The Nation and Its Discontents
South Asian Literary Association

JANUARY 8-9, 2014

ALOFT HOTEL (CITY CENTER)
515 NORTH CLARK STREET; CHICAGO, IL 60654
312-661-1000

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 7
PRE-CONFERENCE MEETING - ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE
6-8 p.m. Executive Committee

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8
8:00 a.m. onward REGISTRATION (Lobby)
9:00-9:30 a.m. CONFERENCE WELCOME (ROOM: THE L)

9:45-11:00 a.m. SESSION 1 (PANELS 1A, 1B, AND 1C)
1A: INTERROGATING INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONALISM (ROOM: THE RED LINE)
1B: EUROPE IMAGINES SOUTH ASIA (ROOM: THE BLUE LINE)
1C: THE DALIT QUESTION (ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE)

11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m. SESSION 2 (PANELS 2A, 2B, & 2C)
2A: TERROR, VIOLENCE, AND WAR
ROOM: THE RED LINE
2B: SRI LANKAN NATIONALISM AND INSURGENCY (ROOM: THE BLUE LINE)
2C: CONTENTIOUS FRAGMENTS (ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE)

12:30-1:30 p.m. LUNCH (The “L”)

1:30-2:45 p.m. Session 3 (Panels 3A, 3B, & 3C)
3A: BANGLADESH AND ITS DIASPORA (ROOM: THE RED LINE)
3B: AMITAV GHOSH AND NATIONAL CRITIQUE (ROOM: THE BLUE LINE)
3C: CONTESTING THE NATION IN (NON) NOVEL FORMS (ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE)

3:00-4:15 p.m. Session 4 (Panels 4A, 4B, & 4C)
4B: ARAVIND ADIGA’S THE WHITE TIGER AND NATIONAL CONFRONTATION (ROOM: THE BLUE LINE)
4C: THE POLITICS OF ARUNDHATI ROY (ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE)

4:30-5:45 p.m. GRADUATE CAUCUS (ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE)
6:00-7:00 p.m. GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING (ROOM: THE L)
7:00-8:15 p.m. DINNER ON YOUR OWN
8:30-10:00 p.m. HAMARA MUSHAIRA: LITERARY ARTS EVENT (ROOM: THE L)
DAY 2: THURSDAY, 9 JANUARY
8:00 a.m. onwards  REGISTRATION

8:00-9:00 a.m.  PLENARY PROFESSIONALIZATION PANEL (ROOM: THE “L”)  
Demystifying the Job Market

9:15-10:30 a.m.  Session 5 (Panels 5A, 5B, & 5C)  
5A: SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORA AND FEMALE INTERVENTIONS (ROOM: THE RED LINE)  
5B: STEREOTYPES & RESISTANCE IN SOUTH ASIAN REPRESENTATIONS INTO THE TWENTY  
FIRST CENTURY (ROOM: THE BLUE LINE)  
5C: RECASTING 20TH C. NATIONALISM FROM THE MARGINS (ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE)

10:45 a.m.-12:00N  Session 6 (Panels 6A, 6B, & 6C)  
6A: MEMORY, TRAUMA, AND REFRAMING THE NATION (ROOM: THE RED LINE)  
6B: RELIGIOSITY AND SOUTH ASIAN NATIONALITY (ROOM: THE BLUE LINE)  
6C: POETICS, POLITICS, AND AFFECT (ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE)

12:00-1:00 p.m.  LUNCH AT LOWER LEVEL LOBBY

1:00-2:15 p.m.  Session 7 (Panels 7A, 7B, & 7C)  
7A: PERFORMANCE OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP (ROOM: THE RED LINE)  
7B: GLOBALIZING THE CALL CENTER (ROOM: THE BLUE LINE)  
7C: THE POLITICS OF FILM (ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE)

2:30-3:30 p.m.  Session 8 (Panels 8A, 8B, & 8C)  
8A: PERFORMANCE OF GENDERED CITIZENSHIP (ROOM: THE RED LINE)  
8B: NEW DIRECTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS (ROOM: THE BLUE LINE)  
8C: THE BRITISH DIASPORA (ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE)

4:00-5:00 p.m.  RECEPTION (Lobby)

5:00-6:00 p.m.  CONFERENCE KEYNOTE ADDRESS (ROOM: THE L)

6:00-7:00 p.m.  SALA 2014 AWARDS CEREMONY (ROOM: THE L)

7:30-8:15 p.m.  SALA CONFERENCE DINNER  
INDIAN GARDEN RESTAURANT  
247 E ONTARIO STREET  
CHICAGO, IL 60611
1A: INTERROGATING INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONALISM
ROOM: THE RED LINE
Panel Chair: Henry Schwarz, Georgetown University

1. Fragments of History and Female Silence: Discursive Interventions in Partition Narratives
   Parvinder Mehta, Siena Heights University

Many literary narratives about the partition of British India into India and Pakistan in 1947 have depicted a diverse range of violent experiences of displacement caused by the tumultuous incidents including mass killing, rape of women on both sides of the border as well as homelessness and abduction leading to a catastrophic loss in India's recorded history. Likewise, scholarly books have attempted to explain and/or problematized the binarism implied in the public versus private discourses about partition. Historians as Gyan Pandey, Aijaz Ahmad, and many others have written about historiographic interventions needed to understand the many gaps and silences about the unspoken subject positions that struggle against a shallow homogenization of historical analysis. Likewise, feminist thinkers as Urvashi Butalia, Kamla Bhasin, and Aparna Basu have underscored the private, unspoken discourse around partition. This paper will examine literary and cultural representations of such an unspoken discourse through examination of the notion of female silence and opacity that becomes imperative for maintaining a closeted, totalizing notion of history. The fragmented memories and enforced silences of women in such narratives, especially those written by women writers attempt to decode the inaccessible stories to reveal patriarchal assumptions and question the nationalist-statist framework that denies female agency and address to Partition. Referring to works like Rajinder Singh Bedi's short story "Lajwanti," Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers* and recent films like *Khamosh Pani*, this paper will articulate the discursive implications of female silence or inchoate narrations and highlight the legitimate, feminist questions that these writers bring on in their narratives.

2. Engendering Nationalism: From Swadeshi to Satyagraha
   Indrani Mitra, Mount St. Mary's University

That Tagore and Gandhi, the two key ideologues of Indian nationalism in the first half of the 20th century, didn’t always see eye to eye is no secret. In a series of letters published in the Modern Review in 1921, Tagore questioned the principle of nonviolent civil-disobedience: “The idea of non-cooperation is political asceticism. Our students are bringing offerings of sacrifices to what? Not to fuller education but to non-education. It has at its back a fierce joy of annihilation....” In his response to the poet, Gandhi insisted that “rejection is as much an ideal as the acceptance of a thing. It is as necessary to reject untruth as it is to accept truth” (*Young India*, June 1921). In the decade following the failure of the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, Tagore had, of course, turned his back on nationalism in order to embrace a universal humanism, his “religion of man.” Gandhi, on the other hand, embraced the goal of national independence as a necessary first step in the pursuit of truth.
My essay explores the gendered discourse that both deployed in the context of the chapters of Indian nationalism in which they occupied center stage—Swadeshi for Tagore and Satyagraha for Gandhi. Much has been written about Gandhi’s call to women as embodiment of passive resistance, consequently limiting women’s lives to domestic spaces and roles. His selective mobilizing of a gendered mythology—Sita, Savitri, etc—worked towards this end. Such analysis, certainly for Gandhi, is not new. My purpose in this essay is to examine how both men deployed a gendered discourse towards a different end—to tame and domesticate nationalism itself, thereby silencing and displacing militant possibilities that from time to time disrupted the dominant discourse of Indian nationalism.

3. Unhomed and Deterritorialized: Quest for National Identity in Indira Goswami's *The Ahiran*
   Kumar Sankar Bhattacharyya, Birla Institute of Technology and Sciences (BITS), Pilani

The partition of British India to India and Pakistan in 1947 saw unprecedented human suffering, migration and political bickering. Underlying the obvious genocide are stories of survivors with little or no agency whose trials and tribulations, struggle through years to find prominence in main stream discourse. Indira Goswami, the noted Assamese writer, in her novel, *Ahiran*, tells the story of Ajij Miyan, a simple washerman working in the aqueduct project on the Ahiran river. Ajij Miyan's continued presence in post-1947 “Hindustan” made him the “other” as his allegiance is questioned in multiple ways. Despite the fact that like many others, Ajij Miyan had never supported the separate homeland concept, he was suddenly turned into an alien in his own land. Repeated questioning by his co-workers Kadam and Joseph about his commitment tormented Ajij Miyan to a great extent, as for him the home was still the India he was born into and no imaginary Dar-al-Islam could reinscribe it. However, the constant “othering” took a toll on him and pushed him towards his death in the end. He was one of the lucky ones who had survived the grotesque, physical violence during the partition in and around 1947. But Ajij Miyan fell a victim to what Gyanendra Pandey, in a different context, referred to as the “indirect” or “silent” form of violence as opposed to the “spectacular, explosive and visible moments” of violence. In my paper, I propose to explore the “discontent” of a nation through a religious and economically marginalized person like Ajij Miyan who falls prey to incessant mental violence as he stands deterritorialized and homeless within India, post-1947.

1B: EUROPE IMAGINES SOUTH ASIA
ROOM: THE BLUE LINE
Panel Chair: J. Edward Mallot, Arizona State University

1. From Somebodies to Nobodies: The Dilemma of National Belonging for Poor Whites in India and Britain
   Suchismita Banerjee, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

This paper will focus on the differential politics of the British Raj towards its own people based on the ideology of Whiteness and racial superiority. Domiciled Europeans who worked and stayed
in India were legally not considered Europeans because of their domiciled status. The mode of Othering was much stronger and overt for those poor Domiciled who came from working class or poor families or did not fit into the “offiers” category of the East India Company. For these outcast Europeans the concept of home and belonging were contested discourse that became more troubling after India’s independence in 1947. Paul Scott’s 1977 novel, *Staying On* complicates the problematics of race and class by looking at the poor white characters after the fall of the empire. Scott’s novel, set 25 years after independence, portrays Tusker Smalley and his wife Lucy, an army couple who after retirement stayed on in India and became tenants at a dilapidated hotel. The novel shows the dual marginalization and the dilemma of belonging of the Smalleys. They had a peripheral position within the inner circle of the Raj society because of their middle class background, yet shared a certain symbolic prestige because of their race that was robbed off after decolonization. After independence, they are misfit in a new India that considers them unwanted appendage of the Raj and has no use of their service. Tension builds up through interaction of characters and the portrayal of decay in the lives of the former employers of the Raj. At the heart of the novel lie a futile nostalgia for the past prestige and privilege and present disenfranchisement in an independent nation.

2. White Elephants and Discontents
   Moumin Quazi, Tarleton State University

When I teach Ernest Hemingway’s “Hills Like White Elephants,” published in 1927, my students are surprised to find that Hemingway’s treatment of the woman known as “Jig” is in some ways quite sympathetic, as he paints her travelling companion and lover, also known as the “American man” (who is trying to persuade her to undergo an abortion later), as a kind of dolt who can’t think metaphorically. One of the more intriguing aspects of the story is the way that Jig perceives the distant hills as looking “like white elephants.” Her use of metaphorical language reveals a maturity that desires to see her pregnancy through full term. This story contrasts Georgerne Faulkner’s 1929 retelling of The Jataka Tales’ “The White Elephant,” whose titular character is an Indian elephant taken away from its mother by a Rajah because of its unique beauty. In both stories, displacement and loss factor largely, but in the Indian folktale, the transition leads to contentment, while in the other, it leads to a sense of discontentment. I am interested in how South Asian stories of elephants, particularly white ones, differ from Anglo-Western depictions, including those by George Orwell (“Shooting an Elephant”), Rudyard Kipling (“Just So Stories”), and Hemingway. I will comment on the issues of gender, color, work, and the subaltern, in the contexts of empire and diaspora.

3. Social Outcasts in Melodrama: Cross-Cultural Comparisons between Indian and Spanish Melodrama in Film
   Maria Dolores Garcia-Borron, Independent Scholar

Recent studies in the film genre called melodrama have profited from cross-cultural—diachronic and synchronic—analyses of examples of this genre and from their comparisons.
There are many differences in what relates to existential conditions and conflicts as well as cross-national (or cross-continental) trends in melodrama within different cultures. As for the characters, they may vary, but we also find some common tropes, and even among the many varying codes of social, psychological or political discourse, bearing the same positive or negative valences, or not.

Just the name in terms of cinematic art; because there are different "priorities of evaluation", so the ways of describing and/or poetizing tragedy, highly emotional themes, social pressures, pathos-filled situations and characters, physical or mental illness, rape, alcoholism, fears, real threats, repression, domestic violence, romantic problems, etc, and the ways of surmounting them with resolute endurance, bravery, sacrificial acts, etc, may be similar or differ in parallel.

As for the story and the work of the actors—excessive emotionalism, prolonged suffering, exaggerated expressions, moral polarization, extravagant representation, excessive suspense, and problems related to traditional versus modern conflicts—are also present in both cinemas. The 40s and 50s were the heyday of melodrama both in Hispanic countries and India (as well as in other countries, Eastern and Western). We will focus especially on the issues relating to outcasts (and other marginalized people) appearing in Spanish and Indian melodramas pertaining to those two decades, and will also comment on some other interesting outcasts in films pertaining to other eras in film history.

4. Women as India: Gendered Metaphors of Nation in Indo-Caribbean Indenture Narratives
   Alison Klein, CUNY Graduate Center

In historical fiction, metaphors of marriage are frequently used to represent the coming together or fragmenting of a nation. For example, many Indo-Caribbean authors use a triadic relationship between an Indian couple and a British man to depict the impact of British colonialism on Indian nationhood. David Dabydeen’s *The Counting House* and Sharlow Mohammed’s *The Promise* are two contemporary novels about the nineteenth century indenture system, during which 500,000 Indians traveled to the Caribbean. In both novels, an Indian man and woman fall in love and marry, but are driven from India by British colonialism. Both couples travel to the Caribbean under indenture, and both couples are torn apart by a British planter who takes the woman for himself, which represents Britain's violent conquest of India.

Yet, there is a danger in these metaphors, as they suggest that women are the bearers of culture and must be protected and controlled. This view, a common one in many traditional societies, was concretized by the indentured labor system. The dramatic disparity in the numbers of male to female laborers—as high as five to one—meant that women became a prized possession for Indians and British alike, and controlling their sexuality became a sign of masculinity and power. In addition, far from home, laborers viewed women, in their roles as mothers and wives, as the protectors of Indian tradition and culture. This meant that they in turn had to be protected.

While the gender ratio eventually evened out, these attitudes towards Indo-Caribbean women persist, as evidenced by the representations of Indo-Caribbean women in literature. This paper will examine the ways that gendered discourses of nationhood in Indo-Caribbean novels maintain the problematic view that developed under indenture of women as India.
1. From Worse than Dogs to Heroic Tigers: Situating the Animal in Dalit Autobiographies
   Aniruddha Mukhopadhyay, University of Florida

   In her article “Who Claims Alterity” (1989), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak provides a reading of Mahasweta Devi’s “The Hunt” to elucidate how “the postcolonial negotiates with the structures of violence and violation that have produced her” through “the rewriting of ethnicity and the reappropriation of rape.” This postcolonial negotiation is enacted through a rearticulation of “animality” as the central protagonist, Mary Oraon, reappropriates her wild-ness through the animalization and subsequent brutalization of the exploitative figure of the Collector. But this postcolonial deployment of animality and animalization stops just short of addressing the question of the “animal” that informs this re-constitution of her identity.

   In the autobiographies of several Dalit writers like Bama, Omprakash Valmiki, Narendra Jadhav and others, I find similar negotiations of identity through the symbolic deployment of the animal as both the “limit” and “test” of sovereignty. In this paper, I examine not only the rearticulation of the sovereign subjectivity of the Dalit writer, but also the place of the animal in this semiotic process. And in doing so, I hope to address the following questions: Does this postcolonial negotiation in rearticulating Dalit identity also rearticulate the borders of sovereign subject-constitution premised on the limit of the non-human animal that Jacques Derrida explores in The Beast and the Sovereign? Or does the process re-inscribe that limit, thereby reproducing the central bind of the “animal” as the absent other, the textual blankness around which the dialectical interplay between the dominant and the oppressed can take place? Is the animal then an-other trace of the subaltern? How, then, does the question of the animal inform Dalits' struggle for human rights in postcolonial India as they negotiate a hegemonic national (caste) narrative that seeks to confine them in the slippage between the human and non-human animal?

2. Revolutionary Affects: Alienation of Caste, Class and Gender in Mahasweta Devi's “Rudali”
   Puspa Damai, Marshall University

   This paper discusses Mahasweta's Rudali through the lens of affects. It demonstrates how Mahasweta, on the one hand, examines the perverse effects of feudalism, especially the absence of “ordinary” affects (such as mourning the dead) amongst the feudal class; on the other hand, Mahasweta shows how feudal discrimination and exploitation of the subalterns also result in the emotional and moral drainage in the subalterns. The paper will situate Mahasweta's revolutionary politics between this dual structure of affective alienation in order to foreground Mahaweta's vision of “mass revolution” for restoring human capacity for affects. The paper intends to critique Mahasweta’s “revolutionary affects” by arguing that though Mahasweta rightfully identifies feudalism's, and by extension, capitalism's commoditization and invasion of human affects, her deployment of affects as conduits for camaraderie fails to carefully consider differences within and between class, caste or gender.
My paper focuses on the two endings of Velutha's story in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, which contrastively present Velutha's subalternity as victimage and triumph, and contends that the textual ending of the novel far from being an escape from radical politics to sentimental aesthetics, consolidates the novel’s socio-political critique. The tragic chronological ending, buried in the discursive middle of the novel, objectifies Velutha as an unresponsive body fatally sealed in manifestly alien subalternity, and the subversively transcendent textual ending of the romantic plot grants Velutha love, life, a hopeful tomorrow, and full subject-agency. My analysis realigns discourse and action, which the novel disconnects, under the aegis of a single critical ideology, and positions itself at the intersection of the debates about re-presentation of subalternity by the Subaltern Studies thinkers and D. A. Miller’s analysis of narrative closure. It considers Velutha, who does not play by love's rules, to be symptomatic of transgression within the Ayemenem community in both his conclusive representations. The chronological end of Velutha's story brings the Ayemenem community together in a wholly unethical and parodic unity as Velutha is beaten by the police after being betrayed by Baby Kochamma, Mamachi, Kochu Maria, and most significantly Vellya Paapen. Roy, however, rejects closural visibility for that ghastly integration by choosing instead the scene of pleasure between Velutha and Ammu as the textual end. By rejecting the unethical integration of the Ayemenem community granted by Velutha's death the novel insists on the fragmentariness of the microcosmic national Ayenemen community. The romantic ending of the novel, coming as it does “after” the graphic violence of Velutha's death, amplifies the notion of fragmentariness by calling attention to its vulnerability and erasing mere sentimentality.
northeastern region. Borrowing a term from Begoña Aretxaga (2005), I argue that Arunimar Swades and Artha explore the functioning of an “occult real” in the sphere of everyday life during a state of emergency. Analysis of the occult real—Aretxaga defines it as “the construction of reality as a phantasmatic universe in need of constant interpretation”—reveals how state terror assumes certain narrative forms that circulates among populations, thereby sustaining economies of terror. Figures of excess, fantasy, magic and dream commingle inextricably with the tangible, the “rational” and the concrete in narratives that represent state terror. Both Arunimar Swades and Artha show how attempts at representing scenarios of state terror through “realist” registers invariably conjure the uncanny aspects that structures categories such as the “everyday” and the “ordinary.” Thus, Arunimar Swades explores the occult real through a commingling of the spheres of quotidian reality and dreams; Artha probes the phantasmatic aspects of the everyday in a state of terror by paying close and meticulous attention to the uncanny inherent in the banal and the ordinary. Taken together, these two fictions, I argue, help us in deepening critical analyses of the narrative forms through which state terror is represented.

2. Mani Ratnam's Dil Se and the Pyrotechnics of the Body
   Jason Howard Mezey, Saint Joseph's University

My examination of Mani Ratnam's 1998 film Dil Se--which sets a love story against a backdrop of national unrest, terrorism, and state violence--begins with a consideration of two filmed explosions. Dil Se's state-crossed lovers, Amar and Meghna, perish at the end of the film when Meghna's suicide vest detonates during their final embrace, foiling her role in a plot to assassinate the President of India. This violent fantasy ending, however, is haunted by another explosion, which took the lives of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, sixteen bystanders, and his assassin. I analyze Dil Se in conversation with its darker subtext of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination; although Ratnam never directly references it (Indira Gandhi's assassination is, but not her son's), his film echoes elements of Rajiv Gandhi's murder in its story about a radicalized group vowing revenge against the militaristic overreach of the state. In both cases, the bodies of women are tellingly deployed as the pyrotechnic materials that fuel anti-state violence. The similarities between the two images of detonations--one a fictional denouement to a love story gone wrong and one a historical document of terroristic violence against a head of state--provide insight into the politics and theatries of civil unrest and fragmentation as they oppose themselves to rhetorics of national unity and state authority. By strategically incorporating selected details from Rajiv Gandhi's assassination seven years after the fact, Dil Se attempts to render into a conventional plot structure the dramas of resisting and enforcing national unity; however, Ratnam also recognizes with the final destruction of its storytelling and cinematic frame the risks and limitations of superimposing narrative unity onto a backdrop of national disunity.

3. Scattered Voices: Diasporic Reflections on the Nation in Turmoil in The Assassin's Song
   Melanie R. Wattenbarger, University of Mumbai

Traumatic experiences shape communities. To borrow from Anderson, the nation is imagined through traumatic experiences as well, as seen in the work of Fanon. Among the nation's
fragments are the scattered, diapsoric communities who imagine the nation from afar. This paper examines how traumatic experience creates and solidifies boundaries between the fragments of a nation. M. G. Vassangi’s novel *The Assassin’s Song* is analyzed as a diapsoric representation of the Gujarat carnage of 2002. Communal networks between those who suffered through the riots and those who returned after were strained as the community came to identify itself as pre- and post-the riots. First-hand fieldwork in Gujarat informs this paper’s reflection on the state of communal relationships in Gujarat and the diaspora today.

Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister, spoke pointedly that India’s diaspora should forget their motherland and assimilate into their host nations as a way to cope with the devastation of colonialism. He advocated a type of communal amnesia between the newly independent nation and her fragments of indentured laborers and mercantile diasporas abroad. In light of this call for papers ending on the anniversary of the Indian Independence, this paper turns back to how the nation was originally imagined amongst political strife and violence surrounding partition to see how seventy years later trauma affects national imagining. Echoing Chatterjee’s question “Whose Imagined Community?” this paper explores whether the diaspora is allowed to imagine the nation in light of communal trauma and if so, how. Vassangi’s novel provides the platform from which this discussion can reach towards an understanding of who carries the voice of the nation. The paper concludes in asking if the nation can ever be imagined as a whole, or if due to traumatic events, it must remain ever fragmentary.

4. India, Geopolitics, and Specters of Future War
Suparno Banerjee, Texas State University- San Marcos

The beginning of the twenty-first century has seen a rise in futuristic narratives focusing on India by Western as well as Indian authors, such as Humphrey Hawksley’s *Dragon Fire* (2000), Ruchir Joshi’s *The Last Jet-Engine Laugh* (2001), Ian McDonald’s *River of Gods* (2004), Rimi Chatterjee’s *Signal Red* (2005), Manjula Padmanabhan’s *Escape* (2008) to name a few. Uses of science fictional devices in these works allow speculative freedom based on their extrapolative and thought-experimental qualities about India’s role in the near-future geopolitics and social mores of South Asia. In an often dystopian meditation on future scenarios, these texts regularly bring up specters of war in and around the subcontinent. Sometimes the wars directly involve the mutually distrustful and nuclear armed neighbors-- India, Pakistan, and China-- and sometime India is depicted as a battle ground for its fragmented regional powers. Whatever the setting, a large portion of the futuristic narratives situated in India foreground the inevitability of a military conflict in this region. Such extrapolative writing acquires significance given the history of political and military volatility of the region-- the hotly contested border demarcations between the nations, the frequent skirmishes at the borders between India and Pakistan, the regular terrorist attacks on the civilian population, the mutual accusations of military incursions by Chinese and Indian governments, the internal security threats posed by separatist and political violence. Such simmering elements keep the ground fertile for large scale armed conflicts in the Indian subcontinent. My paper explores the depiction of such future wars through the lens of Suvin’s theory of science fiction as a literature of “cognitive estrangement,” and also examines the differences in perception between the western and Indian texts regarding such conflicts.
1. Shyam Selvadurai's Toronto: The Role of the City in *The Hungry Ghosts*
   Asha Jeffers, York University

The Hungry Ghosts is Shyam Selvadurai's fourth novel, and his first set partially in Canada, where he has lived since the early 1980s. This pattern is not altogether unusual for immigrant Canadian authors. Yet by turning his gaze to Canada, Selvadurai offers a powerful, distinct, and intimate perspective on the migration process that also fills notable gaps in the body of Canadian immigrant literature, particularly through his foregrounding of a queer perspective and his representation of the Sri Lankan diasporic population centred in the Greater Toronto Area, a large but underrepresented group in literature and popular culture.

In my paper, I will show how the novel vividly demonstrates the myriad, intersecting factors which shape a migrant's experience of the city. Gender, age, sexuality, entho-linguistic community, and proximity to the city centre all have an integral impact on these migrants' experiences. Toronto is a complex space for Selvadurai's characters, experienced differently by the narrator, Shivan, and his mother and sister. The city is a place of discovery for Shivan, but not of fulfillment or peace. For his sister, Toronto is a site of constant self-reinvention and adaptation but not of belonging. For his mother, Toronto is a space of desolation but becomes a place of healing. These relationships to the city are shown to be deeply influenced by the character's varied subject positions, which were shaped in Sri Lanka. Particularly in the case of Shivan and his mother, Sri Lanka remains an inescapable and bittersweet centre point to their lives; for these characters, the postcolonial nation, personified in the person of the grandmother, can never truly be left behind but must be come to terms with if a new life there or elsewhere is to be possible, even if neither the nation nor the grandmother will accept her fault.

2. Fragments of the Nation in Beate Arnestad's *My Daughter the Terrorist*
   Joya Uraizee, Saint Louis University

How do films made about South Asian civil wars envision the nation? In what ways do gender and ethnicity mediate notions of national fragmentation? In this paper, I will analyze Norwegian Beate Arnestad's documentary movie, "My Daughter the Terrorist" (2007), about three women: Puhalchudar and Darshika (young, female members of the LTTE, the recently-defeated Sri Lankan Tamil guerilla army), and Darshika's mother, Antonia. The movie covers the years 2003-2006, a time of increasingly escalating violence, during the Sri Lankan Civil War (1983-2009). I will examine how initially, Arnestad presents all three women as strong, heroic and self-willed; and how later, they appear more like victims. As critics have suggested, the cinematic techniques Arnestad uses, namely, repeated close-ups, lush natural settings, emotional appeal, and recurring cross cuts between the personal stories and news reports of similar events, all have a highly
ambivalent effect. On the one hand, they evoke viewer sympathy for Puhalchudar, Darshika and Antonia, thereby undermining the supposed objectivity of the documentary filmmaker. On the other hand, they call attention to the unreliability of the three women's stories. I will conclude by describing the wide variety of critical responses to the film. There were largely positive reviews in the Western media, much of which viewed the women primarily as victims. In the Tamil media, which read the movie as supportive of the Tamil cause, there was primarily praise. Finally, there was sharp criticism of the movie by the Sri Lankan government, which seems to have regarded it as overt glorification of terrorism. These various responses to the film underscore its ambivalent ideological stance.

3. Burgher (Trans)Nationalism and the Discontents of Hybridity
Maryse Jayasuriya, University of Texas- El Paso

Among the most frequently forgotten of the “vanishing people” of South Asia, the Burghers of Sri Lanka are descendants of the Portuguese and Dutch, or of those of them who intermarried with Sri Lankans of different ethnic groups. As Neluka Silva notes, “the Burghers' mixed ancestry enabled them to be positioned as the “degenerate outsider' in pre-independence nationalist discourses and, in the post-independence landscape as a continuing reminder of colonialism” (The Hybrid Island 104). From a political standpoint, their loyalties were considered suspect since they seemed to align themselves to or be automatically aligned with the colonizers. From a socio-cultural standpoint, they were also othered— the Burghers were condemned for their westernization and considered to be sexually permissive and even immoral. The “Sinhala-Only” language reforms of 1956 meant that many Burghers felt disenfranchised and sought refuge in countries such as Australia. Over the decades, many writers have countered the negative image of Burghers, showing them to be loyal yet cosmopolitan Sri Lankans who were compelled to face the detrimental effects of short-sighted reforms and whose contributions to all aspects of Sri Lankan life have often been ignored. My paper looks at how established writers such as Carl Muller, Michael Ondaatje and Jean Arasanayagam, as well as relative newcomers such as Vivimarie VanderPoorten and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha interrogate their heritage/multiple identities. By cutting across generations in my discussion of Burgher identity in postcolonial Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan diaspora, I show how their particular discontents illuminate the precariousness of the nation.

2C: CONTENTIOUS FRAGMENTS
ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE
Panel Chair: Rahul Gairola, University of Maryland (Baltimore County)

1. The Impossibility of the Nation-State in Kashmir in Meena Arora Nayak's Endless Rain
Robin Field, King's College

Endless Rain, the harrowing 2006 novel by Meena Arora Nayak, explores the history of Kashmir from 1971 until the late 1980s in order to pose the difficult, if not unanswerable questions about the possibility of sovereignty for Kashmir. The novel traces the lives of three generations of a Kashmiri Muslim family living in Srinagar. Salahudin, the patriarch, is a shawl weaver whose wife
was raped and murdered in 1947 by Pakistani tribesmen who wanted Kashmir to align with their country. Maqsood is their son who witnessed the atrocity perpetrated upon his mother and who searches for solace and understanding using the stories and mythology of the past. Ali, Maqsood's son and Salahudin's grandson, belies the literal meaning of his name, “warrior of peace,” when he chooses a violent path by joining the JKLF in order to fight for azaadi, for freedom and autonomy for Kashmir. Nayak focuses upon these three male characters to explore three possible methods for the creation of a nation-state in Kashmir. Salahudin believes in the efficacy of politics and diplomacy; he trusts the political figurehead of Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, to negotiate independence from India. Maqsood, watching the political process deteriorate throughout his lifetime, places his faith in the mythology and Kashmiriyat of his friends and neighbors to create a viable nation-state for all Kashmiris, whether Muslim, Hindu, or other. The teenaged Ali believes only in the power of violence to achieve independence and soon has blood on his hands. *Endless Rain* demonstrates how none of these three paths has achieved azaadi for Kashmir. As its mournful title elegizes, *Endless Rain* questions whether the nation-state will ever be possible again in Kashmir.

2. **Human Condition in Kashmir**

Priyanka Thakur, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India

The “unwritten books about the Kashmiri experience”, in the words of Basharat Peer, are finally being written. The fragments which were rendered invisible in the shadow of various dominated discourses about the Kashmir conflict have started telling their stories themselves. Pankaj Mishra rightly puts this phenomenon in his words when he states that the “life under political oppression has begun to yield . . . a rich intellectual and artistic harvest”. The ordinary Kashmiri people can be heard in the recent works by Kashmiri authors like Mirza Waheed, Siddhartha Gigoo and Rahul Pandita. One can read books like *Until My Freedom Has Come: The New Intifada in Kashmir* and *Of Occupation And Resistance: Writings From Kashmir* to witness ordinary lives breaking the silence through various mediums like books, music and internet. The human rights violation or rather the real human condition of the two communities of the valley—Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits, is the area which these cultural products are trying to engage with. My paper primarily deals with the human conditions in a conflict zone which continues to be an inseparable yet suppressed part of the Indian Nationalist discourse. It will analyse the recent works of Kashmiri writers to find out how the state apparatuses, both ideological and repressive, bruise the everyday lives of Kashmiris. The paper will also look at condition of the “displaced” Kashmiri Pandits in the refugee camps of Jammu described in the works of Kashmiri Pandits. These voices from Kashmir are in no way homogeneous and are clearly taking different positions. The paper is a small intervention to bring forth these ordinary voices and their aspirations.

3. **Hyphenated Existence in-Exile: Transnationalism, Transculturation in Tibetan Poetry**

Rashmi Ramaul, Government College of Teacher Education, Dharamshala.

We are refugees here
People of a last country
Citizen to no nation
I am an “Indian-Tibetan”.
- Tenzin Tsundue

Tibetan exodus is recorded as one of the biggest geo-political events in the contemporary history. The estimated 1,50,000 Tibetans-in-exile live a hyphenated life between two nations, two cultures, self and other. For more than fifty years in exile they have lived with pain, suffering, alienation and nostalgia for land, clan and culture and yet have continued to maintain and preserve the social fabric through identity markers like dress, language, food, manners, beliefs, rituals and customs and cultural artefacts inclusive of thangkas, prayer wheels, flags, etc. Though Tibetans in exile have accommodated well within their host cultures and are in a process of irreversible assimilation, yet the struggle and activism for freedom continues and keeps alive the Tibetan spirit for togetherness amongst their community around the world.

Of late, they have realized that education is the beacon that will light their future and one step on this path is their writings in Tibetan and English. These works are mainly personal thoughts, passions, anguish and hope expressed in poetic form. This paper aims to analyze the Tibetan poetry—the Tibetan voice, as an expression of transnationalism and transculturation. The poems of three generation poets like Gendun Choephal, Lhasang Tsering and Tenzin Tsundue highlight the bitter and painful reality of exile, the presence of a strong hope, the cries of an anguished heart and the spirit to protest and fight for their rights.

The article will not only analyze the poems but also will include extracts from some poems which are pertinent to the theme of the conference and the focus of the paper. These poems portray the Tibetan microcosm in other lands.

1:30-2:45 p.m. Session 3 (Panels 3A, 3B, & 3C)

3A: BANGLADESH AND ITS DIASPORA
ROOM: THE RED LINE
Panel Chair: Pennie Ticen, Virginia Military Institute

1. Negotiating the Politics of Power: Tahmima Anam’s The Good Muslim and Women’s Role in Nation Building
   Farzana Akhter, University of Arkansas

Despite having a female prime minister, women have not wielded much power in Bangladesh. When it comes to exercising freewill and power, women still remain in the liminal threshold. Even though women have contributed a great deal in the formation and building of the nation, they have never been acknowledged. Nation building history has always been gender-blind. In the official historical accounts of Bangladesh War, there has been an overwhelming tendency to omit women's experiences of the war. Instead, the focus has been on the male military achievements. In The Good Muslim, through the personal narratives of Maya and Piya, Anam throws light on how women's role in the national struggle for freedom has been overshadowed by male heroism. Maya not only was an active participant in the freedom fight, but also partook in rebuilding the war
torn country. But her efforts have not been acknowledged by anyone, not even by her brother Sohail. Women's wartime experiences and struggles and their participation have been left in the dark. In this paper I will focus on how war politicize and mobilize women but after the war women's role in the emergence of the nation is forgotten with the “cultural amnesia” (Saigol, 1998, Nantais and Lee, 1999). I will also contemplate on Maya’s transformation to critique the male dominated society that compels women to come under its hegemony by donning on the proscribed role of a woman. Maya's stepping out of the role of the builder of a nation and becoming an agent of reproduction reaffirms the fact that nationalism is gendered and that it draws on socially constructed ideas of masculinity and femininity to shape female and male participation in nation building.

2. Clashing Nationalisms and Corrupting Co-existence: An Analysis of the Shahbag/Hefajot Frenzy in Bangladesh
   Asif Iqbal, University of Maine

While Partha Chatterjee's *The Nation and its Fragments* illustrates the creative nature of Bengali nationalism, nationalism in Bangladesh—a nation imagined for the people of Bengali ethnicity—continues to be defined by unimaginative nationalist constructions. The two nationalisms, one modeled after Indian secular nationalism and the other mimicking the religious nationalism of Pakistan, exclude the country's indigenous communities of various ethnicities and religions. To substantiate my claim, I will analyze the cultural materials, newspaper articles, songs, and propaganda videos, circulated during the Shahbag Movement and Hefajot-e-Islam gathering in Dhaka. These materials, though appear to represent the clash between secular nationalism and religious nationalism, actually show that the nationalism fever in Bangladesh enunciates the tenuous nature of contemporary Bengali nationalism and is still shaped by the politics that led to the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947.

   Ipshita Chanda, Georgetown University/Jadavpur University

This paper will examine narratives, oral and written, which form the text for performances depicting the story of Bonobibi, a goddess worshipped by forest communities of the Sunderbans, located in the delta region of the Bay of Bengal, spanning the Bangladesh-India border. The deity’s lineage is traced to the will of Allah, and her glories celebrated in a number of ‘punthi,’ hand-written in Bangla by Muslim authors. Her power to protect the poor forest-dwellers who have to fight all nature’s forces for mere survival, is attributed to the mercy of Allah. The language, idiom and form of the texts are rooted in the Islamic culture characteristic of this frontier from the time its first ‘settlers’ arrived in the 13th century. Today, *Bonobibir Johnuranamah*, the common name given to this collection of oratures and manuscripts recording the legend, is recited from memory by Hindu priests at her worship throughout January. Simultaneously, this collection provides the text for performances called Bonobibir Pala and/or Bonobibir Jatra, using dramatic
and musical performance forms popular across the Bengali-speaking areas on either side of the border. 'Bengal,' first partitioned along religious lines in 1905, then partially detached from India in 1947 as East Pakistan, and finally emerging in part as Bangladesh in 1971, has a history of communal tension and linguistic nationalism. Hence, the living history of pluralism of this area often disappears from view. The paper foregrounds the plural nature of Bonobibi culture across ‘national’ boundaries. It begins from an interrogation of the idea of a culturally homogenous nation in South Asia, suggesting that reconceptualising the nation as characterised by plural cultures can actively move this contestation into present and future scholarship.

Panel 3B: AMITAV GHOSH AND NATIONAL CRITIQUE
ROOM: THE BLUE LINE
Panel Chair: Melanie Wattenbarger, University of Mumbai

1. New Currents in Subaltern Studies: Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide*, *Sea of Poppies*, and *River of Smoke*
   Cynthia Leenerts, East Stroudsburg University

In postcolonial studies, what may have seemed solid decades ago in delineations of subalternity has been washed away in recent years, becoming fluid and dynamic: a welcome development. Gayatri Spivak’s continued exploration of arguably the most important question in postcoloniality, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” along with responses from other major critics, insistently sifts through layers of issues, refusing to allow sedimentation of thought to take hold, whether ideology or in literature cradled in subaltern studies. Drawing from Gayatri Spivak’s revised “Can the Subaltern Speak?” from the “History” Chapter of her *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, as well as from Partha Chatterjee’s “Reflections on “Can the Subaltern Speak?': Subaltern Studies After Spivak,” Drucilla Cornell’s “The Ethical Affirmation of Human Rights: Gayatri Spivak’s Intervention,” Rajeswari Sunder Rajan’s “Death and the Subaltern,” and Gayatri Spivak’s “Looking Back, Looking Forward,” all from Rosalind Morris’s *Reflections on the History of an Idea: Can the Subaltern Speak?,* I revisit Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide*, along with *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke* from the Ibis Trilogy, in light of these new and vital reframings of subaltern studies. Ghosh’s recent work harmonizes with that of Spivak and other subaltern-studies scholars, and his depictions of the constantly changing Sundarbans and those who dwell therein, as well as of unpredictable seas and rivers and those who navigate them, open a space for ecocriticism to converse with postcolonialism.

2. Archiving Disappearance: *Sea of Poppies* and the Historiography of Mixed Race
   Nadine Attewell, McMaster University

My current research program enquires into the identity projects of mixed race subjects in late imperial contexts. In this paper, I reflect on the difficulties involved in accessing multiraciality in the past, especially as these shed light on the fate of intimacy, embodiment, and community in the contact zone, through a reading of Amitav Ghosh's 2008 novel *Sea of Poppies*. *Sea of Poppies* has been justifiably celebrated as a historical novel in the Scott line, an attempt to “fill the blanks in the
archive” concerning the involvement of subaltern caste, class, gender, sexual, ethnic, religious, and racial subjects, including multiracial subjects, in nineteenth-century capitalist-imperialist economies of exchange. Without dismissing such projects of representing, I foreground the attention the novel pays histories of disappearance, dematerialization, and dissipation, which I argue animates its own historiographical project. Vanishment is a theme of the scholarship on mixed race people and communities. Thus, for example, the SALA CFP refers to Anglo-Indians as a “Vanishing People,” echoing the subtitle of a 2002 monograph about the Anglo-Indian diaspora, Vanishing Remnants of a Bygone Era. Historians of societies transformed by a sustained pattern of interracial reproductive intimacy frequently note the tendency of mixed race individuals to “disappear” into one or another of their genealogical communities. Partly for this reason, the study of what Adrian Carton calls “multiracial pasts” may not yield identifiable forms of multiraciality, or even any at all. Drawing on the work of Laura Bear, who derives the archive’s (treacherous) centrality to Anglo-Indian claims of belonging from its dual character as a site of erasure as well as inscription, I pursue Ghosh’s invitation to think about and with, and not only fill in, the gaps in the archival record. How are subjects and communities disappeared into, as well as from, “the lines of the nation”?

3. The Shadow Land: The Enigma of East Bengal in Amitav Ghosh’s The Shadow Lines

Nasia Anam, University of California, Los Angeles

Since its publication in 1988, Amitav Ghosh’s The Shadow Lines has become a touchstone in the ever-shifting postcolonial literary canon. It has been roundly celebrated as a work that simultaneously represents rooted, family-centered minor histories of Indian nationalism and a utopian spirit of global cosmopolitanism. However, scholarship on the novel largely does not take into account the historical grounds for its very premise: that is, the estrangement of Bengali Hindus from Bengali Muslims in a severed Bengal, partitioned ever-more firmly three times over in the twentieth century. The novel’s dreamy narrator, in piecing together his family history, draws connective dots between the violence of WWII in London, sectarian Hindu-Muslim skirmishes across mid-century India, and a street riot in mid 1960s Dhaka. Political boundaries and affiliations tear rents between family members and lovers throughout The Shadow Lines, a novel in mourning for the possibilities of a borderless world. Yet alongside the novel's ruminations on the local, family-scale iterations of world violence is a parallel story of the West Bengali middle class losing touch with the fate of post-Partition East Bengalis. Indeed, despite the prominence of Dhaka as a setting, the novel hardly mentions the 1971 birth of the Bangladeshi nation. Though the novel laments and deems arbitrary the “shadow line” between East and West Bengal, the brief moments in which West Bengalis (Hindus) meet their East Bengali (Muslim) others are ones of profound alienation and hostility. In scenes of encounter with diasporic East Bengalis in London or the East (Pakistani) Bengali citizens of Dhaka, the narrative dissolves into confusion, chaos, and ultimately violence. This paper shall read The Shadow Lines against the grain of its purported cosmopolitanism, arguing that, though it resists the logic of national boundaries, the novel cannot itself sustain the dream of borderlessness that seemingly fuels its narrator.
1. The Nation and Its Hijra Communities: Representations of “in Between Male and Female” in Noman Robin's *Common Gender*
   Jana Fedtke, Asian University for Women, Bangladesh

Decades after the formation of Bangladesh as an independent nation-state in South Asia, the country is still in the process of coming to terms with the effects of post/colonialism, nationalism, and its role in a globalized world as evidenced by, for example, the recent tragedies in the garment industry or the ongoing investigations of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) into the 1971 genocide. While Bangladesh is often marginalized in the global context, gender-based, religious, and/or status-based marginalization of certain communities also happens inside the country. My paper analyzes one such case of discrimination or marginalization as it looks at how the plight of the hijra communities in Bangladesh is represented in Noman Robin’s 2012 debut film *Common Gender*. Even though Partha Chatterjee’s *The Nation and Its Fragments* does not specifically address the hijra communities, they can be considered part of the “outcasts,” minorities, or fragments that the book mentions. *Common Gender* shows the struggles of everyday life for members of the hijra communities as they live at the margins of society, trying to make a living by singing and begging. The movie addresses the social status of hijras in Bangladesh as they are ousted by their families, rejected by society, and discriminated against in public. One prominent example of such acts of discrimination in the movie is represented in the “toilet incident” where a hijra is violently removed from both the public toilet for men as well as the public toilet for women. In its humanist approach, the film illustrates that, while Bangladesh may have recently allotted the category “other” to hijras besides “female” or “male” on the new passports, for example, society at large still has a long way to go when it comes to the integration of hijras and other minorities into “the nation.”

2. Digital Citizen Journalism and Sri Lankan Nationalisms in *Groundviews*
   Brian Yothers, University of Texas at El Paso

Since the conclusion of the military conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009, it has been easy for the outside world to view Sri Lankan nationalism in unproblematic terms, a view that has been reinforced by the identification of the state with triumphalist majoritarian narratives and celebrations. The ongoing problems associated with minority rights, political dissidence, and social and economic justice are discussed publicly in the online publication *Groundviews*, a website that encompasses political, economic, and sociological questions as well as providing a medium for Sri Lankan Anglophone literary production and criticism. My essay examines *Groundviews* as one expression of the discontents that remain within Sri Lankan nationalism, exploring how the website both questions dominant nationalist narratives and provides space for counter-narratives, resistance, and debate.
A noteworthy aspect of *Groundviews*’ contribution to Sri Lankan political and human rights discourse is the attention that it has paid to the harassment of mainstream journalists and the work that it has done to encourage independent journalism on the ground, including the De Soyza-Sivanayagam Fellowship for Digital Journalism, which in its name and in its description embraces the legacy of courageous reporters who had suffered death, imprisonment, or harassment. Critiques of nationalist myth-making are not limited to the Sri Lankan state, however. A recent essay engages the Australian government and media on the topic of Sri Lankan immigration to Australia, and in general the digital presence of the publication makes it an alternative voice that can express the discontents of nationalism and the present transnational order alike.

3. *Bhimayana*: Graphic Narrative as a Site for Dalit Resistance and Collaboration  
   Ruma Sinha, Syracuse University

On May 11, 2012 a cartoon depicting the Indian political leader Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in an NCERT textbook became an object of controversy in both the Houses of Parliament of India. The issue at stake was the “distasteful” representation of the chairman of the Constitution drafting committee, Ambedkar, shown sitting on a snail labeled as the Indian Constitution, while the Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru, stands behind the snail with a whip raised in his hand. The cartoon’s recent publicity— it was first drawn in 1949— revived the debate about caste inequality in hindering the political empowerment, social mobility, and economic advancement of Dalits in India. The riots that were a result of the renaming (namantar) of Marathwada University to Ambedkar University in the 60-70s or the several instances of the desecration of Ambedkar’s statue are other cases in point, where the invocation of Ambedkar’s figure has led to a major controversy.

In the light of these cases, it is pertinent to interrogate how the iconic figure of Ambedkar has continued to be the locus where Dalit’s struggle for equality has played out in popular culture. Through a study of Bhimayana (2011) by Durgabai Vyam et al., I explore how the graphic novel serves as a site for critical resistance and in doing so continues the legacy of Ambedkar in defying assimilation within the nationalist discourse in order to raise pertinent questions about Dalit rights in the social, political, economic, and intellectual domain. I argue that Bhimayana uses the indigenous folk-art form of Pardhan Gond to stress the long history of caste-based exploitation while also creating a new platform for collective collaboration and an open engagement with the problems of caste that continue to trouble the nation.

4. *Acting Like a Thief*: Performance as Survival  
   Henry Schwarz, Georgetown University

Contesting the nation is common practice in contemporary India, where thousands of communities contend for recognition and advancement by the state. How does one create non novel forms of protest that both criticize the ideology of a core Indian national identity and at the same time demand recognition of citizenship from the state? Budhan Theatre of Ahmedabad has created a theatrical world sustaining political action over fifteen years. Their productions, evolving from Street Theatre and Third Theatre towards a kind of Brechtian hyper-realism,
compose art distinguished from ideology by what Althusser termed “internal distanciation.” Utilizing both Indian and European aesthetic theory and practice, Budhan mixes traditions to produce a committed, contemporary art that captures national ideologies of inclusion and exclusion in a form that is itself self-critical. The formal elements of the texts comment on how their realist effects are generated, analyzing how mainstream society constructs its repressive versions of reality. The elements are not ornamental but integral and conceptual, adding didactic insights to the realist narrative. This generic discontinuity (realism vs. expressionism) both questions repressive versions of reality and interrogates the efficacy of art to achieve political ends. Cinematic montage clashes with realist diagesis to create concepts from mere story, both showing and telling simultaneously in a powerful spectacle of performativity. Ancient versions of abhinaya meet Brechtian verfremdung within the radical, activist imperatives of modern Indian street theatre to produce a hybrid, multi-leveled dramatic event.

4A: THE COSMOPOLIS AND THE UNDERCLASS
ROOM: THE RED LINE
Panel Chair: Nalini Iyer, Seattle University

1. Emergence of the Cosmopolitan - National in Midnight’s Children and Maximum City
Payel Chattopadhyay Mukherjee and Arnapurna Rath, Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar

In this paper we analyze the urban cosmopolitan individual through the dialogical landscape of Mumbai. We observe its transition from being a colonial presidency to a promised cosmopolitan city through fictional narratives of Salman Rushdie and Suketu Mehta. Mumbai exhibits the “shreds and patches” (Bhabha, 1991) of a polyphonic city, while its fragmented voices open the conflicting spaces of divergent local identities. The city appears as a pastiche of people, cultures, and conflicts. We propose the theoretical concept of a cosmopolitan-national that emerges through the urbane literary cultural narratives. In Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children (1980), Saleem Sinai conceives of a community as “mixing of voices” and stresses the dialogic aspect of existence by saying “To understand just one life, you have to swallow the world” (109). From Rushdie’s Bombay, as we enter Suketu Mehta’s Mumbai in Maximum City (2004), there is a metamorphosis of the city into the polyphonic face of cosmopolitanism, with discontents negotiating through a topographical space. The city vacillates between the formations of narratives in Midnight’s Children and interprets those in the “lived” polyphonic nexus of Maximum City. The city is a metonym for a nation in Rushdie’s novel in the form of “Bombay” while in Mehta’s narrative non-fiction it is a lived dialogical experience as “Mumbai”. From the existing porous boundaries in Rushdie’s narrative about nation, Bombay transpires to the sense of experiencing a carnival, within the lived spectre of hypereality in the image of Mehta’s Mumbai. We argue that the cosmopolitan-national, as emergent in these narratives, is an individual who seeks for a kind of transnational identity in the process of “being” and “becoming” (Dipesh Chakrabarty, 2002). Both the “national” and “cosmopolitan” identities inhabit in the polyphonic self of the cosmopolitan national making her/him a virtual citizen of altered dialogical spaces in the fictional narrative world.
In Behind the Beautiful Forevers, her National Book Award-winning diary of three years in Mumbai (November 2007–March 2011), Katherine Boo asks “What is the infrastructure of opportunity in this society? Whose capabilities are given wing by the market and a government’s economic and social policy? Whose capabilities are squandered? By what means might that ribby child grow up to be less poor?” But she wants to move beyond the ages-old questions of the immorality of this situation to ask a more “practical” question: “Why don’t more of our unequal societies implode?” She found that the slumdwellers she came to know “were neither mythic nor pathetic. They were certainly not passive.” But she is interested in the impact inequalities on this scale have on children, whose “ethical imaginations” may become emaciated, leading her to ask “how do children intent on being ice become water” and to lament the conditions that “sabotage[] their innate capacity for moral action.” In How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia Mohsin Hamid strips romanticized good-luck stories, such as Slumdog Millionaire, of their innocence and demonstrates the cost to human dignity that globalization brings on a daily basis to the “goals” of Boo’s slumdwellers. Amidst the potential for implosion, explosion, spiritual awakening, and becoming filthy rich, what “infrastructure[s] of opportunity” are on the horizon? What is the role of the artist, the fiction writer, the film maker,--the nation-state--, in building them?

3. DeHaadi Friendship & Beyond: Collapsing Our World and Theirs
   Bryan Hull, Portland Community College

In 2012, Katherine Boo and Aman Sethi both wrote about the Indian underclass. In Boo's non-fiction work, she focused on a few men and women who lived in a slum next to the Mumbai airport, and Sethi followed the lives of mostly working poor men in Delhi. In comparing these two works, I noticed these two writers make different decisions on how to interact with their subjects. Whereas Sethi attempts to forge a friendship with the day laborers, particularly one man in particular named Ashraf, Boo notes in an interview that “unlike Aman” she doesn't “fit in” with the slum-dwellers, presumably because she's a white western journalist. (It is interesting to note that she doesn't acknowledge the ways that Aman doesn't “fit in” with his poor subjects.) In another piece, the writer Mitu Sengupta asks the question of Boo, “Aren't the lives of the poor already an open story? When does a work that scrutinizes the lives of the poor so unsparingly become exploitative?” This paper will explore to what degree Boo and Sethi do or don't avoid the exploitation of the people they write about, focusing particularly on this question of “friendship”, and whether forging such an alliance between intellectual and laborer is a way to implicitly (as Partha Chatterjee discusses) resist in a way that is “based neither on the principle of hierarchy nor on those of bourgeois equality.” (The Nation and Its Fragments 198)

4. Urban Space and Terroristic Simmerings: The City Remapped in Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist and Uzma Aslam Khan's Trespassing
Saba Pirzadeh, Purdue University

Through its repeated material and psychological incursion into ordinary mundane lives, violence is emerging as a hegemonic narrative, capable of dictating and modifying lived spaces, and inhabitants' associational relationships with these spaces. Extending this concept, this paper will argue that the penetration and permeation of violence in South Asian spaces undermines and ruptures their national identity, and instead reduces them to spaces of imminent threat and danger. Using Pakistani texts such as Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Uzma Aslam Khan's *Trespassing*, the paper will explore the material and atmospheric experience of violence in Lahore and Karachi, to suggest that violence is becoming an encompassing feature of city life, thereby dominating the personal encounters between the city's inhabitants and redefining the nationalist signification(s) of these metropolises.

*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* epitomizes the multiple ways in which the territorial and cultural markers of Lahore become redefined as signifiers of imminent violence. All interactions with the sights and sounds of an unfamiliar city (Lahore) simmers with terroristic potentiality: exotic food, bodily scars, startling sounds, unexpected blackouts, intimidating looking locals, bearded men, inquisitive strangers-- everything becomes threatening and menacing. *Trespassing* represents how Karachi undergoes a similar re-framing, whereby the violence of regional and political wars, not only brings about material devastation but ideological transformation within the city. The metropolitan fantasy of endless mobility and consistent advancement now becomes marked and maimed by violence, thereby endangering the perambulations of certain communities and reclaiming Karachi as a zone of imminent terror. Building upon these arguments, this paper will argue that the totalizing narrative of violence has radically remapped these cities, by displacing their nationalist signification(s) and re-capturing their complexity into a reductive articulation of danger, in order to sustain stereotypical representations of Pakistan, within the monolithic narrative of violence.

4B: ARAVIND ADIGA'S *THE WHITE TIGER AND NATIONAL CONFRONTATION*
ROOM: THE BLUE LINE
Panel Chair: Aniruddha Mukhopadhyay, University of Florida

1. Survival of the Hungriest
   Amanda Del Signore, Arcadia University

My paper on Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* examines the competitive “jungle law” current in Indian culture by demonstrating how the traditional values and behaviors of the caste system are undermined by the Western ideas of individualism and capitalism, which imply the fittest (or hungriest) survive and succeed. With the insertion of these ideologies into Indian culture, traditional relationships of superiors and inferiors are made void. If one actively looks past the emotions of the novel, one sees the larger social truths being portrayed: Balram does not murder or betray Mr. Ashok out of passion or rage; instead, this moral crime is simply collateral damage as a result of an individual who wants to succeed. The desperately clinging traditions of caste
prohibit success and advancement, thus the only way to improve one's self is to betray such institutions. With “jungle law” gaining popularity within the culture, it enables the devastatingly poor Balram to see the wealthy Mr. Ashok as an equal in society who advanced because of his aggressive will and actions. Hence, if Balram can achieve a greater desire to succeed, he need only translate his desire into willful action, which unfortunately results in Mr. Ashok's death. This act is not an emotional commentary on the woeful fall into that immorality the lower castes suffer in response to Western ideas; rather it is the result of ideology preceding legal means of advancing one's self: not an emotional moralist message at all but a political and economic one.

2. The Door Was Always Open: Revising Iidentity in Aravind Adiga’s White Tiger
   Noreen O'Connor, King's College

Colonization leaves traces across generations and geography through immigration, government structures, and economic inequality. Subjects entering or encountering the decolonized space must account for legacies that impact both colonizer and colonized alike, although perhaps in very different ways. This paper explores a recent literary narrative of the colonized spaces of Asia in Aravind Adiga's White Tiger to argue that identity is contingent on the subject's position within cultural and political legacies of colonial subjugation. Aravind Adiga's novel White Tiger crossed many literary boundaries when it won the Man Booker Prize in 2008. The central theme of this epistolary novel-- formed of a series of letters written over seven successive nights by the title character to the Premier of China-- is the powerful and enduring historical grip of deeply engrained Indian categories such as caste and family name over individual identity. This is a novel that also engages with and revises a number of important western narratives. I will argue that the novel revisits, re-enacts, and ultimately rewrites the highly individualized, westernized narrative journey of the colonizer by moving from “Darkness” to “Light”-- in this case not from the Belgian Congo to the shores of the Thames outside London as in Conrad's novella, but instead from the darkness of rural poverty in fictional Laxmangarh in northern India-- to “enlightenment”-- an artificially-lit, chandelier-filled space in southern India in Bangalore's electronic city. While critiquing the idea of enlightenment, White Tiger ultimately introduces and also critiques a revolutionary narrative that calls for violence-- “blood on the streets”-- as an answer to the hegemonic violence of colonial legacies. The novel works within the realms of possible alternative narratives of reinvention and co-optation of identity

3. The Postcolonial India in Aravind Adiga’s The White Tiger
   Jaclyn Gaydos, Arcadia University

As a postcolonial text, Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger challenges the national perception of religion and morality through the eyes of a murderer. In the novel, Balram frequently refers to Gandhi and religion with disrespect, and, quite possibly, hatred. Numerous scenes that involve corruption and illegal business feature a photograph of Gandhi. Balram never misses a chance to mock the national hero and religion. In one scene, he touches his forehead at religious and non-religious locations in order to impress his employer. This mock act of devotion also wins Mr. Ashok's trust, which consequently becomes his demise. The treatment of religion and morality in
the novel expose a different side to India: one that does not pay tribute to Gandhi’s efforts in achieving independence from Britain. By analyzing the scenes in which Balram opposes India’s independence, one understands his strong hatred toward Gandhi and the religious practices of—but not limited to—India. This perception of a postcolonial nation shows that while Britain may have left India, an oppressor still remains. Balram blames the government, Britain, and Gandhi for this lapse in attention that resulted in a large wealth gap between the villagers and the businessmen. Within this gap the poor become poorer and the rich become richer, without any means of advancing. In this fictitious story, Balram highlights the flaws that emerged from becoming an independent nation while relaying his true feelings towards the societal constructs of India.

Panel 4C: THE POLITICS OF ARUNDHATI ROY
ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE
Panel Chair: Moumin Quazi, Tarleton State University

1. “Can we leave the bauxite in the mountain?”: Posing Unwomanly Questions in Walking with the Comrades
   Pennie Ticen, Virginia Military Institute

Arundhati Roy burst upon the international stage in 1997 with the publication of her novel *The God of Small Things*. Its phenomenal success led to a year of travel, publicity appearances, awards banquets, and general "global dazzle" (Roy, "The Cost" 103). Once that year ended, Roy found herself back in an India celebrating its recent nuclear tests, where the air was "thick with ugliness and...the unmistakable stench of fascism" ("The Cost" 105). Since that year, Roy has channeled her writerly gifts into the production of essays focused on social issues and political action. Readers and critics who were captivated by her "musical, densely patterned prose...[and] the mythic power of her tale" seemed, at best, startled and discomfited by the focused rage of her essays (Kakutani). Is Roy’s status as a woman partly responsible for the disjuncture between those critics who focus on the novel and those who, by and large, mercilessly critique her decision to devote herself for the last sixteen years to political writings and activities? Partha Chatterjee reminded us in 1993 that the nation state has always preferred its women to maintain the "inner-space of community" rather than become entangled in the outer realms of politics (147). In just this way, Roy’s 2010 account of her walk with the comrades unites the private and public worlds. In 2004, Chatterjee defined "popular politics [as] the political life of well over three-fourths of contemporary humanity" (58). In "Walking with the Comrades", Roy’s project is to take us deeply into one small fragment of this humanity, whose members struggle to retain their lives and their land against the massive political and corporate mining interests of the Indian state.

2. Novel Kids on the Block: Child Dissidents and Postcolonial Discontent in Shyam Selvadurai’s *Funny Boy* and Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*
   Prathim-Maya Dora-Laskey, University of Oxford (U.K.) and Alma College
Children are the largest demographic group in South Asia, yet their position is precariously liminal. On one hand they are a cherished and central impetus to the rhetoric of national change, yet on the other, they are marginalized by their incapacity to politically represent themselves. Consequently across South Asia, children as a political constituency are both fragmented and marginalized because though they are subjects of the nation state, they are not national citizens. In this paper, I propose to examine how this influences issues of dissidence, discontent, and rebellion as they impact children via the variety of political, ethnic, and gendered minority positions they occupy in newly independent nation states through an examination of Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* (1994) and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997); Saskia Sassen's curative idea of “renationalization” and Joseph Slaughter's empowering view of personal narratives as human rights endeavors provide heuristic conjectural frameworks. Curiously, the actual depiction of postcolonial government in both novels is fairly minor, featuring the appointment of a vice-principal to a prominent Colombo school (*Funny Boy*) and local elections in a small Kerala village (*The God of Small Things*). Yet these relatively minor postcolonial transactions record the complex subjectivities of postcolonial existence. For instance, *The God of Small Things* provides insightful dissent on issues that include women's property and educational rights, environmentalism, caste and racial oppression, democratic rights and ideological dissensions to the nation state; *Funny Boy* provides an intense reading of minority disenfranchisement, civil war, and the dissatisfactory state of ethnic relations and same-sex rights in multicultural Sri Lanka. Further, the child protagonists on the verge of homelessness and statelessness rebel via domestic guerilla terrorism embodied by the Naxalites in Kerala and the LTTE in Sri Lanka, and thereafter journey from disenfranchisement to diaspora in North America.

3. Faith in Fragility: Queer Narrative Form in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

Mary Reid, University of California, San Diego

In this paper, I examine the ways in which Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* destabilizes and challenges the normative narratives of postcolonial nationalism and capitalist globalization to produce a nuanced critique of the ways in which the local and the global are inextricably interconnected, particularly as they structure and regulate possible ways of being in the world. My analysis demonstrates how the writing of Estha and Rahel's relationship challenges the values of heteronormativity and liberal individualism that are central to both nationhood and globalization. Focusing on the experimental qualities of the novel's language and narrative form, I argue that Roy's innovative use of poetic techniques such as fragmentation and repetition, as well as her experimentation with imagery, narrative voice, and narrative structure interrogate the binaries, norms, and values through which the postcolonial nation and its citizens are conventionally understood. Challenging the values of liberal individualism, upon which normative understandings of politics, citizenship, and selfhood are based, the novel's queer experimentation with narrative form suggests the need and possibilities for alternative ways of being in the world and with others. Contextualizing my analysis with recent critical discussions of the purpose and aims of postcolonial literary studies in the context of the contemporary processes of globalization, I argue that at stake in the relationship between Estha and Rahel is not only a challenge to heteronormativity, liberal individualism, and national historicism, but also a
The North American land for more than a decade has been a land of luxury, a safe haven of existence and a utopia for opportunities to a lot of immigrants across the globe. Such conceptions act in a reverse way, imparting feelings of loneliness, dislocation and fragmented subjectivity when the immigrant learns to look at the flip side of the American dream. Bharati Mukherjee in “Imagining Homelands” rightly speaks for most immigrants who come to realize this dilemma. She posits, “America will never be more for them [the immigrants] than a chance to work, to pocket a little money and snatch a little fun” (Mukherjee 86).

This paper aims to argue that such experiences are further compounded for a third world immigrant female since she has to work through two levels of daunting uncertainty. She needs to break free from the protected and “truncated” life of the paternalistic society which she comes from as well as rewrite her present from the vestiges of the past in a foreign land. This paper examines how Bharati Mukherjee acts as a spokesperson for this complex issue through her third world female protagonists Dimple and Jyoti in Wife and Jasmine. Both these women have lived dependent lives in India but undergo the biggest “psychological metamorphosis” when they are exposed to alien borders of the United States. With the help of Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, this paper will also contemplate the diasporic female subaltern who seems financially secured, but doesn’t have a right to make herself heard even in a country that claims gender equality.

2. Diasporic Fiction: Project of Empire and Consolidation of the Nation-State
Roksana Badruddoja, Manhattan College

In this talk, I review four popular award-winning literary fictions: Samina Ali’s Madras on Rainy Days (2004), Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s Arranged Marriage (1995), Tanuja Desai Hidier’s Born Confused (2002), and Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Namesake (2003). My objective is to demonstrate that too often, popular literary fictions spawned from South Asian diasporic authors for consumption by both the diaspora and the white mainstream are laden with Orientalist dualities. I begin by indulging in a quote from Samina Ali’s Madras on Rainy Days in order to examine how South Asian-American identity formations is fraught with an American Orientalist discourse. Layla, the Muslim-Indian-American protagonist, painfully reveals: “I had faced this all my life, the way each country [U.S. and India] held a moral stance of the other. It was as though each nation had its own uniform and I wore the shirt of one, the trousers of the other, and both sides were shooting
at me...I had never witnessed such confused and beguiled lovers.” It is absolutely imperative to
to consider what the division between America and South Asia implies here. The central problem
with Layla’s words is the “torn between two cultures” rhetoric. In the America:South
Asia/East:West/Tradition:Modernity discourse, Americanness is simply an unambiguous index of
cultural difference, even superiority, and South Asia is the ultimate site of failure.
The “authentic” South Asian-American experience simply represents South Asia within tropes of
“western” hegemonic structures where “South Asian” and “American” are essentialized identities,
ever broken down into further specificity. What is being written into both the academic and
popular narratives is a story of cultural displacement, which evades the specificity of gender and
depends on stereotypic propositions about America and South Asia. The cultural displacement
model plays a key role in perpetuating the cultural authority of the “west.”

3. “The Remnant is the Whole”: Self-Representation through Collage in Meena Alexander’s The
   Shock of Arrival
   Umme Al-wazed, Augustana College

In this paper, I propose to read Meena Alexander’s The Shock of Arrival as a memoir which uses the
heterogeneous technique of collage. Often readers find The Shock of Arrival inconsistent and
question its nature either as an autobiography or a memoir. In an autobiography and in a memoir
stories tend to be chronological. The Shock doesn’t follow that pattern. It is a memoir because the
identity construction, self-representation, and the recovery of memory fragments are
interrelational here. This interrelation has been achieved through collage. Alexander, who has
lived in India, Sudan, England, and the United States, uses poems, explanation of poems, stories of
her grandmother and her ancestral place, and history to construct her identity. Thus rather than
“moving toward a present self,” movement in The Shock is “across the seemingly established and
impermeable boundaries between memory and history, time and place, or self and other, in search
of memories” (McDaniel 71). Through this pattern, Alexander examines nationalism and
citizenship and presents a heterogeneous self, one that is multilingual and transnational.

4. The Diaspora’s Audacity: Deepa Mehta’s Reading of Caste/Indigenous Colonialism in Water
   Abdollah Zahiri, Seneca College

Deepa Mehta’s Water is a brave textualization of the multi-layered oppression in the rigidly
stratified caste regime. This paper is an attempt to unravel the unique positionality of Mehta as an
expat who has lived outside India for quite some time. This unique positioning outside the cultural
milieu has enabled her to picture the flaws in a religious ideology that still dominates the lives of
34 million widows in India in a much more poignant and effective manner than the insiders. Water
is the diaspora’s gaze, albeit the one that is empowering the cause of women and human
rights. Therefore, Water is a clear testimony of the breadth of vision found in Deepa Mehta’s
engagement with the tyranny of the caste regime that encompasses class, race, and gender. Mehta’s
spatial location outside the country, in Canada, further enhances this negotiation for space that is
the forte of Water. This diasporic positioning in the movie, despite all criticisms laid against the
diaspora as being inauthentic and distant, lends it immense credibility by virtue of displaying the
coloniality inherent in the caste regime, especially with regard to gender. It attempts to destabilize the patriarchal, class-based and gendered dynamics embedded in a coloniality that is far from over, as it haunts the lives of many women in India as a fragment of the nation. It is the coloniality that is unfortunately universal in terms of gender violence and an obstacle to the project of modernity.

5B: STEREOTYPES & RESISTANCE IN SOUTH ASIAN REPRESENTATIONS INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
ROOM: THE BLUE LINE
Panel Chair: Rahul Gairola, University of Maryland (Baltimore County)

1. “Feeling so exotic”: Priyanka Chopra’s Gendered Representations in Recent Popular Music Videos
   Rahul Gairola, University of Maryland (Baltimore County)

This panel explores stereotypes and resistance of them in the literature, film, and music videos of South Asia. It will traverse cultural mediums in an attempt to thematically approach production of South Asian identities in popular culture. Together, these papers will offer a panorama of the ways in which South Asian literature, film, and music videos have challenged the domination of “terrorist” stereotypes that spiked after 9/11 and continue to haunt South Asian agency from the security gates at the airport to the cultural expressions that punctuate desi expressions from the 1980s into the 21st century.

The first paper examines twenty first self-orientalization in the pop music videos of Bollywood superstar Priyanka Chopra; the second paper challenges stereotypes of Muslims in Kashmir in Mirza Waheed’s The Collaborator, and the third paper surveys the films 36 Chowringhee Lane and Rang De Basanti to track into the cultural medium of film the ways in which cinematic representation ways of consolidating desi communities following September 11, 2001. Together these papers survey the theme of current representations of South Asians that challenge and/or complicate the racist, orientalist, and violent stereotypes of South Asians around the globe through the cultural mediums of music, literature, and film.

This paper will deconstruct these two videos and question whether Chopra, even unwittingly, engages in a reification of colonialist orientalism or instead mobilizes in the American pop music market what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak calls “strategic essentialism.” This study is especially relevant in a historical moment punctuated by images of Muslim terrorists, on the one hand, and reprehensible sexual violence directed towards women in South Asia, on the other hand. Are there parameters for combating stereotypes in Hollywood that should also be observed when combating stereotypes in music videos?

2. Against Muslim Monoliths: Locating Agency and Resistance in Mirza Waheed’s The Collaborator
   Amrita Ghosh, Seton Hall University

Since the Partition of British India in 1947, the geopolitical region of Kashmir has become a highly contentious space and is today recognized as one of the most militarized regions in the
world. In most popularized narratives Kashmir predominantly exists as a “territory of desire” (Jahanara Kabir), a land that surfaces as a space for stereotypical projections of desire and romance. On the other hand, since the increasing insurgency and political turmoil that started and has continued since 1989, Kashmir has also been represented merely as a conflict zone marred by violence. Kashmiri people have thus become natural suspects existing in an “othered space” in the hegemonic narratives. This paper focuses on Mirza Waheed’s debut novel, *The Collaborator* (2011), which brings into nascence a new direction of Kashmiri fiction and brings into focus the silenced voices of the Kashmiri people in the English language for the first time. Waheed’s text is located in a small border village of Nowgam in Kashmir, close to the Line of Control between India and Pakistan.

The paper explores two aspects of the text – first, it argues that the novel works against the production of monolithic Muslim identities whereby Kashmiri Muslims are not reified in representations of militants, nor do they simply cease to become a state statistic, when increasing reports of the dehumanized dead are recorded year after year in Kashmir. Secondly, through the nomadic border subjects the text also opens up the internal diversity and the minoritization of certain Kashmiri people. I demonstrate that border subjects depicted in the novel become heterotopic subjects (in Foucault’s terminology) who challenge the statist ideologies on both sides of the border. As such, *The Collaborator* significantly humanizes the face of Kashmiri Muslims in the post-9/11 world. The paper also explores Kashmir, in Hannah Arendt’s words, as a “state of exception” – where the state normalizes the brutal subjection of a people, which is believed to be the normative relationship between the state and the subject. This paper thus ultimately seeks to locate the resistance and agency of Kashmiri subjects through the novel, and to understand the space of Kashmir, beyond the normative underpinnings of conflict and Bollywood desire.

3. Creating Alternative Places to Meet in *36 Chowringhee Lane* and *Rang De Basanti*

Arundhati Sanyal, Seton Hall University

This paper will explore relationships between a majority community in its interface with a minority group as depicted in several commercial films directed and released in India within the last forty years. I want to frame my discussion of the films with the parallel phenomenon of communal relations in everyday life of Indians within the same time period that marks an important yet complex phase of post-independent Indian society where communities gradually define themselves and begin to seek greater autonomy not just in governance but in participation within the socio-cultural matrix of the country. Just as the socio-political adjustments find an uneasy solution within a diverse fabric, Indian cinema responds to the need to find narratives that provide a resolution to potential conflicts of interests between the majority and minority groups. I would like to explore alternate space created by film narratives that facilitate dialogue between communities, a phenomenon that seems to belie dire predictions of nationalist tensions.

This mental space in the films reverses power structures to make possible an artistic “release” or a cultural/historical “enunciation” which underscores participation of the minority group with the mainstream. My focus will be on two films primarily, *36 Chowringhee Lane* (Aparna Sen c.1980) and *Rang De Basanti* (Rakesh Omprakash Mehra 2006). The films’ popularity and commercial success may be related to their suggestive locating of alternate spaces where
seemingly irreconcilable interests and positions combine or collide. I raise questions that become all the more relevant in the post 9/11 world of heightened awareness of the “other” to suggest that the “praxis” demonstrated in these films provides a solution to the extreme polarization South-Asians have been subjected to.

5C: RECASTING 20TH CENTURY NATIONALISM FROM THE MARGINS
ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE
Panel Chair: Hena Ahmad, Truman State University

1. “Discontent” in the Aesthetics of I. Allan Sealy’s The Trotter-Nama: Nationalism and Marginalization of the Anglo-Indian Community
   Roger McNamara, Texas Tech University

In The Nation and Its Fragments, Partha Chatterjee explores the rise of Indian nationalism as a cultural phenomenon, its attempt to gain hegemony over the myriad peoples living in the sub-continent, and the responses of these peoples to the threat of Nationalism. In this paper, I have two objectives. First, I examine how I. Allan Sealy, a contemporary Anglo-Indian writer, represents the tension between Nationalism and the Anglo-Indian community in his historical novel The Trotter-Nama. Critics who have written on The Trotter-Nama have only examined this tension through the novel’s content – a representation of the four hundred year history of the Anglo-Indian community from its inception to the 1980s. By contrast, I foreground the novel’s aesthetics – the uncomfortable juxtaposition of postmodern parody and historical realism in the text – that reveals the marginalization of the Anglo-Indian community with the rise of Nationalism. My second objective complicates Chatterjee’s argument because The Trotter-Nama demonstrates that Nationalism is not exclusively responsible for this marginalization of the Anglo-Indians. Rather, the novel reveals that the seeds for this crisis of Anglo-Indian identity were sown when the Community “secularized” itself to identify with the colonial state, and it is this recently fashioned identity that comes into crisis with the rise of Nationalism. This again is reflected in the novel’s aesthetics. Postmodern parody, which captures a pre-secularized Anglo-Indian past in the novel, has a sense of exuberance. However, this exuberance is missing when the novel uses historical realism to represent the period after the Community was secularized. By demonstrating how the aesthetics of The Trotter-Nama explores the experience of and the reasons for the marginalization of the Anglo-Indians, my paper attempts to complicate the relationship between the Nation and its discontents.

2. Airing Domestic Dirt: Modernity, Mobility, Education, and Education in Sulekha Sanyal’s The Seedling’s Tale (Nabhankur)
   Kathleen Fernando, Kenyon College

Feminist scholars have maintained that while Indian anti-colonial nationalism(s) may have brought impressive gains in terms of political rights for women, they also circumscribed women’s positions as citizen-subjects by women’s very “real subordination with the private/familial domain.” Indeed, many scholars have suggested that revivalist nationalism
asserted its moral superiority over the colonizers by claiming the “home as a space of affection– of love, rather than dominance – and women as being autonomous and happy” in their inner domains. Through a reading of Sulekha Sanyal’s Bengali novel The Seedling’s Tale (1956), I argue that the middle class Revivalist and Reformist nationalism(s) mobilized a discourse of moral hygiene that intersected with Brahmin religious discourse of ritual purity/pollution to regulate women’s bodies and minds. The narrative traces the growing up of Chhobi, a young girl in a high caste Hindu household, whose “education” is crucially constituted by her departure from the village, as well as her encounters with members of the lower classes/castes in the city. Imagined as a site of moral regulation, the high caste Hindu household is foregrounded as a space teeming with women who inhabit the various patriarchal figurations of girlhood, marriage, motherhood, and widowhood. In this social organization, women’s exploited bodies are compared to the lower classes/castes; at the same time, considered inherently sexual and promiscuous, high caste women’s bodies were considered symbolically filthy and subject to intense surveillance. Suggestive of her own self-making, Chhobi’s “dirtiness” signals to her desire for an alternative order and her attempts at re-writing the script of modernity through and against the patriarchal social organization.

3. Diaspora, Culture, and Authenticity: Re-inventing Indian Identity in Jhumpa Lahiri’s “Interpreter of Maladies”
   Bishnu Ghimire, Alabama State University

In this paper I would like to argue that Jhumpa Lahiri’s short story “Interpreter of Maladies” presents an interesting perspective on the role of cultural identity in the life of modern Indian American Diaspora. In “Interpreter,” Lahiri probes the nature of cultural identity and its popular corollary, the question of authenticity. The dilemmas of second-generation Indian American Diaspora looking back at its cultural originary in India complicate the former’s view of its cultural heritage. Through Das’s experience, the story projects a radical revision of authenticity and cultural identity. As Mr. Kapasi, the tour guide, manipulates the existing information on a cultural tour to render a more compelling picture of India, he reveals that culture is not a static entity, whose authenticity is a sole prerogative of the local community.

In “Interpreter,” the encounter between the diaspora and its cultural original illustrates that culture is a dynamic system that changes with time and that can be understood in multiple ways, like reading, which is exemplified by the travel book Mr. Das uses, a “paperback” “India” that “looks as if it had been published abroad” (44). That Mr. Das regularly refers to the book on several milestones throughout the trip to the Surya Temple complementing Mr. Kapasi’s “native” knowledge also signals to the possibility of diasporic intervention in the cultural marketplace.

Thus, Lahiri’s short story proposes a new discursive modality for studying the formation of South Asian American diaspora identity. Rather than enforcing an all-encompassing, cohesive cultural schema upon the various strands of Indian culture, both within the culturescapes of India and its various diasporic formations around the globe, Lahiri hints at the need for, and the possibility of, a point of symbolic convergence unavoidably attached to diversity and difference.

6A: MEMORY, TRAUMA, AND REFRAMING THE NATION
1. Neoliberal Development and Conflict: Ambalavaner Sivanandan’s *When Memory Dies*

Nicola Robinson, University of York, UK

My paper examines what is essentially a problematic, yet underexplored, relationship between literature and development discourse in Sri Lanka’s separatist ethnonational conflict. Ambalavaner Sivanandan’s *When Memory Dies* (1997) represents the lived experiences of one of the “fragments” or ethnic minorities of Sri Lanka, the Tamils, by centering on how they were affected by development and the accompanying social changes during the civil war. I contend that Sivanandan criticizes the Sri Lankan state’s neoliberalism for the negative impact on equal resource allocation and the livelihoods of the Tamil communities who live in the north. This paper explores how Sivanandan uses not only content but form to contest the current social order. Examining epic and other literary aesthetics including “romance-across-the divide” (Cleary 2002 and Gopal 2009) uncovers Sivanandan’s refutation of the perceived divide between two ethnically disparate groups. The novel’s representation of the romantic love that exists between Lali and Vijay, between Tamil and Sinhala, demonstrates how Sivanandan embraces the imagination of an alternative society and state structure. This alternative is based on social harmony and human universals and thus negates the ethnically stratified society that exists in contemporary Sri Lanka. My paper argues that it is essential to regard Sivanandan’s text as a literary and political intervention against state development and separatism because these factors continue to be contentious and divisive issues in Sri Lanka today, yet ones that have clear implications for sustainable peace.

2. Tsunami Stories: Narrating the Oceanic Disaster

Pallavi Rastogi, Louisiana State University

This paper looks at literary postcoloniality through the trope of disaster, particularly focusing on writing about the Tsunami in Sri Lanka in 2004. I examine what I call “Tsunami Literature” in order to understand not just the emotional effects of the Tsunami but also how the Sri Lankan nation responded to this catastrophic event. What does the analytical lens of disaster show us about a nation at a certain moment of time? How does a country’s response to a cataclysmic natural disaster help us in understanding its contents as well as its discontents? I examine Phillippa Halwey’s novel *There’s No Sea in Salford* (2013) and Indran Amirthanayagam’s collection of poetry entitled *The Splintered Face: Tsunami Poems* (2008) in order to understand what the creative artist’s response says about the state of the nation in a moment of crisis. My findings reveal that the rebuilding process unites people, especially Sri Lankans with those of other nationalities. One particular theme springs to attention here: that of the diasporic coming home to rebuild the nation. Writing absorbs the trauma of the collective, turning it into something restorative that changes the writer, reader and the nation. The future presented is almost always children-oriented. The children represent the possibility of an efflorescent nation. The damaged bodies that inhabit these narratives often reflect the body politic, both present and future.
Narratives about the Oceanic Disaster also act as testimony: a commentary on the true state of disarray and suffering in the nation. This uncomfortable reality is disseminated through literature, a form that is accessible to people all over the world but which can tell the truth with an aesthetic, and therefore more palatable, slant.

3. Remembering Air India: The Politics of the Apology
Chandrima Chakraborty, McMaster University

On June 23, 2010, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the bombing of Air India Flight 182, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued an apology for what he calls the “institutional failings of 25 years ago and the treatment of the victims’ families thereafter” (“PM Speaks”). While the apology seeks to close off the past by admitting institutional failings and moving on to a multicultural future, fictional remembrances of the Air India bombings resist such closure and insist on opening up the past to reveal the Canadian state’s racist treatment of South Asians, both in the past and in the present. This paper examines Stephen Harper’s apology to the Air India victims and families in conjunction with Bharati Mukherjee’s short story “The Management of Grief” and Anita Rau Badami’s novel Can You Hear the Nightbird Call? to demonstrate how Canada denied responsibility for the bombing and ignored the trauma of diasporic communities affected by this tragedy. I will examine Harper’s apology as strategy and discourse that in effect works to manage immigration by conceptualizing brown bodies as potential “terrorists,” rather than empathize with the Air India victim families or reflect on Canada’s long history of racism against South Asian immigrants. While Harper relegates the bombing of Air India Flight 182 to India’s problem with its minorities and as actions of externalized extremists, Mukherjee and Badami direct the reader’s gaze to how narratives of past historical experiences of discrimination and persecution shape South Asian psyches in the diaspora, and, often, produce religious extremism in diasporic locales. Most importantly, by resisting, altering and interrogating state discourses, I argue that these cultural productions of collective remembering of minority histories/traumas establish the continuing memorial insistence the Air India bombing makes on Canadian public memory.

4. South Asian Diasporic Identity Conflict in the Aftermath of 9/11 in South Asian American Young Adult Fiction
Hena Ahmad, Truman State University

Positing the South Asian diaspora as “fragments of nation-states,” this paper explores the connection between South Asian diasporic communities and their homeland nation-states in the social and political contexts consequent to 9/11. The conflict between South Asian ethnic and American national identities, generated in the aftermath of 9/11, reflected in the South Asian first and second-generation immigrant experience is the subject of three South Asian American young adult novels: Marina Budhos’s Ask Me No Questions (2006); Neesha Meminger’s Shine, Coconut Moon (2009); and Anjali Banerjee’s Looking for Bapu (2006). Demonstrating how the diaspora unfolds continually in the context of the prevailing collectivizing of South Asians into a single group in a shifting landscape of globalization and globalism, especially in the post 9/11 charged political
atmosphere, this paper explores the as-of-yet under-examined impacts of societal changes in the aftermath of 9/11 on South Asian American teenagers. Identity as a postcolonial literary construct operates at multiple levels in these texts demonstrating evidence that cultural identity undergoes change and transformation, negotiated and reinvented dependent on individual needs defined in a particular power context. Offering a sharp contrast to dominant mainstream political views, these texts represent how second generation South Asian American youth must negotiate post-9/11 negative perceptions of South Asian Americans. The misguided bias against South Asian immigrants as depicted in these texts when juxtaposed with the notion of South Asian diasporas as “fragments of nation-states,” allows an examination of the complexities of global socio-political scenarios of the 21st century that have shaped attitudes towards South Asian Americans in the aftermath of 9/11.

6B: RELIGIOSITY AND SOUTH ASIAN NATIONALITY
ROOM: THE BLUE LINE
Panel Chair: Amritjit Singh, Ohio University

1. Indian National Identity in Salman Rushdie’s *The Moor’s Last Sigh*
   Maya Sharma, Eugenio de Hostos Community College/CUNY

Indian expatriate Salman Rushdie has been obsessed throughout his long and eminent career with the secular, cosmopolitan Indian national identity Nehru posited in *The Discovery of India* seventy years ago, and Partha Chatterjee analyzed in *Nationalist Thought in the Colonial World* and *The Nation and Its Fragments* twenty years ago. This is evident from *Midnight’s Children*, lately revived as a movie, to *The Enchantress of Florence*, with its sustained counterpoint between Akbar’s court, one of the most popular icons of Indian cosmopolitanism, and the world of the Italian Renaissance, which is made to seem impoverished in comparison. This theme is further delineated in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, in which an unexpected marriage between the great granddaughter of the distinguished Da Gamba family of spice merchants to the descendant of Solomon Castille whose name echoes back to the expulsion of the Moors from Castille by Isabella and Ferdinand of Spain. Then in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* Rushdie tells the story of a Jew whose paternity connects to the last Moors of Spain called the unlucky, and who is defined as a Jew being born of a Jewish mother, Flory Zogiby and a Christian, husband and wife, members of two communities considered alien by both Hindutvans and Islamists, both tied to the Western cultures many Indians treat as the “other,” from which his protagonists have distanced themselves by marrying each other. Recent Indian history is depicted in terms of their experiences, as it had been viewed in *Midnight’s Children* through the lens of Hindu and Muslim boys switched at birth.

2. Islamism, Neo-liberalism and Terror: Fixing Fixity in Tabish Khair’s *How to Fight Islamist Terror from a Missionary Position*
   Afrin Zeenat, University of Arkansas

In addition to being a very catchy title, Tabish Khair’s *How to Fight Islamist Terror from a Missionary Position* teases and titillates readers like any postmodern literary text. The narrative, too, contains
all the trappings of a postmodern text. Taking advantage of the abundance of writing on Muslims and terror, Khair uses the popular trope to simultaneously reinforce and subvert the many assumptions readers may have about Muslims and terror, thereby further unsettling readers and calling attention to the Neo-liberal suspicion of Muslims. Although Tabish Khair’s *How to Fight Islamist Terror from a Missionary Position* is a literary pastiche of the different types of Islamist discourse that got produced and gained readership in the post 9/11 era, it attempts to dispel stereotypes of the certain kinds of Muslims who participate in the terror plots. Khair borrows real events occurring in post-9/11 Denmark and weaves it into a fictional rendering of a terror plot that condemns and stymies any instant identification of devout Muslims, replete with beard and skull-cap, as the palpable proponent of Islamist terrorism. Khair’s novel neither dismisses Islamist terror nor attempts to understand the factors that make a terrorist; rather, it focuses on educating readers against suspecting every Muslim to be a terrorist at the same time critiquing the growing Islamization or Islamism among Muslims. According to Khair’s own confession, *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* “...takes a snide, irreverent look at Islamism and the so-called war against terror.” Hence, Khair’s novel seems to be playfully mocking both the growing religiosity of the so-called Islamists and the abundance of writing on Muslims; it “wages a war against fixed definitions” of what constitutes a Muslim experience in these times fraught with suspicion.

3. The Inbetweeners: The Construction of Moderate Muslim Identities in the Works of Tabish Khair and Mohsin Hamid

Maryam Fatima, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

In the aftermath of the controversy surrounding the Danish cartoons of Prophet Muhammad, Tabish Khair wrote an article “We Have Lost Our Voice” for *The Guardian*, in which he lamented the diminishing space for moderate Muslim opinion in mainstream media. He concluded his essay with a Spivak-ian rumination -- can the moderate Muslim really express herself at all now? Khair’s categorical emphasis on identifying himself as one of the moderate Muslims can be placed within the larger context of the polarized mediated experiences in the post 9/11 world. The construction and perpetuation of a culture of war in the US produced and reinforced the dichotomies of “us” and “them,” “civilized” and “barbaric” and of course, “liberal” and “fanatic.” The media in the US and elsewhere has only been too willing to reinforce these categories, leaving little or no space in between for a more balanced opinion.

In the literary world, however, there have been a few attempts at problematizing these fixed boundaries. Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Tabish Khair’s *How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position* (2012) are two such attempts. Hamid’s novel charts the metamorphosis of its protagonist from general indifference to severe political predicament after the September 11 attacks. Khair’s novel, on the other hand, explores the readers’ preconceptions through a retrospective narration. Both novels explicate different alternatives within the fold of moderation. This paper will explore these two texts in their construction of this moderate identity. It will look at these protagonists in their embodiment of this identity and analyze it from the perspective of class, nation and gender. The concept of “moderation” itself will be interrogated for its elisions and compromises.
4. **Many Falls: Rewriting Camus in Postcolonial South Asia**  
Matthew Nelson, University of Illinois

Albert Camus’ *The Fall* has come to occupy a curious place in South Asian literary history. Writers such as Arun Joshi and Mohsin Hamid have found in its unique narrative style and existential mode of analysis the perfect springboard for their own reworkings. Joshi’s *The Apprentice* and Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* both adapt *The Fall’s* famous second-person narration to implicate their readers in “falls” quite different from the one Camus depicts. Both novels notably place much greater emphasis on the nationality of their two interlocutors, thereby complicating the broader claims about “Man” made in Camus’ novel. In *The Apprentice*, the fall is national -- an older man of the Independence generation speaks to a young student about his own personal fall of compromised ideals, corruption, and despair. The parallel to the moral descent of the Indian nation-state is never far from sight. On the other hand, Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* challenges not the Indian dream of Independence but the American dream of the immigrant. A monologue to an American stranger in Pakistan, Hamid’s novel takes on post-9/11 nationalism and collective responsibility. In this paper, I examine how each novel updates the template of *The Fall* as a way to construe its reader as an implicated subject, someone who shares existentially in a guilt or a “fall” that is intimately tied to the nation-state. Moreover, coming as they do at very different points in postcolonial history, these novels and their Camusian predecessor allow us to rethink several aspects of the broader historical relationship between literary existentialism and postcolonial critique.

6C: POETICS, POLITICS, AND AFFECT  
ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE  
Panel Chair: John C. Hawley, Santa Clara University

1. **Samrat Upadhyay’s Compassionate Gaze**  
Ubaraj Katawal, Valdosta State University

In keeping with Partha Chatterjee’s discussion of the tension between the majoritarian ideology and its discontents in *The Nation and Its Fragments*, this paper will focus on Samrat Upadhyay’s fictional works in which the small forms of human relations that matter the most in people’s everyday lives are presented at the backdrop of larger political and cultural events and expectations. Much like the relationship between nation and its women that Chatterjee focuses in the book, Samrat Upadhyay probes into the seemingly minor events that play major roles in shaping the future of the characters concerned. One of such small events is a gesture of sympathy and compassion towards strangers. Through the paper, I intend to demonstrate how Upadhyay captures the small moments in our lives when we reach out to “strangers” and show them small gestures of compassion. Small things matter the most to those who are neither a part of nor totally apart from the bigger political events that sometimes brings the whole nation to a grinding halt. Kaki, Bokey Ba, Ganga Da and Raja in Upadhyay’s *Buddha’s Orphans* (2010) bear witness to how at a
time when big political events, such as the Maoist conflict, are taking place, what people need the most are small gestures of love and compassion, and how they could not care less if all the grand narratives of political events did not even happen at all. However, being “fragments” of the nation, Upadhyay’s characters manage to survive the violence coming from both a long standing cultural tradition as well as individual political events.

2. Transnational Poetics of Contemporary Pakistani Diaspora Poets
Waseem Anwar, Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), Lahore, Pakistan

Given the controversy around “Pakistani” in Taufiq Rafat’s (a pioneer Pakistani English poet) “Towards a Pakistani Idiom,” this paper offers an analytical survey of selective Pakistani English poetry written by some contemporary postcolonial and post-independence Pakistani diaspora poets. From an ideologically controlled nation-state perspective, these poets, already marginalized, are questioned about their being “Pakistani,” while their work destabilizes/sustains nationhood in a globally expansive capacity. The works of these diverse rhymesters against the backdrop of a poetic cum political tradition based on divided cultures and identities and skepticism and [re-]search forwards modes of expressive realism that help trace thematic dis/connections and un/concerns present in their poetic ventures. In their works, we can find a configuration of some futuristic transnational poetics that probes for a widening scope of Pakistani English poetry in terms of belonging and alienation or acceptance and resistance, challenging thus the possibly monolithic-monolingual core of the seminal poetic term “Pakistani idiom.” Rafat’s “Pakistani idiom” definitely needs to be revisited, reviewed and reinterpreted for a transnational, trans-cultural and trans-creative growth of Pakistani poetry.

3. No Recourse but to the Nation: A Reading of Shonali Bose’s Amu
Alpana Sharma, Wright State University

In critical discussions of Hindi cinema, the family is seen as the synecdochic version of the nation; as Sumita Chakravarty puts it, “the fiction film can only present fragments of the nation and project them as evidence of the whole. The story of a couple, family or group represents [. . .] the whole of which they constitute a part.” Shonali Bose’s 2005 film Amu challenges this truism as it demonstrates that certain fragments will never speak for the whole; disavowed by the nation, they effect a “return of the repressed” that calls attention to its incomplete and failed project of nation building. The fragments in question are the thousands of Sikhs who were massacred in the wake of Indira Gandhi’s assassination in 1984. While the nation “forgot” this irruption of genocidal violence, the character of Amu, a young Indian American woman visiting the land of her birth in the quest to find the “real India,” is forced to confront it through uncanny encounters with the poor in the slums and alleyways of Delhi. As Amu pieces together the circumstances surrounding her adoption twenty years ago, she learns that her Sikh father was killed by Hindus with the complicity of both the police and politicians in the anti-Sikh riots, and her mother hanged herself in a refugee camp shortly afterwards. I argue that Amu provides an opportunity to read fragments differently and powerfully, not as the broken parts of an imagined whole but, rather, as an ethical demand by minorities that the nation account for their elision. The return that they require is not
to some primordial, premodern space in which different realities co-existed harmoniously; it is
to the modern liberal nation state itself, that which produced them as minorities and guaranteed
their constitutional rights in the first place.

7A: PERFORMANCE OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP
ROOM: THE RED LINE
Panel Chair: Kanika Batra, Texas Tech University

1. Fashioning Citizenship: Cosmopolitanism in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*
Pia Sahni, Brown University

Throughout Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*, reading becomes a way for the male characters to
“travel without moving [their] feet” (Lahiri), allowing them to espouse a cosmopolitan identity
through their literary tastes. What does it mean to travel so easily? The men of the novel pass
through borders unheeded, appearing as knowledgeable and global citizens. However, female
characters are met with suspicion and unease, unable to move quite so effortlessly across the
world. In this paper, I argue that the women of the novel do not share in this literary
cosmopolitanism. For them, travel necessitates more than just picking up a book; they have no
access to this masculine literary inheritance. Instead, they must look to clothing in order to create
any hope of a cosmopolitan identity. Their clothing repeatedly calls attention to the borders (both
national and cultural) that they cross throughout the novel. The women in *The Namesake*
demonstrate the ways in which clothing is used to establish a gendered cosmopolitan sense of
ethnic identity: South Asianness can be dressed away to help the female protagonist blend in more
easily, or it can be accentuated through the use of fashion. Brownness becomes another accessory
to wield in order to blend in and travel. Consequently, South Asianness can be augmented or elided
it is malleable. The sartorial allows for an ambiguous South Asian racial formation that can be
read as both exotic and threatening, yet simultaneously always foreign. Through the examination
of fashion within Lahiri’s novel, one gains a better understanding of the ways in which certain
bodies can (or cannot) move across borders.

2. Nearly Home: Gender, Citizenship, and Belonging in Anita Rau Badami’s *Can You Hear the
Nightbird Call?*
Nalini Iyer, Seattle University

In *Violent Belongings: Partition, Gender, and National Culture in Postcolonial India*, Kavita Daiya
argues that Partition has shaped the discourse of citizenship and belonging in South Asia and its
diaspora since 1947. She writes: “The Partition constitutes a field of transformation and a
discourse that became the condition of possibility for the gendered ethnicization of citizenship
and belonging in postcolonial South Asia” (5). Anita Rau Badami’s novel *Can You Hear the
Nightbird Call?* proffers through fiction an analysis of the impact of Partition on citizenship,
gender, ethnicity, and belonging for South Asians in Canada. However, Badami’s diasporic lens
frames the history of Partition between the Komagata Maru incident (1914) and the Kanishka air
-crash (1985). In doing so, she suggests that nation states are tenuous and that considerations of
citizenship, gender, and belonging are always already transnational. This paper explores the discourse of Partition in contemporary South Asian diasporic fiction as it shapes a global discourse on citizenship and belonging. It will examine how Partition experiences shape three generations of a Sikh family (Bibiji, Nimmo, Jasbeer) and their gendered ethnicity both in India and Canada. It will also explore the impact of Partition on non-Sikh characters, particularly Leela, and the role of Sikh experiences in shaping South Asian Canadian's experiences of citizenship and belonging in Canada.

3. Karma Cola Nation: Between History and Mythology in Anita Desai's Journey to Ithaca
   Stephanie Stonehewer Southmayd, University of Toronto

In The Nation and its Fragments (1993), Partha Chatterjee shows that the early Indian nationalist movement constructed an elite and totalizing history to map out the “imagined community,” in Benedict Anderson's terms, of a strong and unified India. A nation-state, then, often presents itself as nothing less than the history it claims, even as it omits and silences the “fragments' of its disparate voices. Anita Desai's novel Journey to Ithaca (1995) undermines such a fixed and monolithic national history, and thus the nation-state itself, in detailing a fictionalized history of the advent of a certain form of Indian spirituality and religious leader; and of the Westerners who, as Gita Mehta acerbically describes in Karma Cola (1979), followed the "Hippie Trail' to chase an exoticized dream of Eastern enlightenment. Most crucially, however, Desai uncovers the nation in miniature “based on Sri Aurobindo's Auroville community” developed by these gurus and their followers, and explores its uncertain origins. Through the eyes of two European travellers to India, would-be ascetic Matteo and his pragmatic wife Sophie, who attempt to uncover the history behind the spiritual “nation” founded by characters based on Aurobindo and his spiritual partner, the Mother, Desai shows that history is opaque and multifaceted, replete with contradiction and opposing viewpoints. The historical and the mythological (or fictive) are, moreover, interchangeable in the novel, thereby problematizing the hegemonic “truths” of history and thus of the nation and India. By engaging with the work of Chatterjee, Benedict Anderson, Chelva Kananganayakam, and Ashis Nandy, among others, I will emphasize the connection between history and the Indian nation-state and show how Desai challenges both the totalizing force of history and the nation that wields its history as a weapon.

4. Khaki Sahibs and the Indian Nation
   Sukanya Gupta, University of Southern Indiana

While well-known Bollywood flicks like Julie (1974) have concentrated on the loose Anglo-Indian woman and the shallow Anglo-Indian man, the more recent film Bow Barracks Forever (2004) has depicted Anglo-Indian families anxious to get away from India. Three decades of Indian cinema continues to paint the Anglo-Indian as a social and national misfit. Underrepresented in literature, Anglo-Indian writers have not been able to challenge the stereotypes. Early Anglo-Indian writing was dismissed by the likes of Edward Farley Oaten and Bhupal Singh. While for Oaten Anglo Indian literature is merely unimaginative “historical and political documentation of empire,” for critics
like Singh, “the chief motif of Anglo Indian fiction is the misery of married life” (Arondekar 147; 156). Anglo-Indian writing today, however, is not concerned with documenting empire or with failed interracial desires. Rudy Otter’s Looking for Louise and Keith Butler’s A Streetcar Named Perspire look back to India as the “center” from England and Australia, respectively. In Otter’s story, Bertie, dismisses the common stereotype of the Anglo-Indian as less Indian and more Anglo. Nostalgic for his India and for Louise, his childhood girlfriend, Bertie returns from England. In A Streetcar Named Perspire, Butler seems to address a common misconception about Anglo-Indians: the disconnect they supposedly maintain and enjoy from the general Indian public. He writes about a young Anglo-Indian boy who has migrated to Australia. “Khaki-sahib,” as the boy calls himself, demonstrates the “classic Calcutta tram-catching style” at the risk of being seen as an “ignorant migrant unable to integrate into Australia.” The India in these two works, does not register the Anglo-Indian separately from the Indian. Focusing on how the Anglo-Indian narrates himself into the Indian nation, this paper examines diasporic Anglo-Indian identity in contemporary short fiction.

7B: GLOBALIZING THE CALL CENTER
ROOM: THE BLUE LINE
Panel Chair: Chandrima Chakraborty, McMaster University

1. Call Centre Cosmopolitanism: Global Capitalism and Local Identity in Bangalore Fiction
Anna Guttman, Lakehead University

Business Process Outsourcing companies (BPOs) have, according to Shashi Tharoor, “become the symbol of India’s rapidly globalizing economy,” for both Indians and citizens of the West, as evidenced from a proliferation of fiction, non-fiction, films and television shows around the world that depict Indian call centres. Much analysis of the call centre as a place of cultural hybridity has focused on the deleterious impact of call centre agents’ need to take on new names, accents, and personal stories that disguise their location and origins in India. Yet recent novels about call centres depict the call centre as a space where boundaries imposed by caste, religion, gender and region can be and are transgressed and even erased. Examining a variety of texts set in Bangalore, I argue that the offices, cafes, and shopping malls that the characters in these narratives frequent are simultaneously spaces of global capitalism and local cosmopolitanism, which have been alternatively represented as amoral and corrupt, as in Arvind Adiga’s The White Tiger (2008), and as offering the opportunity to revel in a liberating, postmodern self-fashioning, as in Bharati Mukherjee’s Miss New India (2011). Drawing on Robert Halsall’s concept of “corporate cosmopolitanism,” and Suman Gupta’s analysis of popular Indian fiction and youth culture, this paper argues that contemporary Indian texts construct a local cosmopolitanism that simultaneously challenges Eurocentric discourses of cosmopolitanism and established theories of postcolonialism. Far from figuring globalization as a source of imposed hybridity (and therefore hegemony), I contend that contemporary popular authors often revel in the ironic potential of globalization, finding in call centre mishap and miscommunication an opportunity to deploy the laughter of survival, thereby reaffirming an identity that is both local and worldly.
2. Disaster Normalized: The Poetics of Bureaucracy
Liam O’Loughlin, University of Pittsburgh

This paper situates a growing body of bureaucracy fiction within the developments of economic liberalization in 1991 and Indian Anglophone commercial fiction. While much consideration has been given to the new genres of campus fiction, “chick lit,” and call-center labor novels—which offer largely uncritical reflections of a new youth culture within the growing middle class—little attention has been paid to a parallel body of bureaucracy writing from this same period. Novels of bureaucratic labor, written by and about government administrators, narrate the changing structure, aesthetics, and ethics of the postcolonial state under neoliberalism in a decidedly more pessimistic mode—one that offers a new lens for interpreting the commercial fiction. My paper analyzes the narrative relationship between bureaucracy (the mundane labors of the everyday) and disaster (eruptive instances of violence). In particular, I examine the flooding of a coal mine in Sanjay Bahadur's The Sound of Water (2007) and the emergence of plague in Upamanyu Chatterjee's The Mammaries of the Welfare State (2000). Using theorizations of indirect violence—in particular, Akhil Gupta’s conception of “structural violence”—I read the novels’ depictions of ineffective or indifferent state response to disasters as particular forms of indirect harm, enacted by mechanisms of obfuscatory language, routinization, and delay. While these depictions might affirm neoliberal notions of an inescapably unwieldy and inefficient state government, Bahadur and Chatterjee consistently link these practices to the structure of a rigidly hierarchical bureaucracy—a form of social organization common to both corporations and government. This focus on bureaucratic organization offers a way to read the commercial fiction differently; rather than simple expressions of frustration with corporate labor, the exasperations conveyed in works like Chetan Bhagat’s One Night @ the Call Center (2005) might also be read as critiques of bureaucratic management structures.

3. Is There a Call Center Literature?
Ragini Tharoor Srinivasan, University of California- Berkeley

This paper argues that there is a genre of Indian English novels that may be productively understood as “Call Center Literature.” Call Center Literature (CCL) is offered as a provocation in relation to the dominant categories of world, post-colonial, and diasporic literature, and it is considered in relation to earlier renominations of those categories, including “World Bank Literature.” Like the call center, which emerged as the primary spatial, social, and economic sign of the new India in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the novels of CCL serve to destabilize and complicate nationhood by producing an ambivalent image of Indian globality. They both announce and critique India’s arrival on the putative world stage, performing her movement out of the “waiting room of history” which was the frustrated backdrop of the post-colonial, and motivating the reverse migrations of middle and upper-middle class Indians in diaspora. I offer readings of Chetan Bhagat’s One Night @ the Call Center (2005), Aravind Adiga’s The White Tiger (2008), and Mohsin Hamid’s How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia (2013) as exemplary
species of Call Center Literature, focusing on how each of these novels utilizes the themes and techniques of the self-help book. I propose a critical analogy between call center tech support and literary self-help, arguing that novelistic depictions of the entrepreneurial subjects of the new global India are indebted to, and have been modeled on, the figure of the call center agent, who, in turn, is a critical foil for the subject in diaspora.

7C: THE POLITICS OF FILM
ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE
Panel Chair: Summer Pervez, Kwantlen Polytechnic University and Vancouver Film School

1. Bollywood and the Formal Aesthetics of a Global Nation
   Koel Banerjee, University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

This paper engages with two Hindi films Agneepath (The Path of Fire, Mukul Anand: 1990) and its remake Agneepath (Karan Malhotra: 2012). The former film is a carryover of the angry young man films that cemented Amitabh Bachchan's star image as “the industrial hero” (Prasad: 1998) at the moment of disaggregation faced by the Bombay film industry during the 1970s. And the latter film, in being a remake, carries (nostalgic) traces of the original's dissonance with failed promises of the nation-state. However, the remake places itself both in production and narrative time in the moment of an unevenly globalizing India. The paper concerns itself with the nature of articulation and the narrative resolution of the dissonance in both films and locates a shift from the aesthetics of mobilization of the original to a mobilization of aesthetics of its remake. The disappearance of the sidekick, Krishnan Iyer (played by Mithun Chakravarthy) from the remake provides a site for an investigation of the changed nature of stardom from the representative status (both aesthetic and political) in the original to the consumable hero in the remake. The paper argues that this shift coincides with the reinvention of the commodity form in India. Finally, the paper engages with how the transition from the territorial nation to a global nation makes its impress on the film form itself. It argues that the formal politics of the original film coincided with the struggles over the form of the state. On the other hand, the remake, without any marked investment either in the state form or in representation by proxy, functions according to the logic of personal vengeance made spectacular through the deployment of excessive and choreographed violence.

2. The objective and the immersed: Cinematic lenses for caste and the contemporary rural in Bawandar and Omkara
   Arunima Paul, University of Southern California

Much of post-Liberalization Indian cinema's ruminations on the nature and inequities of contemporary Indian modernity, notions of subjectivity and citizenship, has focused on its depiction of metropolitan subjectivities and worlds. Non-metropolitan India has figured as a presence that is excluded from the benefits and impacts of the same and left in the throes of regressive caste and gender patriarchies. These representations reprise an understanding of contemporary global modernity as a fundamentally metropolitan phenomenon. In this paper, I examine two very different films that depict contemporary rural modernity in northern India as
immanent in, and through, structures of caste and gender: Jagmohan Mundhra's Bawandar (2000) and Vishal Bharadwaj's Omkara (2006). It will look at how both films respond to the call that was issued by Partha Chatterjee and the Subaltern Studies for immanent critiques of caste. Bawandar is based on the 1992 case of the assault and gang-rape of Bhanwari Devi, a lower-caste rural development worker in Rajasthan by upper caste men as retribution for her opposition to the practice of child-marriage in her village. The film narrates Devi's story through a transnational human rights and part-ethnographic lens and critiques the functioning of rural patriarchies, the local administration and metropolitan civil society. Omkara adapts Shakespeare’s Othello to modern-day rural Uttar Pradesh and an inter-caste love-relationship between Omkara—the ‘half-caste’ right-hand man of a local politician, and Dolly—the daughter of an upper-caste politically-connected lawyer. The paper will consider the implications of the ‘objective’ lens of Bawandar on rural Rajasthan and the ‘immersed’ experience of rural UP in Omkara for the kinds of recognition they enable of rural modernity as gendered and caste-anchored subjectivities emerging from interstices of changing forms of governmentality, political cultures as well as discourses of social and erotic citizenship.

3. By the Glow of the Campfire: Interrogating Indian Summer
Anu Chatterjee, Clermont College, University of Cincinnati

Preoccupation with diasporic identity is prominent in representations of South Asian presence in North America. I attempt to interrogate the power dynamics underlying these representations and unpack terms like “culturally authentic.” My paper examines Mridu Chandra’s short documentary Indian Summer that documents the experiences of four kids as they attend a Hindu Heritage camp (HHC) in the summer of 2012 near Rochester, NY. The camp claims to “convey the richness and diversity of Asian American experience” and prides itself in giving the kids a sense of belonging and community. The film addresses the problem of identity and the contradiction between being American and asserting an Indian/Hindu identity. This depiction raises several disturbing and ambivalent questions about the portrayal of Indian Americans in particular, and the performance on desi identity as a whole. The easy interchange of Indian with Hindu identity is unsettling as is the enactment of expatriate nostalgia by the camp organizers that situates Hindu identity in terms of deliberate enactment of rituals like singing bhajans, doing poojas and performing yoga. Building on the work of sociologist Arvind Rajagopal, I examine how such camps are creating a subtle yet distinct subculture that soft pedals the ideology of the fundamentalist Hindu organizations like VHP by appropriating familiar Western camp tropes like the campfire, camp songs (99 bottles of doodh) into their narrative. Chandra’s documentary leaves us with some ambivalence as to the need and demand for such acculturation camps. What are the intentions of the parents and guardians who sign their kids up? Do they consider them “American” and “not Indian enough”? Interestingly, the kids attending the camp see themselves as “Indian” and “brown.” The documentary opens up the discussion about otherness but is unclear about its endorsement of the camp’s version of the authentic Hindu identity.

4. Rituparno Ghosh: Queer Aesthetics and Political Drag in the Discontented Nation
Basuli Deb, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
A spectacle of public mourning marked the state funeral of film director Rituparno Ghosh who died on May 30, 2013 in India. As the crowd thronged the streets to join the cortege, celluloid celebrities mingled with the common people. Such encounters in the context of Ghosh's death reiterate the spaces of contact that his life produced between a celebrity like him and the cinegoers that devoured his films. Not only did he become iconic of queer performance as director and actor, but performing the queer daily became his statement to the public. Such cultural productions, practices, and forms constituted a repertoire of intellectual labor that engaged with the important cultural work of transforming public consciousness. Ghosh's oeuvre becomes particularly important in the context of commemorating twenty years of Partha Chatterjee's “The Nation and its Fragments.” This is more so because in their discussion of the fragments of the nation, the Subaltern Studies Collective has largely left out the "fag-ments" of the nation. As a director and actor, Rituparno Ghosh picks up these overlooked fragments of the discontented nation in his film Chitrangada (2012), and in his roles in Kaushik Ganguly's Aar Ekti Premer Golpo (Just Another Love Story 2010) and Sanjoy Nag's Memories in March (2011). Chitrangada draws on Tagore's dance drama of the same name to examine the consequences of sexual reassignment surgery on romantic and family relationships. In Just Another Love Story and Memories in March, Ghosh plays the roles of gay men of yesteryears and contemporary India experiencing the agonies of societal expectations. Examining these three films, this paper will critically interrogate how the intellectual work of consciousness raising films and celebrity performances of public personas stand vis-à-vis a nation-state with strong legacies of British Obscenity Laws as well as neo-liberal forces of modernization.

8A: PERFORMANCE OF GENDERED CITIZENSHIP
ROOM: THE RED LINE
Panel Chair: Afrin Zeenat, University of Arkansas

1. Material Girls Living in a Material World: Gender and the Nation State in Rising Asia
   Nira Gupta-Casale, Kean University

My paper examines what is essentially a problematic, yet underexplored, relationship between literature and development discourse in Sri Lanka's separatist ethnonational conflict. Ambalavaner Sivanandan's When Memory Dies (1997) represents the lived experiences of one of the “fragments” or ethnic minorities of Sri Lanka, the Tamils, by centring on how they were affected by development and the accompanying social changes during the civil war. I contend that Sivanandan criticises the Sri Lankan state's neoliberalism for the negative impact on equal resource allocation and the livelihoods of the Tamil communities who live in the north. This paper explores how Sivanandan uses not only content but form to contest the current social order. Examining epic and other literary aesthetics including “romance-across-the divide' (Cleary 2002 and Gopal 2009) uncovers Sivanandan's refutation of the perceived divide between two ethnically
disparate groups. The novel's representation of the romantic love that exists between Lali and Vijay, between Tamil and Sinhala, demonstrates how Sivanandan embraces the imagination of an alternative society and state structure. This alternative is based on social harmony and human universals and, thus negates the ethnically stratified society that exists in contemporary Sri Lanka. My paper argues that it is essential to regard Sivanandan's text as a literary and political intervention against state development and separatism because these factors continue to be contentious and divisive issues in Sri Lanka today, yet ones that have clear implications for sustainable peace.

2. Re-mapping the Nation: Gender, Identity and Domestic Space in Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain*

Sreya Chatterjee, West Virginia University

The notion of "domestic space" has emerged as a significant area of theorizing in contemporary postcolonial feminist scholarship on the spatiality of gender and identity. "Domestic space" is not only central to political re-inscriptions of the "post-colony" but also crucial for mapping the aesthetics of "space" constituting the nation-state in contemporary South Asian women's fiction. In *Dwelling in the Archive* Antoinette Burton observes that the "house" (in the postcolonial novel) is a site where "subjectivity is produced and lived as history, through historical processes embedded ... in everyday architectural apprehensions and imaginaries" (28). "Domestic space" is thus already a hyper-signified area in postcolonial fiction, especially in its capacity to "ground" gendered embodiments of the nationalist imaginary. In Anita Desai's novel *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), such gendered embodiments are not only subverted but re-appropriated, as Desai offers an early, pioneering literary landscape where gender as a category can be used to uncover a "post-national" reading of domestic space. According to Geetha Ramanathan (1993), Desai's representation of "domestic space" is both fraught with the complexities of feminine agency, and inscribed with the possibilities of "freedom" and the feminine desire of "belonging". In the novel, "domestic space" becomes a site of both confinement and freedom for the protagonist Nanda Kaul, whose ownership of the house symbolizes her independence, while at the same time "territorializing" the articulation of that freedom. This paper will offer a critical close-reading of Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* in order to posit a postcolonial feminist reclaiming of "domestic space". Further, to nuance and complicate the psychosomatics of feminine desire and agency, I argue for a multimodal re-imaging of "domestic space," as a site where the gendered forms and margins of feminine subjectivity can be challenged and subverted.

3. War on Women: South Asian Women, Violent Event and the Concept of "Ethnicity"

Tehmina Pirzada, Purdue University

This paper deconstructs western media's portrayal of violent "events" against women in South Asia. Drawing up on Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities," I will analyze how certain ethnic identities are considered as a threat to global peace, and the impact of these intersectional identities on women rights. Through an examination of Mukhtar Mai's memoir about her gang rape, *In the Name of Honor*, and the journalistic accounts of Malala Yousafzai's
persecution at the hands of Pakistani Taliban, I will analyze the ways in which third world events of violence against women are employed by western media to highlight the intolerance and misogyny associated with certain third world nations. The compulsive narrativization of these violent events not only alludes to an imperialist fascination with third world spaces but also illustrates how entire ethnic communities are placed within an alleged framework of sexual and gendered violence. Due to the media portrayal of these violent events, the remote rural areas of Pakistan have attained a hyper-visibility, and this hyper visibility then raises questions about the paradoxically elastic yet finite notion of what constitutes as a ethnic “identity” in a country like Pakistan. The images and narratives of these victimized women are selectively appropriated to engage public sentiment resulting in a seamlessly constructed and reified identification with imperialistic powers, and as a justification to assuage criticism against the “war on terror.” Western media transforms these survivors of patriarchal violence, into icons of spectacular transgression and rarely turns an introspective gaze upon the violence generated in Pakistan through the collusion between western neo-imperialism and indigenous conservatism, and how it has violently reinscribed the notion of "Pakistani" identity. This paper attempts to demystify the representations of these two incidents of violence in order to counteract the imperialist "seeing" that circumscribes third world women within the rhetorical framework of the “war on terror,” and stresses the need to re-constitute the act of “seeing” in order to understand the intersections between gender, nationalism and imperialism.

4. The Myth of Gender Equality: The H4 Visa
   Parmita Kapadia, Northern Kentucky University

As government and corporate forces—often working in tandem—dictate an ever-increasing environment of global capitalism, the tensions between immigrant communities and the host nation-state grows more significant. This paper examines the gendering of citizenship and the ideals of gender equality through the experiences of South Asian women who have emigrated under the H4 visa statute. The H4 visa allows individuals to emigrate to the US under “spousal sponsorship.” For many South Asian women, marriage to a “foreign return”—a boy who was born and raised on the sub-continent but who now resides and works in the West—is considered to be the holy grail. Such a marriage—and the promise of emigration that accompanies it—ensures financial security, glamour, and improved family status. Unproblematically constructed as a place offering prosperity, opportunity, and for women especially, equality, the West is depicted as being the grand benefactor and provider of gender equality. However, although the H4 visa allows immigration to the US, it prohibits the holder from enjoying independent, legal status, rendering her (and the vast majority of H4 visa holders are women) wholly dependent on her spouse. Highly vulnerable, these women are relegated to second-class status. The ideals of gender equality and opportunity that the US touts are inverted here as these immigrant women—many of them highly educated and professional—face personal and cultural imprisonment. Rather than promoting greater opportunity for women, the H4 visa severely restricts women's autonomy. Literature and film draw attention to the position and experiences of these South Asian women. Through Anita Rau Badami's Tell It to the Trees and Meghana Damani's short film Hearts Suspended, this paper
explores the tensions between the universalist ideals of gender equality and the realities experienced by diasporic South Asians.

8B: NEW DIRECTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS
ROOM: THE BLUE LINE
Panel Chair: Maria-Dolores Garcia-Borron, Independent Scholar

   Mayuri Deka, The College of the Bahamas

The student in the South Asian literature classroom today is a citizen of a global community that is constantly transforming and expanding to include new and sometimes conflicting socio-cultural contexts. Within the texts that they are expected to read, students are also usually being introduced to a world that may seem distant and unrecognizable. The reactions of disinterest and non-involvement with the texts, and material is quite common within the ethnic literature classrooms. A new pedagogy that focuses on these areas of conflict and encourages a new schema of secure identity in a student is therefore needed within the South Asian literature classroom. Psychiatrists like Piaget (1962) and Hastie (1981) have recognized that individuals bring organized meaning structures (labeled as “schemas”) to every new encounter in the physical or literary world. Through certain role and perspective-reversal exercises it is possible to introduce changes to an individual’s schema. The whole cognitive process leading to action and change in a person’s situation (perceptual, judgmental, motivational, and actional change) is dependent on a secure identity that sees similarity and difference in its relationship with the Other. The very nature of the material in the South Asian literature classroom allows for the introduction of such exercises. This paper aims to provide pedagogical strategies within the South Asian literature classroom to facilitate the development of complex identity-contents in the students through the use of schema theory to make them more open to identify commonalities between the Self and Other and increase their engagement with the texts and lead to prosocial action.

2. The Disruption and Restructuring of Social Schema in the Classroom Using Bollywood Film to Create Counterstereotypical Exemplars
   Sarah Mohler, Truman State University

Creating a classroom atmosphere that allows culturally distant students to confront and discuss their own stereotypes about South Asian culture without feeling vulnerable themselves is often a challenge in many universities. However, when cognitive theory is utilized to help students critique how the viewing experience of Bollywood films is structured, students gain not only new tools for narrative analysis but new insight into their own reactions to the films. Kahaani (Story 2012), starring Vidya Balan as a pregnant wife in search of her missing husband, is particularly adept at helping students critique and dismantle both cultural and gender stereotypes because the surprise ending forces audiences to consciously reassess the assumptions they have made
throughout the film that have led to their consistent misinterpretation of character motivation, interpersonal dynamics, action and framing of the “story” being told. By introducing and drawing on the cognitive literary theory concepts of script, schema, and conceptual metaphor utilized by Mark Turner (The Literary Mind 1998) and George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (Metaphors We Live By 2003) when discussing the film in class, students are able to analyze how the film is dually coded to both activate and disrupt commonly held personal and cultural understandings of motherhood, womanhood, truth/duplicity, heroism, justice, terrorism and revenge. Furthermore, the ambiguous use of figure and ground within the film facilitates the discussion of how interpretation of situations in narratives, as well as in real life, depends on where we direct our attention. Most importantly, new research on the effectiveness of counterstereotypical exemplars in prompting individuals to restructure social schema (Lai, et al. “Reducing Implicit Racial Preferences: I. A Comparative Investigation of 18 Interventions” May 29, 2013), suggests that this and other similar viewing experiences may have lasting effects on students’ conscious and unconscious use of cultural schema outside the classroom.

3.  Translating Landays: Using Schema Theory to Teach New Poetic Forms
Zeeshan Riyaz Reshamwala, Moberly Area Community College

Teaching students poetic forms originating in cultural contexts remote to them can be challenging if these forms are heavily dependent upon cultural knowledge that students do not share with the original audiences of their reading. A cognitive-theoretical approach to pedagogy in this case may allow students a framework with which to engage new discursive practices. In the June 2013 issue of Poetry, Eliza Griswold examines landays, primarily oral poems, clandestinely composed and disseminated by Pashto women. Because a landay is a short twenty-two-syllable couplet (Griswold 195), it relies on reference to the communal knowledge of its audience. Often, the cultural work that landays perform involves how they re-craft or invert cultural schemata that define conventional power relations (for example, between daughters and fathers). Ronald Casson defines schemata as “abstractions that serve as the basis for all human information processing, e.g. perception and comprehension, categorization and planning, recognition and recall, and problem solving and decision-making” (D'Andrade 711). In many cases, translating landays for Anglophone audiences leads Griswold to employ paratextual strategies to help readers interpret poems by supplying specific cultural knowledge wherever necessary. Griswold explains that landay are embellished and re-worked as they spread from poet to poet. Recently, a Facebook page, pashtolanday, has accelerated this by allowing writers to interact in a dialogue of landays that improvise upon and respond to one another (Griswold 239). In the classroom, setting students the task of composing and improvising upon their peers' landays requires them to project the cultural work landays perform in a Pashto context onto their own culture, and decide how to perform similar discursive tasks in their own cultural context. Using cognitive theory to analyze the discursive maneuvers of landays allows students the opportunity to deeply analyze the relationships of power in Pashto culture, as well as their own.

8C: THE BRITISH DIASPORA
ROOM: THE YELLOW LINE
1. “This is a Text Nobody Likes”: Hanif Kureishi and the Subversive Spaces of British Nationalism
   J. Edward Mallot, Arizona State University

While Hanif Kureishi’s 1985 screenplay My Beautiful Laundrette has generated substantial scholarship investigating race-based identity politics and sexual difference/sexual orientation, less attention has been paid to the film’s considerable interrogation of Thatcherite economics, and more specifically the spatialized dynamics of class difference. Multiple characters note that institutional policies and nationalist prejudices push ethnic minority communities to the socioeconomic margins of 1980s Britain; some recognize that economics hold the key for those same communities to fight their way back toward the center. Hence Salim, one of the protagonist Omar’s uncles, argues that “we’re nothing in England without money” while another uncle, Nasser, confidently asserts that “[t]here’s no race question in the new enterprise culture.” This paper begins by examining the economic climate and nationalist sentiments of the Thatcher era alongside the ongoing struggle for minority rights and representations. As a vehicle for socioeconomic advancement, a laundrette might seem an unusual and problematic setting, particularly given its connections to cultural stereotypes and Omar’s family’s other money-making enterprises. But centering this drama within a laundrette offers Kureishi a particularly provocative stage. Here, he creates a “third” and/or “diaspora” space, where expected engagements among ethnic communities are inverted and subverted. For Omar, the laundrette suggests not only racial equality but a reversal of power, as his white lover works as his right-hand man and general handyman; as the film concludes, Omar considers how his single establishment might expand to something of an empire. This paper concludes by moving beyond how the laundrette matters for British national space, to consider the specific and significant ways the business is itself spatialized, allowing Kureishi to clarify his arguments concerning the intersections of racial and sexual difference.

2. Religious Fundamentalism, Nationalism, and Transnational Modernity in Salman Rushdie’s Novels
   Tawnya Ravy, The George Washington University

In The Nation and Its Fragments, Partha Chatterjee argues that South Asian nationalism was marked by establishing cultural difference from western modernity because of the history of colonialism. Salman Rushdie, writing from the South Asian diaspora, has for many years been invested in depicting the development of nationalism in South Asia. Much has been made of Rushdie’s depiction of South Asian nationalisms in his two early works Midnight’s Children and Shame; however, this paper looks at how Rushdie depicts religion and the nation-state in two of his later works, The Moor’s Last Sigh (1995) and Shalimar the Clown (2005). Written ten years apart and both after Rushdie’s experience with the Iranian fatwa, these texts offer the opportunity for a comparative analysis of religion and nationalism in modern South Asia. In The Moor’s Last Sigh, Rushdie critiques the rise of Hindu fundamentalism in relation to the development of modern Indian nationalism. Taking the Ayodhya controversy as a contemporary example, Rushdie
suggests that modern Indian nationalism has given rise to fundamentalism and religious intolerance. In Shalimar the Clown, he attempts to answer the question of how the rise of Islamic fundamentalism is affecting modern nation-states as a transnational movement in a globalized, post-9/11 world. Rushdie continues to be critical of the religious politics of India as evidenced by his frequent declarations on the news and in social media outlets. As a well-known celebrity author, Rushdie's views on South Asian nationalism impact the larger cultural imaginary. In contemplating the legacy of independence, Rushdie expresses anxiety about the fragmentation along religious lines which he would argue dominates South Asian politics at home and abroad. This paper takes a critical look at the way in which Rushdie depicts fundamentalism and nationalism, and the way in which his ideas about these concepts has changed over time.

3. The Subversive Sketch Comedy of Meera Syal and Sanjeev Bhaksar

Summer Pervez, Kwantlen Polytechnic University and Vancouver Film School

Actor, writer, singer, filmmaker, and comedian Meera Syal has actively worked to “think the new” while finding her voice as a South Asian British cultural producer. In conjunction with Sanjeev Bhaksar, she has written and acted in the television series Goodness Gracious Me and The Kumars at No. 42. Consisting of a series of comedy sketches enacted by a permanent troupe of predominantly South Asian British actors, both shows provoke uneasy laughter while stimulating thought on the relationship between humour and race relations in Britain. Laughter itself is presented as ambivalent: the situations and characters presented do not remain straightforwardly comic—or even comically stereotypical—for very long. Syal and Bhaksar play with Bakhtinian notions of proximity and distance to achieve their desired effects. On the one hand, a free and close examination of stock characters based on ethnic stereotypes stimulates laughter, supporting the claim that all comic creativity works in a zone of maximal proximity. On the other hand, Syal and Bhaksar also call upon their audience to pity the conditions of their characters from a necessary distance when confrontations reach their painful climactic points, often with a simple subversion or reversal of the cultural stereotypes that are invoked. The lens of sketch comedy allows for laughter to operate not as a reductive strategy but as a constructive one, thereby illustrating how postcolonial humour functions subversively not only as a survival strategy in the face of stereotypes and discrimination but also as a vehicle through which hierarchies of power can be unsettled. Taken as a whole, Syal and Bhaksar's comedy allows for a critique of mainstream perceptions of the South Asian diaspora while also interrogating the nation itself through a reconfiguration of what it means to be culturally and postcolonially British.