

Rethinking Difference in India: Racialization in Transnational Perspective

April 1-2, 2019, American University, School of International Service,
Washington, DC

Workshop Schedule

Day I: Plenary and Opening Reception | SIS Founders Room

4:30-6:00 pm: Introductory remarks by Mabel Gergan (Florida State University) and Malini Ranganathan (American University) followed by Opening Plenary

Opening Plenary Speakers

Jesús F. Cháirez-Garza (University of Manchester)

Sureshi M. Jayawardene (San Diego State University)

Dolly Kikon (video call) (University of Melbourne)

Jessica Namakkal (Duke University)

Moderator: Pavithra Vasudevan (University of Texas, Austin)

6:00 pm | Opening Reception

Day II: Three Panels + Closing Keynote | SIS Founders Room

9:00 - 10:45 am | Panel I: Technologies of Difference

Mona Bhan (Depauw University): "In Search of the Aryan Seed": Race, Religion, and Sexuality in Indian-Occupied Kashmir

Sunil Purushotham (Fairfield University): The Camp and the Citizen: "Tribe" in Revolutionary Telangana

Pasang Sherpa (University of Washington): Power in Number: Murkiness of Racialized Sherpas

Discussant: Sureshi Jayawardane (San Diego State University)

11:00am - 12:45 pm | Panel II: Encounters in/as Space

Jesus Francisco Chairez Garza (University of Manchester): Feeling untouched: Space, caste and racialization in Ambedkar's political thought

Sara Smith (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) and **Mabel Gergan** (Florida State University): Racialized Subjectivities, Urban Encounters, and Fraught Histories in India

Pallavi Gupta (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill): Broomscapes: Locating caste, materiality, and space in Indian Railways

Discussant: Sapana Doshi (University of Arizona, Tucson)

1:00 - 2:00 pm | Lunch Break

2:15 - 4:00 pm | Panel III Identity in Formation

Amit Baishya (University of Oklahoma): Butchers and their Kills: Sacrifice ("Boli"), Speciesism and Racialization in the Works of Hafiz Ahmed

Mabel Gergan (Florida State University): Negotiating Desire and Despair in India's Urban Heartland

Balmurli Natrajan (William Paterson University): Caste as Political Identity: Difference, Hegemony, Solidarity

Discussant: Jessica Namakkal (Duke University)

4:30 - 6:00 pm | Keynote: Suraj Yengde (Harvard University)

Keynote Bio

Suraj Yengde is a Shorenstein Center postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School. Suraj is India's first Dalit Ph.D. holder from an African university in the nation's history. Suraj is a published author in the field of inter-regional labor migration in the global south, Caste, Race and Ethnicity studies. Currently, he is involved in developing a critical theory of Dalit and Black Studies.

Suraj is an academic activist in the transnational movement of Dalit rights. He is actively involved in building solidarities of Dalit, Black, Roma, Indigenous, Buraku and Refugee people's solidarities in the Fourth World project of marginalized peoples. He is a passionate Human Rights attorney by qualification from India and the UK, who is also an anti-caste and anti-racism advocate, columnist at The Huffington Post, The Indian Express, The Mexican Times, The Conversation, The Citizen among others. His writings have appeared in the Sunday World, Mail & Guardian Africa, Saturday Star. He is frequently invited by the media to offer expert advice on the issues of caste, migration, race relations and international law. He was featured in the independence day magazine of The Economic Times magazine.

Suraj has worked with leading international organizations in Geneva, London, and New York. Suraj is also an activist in the transnational movement of Dalit rights. He is a co-convenor of Dalit-Black Lives Matter symposium and Dalit and Black Power Movement. He runs a monthly Ambedkar Lecture Series at Harvard. He is the author of forthcoming Caste Matters with Penguin Random House and co-editor of The Radical in Ambedkar: Critical Reflections (Allen Lane, 2018), and Associate Editor of CASTE: A Global Journal on Social Exclusion published by Brandeis University Library.

His recent work with the philosopher Cornel West has received global attention and calls for unity between the African Americans and the Dalits.

Suraj offers consultations to the government and non-governmental policy-making bodies on the issues of human rights, social justice, cross-border migration and organizational strategies for campaigns and advocacy. He is a convenor of "India For Diversity" movement. Suraj also holds a research associate position with the department of African and African American Studies.

Participant Bios

Amit R. Baishya is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Oklahoma. His monograph Contemporary Literature from Northeast India: Deathworlds, Terror and Survival was published in 2018 by Routledge. His essays have appeared in Postcolonial Studies, Interventions, Himal South Asian, South Asian Review and several collected editions. He is also the co-editor (along with Prof. Yasmin Saikia) of a collection of essays titled Northeast India: A Place of Relations (Cambridge University Press, 2017). A

co-edited volume with Prof. Suvadip Sinha titled *Postcolonial Animality* is forthcoming in 2019 (Routledge). Baishya translates short stories and novels from Assamese to English. His translation of Debendranath Acharya's Assamese novel, *Jangam* (The Movement, Vitasta Press), on the "forgotten long march" of Indians from Burma during WWII was released in May 2018.

Mona Bhan is Otto L. Sonder Jr. Professor of Anthropology at DePauw University, Indiana. She is also the co-editor of *HIMALAYA*, the flagship journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies. Bhan has authored *Counterinsurgency, Development, and the Politics of Identity: From Warfare to Welfare?* (Routledge); and co-authored *Climate without Nature: A Critical Anthropology of the Anthropocene* (Cambridge). She recently co-edited a book on Kashmir, *Resisting Occupation in Kashmir* (UPenn), with scholars from the Critical Kashmir Studies collective of which she is a founder member. Her research articles on resource and territorial sovereignties, military and corporate humanitarianism, environmentalism, gender, race, and tourism, have appeared in the *Critique of Anthropology*, *Biography*, *Cultural Anthropology*, *Contemporary South Asia*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, and *South Atlantic Quarterly*. She is also the co-editor of a special issue on States of Occupation in the *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*.

Jesús F. Cháirez-Garza is a Lecturer in the History of Race and Ethnicity at the University of Manchester. His work deals with questions of caste and race, in India and Mexico, during the twentieth century. Jesús is currently working on two projects. The first one is an intellectual history of the Indian intellectual B.R. Ambedkar looking at the way in which Ambedkar linked the concept of untouchability to broader political questions such as political representation, race, space and liberty. In his second project, Jesús has been studying the influence of the American philosophy of pragmatism in the Global South.

Sureshi M. Jayawardene is an Assistant Professor of Africana Studies at San Diego State University. Her research raises questions about Black geographies, race, coloniality, Africanity, and self-definition in the lives of Afrodiasporic communities in South Asia whose ancestors were brought to the region through the Indian Ocean slave trade. Jayawardene also serves as an affiliate faculty with the Digital Humanities Center and the Department of Women's Studies at SDSU. She also co-directs the Afrometrics research institute.

Mabel Denzin Gergan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at Florida State University. Her research in South Asia combines political ecology, tribal/indigenous studies, anti-colonial and materialist theory. So far her research has focused on the Indian Himalayan borderlands and the oppositional trends shaping the relationship between the margins and the center, characterized on the one hand by state-led development interventions in this region and on the other, through the movement of racialized bodies from the borderland to India's urban heartland.

Sapana Doshi is an Associate Professor at the School of Geography and Development and a Faculty Affiliate in the Department of Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Arizona. She is interested in the politics of global city redevelopment, eviction and

resettlement in Mumbai, India with a focus on social mobilization among displaced residents of informal slum settlements.

Pallavi Gupta is a doctoral student in the Department of Geography, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Her research interests lie at the intersection of gender, law, and space. Her PhD research focuses on caste, materiality, affect, and waste. She has worked for many years with noted non-profits in India on issues related to gender and child rights and has published on these issues, in prominent journals like *Economic and Political Weekly* and *Indian Journal of Social Work*.

Dolly Kikon is a senior lecturer in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne. Her research focuses on the political economy of extractive resources, migration, development initiatives, gender relations, and human rights in Northeast India. Prior to obtaining her doctoral degree in Anthropology from Stanford University, Dr. Kikon worked as a human rights lawyer and a community organizer in India. Focusing on land rights among tribal communities in Northeast India, her legal advocacy works extensively dealt with constitutional provisions with regard to land and resource ownership, as well as autonomy arrangements for securing ethnic rights and guarantees. She is the author of *Living with Oil and Coal: Resource Politics and Militarization in Northeast India* and *Leaving the Land: Indigenous Migration and Affective Labour in India* (forthcoming book with Bengt Karlsson). She is also working on a co-authored book titled *Ceasefire City: Militarism, Capitalism and Urbanism in Dimapur* with Duncan McDuie-Ra.

Jessica Namakkal is an Assistant Professor of the Practice in the International Comparative Studies Program at Duke University. Her research focuses on the global networks established through colonial conquest and the ways in which movements for decolonization have utilized, challenged, and/or transformed these networks. Her first book project is a history of decolonization in 20th-century French India, *Unsettling Utopia: Decolonization, Borders, and Mobility in 20th Century India*. Her manuscript in progress shows that the colonial borders the British and French constructed during their rule in South Asia were adopted and reinforced by the Indian state, subsuming many movements for post-colonial autonomy that emerged on the ground in French India. Decolonization, an event that historians often consider complete, did not destroy colonial systems but instead opened new spaces for settlement, making way for settler colonial projects under the guise of cultural and spiritual tourism and utopianism. Her new research from her second project on race-mixing and diaspora in South Asia and Europe is forthcoming in the *Journal of Women's History*, Summer 2019.

Balmurli Natrajan is a Professor of Anthropology at William Paterson University of New Jersey, USA, and a Visiting faculty at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru, India. An anthropologist and engineer by training, Murlī's research and teaching interests are on Caste-Class-Gender-Culture (Group Formation & Identity); Culture (Transmission, Cognition, Meaning); Development (Artisans, Farmers, Domestic Workers, Sanitation); Hinduism-Hindutva (Philosophies, Traditions, Nationalism, Fascism). He has published in scholarly journals, books, and in popular media on globalization, caste, politics, culture and religion. His books include *Culturalization of Caste in India: Identity and Inequality in a*

Multicultural Age (London: Routledge, 2011) based on work among an artisanal caste in Chhattisgarh, and a co-edited volume with Paul Greenough *Against Stigma: Studies in Caste, Race and Justice Since Durban* (Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2009). His current research is on explanations of toilet behavior (Chhattisgarh, India), and collectivization of domestic workers (Bengaluru, India), and on caste myths.

Sunil Purushotham is an Assistant Professor of History at Fairfield University. He is a historian of modern South Asia, with a specific focus on twentieth century India. His research examines decolonization in South Asia, interrogating the constitutive relationships between violence, sovereignty and democracy. Professor Purushotham received his PhD from Cambridge University in 2013, where he taught for two years before joining the History Department at Fairfield.

Malini Ranganathan is an Assistant Professor in the School of International Service and co-lead of the Environment Team at the Antiracist Research and Policy Center at American University. A critical urban geographer by training, her research focuses on intersectional forms of discrimination pertaining to environmental injustices in the US and India, with special attention to the history, politics, and inequalities of water infrastructure and property regimes. Most recently she has published on the intersections of race, empire, and liberalism and decolonial and feminist reimaginings of "the environment as freedom". She is an 2017-2019 American Council of Learned Societies Andrew W. Mellon Fellow.

Pasang Yangjee Sherpa is an anthropologist from Nepal. Her primary research areas include human dimensions of climate change, Indigeneity, and development in the Himalayas. Her secondary research involves Sherpa diaspora in the United States and South Asia. She is currently affiliated with the South Asia Center of the University of Washington. She served as program director of their Nepal Studies Initiative until 2018. Previously, she was a lecturer in the department of anthropology at Penn State University and a postdoctoral fellow at The New School. She recently co-edited the special issue of *Verge: Studies in Global Asias* on "Indigeneity".

Sara Smith is an Associate Professor of Geography at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a feminist political geographer interested in the relationship between territory, bodies, and the everyday. In her research she seeks to understand how politics and geopolitics are constituted or disrupted through intimate acts of love, friendship, and birth.

Pavithra Vasudevan is an Assistant Professor with the Department of African & African Diaspora Studies and the Center for Women's & Gender Studies, and a faculty member of the University of Texas Feminist Geography Research Collective. She is interested in understanding how racism is reproduced transnationally and in relation to specific regional racial formations, exploring articulations of abolitionist, decolonial and liberatory futures in popular media and grassroots politics, and developing feminist collectives as decolonizing praxis.

Speaker Abstracts

Amit R. Baishya | *Butchers and their Kills: Sacrifice ("Boli"), Speciesism and Racialization in the Works of Hafiz Ahmed*

Critical discourses on racism in the context of Northeast Indian studies have either focused on race-thinking as a colonial/postcolonial administrative modality (Sanjib Baruah) or through the lenses of migration to the "mainland" and othering (Dolly Kikon, Beppe Karlsson, Duncan McDuie-Ra). What hasn't been addressed is the way in which racism and speciesism often converge in the formation and sustenance of a multiplicity of necropolitical conditions in the region. This lacuna is evident, I argue, even in works that use the lens of "bare life" or necropolitics to study the deleterious effects of the AFSPA in Northeast India. To this end, I begin by focusing more generally on the recent trajectory of "Miya" poetry and literature (Assamese literature written by poets of Bengali-Muslim heritage) where questions of race, racialization and othering are placed at the forefront. More specifically, I focus on the poetry and fiction, especially dealing with the Nellie massacre of 1983, of one of the prominent figures in the "Miya" literature movement: Hafiz Ahmed. Scenes of animal sacrifice ("boli") often figure prominently in Ahmed's poems. But this direct representation of concrete animal figures (like chickens, goats or grasshoppers) in the poems and fictions as figurations of bare life often transmogrify into complex allegories for the "noncriminal putting to death" (Derrida) of the human. "Boli" in Ahmed's works, of both animals and humans, operates through a paradox: it is not to be understood in the "valuable" sense of *sacratio*, but in the sense of forms of life that can be killed, but not sacrificed. Species sovereignty and a carnivorous sovereignty forged in the smithies of the necropolitical cross-hatch and converge with each other. This paper evaluates the convergences of the biopolitical, the zoopolitical and the necropolitical in Ahmed's works, and tries to advance the argument that the blurring between constructs of race and species difference can offer a different lens to analyze discourses of racialization and necropolitical sovereignty in the context of Northeast India.

Mona Bhan | *"In Search of the Aryan Seed": Race, Religion, and Sexuality in Indian-Occupied Kashmir*

The documentary film *Achtung Baby: In Search of Purity* offers a sensational account of German race and pregnancy tourism among the "Himalaya's Hidden Aryans", the Brogpas, a small ethnic minority community from the province of Ladakh in the Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). In this chapter, I situate the fetish for the "Aryan seed" not only within colonial and global circuits of myth and fantasy but also within India's contemporary politics of race, religion, and territory in Kashmir. I show how the unity of race and nation facilitated the insertion of Brogpas, a minority border community of Buddhists, into a Pan-Hindutva continuity, making Brogpas significant to chauvinist projects that treat Aryanism as fundamentally Hindu and Indian. The entanglements between India's racial and religious politics also relied on reclamations of a particular kind of Hindu masculinity that could sustain the militant project of a resurgent Hinduism especially in Kashmir, where the Indian military battled a defiant Muslim population. India's fixation with "Aryan seed," as illustrated in the film, for instance, was thus a national

cultural project that heightened sexually charged albeit racially mediated metaphors of desire and virility for serving the goals of an aggressive Indian nationalism (Anand 2011). In popular Indian conceptions of Kashmir, discourses of racial purity and virility masculinized borders as much as they paved a way for a "corporeal regime" that governed through narratives of desire, affect, and fantasy (Linke 2006). The widespread fetish for Aryan seed therefore cannot be detached from India's fundamentalist religious, national, and territorial politics in Kashmir. Nor can it be fully understood outside India's increasing assertion for equality or even superiority within a restructured global regime in which it sees itself as a rising player "alongside the 'great' nations of the world" (MacDonald 2003, 1565; see also Hansen 1996).

Jesús F. Cháirez-Garza | *Feeling untouched: Space, caste and racialization in Ambedkar's political thought*

Untouchability in India has been widely understood as the practice of excluding, from social or religious life, people who are believed to be permanently impure. Yet, this vision neglects the different experiences, emotions and feelings that untouchability produces in the subjects involved with it. This perspective also fails to grasp how untouchability is played through different bodies and diverse spaces at specific historical contexts. This type of understanding often results in an anachronistic portrayal of untouchability as a pan-Indian millenary phenomenon. To avoid this problematic, this paper analyses the complex nature of untouchability by examining its connections to concepts such as space, emotions and the body. In order to do so, this essay looks at the autobiographical notes of B.R. Ambedkar and his dealings with untouchability. It will be shown that Ambedkar's remembrances of untouchability were linked through specific spaces, such as hotels or train stations, where people could not determine at first hand his place in the caste hierarchy. Such spatial and emotional indeterminacy, allowed Ambedkar to do three things. First, it allowed him to question how untouchables should feel or behave in spaces where they are not identified as an untouchable. Second, analysing the relationship between untouchability and the spaces associated with this practice, Ambedkar became aware that places like the village facilitated the racialization of certain bodies as touchable or untouchable. Finally, his dealings with untouchability facilitated Ambedkar's view of untouchability not only as ritual or religious phenomenon but as a practice aimed at excluding untouchables from specific places associated with power.

Mabel D. Gergan | *Negotiating Desire and Despair in India's Urban Heartland*

In the last decade, India's urban metropolitan centers have witnessed several incidents of racism – including mob violence and hate crimes – directed primarily at African immigrants and people from India's mountainous borderland states. The latter category of migrants from geopolitically "sensitive" border regions (Van Schendel 2013), are driven to Indian cities due to dismal infrastructure in the region – a result of several decades of neglect and uneven development. While the small but steady stream of African migrants, mostly students, has been facilitated by growing India-Africa economic and political ties – part of India's geopolitical strategy to counter China's dominance in Africa. Due to perceived racial and cultural differences, and larger processes of gentrification and urban

change (Negi and Taraporevala 2018), these groups are routinely denied housing and face gendered and racial harassment – which has pushed activists to demand an Anti-Racism bill from the Indian state. Placing these trajectories of migration and racialized exclusion, in the larger context of neo-liberal expansions and South-South mobilities, this paper examines how racialized minorities are both central to and disruptive of, India's vision of a cosmopolitan urban future. As racialized minorities find themselves in the Indian heartland, how does their everyday experience of exclusion and marginalization, thwart the cosmopolitan aspirations of urban India? More broadly, this paper traces the postcolonial legacies of Asia and Africa, including histories of solidarity (Prasad 2008) and colonial racial hierarchies (Stoler 2010), linking it to the present-day, grounded reality of South-South geopolitical relations.

Pallavi Gupta | *Broomscapes: Locating caste, materiality, and space in Indian Railways*

In my paper, I examine how the interaction between caste and waste shapes labour relations within the context of public infrastructure. Specifically, I study the allocation of cleaning related jobs in a railway station to ask if caste identity of the cleaning staff determines that kind of jobs that they are assigned and the nature of technology allotted for their assistance. The railway station has different places that need to be cleaned. Some cleaning tasks are visible while others are invisible; the platform is visible to the commuters while others like the railway tracks are invisible even though they are the *raison d'être* of the railway station. I argue that this inherent characteristic of the different spaces within a railway station has an influence, in material terms, on the kind of technology deployed for their cleaning, and the identity of people assigned to the task of cleaning these spaces. For instance, many platforms are cleaned with a mechanical broom which puts considerable distance between the waste and the cleaner. On the other hand, most railway tracks are still cleaned with a traditional broom and a basket which forces the cleaner to get really close to the waste that he/she is cleaning. I argue that such allocation of labour and technology, mediated by caste identity, and combined with increasing contractualization of cleaning related task is resulting in the expropriation of the workers labour. I employ theoretical frameworks provided by racial capitalism (Pulido, 2017), and that of the value of waste (Gidwani and Reddy, 2011) to inform my arguments.

Balmurli Natrajan | *Caste as Political Identity: Difference, Hegemony, Solidarity*

India is increasingly shaped today by Hindutva neoliberalism, which is characterized by its avowed anti-liberalism, counter-revolutionary capitalist commitments, and ability to deploy storm trooper-like methods to animate its ideas of 'national renewal.' How does caste 'fit' (or not) in this project? This paper addresses this question by advancing a view of caste as part of a more general social process of identity, identification, and group formation in relation to the demands of capital. Neither is caste a pre-given reality, nor is casteism an inevitability. Both are produced continually through human action by creating 'caste situations'. Using examples from India, the paper argues for viewing caste as a political process / practice of production and articulation of 'difference' for hegemonizing the social. 'Difference' here is contingent in its value, being constructed variously as grounds for domination, demand for deference, tolerated or even celebrated by domestication, or threatened and attacked as defiance. Such a view of caste has

implications for thinking about what solidarity across caste identities (anti-caste), and across social contexts (global anti-caste) could mean in an age of social indeterminacy.

Sunil Purushotham | *The Camp and the Citizen: “Tribe” in Revolutionary Telangana*

In the last months of 1949, the Government of Hyderabad initiated what was referred to as the Tribal Rehabilitation Scheme or the Tribal Reclamation Scheme. Adivasis living in the hill and forest regions of the districts of Warangal, Karimnagar, and Adilabad were, by the thousands, forcibly relocated to roadside camps and what were called Rural Welfare Centres. This paper explores the history of these camps in order to investigate how the idea of “tribe” took on new meaning within a historical context of revolution and counterrevolution, decolonization, sovereignty, and democracy. Telangana was in 1949 the site of a massive communist-led agrarian revolution and the camps were implemented as part of government efforts to establish state sovereignty in what was previously a frontier of the princely and colonial order. I argue that by attending to the way in which colonial ethnographic knowledge was weaponized, we can gain insights into the nature of a postcolonial regime of citizenship and sovereignty.

Pasang Sherpa | *Power in Number: Murkiness of Racialized Sherpas*

In exploring how racialization plays out through reproduction across forms of difference and in diverse political contexts, this paper turns to the Sherpas of Darjeeling. This paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in 2018 in Darjeeling and surrounding villages, where ‘power in number’ appeared as a recurring theme while describing the local socio-politics. It presents three vignettes that speak to the racialization of Sherpas. Each of these vignettes reveals a different set of salient issues pertaining to the lives of the Sherpas. Racialization in this context emerges as an active process of defining identity in relation to other dominant and subordinate groups by the Sherpas. This paper does not sufficiently discuss racialization through an emphasis on corporeality and embodiment. This is however not to argue the lack of their relevance in the case of the Sherpas. On the contrary, this paper draws from sociological theories of racialization to decipher how socio-political identity formation is based on Sherpa bodies and embodiments. Racialization as an analytical tool to understand Sherpa identity thus holds promise. In doing so, this paper heeds to the reminder that however varied the manifestations of ‘race’ and racialization are, especially when examining previously overlooked groups like the Sherpas, the debates about terminology and concepts are only a small part of the issue (Barot and Bird 2010).

Sara Smith and Mabel D. Gergan | *Racialized Subjectivities, Urban Encounters, and Fraught Histories in India*

This article considers the encounter between India’s urban centers and its mountainous borderlands, through the lens of race and racialization, with a focus on the North-Western region of Ladakh. Like those from India’s North-Eastern states, people from Ladakh face expulsion from the Indian “physiognomic map” that excludes, “those who do not ‘look Indian’ but yet live within the Indian polity and possess Indian citizenship.” (Subba and Wouters 2013:3). In the last decade, ecological degradation, increasing militarization, a shrinking public sector, and sharp rise in unemployment in hill/mountain states have

pushed young people from these Northern borderlands to Indian cities. The spaces of encounter created by urban spaces provide young people a new vantage point with which to observe their homelands while also building solidarities among other racialized minorities. In 2014 the tragic death of Nido Tania, a young student from India's borderland state of Arunachal Pradesh, who was beaten in a racialized hate crime, sparked protests and galvanized support across Himalayan and North-Eastern student groups. However, the geopolitical histories of these regions and the diversity of racial categories in which different hill/mountain populations are placed, make it challenging for broad solidarities to emerge between these groups even in urban centers where they are often misrecognized for each other. We explicate this challenge through a focus on Ladakh's relationship with the Indian nation-state, as a product of colonial ethnographic representations, its fraught history within Jammu and Kashmir, to its status as a prominent tourist destination today. The second half of this paper, focuses on ethnographic fieldwork with young Ladakhis pursuing higher education in Indian cities and demonstrates how a racialized subjectivity forms not only through the experience of exclusion and discrimination but also in an embrace of difference through the discourse of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism.