

CSASA  
ACESA

Canadian South Asian  
Studies Association

Association canadienne  
d'études sud-asiatiques

## Congress 2022

May 12 2022, Virtual  
9:30am - 6:00 pm EDT

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Association Information
- Congress 2022 Schedule
- Presenters
- Abstracts

## CSASA-ACESA 2022 Congress Organising Committee



Andrea Pinkney, Associate Professor,  
McGill University

Andrea Pinkney is Associate Professor in South Asian Religions at McGill University in the Faculty of Arts. She first studied South Asian civilisation as an undergraduate at McGill in the Faculty of Religious Studies (B.A.); then in India (Banaras Hindu University, Adv. Diploma in Hindi) and the United States (M.A., University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Ph.D., Columbia University). She has taught in India (Antioch College and S.I.T.), and Singapore (National University of Singapore); her research languages are Hindi-Urdu and Sanskrit. She serves as Vice-President of CSASA-ACESA, the Canadian South Asian Studies Association / Association canadienne d'études sud-asiatiques.



Timothy Lorndale, Graduate Student,  
University of Pennsylvania

Tim Lorndale lives in Montréal. He works on literature and epigraphy in Old Kannada and Sanskrit. He also recently defended his doctoral dissertation at Penn.

Julie Vig, Assistant Professor, York  
University

Julie Vig is Assistant Professor of Humanities, Religious Studies, and South Asian Cultures at York University. Her research focuses on premodern Sikh and Punjabi cultural production and how it relates to wider cultural worlds and networks of premodern North India (c.1500-1850). Her particular focus is on gurbilās literature and its interactions with broader Brajbhasha literature in the early modern period. She also has secondary research interests in the reception of early modern Sikh texts in the colonial period and women, gender, and sexuality within the Sikh tradition.



Sloane Geddes, Graduate Student,  
University of Toronto

Sloane Geddes is a PhD Candidate at the University of Toronto in the Department for the Study of Religion. She works on Sanskrit poetry and is interested in poetics, gender, and affective communities in Sanskrit Kāvya.



## Joining CSASA-ACESA

**Association Email:** [csasa.acesa@gmail.com](mailto:csasa.acesa@gmail.com)

**Association Website:** <https://sites.google.com/view/csasa-acesa-congress-2022/home>

### CSASA-ACESA Membership and Annual Dues:

Membership dues support our affiliation with the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences and CSASA-ACESA's participation in the annual Congress meeting. Regular membership dues for CSASA-ACESA are 50\$CDN annually; with the rate for retired colleagues, unwaged colleagues, and students set at 35\$CDN. Fees can be paid via Interac E-Transfer sent to: [csasa.members@gmail.com](mailto:csasa.members@gmail.com). To apply for an annual membership, write to [csasa.acesa@gmail.com](mailto:csasa.acesa@gmail.com) with the following information: (1) your name, (2) academic affiliation, (3) title or name of graduate supervisor, (4) preferred contact information, and (5) five key words to describe your South Asia-related research.

### CSASA-I Academic Listserv:

CSASA runs a professional academic listserv, CSASA-I, hosted by Athabasca University. Prospective subscribers should hold terminal degrees relevant to Canadian South Asian Studies and be actively researching and/or teaching in Canada, or be actively enrolled in a Canadian Ph.D. or M.A. programme relevant to South Asian Studies. Subscriptions are available to expatriate Canadian colleagues as well as other scholars with relevant qualifications, and to undergraduate students in Canada sponsored by an academic advisor. CSASA-ACESA membership is not required to subscribe to CSASA-I. To submit your CSASA-I subscription request, visit this page: <https://mailman.athabascau.ca/mailman/listinfo/csasa-i>

## Land Acknowledgements



Image: Bethlehem Catholic High School Students, Saskatoon. Canadian Commission for UNESCO, <https://tinyurl.com/7r4evf7k>.

While we gather together for our conference online, we study and research on unceded and treaty lands. Because of this, we would like to acknowledge a range of our collective hosts, upon whose land we are grateful to live, work, and learn. To further a conversation on reconciliation in our academic circles, we encourage you to watch and reflect upon Dr. Shelly Johnson (aka Mukwa Musayett)'s talk on indigenization and reconciliation in Higher Ed [here](#). In particular, see "Dr. Shelly Johnson shares an example of indigenization at UBC's School of Social Work".

### University of British Columbia, Point Grey Campus, Vancouver, BC

We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the  $\text{xw}\text{m}\text{ə}\text{θ}\text{k}\text{w}\text{ə}\text{y}\text{əm}$  (Musqueam) People.



### **Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Surrey, BC**

Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) takes its name from the Kwantlen First Nation. We work, study, and live in a region south of the Fraser River which overlaps with the unceded traditional and ancestral lands of the Kwantlen, Musqueam, Katzie, Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen, Qayqayt and Kwikwetlem peoples.

### **University of Regina, Regina, SK**

Welcome to the University of Regina, with three federated colleges, the First Nations University of Canada, Campion College and Luther College. The University of Regina is situated on Treaty 4 lands with a presence in Treaty 6. These are the territories of the nêhiyawak, Anihšīnāpēk, Dakota, Lakota, and Nakoda, and the homeland of the Métis/Michif Nation. Today, these lands continue to be the shared Territory of many diverse peoples from near and far. The nêhiyawak originally referred to Regina as oskana kâ-asastēki which literally means “The place where bones are piled up.” This is why Regina’s nickname is “Pile O’Bones” and this is the origin of the name of our current location in Wascana Park.

### **Western University, London, ON**

We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ahpay- wuk) and Chonnonton (Chun-ongk-ton) Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.

With this, we respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research and community service.

### **York University, Toronto, ON**

We recognize that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

### **University of Toronto, Toronto, ON**

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

### **McGill University, Montréal, QC**

McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous peoples whose presence marks this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

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# CSASA-ACESA Congress 2022 Schedule

## Session 1: Emplacing Pasts and Presents

Zoom Room 1  
9:30h – 11:30h EDT

### Anne Murphy, University of British Columbia

Beyond the Past: Poetry as a Notation of the Present

### Mukti Patel, University of Toronto

The Spiritual Spatial in Maṇḍalika's Gīnar

### Andrea Pinkney, McGill University

Imperial Cartography, Republican Pilgrimage in the Western Himalayas

## Session 2: (Social) Media, Music, and Memory

Zoom Room 2  
9:30h – 11:30h

### Elliot Montpellier, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

"Feedback Time": Digital Media and Recursive Religiosity in Pakistani TV Dramas

*Continued on the next page*

### Ryan D'Souza, Chatham University

Rohail Hyatt's Metamorphosis with Quantum Physics and Sufism

### Michelle Folk, University of Regina

Why Mementoes Aren't Just Memories: Ephemera as a Site of Colonialist Narratives on India

### Sananda Sahoo, Western University

Nonsensical Tweets Negotiate Agency through Misnaming

## Session 3: CSASA-ACESA Business Meeting

Zoom Room 1  
12:00h – 13:00h

**Moderators:** Julie Vig, York University and Andrea Pinkney, McGill University

Session 8: CSASA-ACESA Networking Lounge

Zoom Room 5

Open all day from 9:30am – 18:00h

**Session 4: Reading between the Lines in South Asian Literatures**

Zoom Room 1  
13:30h – 15:30h

**Jesse Pruitt, University of Toronto**

Childhood's End: Ramalinga Swamigal's Reappraisal of the Devotion of Youth

**Tim Lorndale, University of Pennsylvania**

Inscriptions are like Onions: Peeling Back the Compositional Layers of the Attimabbē Inscriptions at Lakkuṇḍi

**Gal Gvili, McGill University**

Śakuntalā in Modern China

**Meera Kachroo, McGill University/ St. Thomas More College**

A Mid-Century Mantra for the Guhānanda Maṇḍalī: Cidānandanātha's Śrīvidyā

**Session 5: Social Issues in South Asia and Beyond**

Zoom Room 2

**Tania Das Gupta, York University  
and Sugandha Nagpal, OP Jindal Global University**

The Resilience of Punjabi Migration and Mobility during the Pandemic

*Continued on the next page*

**Bidushy Sadika, Western University**

Darker-Skinned and Unmarriageable? Experiencing and Coping with Shadism amongst South Asian Women in Canada

**Aditya Bhattacharjee, University of Pennsylvania**

An Elephant amid Rice Fields: Ganesha's Thai Diaspora

**Session 6: Exploring South Asian Food Cultures in Canada**

Zoom Room 1  
16:00h – 18:00h

**Shelley Boyd, Kwantlen Polytechnic University**

Recipes for Reading Drama: Mixing Genres in a Brimful of Asha

**Asma Sayed, Kwantlen Polytechnic University and Jacqueline Walker, Kwantlen Polytechnic University**

Biryani Poutine and Halal Burgers: The Poetics and Politics of Food in Uzma Jalaluddin's Hana Khan Carries On

*Continued on the next page*

**Session 8: CSASA-ACESA Networking Lounge**

Zoom Room 3

Open all day from 9:30am – 18:00h

**Sameena Siddiqui, University of British Columbia**

Culinary Politics, Farmers' Protest and Diaspora Art

**Aqeel Ishan, York University**

"I'm Goan Because I Eat Goan Food": A Critical Look  
at the History of Goan Canadians

**Session 7: The Jigsaw Puzzle of Hindutva**

Zoom Room 1  
16:00h – 18:00h

**Harshita Yalamarty, York University**

The Jigsaw Puzzle of Hindutva

**Sabika Zaidi, York University**

Transnational Hindutva

**Yasir Hameed, York University**

The Digital Realm of Hindutva

**Arpita Bajpeyi, York University**

Performances of Hindutva

**Session 8: CSASA-ACESA Networking Lounge**

Zoom Room 3

Open all day from 9:30am – 18:00h

# PRESENTERS



**Aditya Bhattacharjee, University of Pennsylvania**

Aditya Bhattacharjee is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. He developed a curiosity for narratives about Hindu divinities as a child through his grandmother's bedtime stories. This boyhood inquisitiveness grew into a more sustained academic interest in transnational Hinduism that he's explored through BA and MA degrees at McGill University. He continues this pursuit in his dissertation on global worship communities dedicated to the deity Ganesha. He has an ancillary interest in the subject of interrelatedness between Hindu and Buddhist traditions in both pre-modern and modern Thailand. Born in Bombay and raised in Bangkok, Aditya is a fluent speaker of Thai, Bengali, Tamil, Hindi, and French.

**Anne Murphy, University of British Columbia**

Anne Murphy (Ph.D. Columbia) teaches at the University of British Columbia. She is a cultural historian whose work focuses on the Punjab region of India and Pakistan, with interests in language and literary cultures, the history of the Punjabi language, religious community formations in the early modern and modern periods, oral history, historiography, commemoration, and material culture studies. Her book-length translation of the short stories of Punjabi-language writer Zubair Ahmad, *Grieving for Pigeons: Twelve Stories of Lahore* is coming out with Athabasca University Press in 2022. She has published one monograph; edited one volume and co-edited another; guest-edited or co-edited three journal special issues; and authored numerous book chapters and articles, in *History and Theory*, *Studies in Canadian Literature*, *South Asian History and Culture*, the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, and other journals.

**Aqeel Ihsan, York University**



Aqeel Ihsan is a PhD History Candidate at York University, specializing in migration and food history. His research interests focus on the South Asian diaspora currently residing in Canada. His doctoral dissertation seeks to conduct a food history of Toronto by placing “smelly cuisines” at the centre and chronologically tracing the history of the most prominent site where South Asian immigrants, beginning in the early 1970s, could purchase and consume South Asian foodstuffs, the Gerrard India Bazaar.

**Recent Publications:**

1. An article on Goan food history: <https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/ghr/article/view/20028>
2. An essay that shares my findings from in-depth interviews conducted with three Partition survivors: <https://www.thecry-sc.com/partition-essay2>

**Contact:** [aqeel8@my.yorku.ca](mailto:aqeel8@my.yorku.ca)



### Arpita Bajpeyi, York University

Arpita Bajpeyi is a PhD candidate in Dance Studies at York University, Toronto, and a Graduate Research Associate at the York Centre for Asian Research. Her practice-based research builds off of her background as a kathak dancer and a public historian (MA, Carleton University) to ask if this dance form can be opened up to make visible the erasures that have enabled its practice and performance as a 'classical' form today. Alongside Sinead Cox, Arpita also co-directs Staging Our Histories, a not-for-profit organisation that acts as a platform for performing artists whose work explores history, memory, and the past. Some of her writing has been published in Art India Magazine, Intermission, [kaur.space](#), Rung, and Seminar.

**Contact:** [abajp@yorku.ca](mailto:abajp@yorku.ca)



### Asma Sayed, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Dr. Asma Sayed (she/her) is Canada Research Chair in South Asian Literary and Cultural Studies in the Department of English at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on Indian Ocean Studies, Postcolonial Studies, South Asian diaspora in Canada, and Indian cinema. Her publications include five co-/edited books and numerous articles in a range of periodicals, anthologies, and academic journals: Canadian Review of Comparative Literature; Canadian Culinary Imagination (McGill-Queen's UP); South Asian Review; Virgin Envy (U of Regina P). She is the President of the Canadian Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (2019-22), soon to be renamed the Canadian Association for Postcolonial Studies (CAPS). In 2020, she was elected as a member of the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists, and Scientists.

**Contact:** [asma.sayed@kpu.ca](mailto:asma.sayed@kpu.ca)

### Bidushy Sadika, Western University



I am a PhD Candidate in Social Psychology, with a specialization in Migration and Ethnic Relations, at Western University, London, Ontario, Canada. I also work as a Research Analyst for the London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership (LMLIP). My research areas include intersectionality theory; gender roles and stereotypes; immigration and settlement issues; and race, ethnicity, and culture. Alongside publishing in peer-reviewed journals, I engage in community work that focuses on the lived experiences of immigrants and ethnic minority women, as well as the prevalence of immigrant-specific services in Canada. In future, I aspire to become a feminist social psychologist and adopt an intersectionality lens in my pedagogy and community work. In my free time, I like to go shopping, watch science-fiction and action movies, travel with my family, and cuddle my pet dog, Dribble.

**Contact:** [bsadika@uwo.ca](mailto:bsadika@uwo.ca)

**Elliot Montpellier, University of Pennsylvania**

Elliot Montpellier (he/him) is a dual-degree doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology and Department of South Asia Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. He studies mediatized discourse about Islam, piety, and morality in Pakistani television drama serials. His ethnographic work traverses Karachi, Pakistan, Surrey, Canada and digital spaces. He connects these overlapping virtual and physical worlds by examining the interplay of media production and reception and the impact of the Internet on shaping pious publics in South Asia. He currently resides on unceded traditional and ancestral lands of the Coast Salish peoples, known as Surrey, Canada where he teaches in the Asian Studies and Anthropology departments at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.



**Contact:** [emontp@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:emontp@sas.upenn.edu)

**Gal Gvili, McGill University**

Gal Gvili studies and teaches modern and contemporary Chinese literature. Her articles have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, *Religions*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, *China and Asia: A Journal in Historical Studies* and the edited volume *Beyond Pan-Asianism: Connecting China and India 1840s-1860s*. Her book *Imagining India in Modern China: Literary Decolonization and the Imperial Unconscious, 1895-1962* (Columbia University Press, 2022) examines how the image of India, in particular, Chinese writers' multifaceted visions of Sino-Indian connections, shaped the making of a new literature in the twentieth century.



**Contact:** [gal.gvili@mcgill.ca](mailto:gal.gvili@mcgill.ca)

**Harshita Yalamarty, York University**

Harshita Yalamarty holds a PhD in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies from York University, Tkaronto. Her doctoral dissertation is titled "Across Seven Seas, I Followed You Here: Caste, Marriage Migration and Multiculturalism in the Indian Diaspora" and presents a transnational and intersectional perspective on the migration experiences of Indian marriage migrant women in Canada in relation to migration policies, expectations of waged, household and care labour, and caste in the diaspora. Her teaching and research interests include migrant labour and settler-colonialism in Canada. Her work has been published in *Canada Watch*, *Studies in Social Justice* and *Violence Against Women*.

**Contact:** [harshita@yorku.ca](mailto:harshita@yorku.ca)

**Jacqueline Walker, Kwantlen Polytechnic University**

Jacqueline Walker is completing her dual major in English and political science at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. She is interested in social justice, animal rights, gender studies and the intersections between these areas of research.

**Contact:** [Jacqueline.walker@kpu.ca](mailto:Jacqueline.walker@kpu.ca)

**Meera Kachroo, St. Thomas More College & McGill University**

Meera Kachroo is a lecturer at St Thomas More College (Saskatoon, SK) where she teaches courses on Asian religious and philosophical traditions. Also a Doctoral Candidate at McGill University (Montréal, QC), her dissertation research is based on extensive fieldwork among Śrīvidyā ritual initiates in South India. Meera's research and teaching highlight the ways that religious ideas and practices circulate in contemporary society, and how classical ideas are made relevant to modern life.

**Contact:** [mkachroo@stmcollege.ca](mailto:mkachroo@stmcollege.ca)



**Elliot Montpellier, University of Pennsylvania**

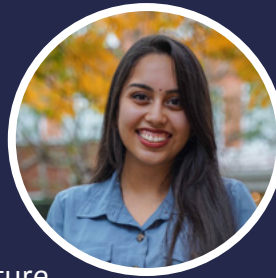
Michelle L. Folk received her PhD in religious studies from Concordia University. Her dissertation *Ascetics, Devotees, Disciples, and Lords of the Matam: Monasteries in Medieval Tamilnadu* examines endowments recorded on the walls of South India's religious institutions from the ninth to thirteenth century for what epigraphical records reveal about the activities and people associated with matams during this period. Research and teaching interests include asceticism and monasticism, gender and sexualities, narrative, and colonialism in the South Asian context. As a member of the department of gender, religion, and critical studies, she teaches in religious studies at Campion and Luther Colleges at the University of Regina. Her current project examines how ephemera in personal archives reflect colonialist narratives and discourses of Otherness. She is a member of the executive and program co-chair for the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion (CSSR).

**Contact:** [michelle.folk@uregina.ca](mailto:michelle.folk@uregina.ca)



**Mukti Patel, University of Toronto**

Mukti Patel is an undergraduate student at the University of Toronto specializing in religion and minoring in writing and rhetoric. She is broadly interested in South Asian literature, philosophy, and history, with special attention to religious life in Gujarat. She looks forward to starting an MA at the University of Chicago's Divinity School this fall.



**Contact:** mukti@uchicago.edu

**Ryan D'souza, Chatham University**

Ryan D'Souza is an academic writer based in Hamilton, Ontario. He earned his Ph.D. in Communication (2019) from the University of South Florida, specializing in postcolonial culture and media. He writes on modernity, philosophy, and science.



Ryan's research examines the formation of European subjectivity in the structures of capitalism-colonialism, imperialism-supremacy, and modernity-rationality. He approaches the structures of subjectivity with political economy, psychoanalysis, and French structuralism. He argues that entering European subjectivity is inescapable, owing to colonialism and the continued dominance of western ways of knowing the world.

Ryan has recently published in the Global Media Journal – Canadian Edition, Communication, Culture & Critique, and the Journal of International and Intercultural Communication.

**Contact:** dsouzara@gmail.com

**Sabika Zaidi, York University**

Sabika Zaidi is an incoming PhD student at York University, Toronto. Her research focuses on criminalization of Muslim geographies, including questions of political citizenship, displacement and institutionalized racism on Indian Muslims.

**Contact:** sabikaza@yorku.ca

**Sameena Siddiqui, University of British Columbia**

Sameena Siddiqui is a Ph.D. candidate and SRSF doctoral fellow at the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory, University of British Columbia, Canada. She did her M.Phil. from the School of Arts & Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi, and has presented her research work at several international conferences and residencies. Her dissertation research recently won the MFAH Joan and Stanford Alexander Dissertation Award, US, 2021-22. In addition, Sameena has published her writings in art magazines and worked as an art curator at art galleries in Delhi, India.

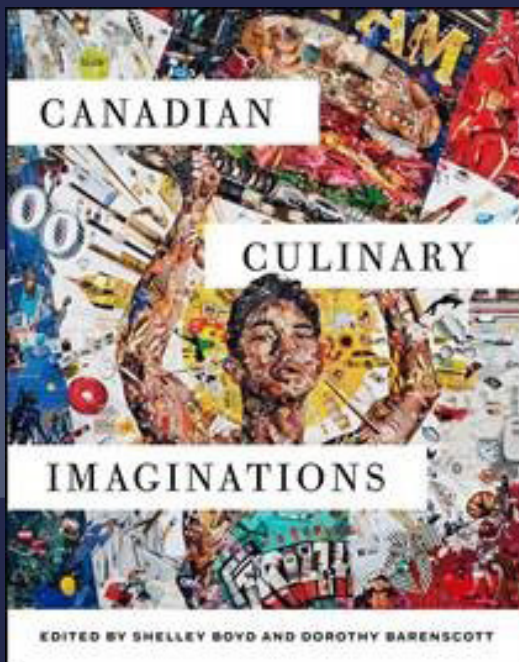
**Contact:** sameenasiddiqui064@gmail.com





**Shelley Boyd, Kwantlen Polytechnic University**

Shelley Boyd is an Associate Dean in the Faculty of Arts and a Canadian literature specialist in the English Department at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey, British Columbia. She is the author of *Garden Plots: Canadian Women Writers and Their Literary Gardens* (MQUP, 2013), and co-editor of the collection *Canadian Culinary Imaginations*, which brings together academics, writers, artists, journalists, and curators to discuss how food mediates our experiences of the nation and the world. (MQUP, 2020). In addition to her publications on food-focused pedagogy in the literature classroom, Shelley's recent articles examine foodscare dramas on the prairies, and dystopian/utopian meals in the speculative fiction of Margaret Atwood.



**CANADIAN CULINARY IMAGINATIONS**  
edited by SHELLEY BOYD and DOROTHY BARENSCOTT

In the twenty-first century, food is media - it is not just on plates, but in literature and on screens, displayed in galleries, studios, and public places. *Canadian Culinary Imaginations* provokes new conversations about the food-related concepts, memories, emotions, cultures, practices, and tastes that make Canada unique.

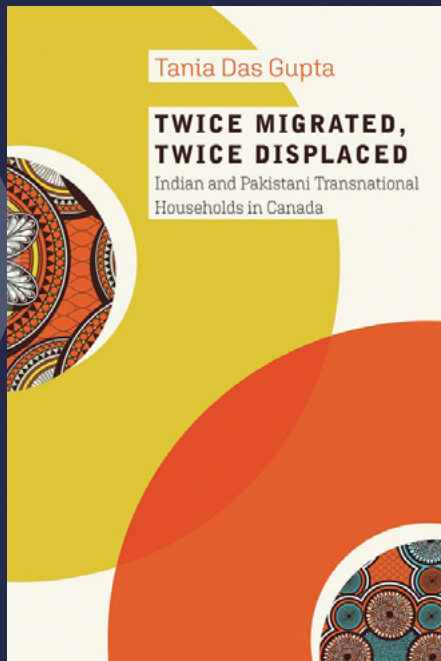
This collection brings together academics, writers, artists, journalists, and curators to discuss how food mediates our experiences of the nation and the world. Together, the contributors reveal that culinary imaginations reflect and produce the diverse bodies, contexts, places, communities, traditions, and environments that Canadians inhabit, as well as their personal and artistic sensibilities. Arranged in four thematic sections - Indigeneity and foodways; urban, suburban, and rural environments; cultural and national lineages; and subversions of categories - the essays in this collection indulge a growing appetite for conversations about creative engagements with food and the world at large.

As the essays and images in *Canadian Culinary Imaginations* demonstrate, food is more than sustenance - as language and as visual and material culture, it holds the power to represent and remake the world in unexpected ways.

See more about the book at [McGill/Queen's Press here](#).

## Tania Das Gupta, York University

Tania Das Gupta is Full Professor in the School of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, York University. Her publications, teaching and research interests are in the following areas: South Asian diaspora and transnationalism, race and racism, anti-racism, migration, state policies, women, work and families, community activism, racism in the labour movement. She has published widely in these areas, including most recently *Twice Migrated, Twice Displaced: Indian and Pakistani Transnational Households in India* and also earlier publications *Real Nurses and Others: Racism in Nursing*. (2009); *Racism and Paid Work* (1995) and; Co-editor of *Race and Racialization: Essential Readings* (with Carl James, Chris Andersen, Grace-Edward Galabuzi, Roger Maaka). Her current research is about Punjabi newcomers in Canada in the context of Covid-19 (with Dr. Sugandha Nagpal).



## TWICE MIGRATED, TWICE DISPLACED: Indian and Pakistani Transnational Households in Canada

by TANIA DAS GUPTA

*Twice Migrated, Twice Displaced* explores the lives of Gulf South Asians who arrived in the Greater Toronto Area from India and Pakistan via Persian Gulf countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Like most modern migration, their journey was not point A to point B, but rather it was a two- or three-step process. Drawing on in-depth interviews, Tania Das Gupta reveals the multiple migration patterns of this unique group, and the class, gender, racial, and religious discrimination they have encountered both during their journey and upon arrival in Canada. She analyzes themes such as class mobility, the formation of transnational families, and identities in a post-9/11 context. More broadly, she asks how the Canadian labour market affects transnationalism and if immigrants are being strategic in their use of step migration and transnational living practices.

Das Gupta concludes that neoliberal economies in South Asia, the Gulf, and Canada create conditions for flexible labour by privatizing and diminishing social welfare. As migrants then search for employment, families are split across borders – making those relationships more precarious. The result is the development of ambivalent, hybrid identities – with implications for community building, diaspora, citizenship, and migrants' sense of belonging in Canada.

This incisive work will appeal to a wide array of scholars and students – in migration studies, anti-racism studies, feminist studies, gender and women's studies, family studies, sociology, and diaspora and transnational studies – as well as to immigrant and refugee settlement practitioners, especially South Asian community workers.

See more about the book at [UBC Press here](#).

### Sananda Sahoo, Western University

Sananda Sahoo is a Ph.D. candidate in Media Studies at the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, Western University, Canada. She looks at the intersections of public, public space, and digital infrastructures with a focus on South Asia, especially India. Her previous research includes political posters and platforms, data imaginaries in colonial and contemporary India, questions of collective responsibility, sites of violence in the digital sphere, and colonial narratives in photographs and memoirs by women. Her current work involves the public sphere and political campaigning.

**Contact:** [ssahoo3@uwo.ca](mailto:ssahoo3@uwo.ca)

### Sugandha Nagpal, University of East Anglia

Dr. Sugandha Nagpal (Ph.D. International Development, University of East Anglia) is an Assistant Professor of Sociology in the School of International Affairs at O.P. Jindal Global University. She focuses on issues of migration, gender, youth mobility, and urbanization. Her Ph.D. dissertation explored the gendered dynamics of middle-class culture in a Dalit Punjabi community. Previously she has worked on land acquisition, maternal health and mobile technology in India, and sex selection in Indo-Canadian communities. She was recently part of a QMUL funded interdisciplinary project on mental health and family resilience. She is currently working on an SSHRC-funded project on Covid-19 and Punjabi Migration. Sugandha is also leading a project on internal migrants' aspirations for education and employment in Haryana.

### Tim Lorndale, University of Pennsylvania

Tim Lorndale lives in Montréal. He works on literature and epigraphy in Old Kannada and Sanskrit. He also recently defended his doctoral dissertation at Penn.

**Contact:** [tlorn@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:tlorn@sas.upenn.edu)



### Yasir Hameed, York University

Yasir Hameed is a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University and a York Centre for Asian Research Graduate Associate. He has a bachelor's degree in Architecture (Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi) and a master's degree in City and Regional Planning (UC Berkeley). His work explores questions of public space, housing, safety, marginalization, resistance and social justice in cities. His dissertation research examines how Hindu nationalism has traveled transnationally across neocolonial landscapes and manifests in physical and online spaces of Canada.

**Contact:** [yasirh@yorku.ca](mailto:yasirh@yorku.ca)

## ABSTRACTS



Image: British Library. Or 12208,  
fol. 325v. Nizāmī Ganjavī, Khamsah.  
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Viewer.aspx?ref=or\\_12208\\_fs001r](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or_12208_fs001r)

## Beyond the Past: Poetry as a Notation of the Present

*Anne Murphy, University of British Columbia*

Bhai Vir Singh was a major figure in the colonial and post-colonial literary worlds of Punjab, and then the Indian Punjab; he is known today, perhaps most centrally, as a defining force in the forging of modern Sikh identity, grounded in a particular approach to the past. He was active across a wide range of genres: he edited historical texts and produced extensive commentaries on them; he produced the first modern play in Punjabi, discussed in an essay in this volume; he wrote historical novels; and he was active in popular printing, for which he produced a wide range of short largely didactic and polemical works. But the genre that he was most renowned for – which has been largely neglected by English-language scholarship, except for pioneering work by Harbans Singh, Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, and a few others – was his modernist poetry. Indeed, it was the modernist poetic compilation *Mere Sāīāñ Jīo* (1953) that earned him the Sahitya Akademi award in 1955, in the first year that the award was ever granted, and a year before his death. This paper seeks to explore aspects of Bhai Vir Singh's modernist poetic work, to consider what examination of this body of poetry might tell us about his work as a whole, and its complex relationship with time, tradition, and the future.



## The Spiritual Spatial in Maṇḍalīka's Girnar

*Mukti Patel, University of Toronto*

In examining a period of medieval transitions, specifically, political shifts of power as the Gujarat Sultanate conquered a city ruled by a Hindu king, my paper examines aesthetic aspects of a fifteenth century Sanskrit mahākāvya called the Maṇḍalīkanṛpacarita with attention to religious themes. The mahākāvya, commissioned in 1460 CE at the height of the king's power, narrates the deeds of king Maṇḍalīka, the last dynastic Hindu king of Junagadh. Its impetus for creation may have included threats to the king's political power preceding a transition from Hindu dynastic kingship to the Islamic sultanate in Gujarat in 1472 CE. Aparna Kapadia and Sameira Sheikh have studied this text to theorize about the role of Sanskrit literature in Gujarati kingship, but the religious dimensions of the text in this period of transition are largely underexplored. Because Kapadia notes that the Maṇḍalīkanṛpacarita is extremely localized in scope and rooted in the surrounding topography, I am interested in discerning religious themes through a close analysis of the early verses that set the scene. I analyze the setting in the first chapter of this mahākāvya, which makes universalist claims about particular landmarks as the poem asserts a sacred geography on the mountain. I aim to understand how the aestheticization of Mount Girnar, a site sacred to various religious groups, contributes to our understanding of the dynamic religious landscape in fifteenth century Gujarat. Such historical background can help scholars understand the current socio-political climate in Gujarat and interreligious encounters.

## Imperial Cartography, Republican Pilgrimage in the Western Himalayas

*Andrea Pinkney, McGill University*

Until the turn of the nineteenth century, the North Indian region of Uttarakhand was largely inaccessible as its roads, emanating from the northernmost railheads, dwindled to footpaths and, ultimately, vanished as they approached the topographical boundary of the Himalayas. While the region's remoteness has historically been a buffer against large-scale external influences, profound social changes in the twentieth century accompanied the expansion of state roadways. Now, millions of domestic and international religious tourists can visit Uttarakhand's most famous sites, the Char Dham, in seven days (or less) during the brief summer pilgrimage season. In this talk, based on analyses of regional maps, colonial sources, and pilgrims' testimonies, I explore the links between trigonometric theory, cartography, and the practical staging of these sciences in colonial India as key to understanding the transformation of religious travel in Uttarakhand into a mass-market, motor pilgrimage network.

## **“Feedback Time”: digital media and recursive religiosity in Pakistani TV dramas**

*Elliot Montpellier, University of Pennsylvania*

This paper reports on transitions over the last ten years from a primarily broadcast distribution of television to a more diversified and digitalised mediascape in Pakistan. Networks that repositioned Urdu television dramas as a core culture industry in the wake of liberalisation in the early 2000s have been confronted with challenges in adapting to a global “post-network” era of digital media. The advent of digital production technologies and platforms has been accompanied by the rise of social media. Social media has opened new potentialities for audience engagement with dramas. The paper’s focus on these changes draws from ethnographic fieldwork in Karachi with the industry as well as digital ethnography of internet spaces where audiences and producers engage one another.

This focus captures the interplay between television and social media in the Pakistani drama industry, one that draws community and morality into the political economy of the mediascape and into distinct notions of religious publics. Religious publicity is an effect of the productive work that audiences do (Cody 2011) through viewing practices and social media engagement with the drama content. By tracing circulations, we can better understand the extension of tastes, pious behaviors, and religious affects across (virtual and real) social domains alongside how drama producers interpret reception to carry forward into new productions. This feedback process takes place under conditions inflected locally by commercial and technological interests. Pious content materializes under these conditions where emerging content is recursively introduced (Kelty 2005) into translocal media - and religious - worlds.

## **Rohail Hyatt’s Metamorphosis with Quantum Physics and Sufism**

*Ryan D’Souza, Chatham University*

Rohail Hyatt is a music composer from Pakistan, notably associated with Coke Studio Pakistan (2008-2013). In April 2015, he delivered a lecture on music and nature at Harvard University’s South Asian Institute. Hyatt identifies an imbalance in music standards, especially at a conceptual understanding of sound. In exploring the imbalance, Hyatt discloses that he exposed himself to pure frequencies and tones that initiated a metamorphosis in him. He concludes his female woke up.

Hyatt’s metamorphosis alludes to a transition from one mode of being to another. He makes sense of his experience with sound by comparing quantum physics and Sufism as approaches to the nature of Reality from different methods to knowledge. In the comparison, Hyatt discusses culture and science in a productive relationship, making relativism an obvious conclusion of human knowledge. Such a conclusion is disastrous for the nature of Reality because being human is explainable with neither culture nor science.

To understand Hyatt’s lecture, I approach quantum physics and Sufism with sound within a framework of alternative humanisms owed to Sylvia Wynter’s exposition on the invention of Man as human. I trace the development of the equal-temperament scale to show sound was subjected to the ideology of Neoplatonism that structures contemporary biology. I then trace the development of quantum physics, focusing on Einstein’s heuristic point of view to show a development in Sufism offering similar conclusions. The connections show that other ways to reorganize life can be invented, if not, found in different ways to be human.

## Why Mementoes Aren't Just Memories: Ephemera as a Site of Colonialist Narratives on India

*Michelle Folk, University of Regina*

We use things to remember. Objects are carefully and intentionally curated by us with the purpose of remembering the past. Our personal collections – photos, notes, and more – often contain ephemera or items that were not created to survive long term. Charles A. Bradbrooke (1873-1948) served in Britain's Imperial Army at Aden and Lucknow before settling in Saskatchewan in 1911 and becoming the Indian Agent at Pelly. The Saskatchewan Archives' Bradbrooke Fonds is an assortment of things we imagine ourselves collecting as remembrances – awards, newspaper clippings, notebooks, and postcards. I imagine the fonds as mementoes for Bradbrooke, perhaps being stored in a drawer or a box in an attic and pulled out when he wanted to reminisce about his time in Aden and Lucknow. Bradbrooke's keepsakes – his postcards for example – however personal they were for him, offer us a unique glimpse into history. Postcards were collected, traded, and sold by Europeans in the early 20th century as souvenirs of people's adventures. They were also a way of communicating Eurowestern narratives on South Asia using accessible and commonplace objects. Ephemera like the ones Bradbrooke collected during his time in India were a means of disseminating colonialist ideologies through everyday artefacts. I will examine the Bradbrooke Fonds and other personal archives (e.g., Regina's Norman MacKenzie) for what we can learn about colonialist narratives from souvenirs, though intended as personal memories of India, cannot be interpreted or understood apart from these narratives.

## Nonsensical Tweets Negotiate Agency through Misnaming

*Sananda Sahoo, Western University*

This paper aims to study nonsensical tweets that display antagonism and contribute to noise. Such tweets are nonsensical because they have no overt meaning, are often confined to a jumble of signs and hashtags, and spam any attempt at a discussion on Twitter, challenging the notion of autonomy in digital assembly. "Nonsensical" tweets fail to further dialogue by violating Grice's maxims for effective conversation and communication (Grice 1975). The paper seeks to answer: Why do Twitter users post tweets using linguistic and non-linguistic features that do not have referential meaning? What accounts for the usage of nonsensical tweets, what purpose do they serve? How can this knowledge anticipate future use of speech and features of speech acts on social media platforms?

Expanding on the literature on naming (Pennesi 2019) and stancetaking (Goodwin and Alim 2010; Kiesling 2018; Piller 2016), I focus on the act of misnaming to take a stance. As data, I consider Twitter responses that use #lynching and #India when responding to incidents of lynching in India since 2015. I argue that this is done to misname the intended audience members to impose an identity on them and take a stance, display community, personal power, and knowledge through hate words, slang, and keywords that could trigger retweets or retweets @mentions. This is an attempt to negotiate agency of their audience members through misnaming. The categories popular among users to impose an identity include traitor or anti-national; liberal media or partisan (god) media; "Gandhi followers;" and "Muslim appeaser."

## Childhood's End: Ramalinga Swamigal's Reappraisal of the Devotion of Youth

*Jesse Pruitt, University of Toronto*

With the respective publications of Srilata Raman and Richard Weiss we see not simply a sudden proliferation of academic writing on the 19th century Tamil Śaiva saint, Ramalinga Swamigal, but a focus on the figure as the turning point where Śaivism became modern, and the Saint became public. In my paper, I will approach this individual not for his external legacy, but rather to consider how a Saint can come to terms with the religion of their own past. I will read two texts concerned with the god Murukaṅ written at the bookends of Ramalinga's life – first the Teyvamaṅimālai, a bhakti poem regarded as sung at the age of nine (~1832) to the god in colonial Madras, and second Cuppiramaṅiyam, a prose teaching recorded by his followers in the last years of his life (~1867). In that span, Ramalinga had left the metropole, pivoted to worshipping the Great Light of Grace (aruṭperuṅcōti), and attracted both followers through emphasis on the act of feeding through compassion for all lives (cīvakaruṅyam) and critics through the framing and publication of his writings as a new Śaivite canon, the Tiruvaruṭpā. Given the evidence that the unlicensed printing and dissemination of his early work in streets and bazaars was an incentive for the publishing of his oeuvre, how might the living saint have reconciled his new idiosyncratic teaching with the poetic compositions of his boyhood? This essay addresses this question while contributing to a history of the shifting devotional landscape of 19th century South India.

## Inscriptions are like Onions: Peeling Back the Compositional Layers of the Attimabbē Inscriptions at Lakkunḍi

*Tim Lorndale, University of Pennsylvania*

In the village of Lakkunḍi, there are two inscriptions (SII XI, nos. 52-3) that contain donations by Attimabbē (ca. 10th-11th c.), the widow, who, both during her lifetime and in the centuries that followed, became the paradigmatic example of a Jain devotee and patron in the Deccan (Hampana 1996; Kumari, 1994; Nagarajaiah 1996; Srikantaiah 1948; Taylor 2016). The first (no. 53), dated to 1007 CE, contains a modest endowment to the Jain basadi that she established in the village. However, the stone that held no. 53 sustained damage and broke into several pieces. The inscription that replaced it (no. 52), though usually understood to be just a slightly expanded copy, contains multiple new endowments that do not appear in the original record. While scholars acknowledge that differences exist between the two charters (Chidananda Murty 1966), the work that has been done to assess its contents focuses overwhelmingly on the hagiographical tradition that developed around this famous widow (Nagarajaiah 1996). In this paper, I explore the alterations and changes found in inscription no. 52 to reassess its compositional history. By examining its description of village bureaucracy, types of donations, and overall rhetoric, I argue that it is possible to narrow down this charter's window of composition to a period of 75 years.



## Śakuntalā in Modern China

*Gal Gvili, McGill University*

This paper presentation situates the modern history of Śakuntalā in China, which begins with the first translations conducted from French and English in 1907 and 1908. The paper then moves to focus on the 1956 groundbreaking translation from Sanskrit by the foremost Chinese Indologist Ji Xianlin (1911-2009). Trained in Germany in Sanskrit and Tocharian languages, Ji Xianlin established the field of South-Asian Studies in China in his long career at the prestigious Peking University. He was also the first major translator of Indian classics from original languages into Chinese, including Śakuntalā, the complete Ramayana and more. Ji's translation of Śakuntalā was considered such an aesthetic achievement that it is still studied today in China's highest institution of performing arts, the Central Academy of Drama in Beijing. Contextualizing this translation is the period that came to be known as "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai." Between 1947-1962, as China and India's relations tightened, Ji Xianlin was selected to lead several cultural delegations to China while continuing to avidly research South-Asian languages and China-India connections. The paper will discuss major issues emerging from the translation in relation to contemporaneous requirements of socialist realism and the thriving of cultural diplomacy. Mainly, I show that the 1956 translation of Śakuntalā which was immediately honored by a widely covered performance in China and in India, must be understood beyond the familiar "Third World Solidarity" paradigm. The translation demonstrates, I argue, that Ji Xianlin joined key Chinese intellectuals in his efforts to phrase a theory of literary aesthetic from examining China-India cultural exchange.

## A Mid-Century Mantra for the Guhānanda Maṇḍalī: Cidānandanātha's Śrīvidyā

*Meera Kachroo, McGill University/ St. Thomas More College*

N. Subramania Iyer (dīkṣā and publication name Cidānandanātha; 1882-1957) was the preeminent twentieth-century interpreter of Śrīvidyā; through the mid-century his disciples' association published over a dozen of his works under the auspices of the Śrī Brahma Vidyā Vimarśinī Sabhā. As issued from a series of small (and now-defunct) private presses, Cidānandanātha selected and edited key volumes from the Śrīvidyā canon to guide the theological speculation and ritual activities of his disciples, who comprise the still widely renown Guhānanda Maṇḍalī of Chennai. Among Śrīvidyā initiates, the Guhānanda Maṇḍalī is associated with exacting standards, high levels of discretion, innovative publication strategies, and complete respect for the intellectual, ritual, and philosophical precision of its members. In his Śrīvidyānityāhnikā and in Śrīvidyāsaparyāpaddhati, Cidānandanātha sets forth the curriculum of tantric upāsana, positioning the mantric practices of śrīcakrapūjā as suited only to those ardently seeking liberation (mumukṣus). With this highest bar of eligibility, Cidānandanātha's criteria sternly rebuked the reputational prejudices that dominated discourses about tantra in the early part of the twentieth century. The uniquely liberatory orientation that guides the ethos of his published volumes is further reproduced in the initiation criteria established by successive gurus of the maṇḍalī. In rejecting the bubukṣu, who seeks pleasure or enjoyment through ritual practice, Cidānandanātha lays bare the underlying purpose and thematic of the Śrīvidyā tradition, which has often been described in academic publications as founded on traditions of love-magic, oriented towards the pursuit of worldly accomplishments, or as an instrument of political and regal favour.

## The Resilience of Punjabi Migration and Mobility during the Pandemic

*Tania Das Gupta, York University*

The onset of the pandemic has entailed a reconfiguration of migration and mobility experiences across the world. In this paper, we examine how young Punjabi men and women across the contexts of Toronto and Punjab are navigating and articulating their aspirations for physical and social mobility during Covid-19 through the framework of social resilience. Our focus is on transnational Punjabi migrants that are currently in the process of or have engaged in student or skilled migration to Canada. In this paper, we compare how young Punjabis' aspirations for migration and mobility have evolved in the pre-and post-migration phase in the context of Covid-19. In the telling of their migration plans and experiences, young Punjabis across both contexts reiterate the importance of migration. Covid-19 features as one of the many institutional barriers to migration and mobility rather than the dominant obstacle. In the pre-migration phase, Punjabis highlight the role of fraudulent agents, information asymmetry, and rapidly evolving immigration policies. In the post-migration phase, they discuss discrimination from other Punjabis, housing issues, logistical challenges of combining study and work, immigration requirements, and social isolation in Canada. We argue that young Punjabi's discourse about migration during the pandemic reflects their social resilience and how it is informed by gender, migration status (pre-or post-migration), and class positioning.

## Darker-Skinned and Unmarriageable? Experiencing and Coping with Shadism amongst South Asian Women in Canada

*Bidushy Sadika, Western University*

Shadeism is defined as prejudice and discrimination based on skin shade. Women in postcolonial societies, such as South Asia, experience shadeism in marital and career contexts. Those who do not live in their homelands uniquely cope with shadeism by negotiating cultural values of their host countries and ethnic communities. Hence, the present study explored experiences and outcomes of shadeism within interpersonal, social, and cultural contexts amongst South Asian women living in Canada. Virtual, face-to-face, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 South Asian women in Canada. Inductive reflexive thematic analysis was used, which refers to a method to describe patterns within data sets while centering researcher subjectivity and reflexivity. Four broad themes were derived: 1) colonial origins of shadeism; 2) experiences of shadeism (i.e., interpersonal, social, and cultural spaces, media portrayals, and intersections of shadeism with other forms of oppression [e.g., racism]); 3) protective factors against shadeism (e.g., coping, resilience, and resistance; older age and maturity; interpersonal support; living in Canada; and having a bicultural identity); and 4) outcomes of shadeism on perceptions of skin tone, skin-lightening practices, and psychological wellbeing. Overall, researchers are recommended to employ cultural and positive psychological frameworks that depict South Asian women as individuals with culturally rich stories of empowerment and resistance. Practical implications include: 1) provision of workshops and resource toolkits to educate South Asian Canadian families about shadeism and its adverse consequences for women in their communities; and 2) individual counseling and support groups for South Asian women in Canada who experience shadeism.

## An Elephant amid Rice Fields: Ganesha's Thai Diaspora

*Aditya Bhattacharjee, University of Pennsylvania*

In recent years, the semantic valences implied by the term diaspora have been innovatively extended by scholars across many disciplines. These extensions have successfully transformed the latter into a theoretical category that explains various modes of global movement and transnationally sited community formations. This presentation participates in the same processes of lexical creativity, introducing the term divine diaspora to describe individuated, international congregations and worship practices dedicated to single Hindu Gods. I draw upon field visits to the three Ganesha-centered temples in Chachoengsao, Thailand's national Ganesha province. Situated amidst paddy fields in the Siamese cultural heartland, each temple was inaugurated in the previous decades and boasts ownership of a tallest Ganesha statue in the world. Each of these sites was constructed following the devotional impetus and fundraising efforts of various individuals, several of whom self-identify as Thai Buddhists. My talk interrogates the multiple meanings suggested by the imposing materiality and the foundational stories offered at these sites. Tracing these definitions out (1) facilitates a more nuanced engagement with the properties and contours of anthropologist Pattana Kitiarsa's concept of popular Thai religious hybridity and (2) revises current narratives of Hindu diasporas constituted primarily by Indian immigrants by introducing us to Thai Buddhist devotees of Hindu Gods.

## Exploring South Asian Food Cultures in Canada

*Panel Abstract*

Food travels across time and space, carrying with it complex cultural meanings and personal histories that change, and are changed by, new settings and circumstances. This transformative culinary journey is especially apparent in South Asian Canadian food-related expressions. From restaurants to theatre, from literature to film, South Asian food cultures have had a significant impact on Canada's foodways and culinary imaginations. Food is central to South Asians' cultural life. It not only sustains ties to the home left behind but also helps to create a new home space in adopted lands, triggering memories of places, people, and cultures. In this panel, we explore how connection to food is reflected in South Asian Canadian diasporic literature and art through the ways that authors and artists use gastronomy to signify intersectional issues of race, class, and gender, and represent matters of identity and belonging central to understanding migration

## Recipes for Reading Drama: Mixing Genres in *A Brimful of Asha*

*Shelley Boyd, Kwantlen Polytechnic University*

The play *A Brimful of Asha* by Asha and Ravi Jain traces the autobiographical story of the Jain family. Produced by Ravi Jain's *A Why Not Theatre Company*, the play has toured across Canada with Asha and Ravi Jain performing as themselves in a kind of "reality theatre." My paper presents Asha's participation as a complex food-related performance that takes place both on and off the stage. Food and commensality figure prominently in the play. Audience members are served samosas upon entering the theatre. A kitchen table sits at centre stage throughout the play, and both Asha and Ravi share memories of food tied to their Canadian and Indian communities. In the published version, a pocket of index cards includes Asha's family photographs (which appear in the production), and recipes that were not part of the performance. All of these components, and especially the additional paratextual materials, invite audiences-turned-readers to re-examine the play through the generic conventions of culinary memoir, which Traci Marie Kelly describes as a "literary extension of . . . kitchen storytelling" with its "complex pastiche of recipes, personal anecdotes, family history, public history, photographs, even family trees" (252). I will argue that these culinary fragments, both performed and published as *A Brimful of Asha*, present Asha as a diasporic subject "in between" countries and literary genres, where challenging preconceived notions of gender and cultural stereotypes is a central part of her life-narrative. These culinary experiences make her collaborative and title role in the play all the more significant as a figure of self-invention.

## Biryani Poutine and Halal Burgers: The Poetics and Politics of Food in *Uzma Jalaluddin's Hana Khan Carries On*

*Asma Sayed & Jacqueline Walker,  
Kwantlen Polytechnic University*

Connection to food is reflected in South Asian diasporic writing through the ways that authors use gastronomy to signify intersectional issues of race, class, and gender, and represent matters of identity and belonging. *Uzma Jalaluddin's* romantic comedy novel, *Hana Khan Carries On*, is one such work in which gastronomy plays a significant role. This paper examines the poetics and politics of food in *Jalaluddin's* novel. The novel follows Hana and others in her family as their halal food restaurant, *Three Sisters Biryani Poutine*, struggles to remain profitable in their Golden Crescent neighbourhood in the Greater Toronto region. We will theorize the ways that the novel mobilizes food as a language of affection and relationship building and as a representation of religious and cultural divides, and the role of the restaurant/culinary space in romance and intergenerational family and community connection. We simultaneously explore how the novel reflects upon the consumption of halal food as halal food becomes politicized and exoticized by non-Muslims. The extensive, and often intentional, misunderstanding generated around halal food lends itself to further racism and Islamophobia and becomes a tool to further xenophobia. Understanding the role of South Asian gastronomy and culinary motifs in the novel allows for a nuanced reading of the intersections of racialized and gendered identities in diaspora, particularly in the context of South Asian immigrant experience in Canada.



## **Culinary Politics, Farmers' Protest and Diaspora Art**

*Sameena Siddiqui, University of British Columbia*

In the pre-pandemic world, in 2019, Punjab Lalit Kala Akademi in Chandigarh presented an exhibition "Farmer is a Wrestler," curated by artists Sumir Tagra & Thukral that addressed the urgency of the agrarian crisis faced by farmers not only in Punjab but entire India. By deploying the visual metaphors of local games, artworks highlighted the complex issues like generational divisions of land, climate change, vote-bank politics, corporate agricultural policies that severely affected the lives and livelihoods of Indian farmers. These artworks traveled to Winnipeg Art Gallery as part of the exhibition 'Vision Exchange: Perspectives from India to Canada' in the same year. Little was known then that 2020 would be the beginning of huge farmers' protests in India against agro-corporate policies and the authoritarian Modi government. The longest non-violent protest in history raised several crucial questions around global food politics, corporatization, climate change, labor, and structural inequalities. This paper will look at South Asian Canadian diasporic artists artworks and community projects which, through food-based themes or culinary experiments, respond critically to the global agrarian crisis, transnational migrations, land question, women labour, and seek to engage the public to reflect on their own interactions with ethnic cuisines/consumer food cultures, global farming practices and communities as well as with environmental crisis. It will propose that food and culinary politics addressed within contemporary art & other forms of cultural production are critical interventional sites upon which we can construct and open up spaces for inclusive democratic futures.

## **"I'm Goan Because I Eat Goan Food": A Critical Look at the History of Goan Canadians**

*Aqeel Ihsan, York University*

The conceptualization of identity around food is not new to Canadian historiography. Many contemporary historians have, by analyzing culinary narratives such as cookbooks and oral interviews, illustrated how food acts as an intellectual and emotional anchor for immigrant subjects and becomes a source of identity for them in their new country. The scholarship suggests that this was the case for Goan-Canadians. In the absence of a distinctive skin colour, religion, and language, it was Goan food that allowed Goans to have a unique identity in South Asia. This difference is most explicit in the Goan dish sorpotel, which is made from beef and pork. This dish is one of many that allowed Goans to distinguish themselves from Hindus, who do not eat beef, and Muslims, who do not eat pork, and made it possible for Goan Canadians to form a community around food. This is one of the conclusions that Andrea D'Sylva and Brenda Beagan, the only two scholars to write about Goan Canadians, arrive to in exploring the experience of Goan Canadian women and their efforts to conserve their dietary habits.

My paper, which examines menus from various Goan Canadian cultural events, finds that Goan Canadians have a complex relationship with traditional foods, and that food was not as important a boundary marker for their identity as the scholarship might suggest. Instead, Goans in Canada developed their own distinct sense of identity based on community, celebrations of holidays, village feasts, and other social events.

## The Jigsaw Puzzle of Hindutva

*Harshita Yalamarty, York University*

In early 2020, within days of the coronavirus pandemic being declared, the evidence of 100+ days of vibrant protests, political art, and slogans against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) at Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi, India, was erased. In Toronto, Canada, we felt this violence reverberate in our memories and bodies and among our families and loved ones in India. Through organizing and participating in anti-CAA/NRC protests in Toronto, we developed connections and alliances across disciplinary boundaries. However, when younger activists, some with diasporic upbringing, told us that they never learned about the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition or the 2002 genocide in Gujarat, we realized that organizing political action in the diaspora felt incomplete without also engaging these histories and analyses. The growth of Hindutva proceeded with multiple interlocking developments - as critics and scholars, it is important to oppose the CAA/NRC while understanding the contestations over immigration in Assam and the history of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), and the violence in Kashmir as the laboratory for detention centers across the country. These are also connected to the foundational violence of the Partition and caste- and gender-based violence across religions. All these are necessary to the foundational principles of Hindutva and to its transnational reach. Therefore, this roundtable aims to connect varying facets of transnational Hindutva - its connections to the growth of Islamophobia and violence against other oppressed groups - in digital and physical spaces of Canada.

## Transnational Hindutva

*Sabika Zaidi, York University*

The growing presence and socio-political influence of Hindutva organizations is not a concern merely contained to the Indian context. This roundtable presentation analyzes the history of the Hindutva movement in Canada and its embeddedness in cultural, educational, and economic processes. The transition of the majoritarian upper-caste Hindus of India into a model minority in Canada is essential to the white-washing of crimes towards Muslim, Dalit and other oppressed minorities in both countries. Furthermore, this global image makeover of Hindutva –first observed in the United States after the Gujarat anti-Muslim pogrom– becomes essential to the growing bilateral trade and business programming undertaken by the federal and provincial governments in Canada with their Indian counterparts. Finally, I highlight the transnational reach of the concept of “sedition” beyond the territories of the Indian state, to investigate some of the techniques used by the Indian Embassy and the Canadian Hindutva groups to control “Indo-Canadian” dissidents.

## The Digital Realm of Hindutva

*Yasir Hameed, York University*

Through a study of the discourses of online Hindu nationalism in this presentation, I demonstrate how an online ecosystem of Hindutva knowledge production contributes to perpetuating discourses of otherization, caste, and Islamophobia, aiding in the reproduction of Hindu nationalism in Canada. Many (Chopra, 2019; Jaffrelot, 2005; Thakurta & Sam, 2019) have pointed out that propaganda has been a crucial tool behind the rise of Hindu nationalism in India, and it remains a critical component of its success abroad as well (Gittinger, 2018; Therwath, 2012). Hindu nationalism also takes a physical manifestation in Canada in the form of various, online pages, groups, operated by non-profits and "community organizations" who, in the spirit of preserving culture and values from 'back home' serve to uphold caste institutions, inequities, and injustices practiced in India, reproducing dominant-caste Hindu "cultural" hegemony in Canada.

## Performances of Hindutva

*Arpita Bajpeyi, York University*

My contribution to this roundtable considers performance and its associated spaces -- homes, stages, streets, classrooms, and studios -- in India and, quite critically, its diasporas as a critical site for the propagation of 'hard' and 'soft' Hindutva. Though I focus on 'classical' dance, I argue that performance broadly speaking has long been essential to the transnational articulation of Hindu nationalism. Beginning with a brief examination of the early imbrication of 'classical' South Asian arts into a casteist, gendered vision and embodiment of the Indian nation, I then turn to a range of performances through which Hindutva is both articulated and mobilized: from public violence, to neoliberal spectacles and the deployment of star power, and to the 'classical' arts, which have remained a comfortable home for Hindutva values.

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