Letter from the Director

Dear Colleagues, Students and Friends,

It has been a busy year since I took over as director of the South Asia Institute. We started the academic year with a celebration of fifty years as a program in South Asian Studies, and ended with a conference bringing South Asian scholars from all across Texas to UT, Austin. In between we invited scholars, writers, artists, filmmakers, performers and activists related to South Asia. This fall we have already organized two workshops, one on Pakistan and the other on Buddhism in South Asia. We are already planning the seminar series for Spring of 2013, while this semester’s seminar series on Religion and Society in Traditional India, a tribute to our own Patrick Olivelle, is well under way.

This vibrant intellectual life at our Institute is matched by our students, under-graduate and graduate, earning degrees, receiving fellowships, getting post-docs and academic teaching positions. Along with this we also anticipate growth in our faculty positions in departments of Asian Studies, History, Government and Religious Studies and the coming years may find us welcoming new members to our affiliated group of scholars on campus.

The Spring of 2012 was a busy time for the South Asia Institute. We started the academic year with the South Asia Institute. The in March 2012 Herman Van Olphen presented a paper “New Directions in the Teaching of Hindi in the United States” at the European Hindi Conference at the University of Valladolid, Spain. On June 20, 2012 the President of India, Pratibha Patil, presented him with the George Grierson Award for service to Hindi by non-Indians at a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi (see photo below).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kamran Asdar Ali

1. Buddhism in South Asia
2. Texas South Asia Conference
3. Pakistan in Texas
4. Graduate Student Dispatch
5. K-12 Outreach
6. South Asia Book Award
7. SAIF to Partner with FJWU
8. Sagar: Call for Papers

Fall 2011 Conference
Becoming South Asian American
Archaeology in South Asia
Spring 2012 Seminar Series

Faculty

Professor of Asian Studies Martha Ann Selby traveled to Singapore in late November 2011 to participate in a workshop entitled “The History and Cultures of Friendship in Precolonial South Asia,” organized by Professors Daud S. Ali of the University of Pennsylvania and Emma J. Flatt, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. The workshop was held on the Nanyang campus, where Selby gave the paper “The Ecology of Friendship: Early Tamil Landscapes of Irony and Voice.”

In March 2012 Herman Van Olphen presented a paper “New Directions in the Teaching of Hindi in the United States” at the European Hindi Conference at the University of Valladolid, Spain. On June 20, 2012 the President of India, Pratibha Patil, presented him with the George Grierson Award for service to Hindi by non-Indians at a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi (see photo below).

Jennifer Bussell (LBJ School of Public Affairs) recently published a book, Corruption and Reform in India, in which she asks: Why are some governments better able to reform public services than others? Her analysis provides insights into this fundamental question through investigation of a new era of administrative reform, in which digital technologies may be used to facilitate citizens’ access to the state. In contrast to factors such as economic development or electoral competition, she highlights the importance of access to rents, which can dramatically shape opportunities and threats of reform to political elites. The book also illuminates the importance of political constituencies and coalition politics in shaping policy outcomes.

A Q&A was done on the book for ShelfLife@Texas (http://www.utexas.edu/opa/blogs/shelflife/2012/05/21/indias-digital-transformation-in-the-public-sector/) and it was also recently reviewed in The Hindu (http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-business/article3075398.ece).

Professor Ashwini Deo joined the Department of Linguistics as a Harrington Faculty Fellow for Academic Year 2012-13. Prof. Deo is an assistant professor in the Department of Linguistics at Yale University who received her doctorate from Stanford in 2006.

In the past year, Professor Shama Gamkhar (LBJ School of Public Affairs) and graduate student Ian Partridge have done research on the health effects of coal fired power generation: http://www.rff.org/Publications/Pages/PublicationDetails.aspx?PublicationID=21942.

This research was also presented at the American Social Science Association meeting and at the World Bank in 2012. They also authored two articles on the power sector in China, highlighted on this web page (they are currently working on similar issues in India): http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/facultyresearch.


Kamran Asdar Ali, Anthropology, published Women, Work and Public Spaces: Conflict and Co-Existence in
Max Bruce (Asian Studies) received an American Institute of Indian Studies Junior Research Fellowship. Max’s dissertation is on the life and works of Shibli Nomani (1857-1914).

Abdul Haque Chang (anthropology) received a Wenner Gren Foundation grant to conduct pre-dissertation field work in the Indus Delta, Sind, Pakistan.

Anindita Chatterjee (anthropology) attended the seventh International Gender and Language Association Conference (IGALA-7) held at the Universidad de Vale dos anos (UNISINOS) at Sao Leopoldo, Brazil during 20th to 22nd of June 2012, with funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF). Her paper, “Who is a gossip? Questioning gossip as a gendered activity”, focused on how Bengali female and male speakers reconstruct the speech activity of gossip (or “PNPC”) as used more commonly in Bengali) within the framework of a casual informal conversation often referred to as ‘adda’ in Bengal. She focused on how participants discuss the different stereotypical assumptions associated with the discourse activities like adda and PNPC.

Zainab Cheema (Comparative Literature) presented her paper, “Photography of Desire: Examining the Courtians of 19th Century Lucknow through Darogha Abbas Ali’s ‘The Lucknow Album and Hasenain-Lucknow’ at the 100th Annual Conference of the College Art Association (CAA) and at the 2012 American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA).

Eben Graves (Éthnomusicology) was awarded a Junior Fellowship from the American Institute of Indian Studies to fund his doctoral dissertation research on Bengali Vaishnava kirtan. He is currently in Kolkata working with kirtaniyas (kirtan musicians), visiting archives and bookstores, and attending kirtan performances throughout Kolkata and other areas of West Bengal.

Amy Hyne (Asian Studies) received a Fulbright Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad award. Amy is conducting research in Pune, India, for her dissertation on the history, development, and cultural constructions of insanity in India.

Hafeez Jamali (anthropology) received a three month fellowship to complete his dissertation on Baluchistan, Pakistan from ZMO, Berlin (Center for Modern Oriental Studies), Summer 2012.

Mubashir Rizvi (anthropology) did research in Pakistan on an AIFS Short Term Fellowship (Summer 2012).

Ian Woolford (Asian Studies) defended his dissertation titled “Renu Village: An Ethnography Of North Indian Fiction.” Ian is a post-doctoral fellow at Cornell University.

Asian Studies doctoral students Amy Hyne, Mike Jones, and Hillary Langberg presented papers on Sanskrit philology at the 22nd annual meeting of the American Oriental Society in March of this year. The meeting, held in Boston, MA, focused primarily on philological aspects of non-western languages and pre-modern religious texts including those of East Asia, South Asia, and the Near East/West Asia.

In her second presentation for AOS, Amy Hyne analyzed the vocabulary employed in definitions of umānda in Sanskrit medical texts with a paper entitled “Interpreting umānda in Sanskrit Medical Literature.” Mike Jones’ paper, “Krūparājāraḥ 6-10 in light of Tatttirīyā Śaṃcapādaj 2.3-10” analyzed the construction of scriptural authority through allusion in a didactic agricultural text. Hillary Langberg’s paper, “The Term vāyu in Two Medieval Buddhist Texts,” looked at diverging translations of vāyuśa in both the Kārṣṇaṇyāya Sūtra and Matijurīśmilakālpa and the resulting impact on scholars’ attitudes toward Buddhist and Brahmanical deity interaction in these works.

Veteran attendees Dr. Joel Brereton and Dr. Patrick Olivelle also presented at the meeting. Dr. Brereton’s paper, “The Egyedic Ghosha Hymns and the Aitārāra,” suggests that two hymns citing Ghosha, the personified scream, might be appropriately placed within the ritual context of Aitārāra soma rite. Dr. Olivelle closed the meeting’s three days of talks with his paper, “Showbiz in Ancient India: Data from the Aitārāradhakar.” Several Asian Studies alumni also presented. The abstracts and program for the meeting may be found at http://www.umich.edu/%7Eaos/Programs.html.

HUF students Florence Kerns and Ishita Paul both won first place in their respective categories at the prestigious national Hindi debate held at Yale University on April 6, 2012.

The debate featured contestants from Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Pennsylvania, NYU, Cornell, Wellesley, UCLA, and Wesleyan, all of whom were asked to articulate a defense or critique of higher education. The panel of judges awarded second-year HUF student Florence Kerns first-place in the category of non-native non-heritage Hindi speakers, while fourth-year HUF student Ishita Paul was awarded first-place among native heritage speakers. The judges particularly applauded Kerns’ ability to improvise and respond thoughtfully to questions without relying on a memorized Hindi ‘script.’ Similarly, they praised Paul’s remarkable range of Hindi register and nuanced thought on a difficult subject. HUF Foundation Year Hindi lecturer, Vidhu Chaturvedi, assisted both students in their extensive preparations for the debate and accompanied them to the event to serve as member of the Hindi faculty panel.

Congratulations to the 2012-2013 FLAS Awardees!

Academic Year 2012-2013 Awardees:
• Dana Johnson, Asian Studies, Hindi
• Colin Pace, Asian Studies, Hindi
• Gwendolyn Kirk, Anthropology, Urdu
• Charlotte Giles, Asian Studies, Urdu
• Elizabeth Bolton, Radio Television-Film, Hindi
• Jack Loveridge, History, Hindi
• Jonathan Seefeldt, Asian Studies, Hindi
• Jacob Hustedt, Radio Television-Film, Hindi
• Saba Danawala, Public Affairs and Public Health, Pashto
• Emily Ernst, Asian Studies, Urdu
• Hillary Langberg, Asian Studies, Hindi

Summer 2012 Awardees:
• Benjamin Krakauer, Éthnomusicology, Bengali
• Michaela Nelson, Asian Studies, Malayalam
• Jacob Hustedt, Radio Television-Film, Hindi
• Jack Loveridge, History, Hindi
• Ralph Bauer, Asian Studies, Tamil
• Farhana Maredia, Asian Studies, Urdu
The Hindi Urdu Flagship (HUF) continues to develop its mission of bringing undergraduate learners to a high level of proficiency in South Asia's principal pair of languages. HUF moves into its sixth year of operations with a reconfigured administrative staff: following Sarah Green's retirement in May 2012, Selina Keilani has stepped up to the new position of Assistant Director, while Kristine Anderson has joined the team as Administrative Coordinator, on a part-time basis from fall 2012. The new academic year brings some important curriculum changes, blending HUF's program more efficiently with the 'non-HUF' Hindi and Urdu courses taught in Asian Studies; the new course sequence is displayed on HUF's ever-growing website, hindiuurdulanguage.org. A further change is being introduced in the program's Overseas year taught by the American Institute of India Studies: the fall and spring semesters will henceforth be held, respectively, at the American Institute of India Studies in New Delhi and the American Institute of India Studies in Hyderabad, guided and taught by HUF's Media Coordinator, though on a part-time basis from fall 2012 as he returns to his graduate study. All members of Asian Studies faculty in Hindi and Urdu are involved in the program in teaching and in other modes of engagement with the students; and HUF continues to host numerous events that bring the world of Hindi and Urdu to UT, not only for HUF students but for the wider South Asianist community.

Although the current economic climate means that HUF has to do more with less, the program is in a healthy state; several of its students have won major awards, and our recruitment efforts are bearing fruit in the increased numbers of students applying to the program — especially its extended (five-year) version, which admits students with no prior knowledge of Hindi or Urdu. Our collaboration with UT academic advisors across campus has been of great importance to HUF's development, as strong support from both the Department of Asian Studies and the College of Liberal Arts has made it possible for HUF to fulfill its mandate, while UT's strong South Asian focus provides an ideal background for the program's work.

The South Asia Institute, in collaboration with the Hindi-Urdu Flagship program, celebrated the centenary of the literary icon Sadat Hasan Manto with stimulating lectures and discussions. Dr. Shamim Hanfi, the distinguished critic of Urdu prose and poetry, and former chair of the Department of Urdu Studies, presided over three academic sessions that engaged the aesthetics and legacy of Manto. The opening session showcased presentations from undergraduate and graduate students from a Spring 2012 class that focused on Manto. In addition to Manto’s role in framing the narratives of 1947—the year that witnessed the births of India and Pakistan—students also explored Manto’s contribution to the short story genre in particular and South Asian aesthetics in general. The first two presentations, by third-year undergraduate students of Urdu Sabeena Shaikh and Saif Kazim, set the tone for the three-day event. These were followed by presentations by Milia Islamia, presided over three academic sessions that
I had always resisted the idea that I was Asian American. Though I am half-Pakistani, half-American, I did not grow up in the United States, and I thought I did not share the experience of migration and settlement that characterizes Asian America. But, it turns out, I do. 

In fact, on the first day of class, when I reviewed the syllabus for the course, "South Asian Migration to the U.S." (offered through UT's Center for Asian American Studies), many students were surprised to discover that South Asian America existed at all. "I had never thought about that," they told me. "I thought we'd be studying East Asian migration." The broad label "Asian," meant to be inclusive, often masks the historic diversity in Asian America and still has more work to do to encourage the building of solidarity across the ethnic and religious boundaries. To draw out the complexity of South Asian America, however, we had to explore the history of migration to the United States more broadly and this showed the intertwined histories of disparate groups and the importance of those solidarities. In addition, we had to understand the history of South Asian global migration to see how South Asian migration to the U.S. was sometimes similar and sometimes wildly different from it. The class then began with a global scope, and as the semester wore on, we narrowed our focus to specific communities, geographies and groups. Ultimately we narrowed our focus to the level of the individual. 

Each of my 23 students located a South Asian migrant who came to the United States under their own power (was not born here or brought by a parent or family member). They then conducted an oral history interview about that individual's migration and experience, transcribed the interview and wrote an analytical essay linking their narrators' story with the themes of the course. The narrators who generously shared their stories resisted the homogenizing tendency of the blanket term "Asian." Rather, they exposed the diversity of South Asian America. Students interviewed Muslims, Hindus, Parsis, Christians; Sri Lankans, Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. These narrators arrived in the United States variously in college, high school, graduate school, in early career and after retirement; they have made love marriages, arranged marriages, interfaith, interracial and intercaste marriages, or even chosen not to marry; they speak Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Bengali, Urdu, English, Punjabi, Tamil, Malayalam, and Sinhalese; they are men and women; they have been here from three to sixty years. Some came directly to the United States from their home country, some came via Africa, England or the South Pacific. This incredible complexity is hidden inside the stereotype that South Asians represent: a "model minority," seamlessly assimilated into the American system. Oral history interviews, like these, offer access into lives beyond the stereotypes and serve to deepen our understanding of lived experience.

These stories reveal the contours of the South Asian American community in the United States. We have much to learn about its dynamics, the bonds of solidarity between groups, the politics that might divide them, and what it means to be South Asian American. 'These same stories also now form the foundation of two South Asian American oral history collections I have curated that are open and available to other researchers. On April 17, I deposited seven of the students' interviews into the Asian American collection at the Austin History Center; in the coming weeks another twelve interviews will be archived in the South Asian American Digital Archive (www.saadigitalarchive.org). As these collections continue to grow, we invite you to explore the meaning of experience, to move beyond stereotypes and to explore the specificity and complexity of individual lives in this new category of South Asian America.
Symposium on Archaeology in South Asia: Recent Excavations and Re-Interpretations

Gail Minault
Professor of History

On April 13, 2012, the South Asia Institute hosted a one-day symposium on ‘Archaeology in South Asia: Recent Excavations and Re-Interpretations.’ The object of this gathering was to bring together archaeologists, historians, and those with linguistic and textual knowledge to examine the archaeological record, past interpretations, and current re-interpretations based on new discoveries, that might cast new light on past distortions of the historical record.

The morning session included papers relating to archaeology in Pakistan. Mark Kenoyer, Professor of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Wisconsin, presented “New Perspectives on the Indus Civilization: Origins, Character, and Legacy.” Kaleem Ullah Lashari, Secretary, Government of Sindh, Pakistan, and a practicing archaeologist, spoke on “The Pottery of Banbhore: New Evidence” relating to archaeology outside of UT and two of our own faculty. Steven Collins from the University of Texas, and Janice Leoshko, and Himanshu Prabha Ray from the University of Chicago and Oliver Freiberger from UT will be discussing aspects of the southern or Theravāda Buddhist tradition. Collins will examine one of the central concerns of Buddhist thought, the concept of the person, and Freiberger one of the central moments in Buddhist history, the establishment of the Buddhist monastic order. Richard Salomon from the University of Washington will present the results of his study of a very early Buddhist manuscript that was recently discovered in Afghanistan. And finally Gregory Schopen from Brown University and Janice Leoshko from UT will be discussing what images can and cannot tell us about ancient Buddhism. A list of the talks and the full schedule for the conference is available on the website of the South Asia Institute.

Spring 2012 Seminar Series: Tracings and Shadows: Moving Pictures and Drawing Images

Lalitha Gopalan, Associate Professor in the Departments of Radio Television Film and Asian Studies, organized SATs Spring 2012 seminar series around the presumption that there is a common ground between multi-media artists and film scholars. The series highlighted projects forged in the name of South Asian visual cultures both from the region and Diaspora. Structural conversations, the series formalized the ongoing dialogue between artists and scholars in their various genres towards images and moving pictures.

At the end of this academic year, after a career of more than twenty years at UT, Patrick Olivelle will be retiring from the University of Texas. During his time at UT, Patrick has served as the Chair of the Department of Asian Studies and as Director of the Center for Asian Studies, which later became the South Asia Institute. In the year before Patrick’s retirement, the Institute, with additional support from the Department, is sponsoring a series of lectures and seminars that will honor his many contributions to the study of classical South Asia and to the South Asia program at UT. One of the major events of that series will be a conference on Buddhism in South Asia, to be held at UT on October 4-5.

The roots of this conference go back several years to another gathering, this one an international conference for which Patrick was the prime mover and organizer. This conference on ‘Aśoka and the Making of Modern India’ was held at the International Centre, New Delhi, August 5-7, 2009. It had two major themes: the reassessment of the evidence concerning Aśoka and the empire he ruled in the third century BCE and the significance of the memory of Aśoka in subsequent Indian history. The conference was truly an international one, since it was organized and supported not only by the Department and the Institute but also by three institutions in India, and since it included scholars from India, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, France, China, Korea, and Thailand.

The conference at UT this October continues the work of the Aśoka conference, but will more broadly explore new material and reexamine other evidence bearing on the nature and role of Buddhism in ancient India. Five scholars will be presenting papers, three from outside of UT and two of our own faculty. Steven Collins from the University of Chicago and Oliver Freiberger from UT will be discussing aspects of the southern or Theravāda Buddhist tradition. Collins will examine one of the central concerns of Buddhist thought, the concept of the person, and Freiberger one of the central moments in Buddhist history, the establishment of the Buddhist monastic order. Richard Salomon from the University of Washington will present the results of his study of a very early Buddhist manuscript that was recently discovered in Afghanistan. And finally Gregory Schopen from Brown University and Janice Leoshko from UT will be discussing what images can and cannot tell us about ancient Buddhism. A list of the talks and the full schedule for the conference is available on the website of the South Asia Institute.

As part of the conference at UT, there will also be a book launch for the proceedings of the Delhi conference on Aśoka. This volume, Reimagining Aśoka: Memory and History, has been recently published by Oxford University Press. It collects 19 papers written for the Delhi conference, which have been edited by Patrick Olivelle, Janice Leoshko, and Himanshu Prabha Ray from Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. This substantial volume will allow others to share some of the current and new thinking on Aśoka and best current thinking about Aśoka.

A conference on Buddhism in honor of Patrick Olivelle is academically appropriate, since the topic intersects one aspect of Patrick’s work. But it is appropriate for another reason as well. Two paramount ideals of Buddhism are the pursuit of wisdom and the cultivation of kindness. These qualities lead naturally back to Patrick, for he will be deeply missed for the great wisdom and genuine kindness that have been his.
...an invaluable opportunity to bring together a community of South Asian scholars in the region and to connect us more closely."

For two days, UT’s South Asia Institute served as a gathering place for twenty-five graduate students and professors, who presented in panels of three to four each. Scholars brought to light unexpected connections between fields. One panel on literature focused on novels as a space for political critique, while another panel on sanitation and water spoke to issues of cultural difference across the social sciences and the humanities and provided a forum of discussion and dialogue for South Asian Studies scholars from the Texas region. Participating scholars came from Texas A&M, University of North Texas, Texas State University, University of Houston, Southern Methodist University, The University of Texas at Austin, The University of Arkansas and The University of Texas of Oklahoma.

Steve Inskeep at UT

On April 27th, 2012 the South Asia Institute had the honor of hosting Steve Inskeep for a public lecture titled “Colour, Caste, or Creed – Embracing Diversity in Pakistan.” Steve Inskeep, as many of us know, is the co-host of Morning Edition on National Public Radio, the most widely heard radio news program in the United States. Inskeep, who has traveled across the nation and around the world for NPR News has recently written Instant City: Life and Death in Karachi. In 2002 he first visited Karachi, Pakistan – the subject of his book, in the years since, his regular dispatches from visits to Pakistan have included an acclaimed radio series, Along the Grand Trunk Road, reported with his NPR colleagues.

Karachi, the largest and most cosmopolitan city in Pakistan is considered a microcosm of Pakistani life, a country which itself is frequently in the news due to the various security interests that US has in the region. However, Inskeep’s talk was a refreshing departure from the overwhelming representation of Pakistan as one of the most violent spaces in the world, as he described the various layers of society and individual energies that people bring to their everyday lives in large cities like Karachi. He did not shy away from describing the violence that is endemic in the city itself, an urban area divided by class, ethnicity and sectarian identities. Yet he pointed out the dynamism he found among the inhabitants of the city and its civil society leadership who despite great odds seek to make the Karachi a livable city for themselves and others. It was a well attended public talk and helped the South Asia Institute bring more contemporary concerns about South Asia to a wider audience, within and outside the university.

Emergent Voices: Pakistan in the 21st Century

The South Asia Institute organized a two day workshop on Pakistan on September 21-22, 2012. This workshop brought together recent scholarship on Pakistan from a range of disciplines. The discussion opened up new avenues of dialogue and debate based on themes from urban history, cultural politics, to art and aesthetics and social movements. While rethinking the dominant paradigm in Pakistan studies (security studies, gender, Islam), the workshop introduced new perspectives that showcase the dynamic and changing nature of Pakistani society. The invitees specifically included scholars who have published monographs on Pakistan in past few years. Another special feature of the program was highlighting of the contemporary art scene in Pakistan and the experimentations in art forms that are ongoing in the country. The keynote speaker for the event was Professor Aamir Mufti, who teaches Comparative Literature at UCLA. His well attended talk was titled “Revolution is Late Style: Dialectics of Multitude in Faiz Ahmad Faiz”.

As evident from the title, Mufti’s talk was on the famous Urdu poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz (February 1911–1984), who was also an influential left-wing intellectual. (cont’d on p. 18)
Graduate Student Dispatch from India

Jacob Husted
Graduate Student, Radio-Television-Film

There is a club in Malviba Nagar, Jaipur that I have gone to on a couple of nights with some friends from Mumbai and a couple of friends from Jaipur. It’s a noisy, garish place divided in two parts by its dual dance floors— one strictly labeled couples-only and the other for a more general audience. On most Saturday nights, this audience consists of a group of men who have met on “PR” or planetromeo, a networking and hook-up website for gay and bisexual men. Like most guys in gay bars, they're there to dance, drink, meet their friends, and hopefully, by night’s end, to hook up. My friends from Mumbai were surprised by how busy it was. They had thought Jaipur would be more provincial. Yet still, they said, it was no Mumbai or Delhi. I had to go to a Mumbai or Delhi party. They’d take me. Jaipur just wasn’t quite the same. When I arrived in India this summer to do the AIIS Hindi program in Jaipur, I was already interested in the growth of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender activism in India and its connection to India’s global cities— Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, and Chennai. I hoped to trace the interaction between Indian and diasporic LGBT activism onto patterns of economic and migratory circulations in these Indian IT hubs to better understand the global confluence of technological capital, migration, and the emergence of a global LGBT politics. Prior to my arrival in Jaipur, I had thought my research would concentrate on these large cities themselves, yet, already, my time here has changed the way I am conceptualizing my project. While I am still interested in the ways these global centers of technology assist in the distribution and propagation of particular forms of queer identity, I have realized that my research for this project need not necessarily concentrate on these megacities as research sites. Rather, I am becoming increasingly interested in how queer lives in so-called “second-tier cities” are influenced by the technological hegemony of the Mumbais, Delhis, and San Franciscos of the world. What of Pune, Gurgaon and San Jose? How is queer life in these cities shaped and altered by the global capitals of technology and culture that they border? The power of the global city model is not just in how these centers grew into economic and cultural powerhouses but in how the economic and sociocultural pull of these centers has multiple effects across space and time. Moreover, in both India and the United States much work has been done on queer culture in these urban centers, but little has been written on their second-tier counterparts. What does it mean that Jaipur’s clubs are “almost, but not quite” as good as Mumbai’s? And what does it mean about the lives of queer persons in these smaller sites? I hope to use the Internet help these men imagine their relationship to these larger urban centers? My time in Jaipur has made me seriously rethink my preconceived notions of the role of the city in queer life, and this wouldn’t have been possible without the Hindi language training and research funding that South Asia Institute has provided.

Graduate Student Dispatch from El Salvador

Hafeez Jamali
Graduate Student, Anthropology

From May 15 to 20, 2012 a delegation of doctoral students from the University of Texas at Austin’s Department of Anthropology, including Giovanni Batz, Maya Berry, Sarah Ilmoud, Hafeez Jamali, and Elizabeth Velásquez, traveled to El Salvador to launch Peacetime for Whom? A South-South Dialogue on Geographies of Violence and Resistance. Students designed the initiative to further develop anthropological dialogue and solidarity between the Middle East, South Asia and Latin America regions. The diverse group of graduate student scholars from UT’s Activist Research, Diaspora Studies, Indigenous Studies, and Social Anthropology tracks led a five-day academic exchange and dialogue with scholars, students and activists affiliated with two of El Salvador’s most renowned academic institutions: Universidad de El Salvador, Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador, and Universidad Centroamericana - José Simeón Cañas. The UT delegation was featured at the “V Foro de Estudiantes de Antropología Sociocultural” where members gave a panel discussion and a methodology roundtable with UES students. Approximately 100 people attended the event. UT’s panel discussion covered divergent perspectives on violence in the everyday life of L.A.-Guatemala, Israel-Palestine, Balochistan-Pakistan, Cuba and El Salvador. UT students argued that contemporary structural and political violence blurs conceptual divisions between conflict and post-conflict, ordinary and exception, hegemony and domination. The indeterminacy of these concepts forces a reconsideration of official narrative accounts about violence and its relationship with the contemporary neoliberal world order. The panel raised and addressed the following questions: How are narratives of violence deployed by sovereign powers in their attempts to legitimate themselves? What types of subjectivities do encounters with and resistance to everyday violence create? What do these encounters reveal/ hide about the discourses of multiculturalism and neoliberal democracy? SAI-affiliated graduate student, Hafeez Jamali presented his work on megaprojects in Balochistan Province. Pakistan which initially generated surprise more than anything else. Pakistan seemed too far away to register on students’ and ordinary Salvadorians’ images of the world, except as a safe-haven for ‘terrorists’ (courtesy of the western media). Even in the context of traditional leftist ideas of class struggle and international solidarity, places like Pakistan (and Balochistan), do not seem to evoke any familiarity. In a sense, the door to the memory of an era of international cooperation between different leftist national movements of the 1960s and 70s appears to be closing. Nevertheless, UES students and scholars recognized that inequalities being generated by development projects like Gwadar Port in Pakistan shared structural features with similar development projects on the Salvadorian Coast and elsewhere in Latin America. Universidad de El Salvador (UES) UES is a public university, with a very politically active student body. They continue a radical political tradition dating back to the 1970s, prior to the Salvadoran Civil War. The Anthropology Department was founded in 2005. Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador (UTE) UTEC is a private and public university with a very politically active student body. They continue a radical political tradition dating back to the 1970s, prior to the Salvadoran Civil War. The Anthropology Department was founded in 2005. The Texas Asia Conference 2013 is Coming Next Fall!

The Texas Asia Conference (TAC) is a biennial and international graduate student conference organized by the University of Texas at Austin Department of Asian Studies graduate students. The TAC invites graduate students working on original research projects in all academic disciplines and across traditional academic divisions of Asia to present their work. The conference provides students with the opportunity to present their research and engage in transregional, transtemporal, and interdisciplinary dialogues on Asia.

The Fall 2013 Conference will take place next September. Our call for papers for TAC 2013 will be released in early February. We welcome papers from graduate students engaged in research on South, Southeast, Central, and East Asia, and their communities in the diaspora. Our previous conference, in spring of 2011, drew over 100 participants and featured two faculty keynote speakers and 31 student panelists from nearly a dozen universities (including universities in India, Canada, and University of Oslo, Norway). Rather than focusing on one unifying theme, TAC 2011 was structured around 8 distinct theme-based panels, which addressed a wide range of issues including urban change and development, visual culture, nationalism, gender, and textual interpretation. See: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/ims/southasia/_files/downloads/Texas%20Asia%20Conference%202011%20Panels.pdf.

The TAC planning committee is now seeking graduate students from all UT departments to join our committee and get involved! At our upcoming November meeting we will brainstorm sources for funding and potential keynote speakers. Additionally, we welcome any suggestions regarding both funding sources and keynote speaker availability from South Asia Institute affiliated faculty and students. All those interested, please contact TAC committee co-chair Hillary Langberg at langberg@ austin.utexas.edu. Thank you.
SAI: Can you share a little about the different kinds of K-12 educator outreach events you’ve done with the South Asia Institute?

SS: I’ve now had the privilege in participating in two such events. The first was about postcolonial literature from South Asia, in which faculty at UT and Texas A&M shared their thoughts about how to teach literatures from India and Pakistan in high school settings. The presentations on Premchand, Amitav Ghosh, and Mohsin Hamid connected careful readings of the prose with cultural and historical contexts that were deeply informed by new theoretical tools. The second was an outreach event about global cities, in which I gave a presentation about the career of Delhi through 150 years of literature and film. So I covered the transformation of a predominantly Urdu-speaking Delhi at the time of the Mutiny by reading poems from Fugan-i-Dilli, through its transformation under British rule in a novel like Ahmed Ali’s Twilight in Delhi, and its new character as a globalized city in Aravind Adiga’s White Tiger. Of course, any such presentation would have been incomplete without also showing clips from the recent film, Delhi Belly.

SAI: How do you think K-12 educators benefit from these outreach workshops and how would you hope they use the material you presented?

SS: I tend to think that there are few opportunities for K-12 teachers, who face incredible demands on their time, to get their own questions answered about how to teach material from countries about which they know very little. So on the one hand, there is a really genuine interest in the ideals of multicultural education, but not always a deep enough knowledge to make that education accomplish its ends. I think that what these programs do is give teachers an opportunity to work with specific materials, ask specific questions, and then have a package of tools that they can use more effectively in their own classrooms. I don’t claim to have a monopoly on literary interpretation by any stretch of the imagination, so what I hope my presentations do is to give people the confidence to engage with the material in more creative and interesting ways in their classes. I’ve always believed that you are much better at teaching material that you know or think they know in the literature that they are reading. Bollywood films can occasionally come up in conversation, even when there are no South Asian teachers in the audience, too. So there is this a constant shuttling back and forth between trying to dispel some misconceptions and deepen already developed knowledges about the subcontinent.

SAI: What was the most unexpected/surprising thing about working with K-12 educators?

SS: I think that at one level I was surprised by both how much and how little people understand about South Asia. Whenever one gives a presentation about anything related to India and Pakistan, one is forced to answer all kinds of big questions that some times don’t really have anything to do with the piece of literature you are thinking about. When talking about India, someone always wants to know about caste; when it is Pakistan, there are always questions about fundamentalism and terrorism. That is both because people are genuinely curious and also because there is baseline of information (or misinformation) that is disseminated over the news media and people are constantly trying to see what they know or think they know in the literature that they are reading. Bollywood films can occasionally come up in conversation, even when there are no South Asian teachers in the audience, too. So there is this a constant shuttling back and forth between trying to dispel some misconceptions and deepen already developed knowledges about the subcontinent.

SAI: Are there any topics you would like to see covered in future workshops?

SS: I tend to think that Pakistan is now a place that deserves more attention in American classes. The media’s portrayals of the country as well as some of the political rhetoric coming from both parties has tended to distort people’s understanding of the country. It deserves attention not simply because it has become more important as a part of American foreign policy, but also because it is making such important cultural contributions to the world. Pakistani art and literature have undergone something of a renaissance in the post-Zia era and these are things that need to find their way into the west as well.

2012 South Asia Book Awards for Children’s and Young Adult Literature

The annual South Asia Book Award (SABA), established in 2011 by the South Asia National Outreach Consortium (SANOC) recognizes up to two outstanding works of literature, from early childhood to secondary reading levels, which accurately and skillfully portrays South Asia or South Asians in the diasporas. Additionally, up to five Honor Books and Highly Commended Books are recognized by the award committee for their contribution to this body of literature on the region.

For more information about the SABA Award visit: http://southasiabookaward.org/ or Email: saba@southasiabookaward.org

The 2012 Award Winners:

Island’s End (Henry Holt and Company, 2011) by Penny Elliott and Kailash

Same, Same but Different (Groundwood Books, 2011) by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw

The 2012 Honor Books:

No Ordinary Day (Putnam’s Sons, division of Penguin Young Readers Group, 2011) by Padma Venkatraman (G.P. Putnam’s Sons, division of Penguin Young Readers Group, 2011). A young girl trains to be the new spiritual leader of her remote Andaman Island tribe, while facing increasing threats from the modern world.

Following My Paint Brush by Dulari Devi and Gita Wolf (Tara Books Pvt. Ltd, 2010)

South Asia Institute to Partner with Women’s University in Pakistan

The South Asia Institute has initiated a three-year partnership with Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, that will bring faculty members from FJWU to Austin in January to work on research and course development in liberal arts and communication. Each semester, FJWU faculty members will spend four months in Austin, to be followed by a two-week visit from University of Texas at Austin faculty members to FJWU in Pakistan. The partnership aims to help raise The University of Texas at Austin’s profile as a global leader in expanding knowledge and improving lives. It will concentrate on the professional development of FJWU faculty members, with a focus on the exchange of academic values and on building capacity for teaching and research in the areas of women’s and gender studies, social anthropology, communication and media studies. The program’s administration will be housed in the South Asia Institute, which starting in January 2013, four FJWU faculty members will travel to Austin each semester to work directly with their American counterparts. The South Asia Institute will facilitate close collaboration with the university’s Center of Women’s and Gender Studies, the Department of Anthropology and select faculty members from the College of Communication’s School of Journalism and the Department of Radio-Television-Film.

The partnership was made possible by a $999,600 grant from the US Department of State/United States Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Call for Papers:

SAGAR: A South Asia Research Journal seeks innovative academic writings on the history, society, culture, literature, religion, economics, technology and media of South Asia. The journal was established in 1993 and is published annually online and in print by the South Asia Institute at The University of Texas at Austin. As of August 2012, we have made the transition to peer-reviewed status. Submissions are now coordinated by an editorial collective of UT graduate students and blindly evaluated by an editorial board of advanced scholars in the field. We are currently seeking:

1. Full-length research articles: Full-length articles should be between 8,000 and 10,000 words and should include a one-paragraph article abstract.

2. Original translations: Translations should be between 3,000 and 6,000 words and should be preceded by a 300-600 word introduction contextualizing the text or excerpt. Our translation feature will familiarize scholars of particular linguistic regions of South Asia to new literatures, both popular and literary. Such exposure will facilitate comparison, perhaps drawing out common currents in the literatures of South Asia. For the English language reader, this feature will showcase writings outside the commonly translated canons of South Asian literature.

3. Response essays: Responses should be 1500 words or less, and where applicable should include an image or recording of the work to which you are responding. Our second new feature, the response essay, will allow for continuous reflection on images, speeches, exhibits, performances, architecture, songs, and the like. Here, we are not looking for responses to scholarly writings (i.e. book reviews); rather, we encourage scholars to venture outside their areas of specialization, to intervene with timely responses to current events, or take the first steps along the way to future scholarly projects.

Authors should submit electronic copies of papers saved as Microsoft Word files to sagarjournal@gmail.com. Manuscripts should follow the 16th edition of The Chicago Manual of Style. All submissions for inclusion in the 2013 issue are due by October 22, 2012. Submissions received after October 22, 2012 will be considered for the 2014 issue of Sagar. Please visit us online at <sagarjournal.wordpress.com>.

(continues from p. 12) In a provocative thesis enjoyed by all, Mufti argued that in a number of his late poems, Faiz turned to the question of the nature of the historical present, a “moment” characterized by the “lateness” of its emergence. These works, according to the speaker, revisit the entire arc of the twentieth century and raise fundamental questions about the vocabulary of the revolutionary imagination, the terms in which the revolutionary subject has been historically imagined and conceived. They rearticulate the hope for human emancipation, find a new language for its articulation, precisely in the aftermath of the collapse or containment of revolutionary politics worldwide.

The keynote and the first day’s proceedings set the tone for the entire workshop that showcased the maturity of scholarship on Pakistan as moving beyond the discussion on Muslim nationalism and the debates on what can euphemistically called, “Bombs and Burqas”. During the workshop there were various kinds of synergies, agreements and disagreements, but always certainly was a unique event in the history of our Institute and brought forward our commitment to bring together the most critically attuned scholarship on the South Asia region.

SAI co-sponsored the Karachi Literature Festival 2012

Call for Papers: UT Austin’s Sagar: A South Asia Research Journal

Front row (l to r), Kathryn Schalow, U.S. Embassy; Samina Amin Qadir, Vice Chancellor, FJWU; Kamran Asdar Ali, Director of the South Asia Institute.
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