



20th International Workshop of AJEI

March 19th- 20th- 21st 2018

Jawaharlal-Nehru University (JNU)

COMMITTEE ROOM – SSS-I

Image(s) Of India



Presentation

The “Association des Jeunes Etudes Indiennes” (AJEI) is a student organization whose members are young researchers coming from various disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences (from master’s degree to postdoctoral level) whose area of research is South Asia. Since 1998 the AJEI has been organizing a research seminar in France and a French-Indian workshops yearly in India with the support of international and local partners. One of our goals is also to interact informally, and build relationships, with a view to creating a strong international network of researchers. Drawing from the transversal thematic of Images, this year we propose a three-day workshop with an opening lecture, daily presentations discussed by senior researchers, methodological workshops, and a concluding session. Every year, a research seminar in France and a workshop in India bring students and scholars together in order to discuss the topics and papers presented.

What do we picture when we evoke India? For its 20th annual Workshop, AJEI invites young researchers to share their knowledge and to propose a critical approach of the concept of ‘Images’ in the subcontinent: To what extent do images reflect the many realities and representations of India and how does the Indian imagery affect scholarly, artistic and touristic as well as political perceptions, from a western and an Indian point of view? The Workshop is aimed to develop a cross-disciplinary dialogue in social sciences for a better understanding of the multiple roles that Images have been playing from antiquity to nowadays in the perceptions and the foundations of culture and identities in Indian society. The aim is also to open some reflexive discussions on the use and construction of images.

In the contemporary context, TV, Internet, advertising and personal photos are some of the widespread imagery vehicles of social meaning. Images play a key part in our everyday lives, may they be fixed or animated; we use them as support of representation with a view to build a comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the world. What do pictures show us? How to understand/interpret them? How connected/distant are they to/from reality? How do social groups use images to legitimate their status? Images, as subject and objects of research are also used by Indian and Westerner social scientist to illustrate, transmit or testimony the reality they observe on their research. The position of the Indian and Westerner researcher and the dissemination of research has to be examined through reflexive and projective speeches or pictures in a globalized society and its realities. (S.Tawa Lama-Rewal (2016), C.Lefèvre, I.Županov (2012), C.Markovits (2013)).

Bearing from the Humanities and Social Sciences, the variety of status, uses, production, analysis and processing of images (and conversely, the reporting research through images) in all their forms (archives, photographic documents, cartography...(Mead, Bateson(1942), Piette (1992), Conord (2001,2002)) will be thoroughly considered, through an interdisciplinary approach, including a multi-level scale of space and time (M.Boivin (2015), C.Guenzi (2013), P-Y.Trouillet (2013)).

When we think about the early forms of Images depicting South Asia, the visual representations of the great old subcontinent emerge telling us about the conquest and exchange system with the Sumer Empire, the great architecture from the Indus civilisation as shown in the Photographs from Sir John Marshall’s classic book Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilisation (1931) covering the very first excavations in Harappa, the ancient Indus site, and not forgetting the painting and carving from ancient temples and caves that we still admire today.

India and its history inspired and still inspire the Orientalism of the 19th and 20th centuries. Literature (from Alphonse De Lamartine (1856) , Rudyard Kipling (1894) to Shashi Tharoor (2001, 2007), Manil Suri (2001, 2008, 2013), Abha Dawesar (2009), Kavita Daswani (2003)), Art (YashodharaDalmia (2010), Monisha Ahmed (2009)) and philosophy (Max Weber (1916), Karl Marx (1853), Vincent Descombes (2013), Amartya Sen (2005)) testify how deep was and still is the quest for connections between the two continents of European linguists, politicians and travellers.



Nowadays, India remains one of the favorite destinations for travelers and mass tourism. All are being attracted by the 'Incredible India' portrait depicted by the numerous campaign by the Indian Tourist Office, which highlight natural landscapes, wildlife, or the sacred sites of the country art of living. Moreover when we consider the place of images in the Indian subcontinent we cannot avoid dealing with Bollywood, the biggest cinema industry in the world. For some researchers, the images reflected in Bollywood movies appear to be a better guide to the understanding of the realities of modern India and thus should be taken as objects of study per se (Dwyer, 2014).

The power of images, spread over the country through mass production, led historians to trace the intimate connections between the production and consumption of these images and the struggle against colonial rule (Piney, 2004). In postcolonial struggle, images and more particularly the sanctification of political leaders (such as the edification of statue) was part of Dalit political movements as shown by Jaoul (2010) regarding Ambedkar in Uttar Pradesh. The use of popular images which in this case formed a sort of local bricolage bearing from ancient attributes of power, was somehow reverse to what the current Prime Minister Modi did in his 2014's campaign. Using modern technologies, such as holograms and spectacular images effects allowed Modi to be present at dozens of rallies at the same time. The technology and position of images can be questioned as a medium and an element of construction in the political and identity claims.

The use of "India Shining" images, the marketing slogan referring to the overall feeling of economic optimism in India in 2004, popularised by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for the 2004 Indian general elections, helped popularize the reforms at an unprecedented mass scale that until then had largely been limited to elite policy debates and reform packages. (Ravinder Kaur, 2016) We can also analyze it as a form of representation of way of life and consumption of the Indian middle class society.

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Monday, the 19th of March 2018

9h30 – 10h30: Opening Session

Welcome address:

Professor Arun S. Kharat, School of Life Sciences, Director International Collaborations, Jawarhalal Nerhu University

Regarding International collaboration with University of Strasbourg:

Associate Professor Salomé Deboos, Head of the Institute of Ethnology, University of Strasbourg, SavoirsActeurs et Gouvernements Europe (SAGE) - CNRS (UMR 6373)

Inaugural address from AJEI's workshop organizers

Dr. Lainé Nicolas, postdoctoral researcher, **Bailleux Apolline**, Master Student, Strasbourg University, **Bayad Mael**, Master Student, Strasbourg University,



10h30 – 11h: COFFEE BREAK



11h – 12h **Plenary session 1: Images of Islam in India: plurality of living and representation**

11h – 12h: DR. DEBOOS SALOMÉ, Social and cultural anthropology, Head of the Institute of Ethnology, University of Strasbourg, SavoirsActeurs et Gouvernements Europe (SAGE) - CNRS (UMR 6373)

Being from a land or belonging to a religion affiliation first? Case studied: Zangskar

This paper aims to give a better understanding of how Zangskar, men and women, have built their identity community and how this process occurs by sharing a language, sharing a representation of social organisation, and sharing a narrative about the history of the area.

This valley is not isolated from the rest of the world, and what is fascinating is how men and women perceive foreign perspectives of identification, and how they construct their own point of view with regard to belonging to a group or a community, to a particular territory or a religion.

My published work strives to discuss the ideas of reciprocity and exchange, and the nature of this reciprocity (Testart, 2007: 31, 48-51). Thus, it is only when exchange exists in the form of indirect reciprocity that each of the transfers is at the same time both the cause and the effect of the other transfer. Evidence gathered in the field enables us to understand how reconstructed local history and religious experience regulate social relationships within the community in Padum.

Thanks to extensive field research on the Sunni Muslim community in Zangskar, and taking account of previous work on Buddhists in Ladakh and Zangskar, I have based my analysis on specific examples, such as the unequal role of women in decisions about who marries whom, who control the domestic budget, carry out work in the fields and manage reserves during the winter period on one hand, and the disjunction between objective history and local history and accounts on the other hand. In this analysis I am particularly interested in the discourse of women as they play a key role in this community organization. This information enabled me to highlight how violence is subtly managed in the regulation of exchange (social and political) in this bi-confessional



community, especially through speech acts and conversations: “the study of conversation has revealed a number of important aspects of sociality and behaviour, including how social actors construct particular contexts and activity types, socialize new members of society, build or resist authority, organize hierarchies, use literacy, produce multiple identities, worship, argue, imagine. Studying speech use across speakers and contexts shows how social distinctions including gender differences emerge in language use, how experience is organized through narrative [...]” (Keating and Egbert, 2004: 170).
The results of this research have enabled me to conceptualise how Padumpa and Zangskarpa community identity is constructed.



12H – 13H30: LUNCH BREAK



13h30 – 15h15 Panel 1 Changing and Shaping Images of places

CHAIRMAN: DR. DEBOOS SALOMÉ, Social and cultural anthropology, Head of the Institute of Ethnology, University of Strasbourg, SavoirsActeurs et Gouvernements en Europe (SAGE) - CNRS (UMR 6373)

13H – 13H20: SREEDEEP BHATTACHARYA, SNU:

Pangong’s Visual Postmortem: A Matter of Change as the Tourists Depart

As an ongoing project on impact of tourism on landscapes and locals, my paper visually explores the footprint of popular culture in Pangong in the last half a decade. It maps the widely evident and locally acknowledged impact of the mainstream movie - 3 Idiots (2009) and its role in visually reshaping areas around the Pangong Lake.

Following the unfolding of Rancho’s romantic trajectory shot on the banks of the pristine lake in the climatic moments of 3 Idiots, the tourist presence has escalated from 77,800 in 2010 to 1,48,588 in 2011 (which apparently is more than half of the entire population of the entire region of Ladakh). Between 2014-17, five and a half lakh tourists visited Ladakh, out of which 2016 alone recorded close to two lakhs tourists.

In the context of such rapid transformation, the paper attempts to analyse the following processes :

- 1) It throws light on how the world’s highest salt water lake located in the high-altitude cold-desert is coping with the sudden outburst of mass-tourism and coming to terms with its rise to fame as an aspirational hyper-destination and how popular imageries have contributed to the establishment of Pangong as a site of fantasy waiting to be collectively gazed upon.
- 2) A detailed visual examination of simulated experiences, staged-authenticities that offer an easily identifiable signpost for visual consumption near the lake. This section documents the massive commodification of areas surrounding the shooting-points of 3 Idiots – allowing construction and consolidation of the tourist gaze, which is invariably mediated through signages.
- 3) An analysis of how aspirational tourists seeking comforts in the high altitude desert devoid of vegetation leads to immense abuse of the landscape and creates serious issues related to disposal of solid wastes. It focuses on how the issue of special-fixity of the tourism industry in such a region is bound to have severe ecological consequences and also lead to congestion, over crowdedness - destroying the sanity of the locale.
- 4) The last section portrays how the makeshift materials lay barren after the end of each tourist season - often leading to the worst form of visual pollution against such a breathtaking backdrop. This section emphasizes how package-trips and mass tourism and the notion of ‘having-fun’ all the time transforms the local economy, ecology and aspirations – causing abandonment of material excess consumed during the season, waiting for yet another onslaught in the next season. Through visuals of these remains, it will be shown how visuals of chaotic assemble of these ruin-like materials decalre the signs of reckless consumerist obsession even at an 17500 feet.

13H20 – 13H40: DR. JAMPHEL SHEYAN, Department of English & Comparative Literature, Central University of Jammu, *Changing Images of Ladakh: A Case Study of Ladakh*

This proposed research paper endeavors to study the changing images of Ladakh from the early 19th century to the present time. The changing images of Ladakh in the writings of early colonial missionaries to modern time have its resonance with changing dynamics of socio-culture and politics in Ladakh. The depiction of images revolves around people, religion and topography of Ladakh. In the past, Ladakh has been described as Little Tibet, Shangri-La, Buddhist Kingdom, Barren Land and the modern narrative of images include Ladakh as an exotic travel destination and the northern frontier of Motherland India. All the images have its genesis in the larger imperial, political and capital domination being asserted from outside. All these images represent a place in its totality to the general public of the world but at the same time it arises many questions. How far the representation it depicts is per se with ground realities? What is the basis of particular representation? Who is representing these images and why? Michel Foucault’s equation of

Power and Knowledge and Stuart Hall ideas of representation based their ideas on the politics of representation. If we analyze these images, it reflects a major gap in the representation. It depicts a very superficial and inauthentic representation of Ladakh. In case of Ladakh, all the images signify a Buddhist representation largely undermining the Islamic representation prevalent there. Muslim representation started being conspicuous only after the communal violence in 1980s. Kargil district where majority of Muslims resides hardly make to news other than the Kargil War. There are few scholars who have worked on Muslim representation of Ladakh and Nicola Grist was first to study muslim in Suru valley in Kargil district of Ladakh. Besides the dichotomy in religious representation, it hardly reflects hardship and pain native people of Ladakh face. In the present time, representation of Ladakh is only limited to military drills in Ladakh, Indo- China border disputes and a heavenly barren tourist location dotted with oasis. Travel Companies sell Ladakh as Incredible Ladakh and Frozen Ladakh, and Indian army assume the role of protecting this incredibility. Life of native people gets sandwiched between these two giant enterprises. The labyrinth of these enterprises is not as simple as it looks but it sink deep into the culture of local people with its vast influence of money and power. This paper endeavors to find out how dominant power constructs various images of Ladakh to suit its own purpose and what kind of strategies it employ. It also tries to find out how native people react to these images? Is it native people who further favors or counter these images?

13H40 – 14H: RIGZINCHODON, Research Associate,

Ladakh Arts and Media Organization, The 19th Century Leh Bazaar: Then and Now

If you are in Leh, you sure can't miss the *Leh Bazaar* !

The face of Leh Bazaar has changed drastically, compared to how it looks today; how it looked in the last 40 years; how it looked when probably the first picture of the *Bazaar* was taken and even earlier when only sketches of Leh were made.

The images of *Leh Bazaar*, if keenly observed, changed the way Leh was perceived or represented. This social, cultural, political, commercial space has been described in the early 19th Century books written by western scholars, explorers, historians and others with a lot of curiosity and observations.

I would like to present the *Leh Bazaar* from the beginning of the 19th century up until now, through images, mainly, sketches and photographs, (both archival and contemporary), to discuss how this bazaar has been represented by different painters, surveyors, photographers, authors and others during this time period through western as well as local presentations. A comparative study of the 19th C *Leh Bazaar*, then and now, in the light of modern developmental projects like the 'Leh Beautification' project by the local administration, shows the immense loss history being wiped out completely.

The *Leh Bazaar*, formerly, the king of Ladakh's agricultural field, was built after the conquest of Ladakh by the Dogras (after 1834). The Dogras also built new buildings like *serais*, town gates, etc. where trade caravans from different regions were registered. The *Bazaar* was not just a commercial trade area, where business interactions between traders from Yarkand (present China), Kashmir, Lahore, Hoshiarpur etc. took place; but it was also a social space for men and women from different regional centres within Ladakh like Zanskar, Changthang, Shamm, Nubra, where items like wool, *pashm*, vegetables, chang, haystacks, cow dung for fuel etc. were bartered. The bazaar was a historical space that was shared by a plethora of people from different heritage, identity and faith as represented by writers and historians.

Therefore, by using the Visual Archives collection at the Ladakh Arts and Media Organization, I would like to look into how this archive focuses on the need to make these images accessible among the local community by bringing back the history of this space alive through memories (as seen in photographs) instead of keeping them in only in institutes (libraries and archives mainly in the west), where only a limited group of people can access them.

Therefore, i would like to explore the images of Leh Bazaar and study the way Leh and the community of people who crossed paths here, have been represented.

In a small community like Ladakh, an image instantly comes alive, when an unrecognized old man or a woman is identified right away by a relative, an acquaintance or a friend, when an old black and white photograph is unearthed from an archive close by.

14h – 14h20: Dr. AHMAD RAFIQPIRZADA, Amar Singh College – Head of Department

The Image(s) of the Post-Colonial Desire: Kashmir as India's Domestic-ated Destination

This paper aims to demonstrate the progression of desire for Kashmir from its Orientalist representations as "the Eden of the East" to its post-colonial representation as India's domestic-ated "Paradise on Earth." To critically and reflexively examine the progression of this *desire* from its Imperial origin to that of the post-colonial nationalism, this study draws on the paintings and travelogues of early eighteenth and nineteenth century European travellers to Kashmir, subsequent translation of these imaginaries into visual representation of Kashmir by European photographers, and the contemporary "Incredible India" representations of Kashmir in moving images and promotional videos such as the most recent one, "Kashmir: The Warmest Place on Earth."

Examining these discourses on Kashmir against the on-going political violence in the region, this study aims to critically explore three particular thresholds in the progression of this *desire*. One that marked the post-colonial inheritance of the Orientalist *desire* by the Indian nation, which resulted in the domestication/tourism of Kashmir as the "Paradise on Earth." Second, the rupture in the paradisiacal image, with the arrival of the "terrorist" on the scene in late 1980s, which resulted in the "loss of the paradise," and return of the "uncanny" to the "national consciousness" as nostalgia. And, third, the disjuncture between the trans-localities of nostalgia and trans-localities of "separatism," both working in conflictual ways towards (re)producing Kashmir as a trans-locality.

Drawing from the works of Freud, Lacan and Appadurai this study analyses the contestations in Kashmir-making between trans-localities of nostalgia operating in the form of tourism, wherein the Western, the Indian, and the Kashmiri could be seen together in



the terrestrial ‘paradise,’ and the trans-localities of “separatism,” operating in the form of militancy and protests, wherein Kashmiri, non-Kashmiri, and global subjectivities converge to challenge the images of the domestic paradise.

14H20 – 14H45:DISCUSSION



14H45 – 15H15: COFFEE BREAK



15h15 – 18h Film screening and Methodological Workshop

DR. JAOUL NICOLAS, Social and Cultural Anthropology, Institut de Recherche Interdisciplinaire sur les enjeux Sociaux – EHESS, ResearchFellow

Politics of the images: filming the dalit movement.



Tuesday, the 20th of March 2018

9h – 10h **Plenary session 2: Images and Imaginary of Past – Present - Future**

9H – 10H : DR. DEJENNE NICOLAS, Professor Associate, University Paris Sorbonne, Mondes Iranien et Indien, CNRSUMR7528

Teaching the “History of Knowledge about India and Representations of India” at the Sorbonne University: Some Remarks.

In the syllabus of Indian Studies department at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3 (France), where I am a Lecturer, I have been giving since 2010 a class entitled “Histoire de la connaissance de l’Inde”. Its aim is to provide our graduate students with a knowledge and an awareness of the history of the ways in which India — in the sense of South Asia and of Indianized areas of Asia — has been known (first hand or through intermediaries), explored, described, studied and represented in the *longue durée*. As a matter of fact, some images of India, like a “land of naked sages”, which still influence our preconceptions and even our more informed apprehension of Indian culture, have a very long history traceable upto Greek and Latin sources. The teaching is obviously most concerned with the knowledge about and representations of India in Europe and the West from the early modern period but a special care is also taken to highlight images of India in other contexts, principally the Chinese one — as the Buddhist monks travelers to India of IVth to VIIIth c. CE have built a deep analysis of Indian culture, texts and languages — and the masterwork in Arabic by Central Asian polymath Al-Biruni (*The Book of India*, around 1030 CE). As a result, the students willing to engage in further research on Indian topics, from the MA onwards up to the PhD, can develop a more reflexive practice of their studies by inscribing them in the long history of Western cultural and academic interest for India but also, thanks to comparisons, by being aware of approaches of Indian civilization evolved in other cultural areas: the discourse and knowledge on India developed in a specific culture can be properly understood only if being settled in the general xenology (“discourse on the other, the alien”) peculiar to this culture. The risk of falling into an excessive relativism is prevented by the discovery that many questions raised in the West about India have analogues in Chinese or Perso-Arabic contexts and that Chinese and Perso-Arabic sources have also played a (often undervalued) role in the development of Indology as a “Western Science” in the colonial context from the end of the 18th c.

In my presentation at the AJCSS 2018, I will elaborate some of these topics and highlight the challenges posed by such a teaching which requires to refer to a wide range of sources, and I will illustrate my points with a few selected examples.



10H – 10H30: COFFEE BREAK



10h30 – 12h: **Panel 2 Local struggle and population**

CHAIRMAN: DR. JAOUËL NICOLAS, Social and Cultural Anthropology, Institut de Recherche Interdisciplinaire sur les enjeux Sociaux – EHESS/CNRS, Research Fellow

10H30 – 10H50: MADHUWANTI GOSH, Post-graduate Student, Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai,

Making of the ‘Other’: Staged Authenticity and Tribal Tourism in Northeast India

Of all the motivations that drive a person to travel into the unknown, seeking for authenticity has been found to be the most important. The demand for a ‘more authentic authenticity’ is in fact so high that now it is being commoditized and mystified to compete in the tourism market.

When a tourist visits a foreign land, they are looking at it with respect to their own land, constantly putting the ‘self’ against the ‘other’. We all live different realities and in order to make sense of a world even slightly different from ours we distort or appropriate a major chunk of our perception. To make tourism possible, all the participants, the tourist and the host, undergo a systematic process of simplification and standardization in order to understand the reality around them. This is often manifested in souvenirs, tourism



campaigns, brochures and other marketing images. Image management is a very important component of tourism. How a country or region chooses to present itself in front of others is largely dependent on its tourism campaign. However it is not easy to reduce a culture to a few words or images and market it for consumption as a mere commodity. This extreme stripping of the culture destroys the realness of the culture and instead creates what can be called a “proxy reality” or a “surrogate”.

Tribal Tourism is a growing niche within cultural tourism in the North-eastern region of India. In an attempt to emulate a certain narrative of its history, the emergence of hyper-traditions in North-eastern Tribal tourism is common, which leads to a kind of extreme authenticity that in spite of being real feels fake. What is common across all marketing images of this region, is the emphasis on the ‘exotic’ and ‘timeless’ culture of Northeast. Especially while describing the tribes of the region, they take on an anthropological tone and use words such as “simple, colorful, friendly and primitive” to describe tribal life and the people. The political struggles and ethnic conflicts of the region are well hidden and only mentioned in the passing; in fact three of the states only have documented history till they attained statehood. The political consciousness gained by the region after that and the consequent tussle with the central government has gone completely undocumented presenting the region as passive, primitive and most importantly ‘alien’.

This paper tries to look at these different marketing images and explores how staging and the consequent mystifying of authenticity can lead to ‘othering’ of tribal culture and ‘exoticising’ of the region in general.

10H50 – 11H10: DR. TANIYA CHAKRABARTY, Research Scholar, M.Phil-Ph.D., Centre for Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Kudankulam Movement: Peoples’ Movement for Justice, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development

The present model of development heavily relies on industrial development and technological advancement which is dependent on the development of a centralised power system. In this context, the development of nuclear energy as an alternative source of energy has gained support from different political and economic actors. Such development projects however come with larger social costs such as displacement, loss of livelihood, alienation of local communities. Several communities in India depend on natural resources for their livelihood, these communities are now being forced to let go off these resources to make way for projects like mining or for generating power plants. They now face a drastic choice where they either give up their traditional ways of livelihood and work as cheap labour in cities or participate in movements and face state repression. In recent years, the state has adopted aggressive means to repress any opposition to state policies, be it from the citizens or from any collective organisation. State repression has now assumed a form whereby anyone who questions the state and its policies are then seen as an enemy of the state; as a reason we now see that poor fishermen belonging to villages, old men, adolescents and women are all being charged with sedition for defending their basic rights to livelihood and their rights as a citizen. Against this backdrop, this paper attempts to critically study one such social movement - the Koodankulam anti-nuclear movement, which can be located within the larger canvas of environmental movements, and questions the mainstream development model through the critical lens of the new social movement theory. Sheth (2005) argues that with the failure of institutional politics, grassroots movements like the Koodankulam movement emerges as means for the disadvantaged section to assert their rights to life, property, livelihood and nature. This on-going grassroots movement serves as an interesting point for academic analysis due to the link it provides between technology, development policy and the state’s response to widespread demands of its citizens on issues of environment, climate change, development models and overall social justice.

11H10 – 11H30: RAMA DEVI, PhD Candidate, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

Asserting Identities and Claiming the Nation: India as Imagined by Dalits

Since the shift in political power in the Lok Sabha polls of 2014 the unfinished and unending project of making the nation, India, has reentered into the socio-political imagination. The project of remaking the nation is markedly different from the earlier decades of ‘nation building’, as it aims to homogenize the ‘nation’ and citizens as ‘nationalists’. An implicit undertone of constructing this nation inherently sidesteps differences and sets the normative to be followed diligently. In the process of normativising citizens as rightful claimant of the nation and standardization of the very idea of nation, emblems/imageries of national flag, national anthem, armed forces, ‘Bharat Mata’, social and political leaders are being invoked. However, the resistance of subaltern communities especially Dalits and minorities against the violence on the community for different socio-cultural practices disrupts the myth of a homogenized nation. The development of a new form of comradeship among Dalits situated in different regions of the country prominently in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra, and emergence of young Dalit/backward castes leaders from the formidable unity is construed as a response to the impositions and violence.

It is in this broader socio-political context this paper aims to shed light on the micro-politics of Dalits and symbols/imageries deployed to convey multiple identities as Dalits, of a distinct community different from other Dalits, as Hindu, and as patriots, in a resettlement colony, located in east Delhi. Also, the paper attempts to sketch the influence of nascent Dalit movement in the country in shaping and consolidating their identities as Dalits.

The colony was established in 1976 during the national emergency and *Jhuggidwellers* of the city were evicted from their homes to be relocated in these ‘planned colonies’ at the periphery. The colony is part of reserved assembly constituency and preponderantly inhabited by the Dalits of different castes and regions. Under the governmental category most residents are categorised as SCs and politically referred as Dalits. However, Dalits in the colony differ in their caste and regional backgrounds, thus unity as Dalits is punctuated by castes and regional identities. This paper suggests, to claim the limited resources of the city and assert their presence in



the society Dalits claim multiple identities through mobilizing the imageries of icons and emblems. These imageries are rearranged and foregrounded or backgrounded depending on the occasion and the identity articulated on the specific occasion. Through examining the socio-religious celebrations and political organizations like caste association the role of imageries is uncovered to demonstrate as to how Dalits claim the nation and the space in the city vis-à-vis how they imagine India.



11H30 – 12H: DISCUSSION



12H – 14H: LUNCH BREAK



14h – 15h30 Plenary session 3: Picturing the Nature – Experiencing the world

14H – 15H: DR SAMUEL BERTHET, Associate Professor, Shiv Nadar University, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, New Delhi (India)



15H – 15H30: COFFEE BREAK



15h30 – 17h15 Panel 3 Ecology, local knowledge vs. Scientific modernity

CHAIRMAN : DR. NICOLAS LAINÉ, University of Strasbourg

15H30 – 15H50: SAHA, DEBOTTAM, Research Scholar, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi –

Looking beyond image of binaries in agricultural knowledge; critical engagement with ‘alternatives’ in agricultural milieu of India

Green Revolution had resulted in constructing two binary paradigms of knowledge in the context of India. On one hand, the knowledge which claims its utmost superiority, by being modern and scientific knowledge in agriculture, mostly professed by scientists in agricultural universities. On the other hand, as a critique to such paradigm of knowledge, there is an existing ‘alternative’ form of knowledge. The claim here remains mostly valorizing ‘traditional’ forms of knowledge, where farmers are portrayed as sole producers of knowledge. This knowledge binary reproduces two binary set of knowledge producers also- on, one hand, there are ‘modern-global’ scientists and on the other end, there are ‘traditional local’ farmers. The first part of my paper will try to debunk epistemic binaries of knowledge and to show what the different grey areas are in between. In other words, if I consider Latour’s (1999) theoretical lens of considering actor-network processes of knowledge production within scientific knowledge, then that argument can also be fetched over here. I mean to say that within ‘alternative’ domain of knowledge production in agriculture, there also remain different actors and artifacts too. They also contribute and involve with those processes of knowledge production proposed by Latour. However, the argument becomes more complex when, we take ‘power’ as a critical issue over here. I am trying to argue in this paper, probably, this binary construction of knowledge necessarily benefitting both camps in complex ways by putting possible ‘grey areas of practice’ under carpet. The second part of my paper will critically engage with certain documents (artifacts) on ‘alternative/sustainable’ methods of agriculture, in other words, the issue of ‘eco-friendly organic’ method of agriculture. Here, I will try to understand the larger theoretical question on ‘what constitutes as Alternative?’ or ‘How do we understand Alternative?’ as opposed to another immediate binary as something like ‘mainstream or conventional’. The critical concept that I will be using over here would be ‘Nature’ as a concept. How certain alternative knowledge claims are being validated



on the ground of considering ‘nature as principle’? Isn’t it a construct also coming from certain locations of knowledge? This paper of mine will try to critically engage with these certain methodological questions per se. Lastly, the concluding part of my paper will throw upon certain light on certain concerns around ‘soil and seeds’, and how there are certain knowledge claims that are both being constructed within ‘land’ as well as ‘laboratory’?

15H50 – 16H10: GREESHMA HEDGE - Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS)

Knowledge systems (traditional/indigenous/local) and their role in adaptation to climate change

Natural resource dependent communities, including indigenous people, have a long history of adapting to highly variable and changing social and ecological conditions. Knowledge systems (traditional/local/indigenous) existing among such communities have proven to be more effective than science based knowledge, when confronted with complexity of climate change (in terms of uncertainty, magnitude and frequency) coupled with other developmental and social complexities. Such knowledge derived from various sources, under evolving socio-political and ecological contexts, have the advantage of being adapted to the spatial diversity and temporal variability. Existing literature states that such diverse knowledge systems need to be acknowledged, integrated and mainstreamed. However, these knowledge systems often function in isolation and are often not recognised by formal governance structures.

The study aims at bridging the gap that lies between knowledge production, use, access, exchange, legitimacy amongst various institutions (formal and informal, structures and non-structured) and how knowledge can be translated into action to support adaptation response among actors. The paper identifies the role of multi-scalar non-state actors in addressing the communication gaps in the transfer and exchange of knowledge among users and actors. We identify the knowledge brokers working on revival of traditional practices in two ecologically diverse states of India, namely Rajasthan and Nagaland, and delve into their potential role of codifying and legitimising traditional practices.

Knowledge systems under the themes of water, forest and agriculture were selected two from ecologically diverse sites - semi arid and eco-sensitive mountainous regions. Under these themes, Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS) in Rajasthan, West India and North East Network (NEN) in Nagaland, North East India were chosen as case studies. TBS works on the revival of traditional water harvesting and land management systems in Rajasthan with the aim of building community resilience and fostering self reliant communities whereas NEN works on reviving the traditional agro-biodiverse farming of *jhum* cultivation (shifting cultivation) and seed keeping, with a larger goal of empowering and enabling women farmers. To delve into the activities of the non-state institutions, two researchers conducted extensive field visits in four villages of Rajasthan and two villages in Nagaland where TBS and NEN have intervened, respectively. Key informant interviews with members of the two organisations were conducted. Through primary and secondary literature, the intermediary roles of the two knowledge brokers were determined and their potential roles in legitimising the knowledge systems were studied.

TBS and NEN emerge institutions that provide recognition of diverse knowledge systems at different operational scales through co-production and co-management of knowledge. In the respective local communities, these knowledge brokers facilitate interaction and engagement among varied actors and institutions at grassroots and policy level and across geographies and jurisdictions, through their networks. Evidence from the field visits show that these knowledge brokers offer a holistic and collaborative platform for integration of knowledge drawn from wide range of sources (scientific, traditional, indigenous, and local). Institutional innovation of these knowledge brokers has successfully fostered social learning, build resilience of the communities and secure livelihoods through the revival of the traditional practices, in the current context.

16H10 – 16H30: WANGMOCHOZIN, PhD Candidate, Penjab University

Ecology and Ethics among the Nomadic Pastoralists of Kharnak(Changthang,Ladakh) : the parallel worldviews of science based knowledge and the religiously predetermined cultural space and practice

Ladakh, a desert situated at high altitude in the rain shadow of the Himalayan range exhibits extreme environmental conditions in both degree and kind. Ecology of Ladakh is very fragile. It is considered by many that the harmonious traditional ways of the people has maintained the environment well. During past few decades, there has been greater physical connectivity which has opened new avenues for the people. This shift from the traditional to the new market economy has major role in the social transition phase seen and felt in all aspects of life. This transition can also be seen in the change in cosmology of people. Earlier people considered themselves part of ecology and were dependent on the environment for its survival, now the new market economy has made the people innately classify the material world into resource and non-resource. An inconceivable fundamental crisis of human intellect has taken root which assumes nature as subordinate to human species. Climate change indications such as receding snow lines, increased precipitation in the form of rain in contrast to snow and the recent natural calamities, their degree of devastation and proximity in time has made everyone concerned. In early times events in peoples’ lives was explained by religious system and the means to restore balance/normality was also religious rituals. Now there are two parallel systems that explain the status quo of environmental crises, one is objectively defined and scientific and the other divides the whole outer and inner environment of a person in sacred and non-sacred.

Through this paper I will try to explore the gaps and bridges between the peoples’ perception of ecology which is predetermined by religion as opposed to the perception of ecology gained through formal education and other mass media sources. In this paper I will



include anecdotes from my fieldwork research among the nomadic pastoralists of Ladakh living in Changthang, a highland pasture. These instances show how Buddhist ethics are helping the people of Kharnak(a part of Changthang), live sustainably and feed their family and livestock on scanty vegetation based on environmentally sound traditional practices. I will also explore the extent to which the mass media has reached them and has influenced the ways in which they exploit their natural resources.

The marginal situation of Ladakh both geographically and politically, leads to partial compliance and success of government policies. Some credit of its failure can also be given to the over-generalized policies which fail to incorporate the peculiar sensibilities of a particular place and its people and culture. Since social setup in Ladakh is still in the transition phase, it becomes very crucial to understand the peoples' perception about the environment as it will help us avoid formulating bipartisan policies, instead formulate policies that benefit both environmental conservation and peoples' rights over natural resources.

16H30 – 16H50:NARANGDIKSHA, Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, South Asian University

Politics of Social Reform: A Study of the Museum of Toilets in Delhi

The politics of hygiene has seen the emergence of objects that elicit particular kinds of affects. The toilet complex is one such object. The sanitary reform in India has many actors such as government policy-makers, international and national development organizations and middle-class activism. All of these actors are attempting to create a new moral-political consciousness of toilets that is going hand-in-hand with biomedical knowledge production on germs. The politics of toilets is such that the practice of open defecation is being described as both, a public health crisis and a denial of human rights.

One of the players in the sanitary reform is the Sulabh International. They are the leading non-governmental provider of toilets in India and they work closely with the government. In their headquarters in Delhi, they have created a Museum of Toilets. The museum of toilets is an institution that spatializes a narrative. The museum is therefore, a communicator. In addition, it is a space of public education.

Through multiple visits to the Museum, I collected different kinds of data. I closely noted the narrative of the tour-guide of the museum. Secondly, I observed the ordering of the objects in the museum. Lastly, I collected the reviews of museum-goers in the visitor book kept at the end of the museum. In my paper, I have also presented the museum visually through the medium of photographs. I have tried to capture the multi-vocality of the museum beyond representations and objects by integrating the voice of museum-goers and tour-guides.

The Museum of Toilets is the only such museum in India. Through my study, I realized that the Museum of Toilets is communicating a story which is a narrative of progress. At the Museum of Toilets, the narrative centres on a series of inventions from Ancient India where the first toilet technology has been discovered to the first water closet and flush invented in Europe and now, modern day inventions such as toilets in NASA spaceships that convert waste into ash. It spatializes nations in terms of their progress. European modernity that popularized toilet technology is celebrated. The contemporary toilet technologies of countries like China, Japan and United States are shown as 'modern' innovations.

The over-arching emphasis however, is on social reform. Social reform is conveyed through the symbols of Hinduism. Hindu symbols such as Manusmriti, Bhagwat Gita, Vivekananda and Gandhi find their place at the Museum. Symbols of sanitation are also presented to reform the Indian population. The Museum of Toilets spatializes an image of India as involved in social reform through tracing a genealogy from thinkers like Vivekananda and Gandhi and so on.

Through this research, I want to further the debate on toilets beyond the question of access. In the contemporary politics of toilets and sanitation, it has been envisioned that it is lack of access to toilets that is behind the 'crisis' of 'open defecation'. However, there are deeper assumptions of adoption of Western taboos of sanitation. Old practices are becoming new taboos. This history is not evolutionary, but it is cultural. In a broader sense, this adoption of the Western toilet can be understood within a much larger cultural history of the movement from floor-sitting to mounted chairs.



16H50 – 17H15:DISCUSSION



Wednesday, the 21st of March 2018

9h – 10h30 *Plenary session 4: Writing, drawing and painting India*

9H – 10H: PROFESSOR GIRISH NATH JA, Professor, Head of the Institute of Sanskrit studies, Jawarhalal Nerhu University



10H – 10H30: COFFEE BREAK



10h30 – 12h15 *Panel 4 Art and literature*

CHAIRMAN : DR. DEJENNE NICOLAS, French Institute of Pondicherry

10H30 – 10H50: ANOGH ACHARYA, Postgraduate Student, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati

Perceiving fantasy and constructing alternate reality through visual art: an oriental India perspective.

Post-colonialism era encouraged *Orientalism* to emerge and define the east in the terms of the west. During the period the portrayal of Indian sub-continent, many a time was to justify the imagery of fantasy in the minds of the artistes of the west.

India had been perceived as an exotic land of the magic carpet filled with snake charmers, jugglers and floating ‘*sadhus*’ on air. The women of India were always portrayed as an easy-to-get character and extremely sensual in nature. Connecting the roots of sexual pleasure with *Kama Sutra*, its origin India has always been expected to be rich in sexual activities. The same imagery is portrayed in various forms of art, cinema and culture of the west. The art and architecture, paintings and sculptures, crafts and iconography of this oriental heritage were always interpreted by the whims of west.

The paper will make a serious endeavor to critically analyze the tradition of *Orientalism* and to understand the concept of *Saidan Orientalism*. It will also try to bring about how an alternate reality is created through *Visual Art* and how Indians are gradually being affected with this altered version.

The newer generations of *New India* is trying to get away from their original ethnic roots due to this barbaric representation of them in the outer world and also welcoming a *culturally hegemony* in order to live a western lifestyle that results in a complex situation, ultimately leading to an identity crisis. A serious activism is required to be put in place by the leading artistes and art mentors to come out of this mess. A deeper analysis of the issue in order to find out a workable solution would be attempted in this proposed research paper.

10H50 – 11H10: MARIANNE HILLION, PhDCandidate, University of Paris Sorbonne

Debunking an Emblem of the Indian Global City: The Reinvention of the Mall in Raj Kamal Jha and Arundhati Roy’s Fiction

As S. Srivastava demonstrates, shopping malls have become significant places in the Indian urban imagination (S. Srivastava, 2015). Spawned by the economic liberalisation of the 1990s and the new consumer culture it fostered, these recent architectural creations are mushrooming all over Indian cities’ fringes and increasingly appear in Indian fiction and cinema. Following A. King’s contention that buildings are signifiers of cultural power (A. King, 2004), I intend to show how the mall is conceived as a signifier of the thriving Indian global city – the term “global city” referring here to the western construct which has become an overpowering model for urban planning in the Global South (J. Robinson, 2006, V. Dupont 2011), and how this conception is disrupted by fiction. I will

focus on two recent novels set in Delhi: *She Will Build Him a City* by Raj Kamal Jha (2015) and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by Arundhati Roy (2017).

The mall is part and parcel of the attractive urban imagery of novelty that the Indian ruling classes are spreading (R. Kaur, 2016) and it showcases their aspiration to transform Indian cities into global metropolises. Yet this spatial emblem conceals the “internal colonialism” (A. Soni, 2000) underlying its construction, which involves appropriating rural land, marginalizing the poor and using (westernised) architecture to stage a global power.

This American invention, harbinger of the dystopic “generic city” (R. Koolhaas, 1995) for many, also uses visual craft to dissimulate its logic of capitalist consumption under the veneer of entertainment (J. Goss, 1993). Strategies of dissemblance and duplicity are at the core of its design, which makes it a dream world where signs and images supersede reality (J. Baudrillard 1981, B. Bégout, 2002).

This paper contends that fiction demystifies the “magic of the mall” (J. Goss, 1993) as it reveals its capitalist and colonial foundations. Arundhati Roy and Raj Kamal Jha’s texts not only unveil the violence on which the mall is based but also thwart its logic of profit by imagining “aberrant” practices of the consumerist space. Through very distinct aesthetics, both novels picture the mall as a malleable space which is turned into a utopian nightly playground or a mausoleum by marginal characters. Their writing thus connects seemingly disjointed social spheres and endows the mall with temporal depth, excavating the historical layers which are buried under its immaculate surfaces, and making it an unintended memorial to what and whom it has destroyed. Fiction thus yokes the mall to the palimpsestic space of the city rather than displaying it as an ethereal sign of novelty.

Therefore, the fictional reinvention of the mall in these two novels offers a counterpoint to the flaunting of this commercial space as the icon of a global city and constructs an alternative image of urban India.

11H10 – 11H30: SHARMA RAHUL

Deconstructing the Mythos of Imaging: From Greenlaw to the Drone

Imaging, or photography has traditionally been accompanied by tropes that draw attention to themselves. From Robert Fenton with his darkroom on the cart dodging cannonballs in the Crimea; to Samuel Bourne using entire caravans of donkeys and Sherpas to photograph the Himalayas. Similarly, contemporary tropes of technical imaging show people in labs working with high technology and algorithms to generate dazzling imagery.

Using his own experience in recreating historical photographic techniques, and in his work as an art conservator and imaging technician, the author will attempt to put forward an alternative narrative of photography. In this schema, photographic technique, though developed in the west, was molded, by Indians and Westerners, to a uniquely subcontinental form, be it in early photographs, or in hi-tech drone photographs.



11H30 – 12H15: DISCUSSION



12H15 – 14H: LUNCH BREAK



14H: DEPARTURE FOR MODERN ART MUSEUM IN NEW DELHI



Contact

Scientific Committee:

DR. SALOMÉ DEBOOS,

Head of the Institute of Ethnology, University of Strasbourg, SAGE (UMR 7363), France deboos@unistra.fr

PROFESSOR GIRISH NATHJHA,

Head of the Institute of Sanskrit studies, JawarhalalNerhu University, New Delhi, India, girishjha@jnu.ac.in

Organizing Committee:

APOLLINE BAILLEUX, University of Strasbourg
apolline.bailleux@etu.unistra.fr

MAELBAYAD, University of Strasbourg
mael.bayad@etu.unistra.fr

DR. NICOLAS LAINÉ, University of Strasbourg
nlaine@unistra.fr

