives "memory is not just communicated to the 'passive' receiver of information but is actively constructed and performed through participatory practices of remembering. I am interested in evaluating both the materiality and the participatory nature of this archive. What are the conditions that make these archives possible? What purpose do these archives serve and how do they complement the literary representations of the memories of Partition?

Palak Taneja is a doctoral candidate in the English Department at Emory University. Her research interests include postcolonial literature and theory, digital humanities, with a particular focus on South Asia. She is currently working on finishing her dissertation titled "Material Memory and the Partition" that draws on the object-memory interactions of the Partition Literature of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. She is also the current Issue Editor of Religious Theology and Practices journal, Practical Matters: www.practicalmattersjournal.org.

¹ <http://1947partitionarchive.org/>, <http://www.museumofmaterialmemory.com/>

Harshita Yalamarty, Sabika Zaidi & Yasir Hameed

York University, Toronto, Canada

'The Jigsaw Puzzle of Hindutva': Using New Media for a Memory Work and Political Education Project

Within days of the coronavirus pandemic being declared, the evidence of 100+ days of vibrant protests, political art, and slogans against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) at Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi, India was erased. In Toronto, Canada, we -- two women and two Muslims -- felt this violence reverberate in our memories and bodies, and among our families and loved ones in India. After organizing and participating in anti-CAA/NRC protests in Toronto, we wanted to create teaching and sharing spaces that could hold nuances of Hindutva's history. When younger activists, some with diasporic upbringings, told us that they never learned about the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition, or the 2002 genocide in Gujarat, we realized that strategizing and organizing political action in the diaspora felt incomplete without these histories and analyses.

Once the pandemic began, we turned to new media and began creating an interactive, graphic project that juxtaposes Hindutva's various building blocks and strategies as a virtual jigsaw puzzle. Our paper will discuss our collaborative project of memory work as political education, connecting the current suppression of dissent to the historical and institutional spread of Hindutva ideologies in India and the diaspora. For instance, it is important to oppose the CAA/NRC while understanding the contestations over immigration in Assam and the history of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), and the violence in Kashmir as the laboratory for detention centres across the country. All of these are also connected to the foundational violence of the Partition and caste- and gender-based violence across religions. With this project, we seek to create an archive of analyses that counters the state's attempts to shape the historical narrative. In doing so, we hope to add our voices to the women of Shaheen Bagh, who assert their presence and truth in the face of erasure.

Harshita Yalamarty, Sabika Zaidi and **Yasir Hameed** are international graduate students (current and former) from India at York University, Toronto (Tkaronto), Canada. Yasir is a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change who works on questions of marginalization, and social justice in cities. Sabika is an MA Candidate at the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, currently writing her thesis on histories of land use and governance in Muslim colonies in Delhi. Harshita is a PhD candidate at the graduate program in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies, who works on transnational marriage migration of women from India to Canada.

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