



Illustration: "School begins" / Dairymple / 25 January, 1899.



Habib University
shaping futures

HABIB UNIVERSITY'S
3RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON

POSTCOLONIAL HIGHER EDUCATION

OCTOBER 14, 2017 | 9:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M. | HABIB UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM



THE CONFEDERATE STATES REFUSED
THEIR CONSENT TO BE GOVERNED,
BUT THE UNION WAS PRESERVED
WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT

U.S. FIGHTING IN SELF GOVERNMENT

THE NEW CLASSES
PHILIPPINES
HAWAII
PUERTO RICO

PHILIPPINES

HAWAII

PORTO RICO

ABOUT HABIB UNIVERSITY

Habib University is a liberal arts & sciences university, offering interdisciplinary education in science, engineering, arts humanities and social sciences. It was established in Karachi under the patronage of the House of Habib. Committed to providing the highest standards of excellence in higher learning, the University has formal partnerships with several leading international institutions and commenced classes on August 25th, 2014.

Habib University is dedicated to enriching individual lives and engaging society through teaching, research and service. Its mission is to educate promising students from all backgrounds and enable them to become competent, caring and critically- conscious members of society, engage outstanding academics who will work with us to enrich the minds and lives of our students and promote creativity, academic freedom and exchange of ideas in an intellectually stimulating environment of mutual respect and collaboration.



ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

We are living through a period of intense injustices never witnessed before in human history. On the one hand, we are witnessing an intensification of economic inequalities, at an unparalleled scale, with just over sixty individuals owning half the world's wealth. We are also witnessing an environmental and ecological disaster of geological proportions at a rate that has not been witnessed in millions of years. Despite these glaring forms of injustices, it is alarming that far right political tendencies, with their vitriolic commitment to racism, nationalism and imperialism are making their political ascendance. The current state, however, is neither a coincidence nor is it a settled state. It is the historical result of over two centuries of economic, political, and cultural development that began with the development of the capitalist system and its corollary in the peripheral world: the colonial plunder and exploitation of the underdeveloped world.

It is not surprising therefore that the results of these historical injustices, and their continuation, are felt especially urgently in the post-colonial world: class exploitation, racism, conflict, and the destruction of nature are just some of its manifestations. What is more is that the forms of knowledge inherited from colonialism are themselves an obstruction to justice as they impede, rather than enhance, an appreciation of past injustices. Colonial 'knowledge' was precisely knowledge for subordination, exploitation, and systemic racism. In contrast, an appreciation of these past injustices calls for the creation of a spiritual and intellectual force contrary to capitalism, to establish justice.

The Habib University Conference on Postcolonial Higher Education seeks to fill this void by inviting global scholars, thinkers, activists and writers to reflect on the lingering crisis of injustices in our world, and the goals of a critical discourse at this juncture.

DR. SHAHRAM AZHAR

Assistant Professor, Social Development and Policy
Habib University,
Karachi - Pakistan

CONFERENCE AGENDA

TIME	PROGRAM
9:00 – 9:30	Registration
9:30 – 9:45	Introductory remarks by Dr. Nauman Naqvi
9:45 – 10:30	Keynote address: Dr. Mwangi wa Githinji Title: <i>The Impossibility and Possibility of a Just Post-Colonial Development</i>
10:30-11:00	Discussion and Q/A Moderator: Dr. Shahram Azhar
11:00-12:30	Panel 1: Imagining a Post-colonial Politics Speaker 1: Dr. Suren Pillay Title: <i>Thinking the State from Africa, Teaching the State in Africa: Coloniality, Decolonization and the Political Subject</i> Speaker 2: Dr. Peter Hallward Title: <i>The Will of the People and the Weight of the Past</i> Moderator: Dr. Nauman Naqvi
12:30-13:30	Break
13:30-15:00	Panel 2: Confronting a Fractured Past Speaker 1: Dr. Minoli Salgado Title: <i>Writing Wrongs: Literary Reflections on Testimony and Trauma in Sri Lanka</i> Speaker 2: Dr. Sabyn Javeri Title: <i>Teaching Feminist Fiction in the Pakistani Undergrad Classroom</i> Moderator: Dr. Asif Farrukhi
15:00-16:30	Panel 3: Revisiting Emancipatory Futures Speaker 1: Dr. Craig Phelan Title: <i>Postcolonial Labor Relations</i> Speaker 2: Dr. Shahram Azhar Title: <i>Was Marx a Eurocentric Thinker? Revisiting Marx's Theory of Colonial Economy'</i> Speaker 3: Dr. Ammar Jan Title: <i>Marxism Reconfigured: The Formation of Communist Thought in Colonial India</i> Moderator: Dr. Mohammad Moeini
16:30-17:00	Tea Break

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



DR. MWANGI WA GĨTHĨNJI

Associate Professor, Economics
University of Massachusetts – Amherst, USA

TITLE:

**'THE IMPOSSIBILITY AND POSSIBILITY OF
A JUST POST-COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT'**

ABSTRACT

With the creation of politically independent states in the third world, intellectuals, scholars, policy makers and political parties in these countries turned from issues of national liberation to development. In raising a new flag, creating a national coat of arms and composing a national anthem, it was imagined that a new economic order could be created, one that was different from the colonial economic order, which was clearly unjust. The injustice of the colonial system was clear for all to see, so obviously marked by the racial hierarchy which it imposed on colonial societies. In law and practice, Europeans were considered superior and thus received higher wages, prices for their goods, better accommodation etc. than the native population. To distribute economic benefits in this manner required a particular structuring of the economy, the ecology, language and history. While independence wiped out the unjust colonial practices of racial hierarchy in law (even if not always not necessarily in practice), it did little in most countries to change the economic, ecological and language structures that underpinned the unjust practices. Post-independence leaders therefore inherited an unjust economic system which they initially gallantly tried to make serve the broad populations but with little success. This paper will explore the ways that this inherited economic, social, language and ecological structure transmitted colonial injustice into the present and ultimately how that transmission of injustice and the structure of the economy led to the moribund performance of African economies, and the failure to improve the well-being of the vast majority of the population.

PROFILE

Dr. Mwangi wa Gĩthĩnji is Associate Professor of Economics at University of Massachusetts-Amherst. He was Chair of Africana Studies and Associate Professor of Economics at Gettysburg College from 2002-2006, and has over 15 years of experience as an economist. Primarily focused on the areas of Development, Environment and Political Economy with particular attention to Africa, Mwangi is most interested in issues of class, gender and income distribution in relation to agrarian transition. He is the author of *Ten Millionaires and Ten Million Beggars* (Ashgate Press, 2000) which examines issues of income distribution, class and gender in Kenya; in addition he has published journal articles and book chapters on economic development in Africa. Mwangi has consulted widely for UN agencies on economic issues in African countries and the region as a whole.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



DR. SUREN PILLAY

Associate Professor, Center for Humanities Research
University of the Western Cape, South Africa

TITLE:

**'THINKING THE STATE FROM AFRICA, TEACHING THE STATE IN AFRICA:
COLONIALITY, DECOLONIZATION AND THE POLITICAL SUBJECT'**

ABSTRACT

This paper is divided into two parts. In the first section, I describe a project that we have underway at University of Western Cape, to rethink Political Theory and Political Philosophy. It is a project partly responsive to the questions that have been raised over the last two years in South African universities, about rethinking the curriculum and 'decolonizing knowledge'. The second part of this paper will offer a description of a course that I have been teaching at Honours and Masters level on Political Violence and the Modern State. In recounting these two projects I wish to offer the outlines of possible ways to reconstitute an account of the genealogy of the modern state in Africa, and to think about how this might be done in a less Eurocentric way. It is therefore both a theoretical-political argument as much as it is also a pedagogic enterprise.

PROFILE

Dr. Suren Pillay is Associate Professor at the Center for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape. His research focuses on the political and intellectual legacies of colonialism in the present. He currently leads two Mellon-funded research projects at the CHR, one titled *Migrating Violence* and the second, *Citizenship and Justice* on rethinking political theory from the South. He has held visiting fellowships at Columbia University, The Graduate Centre of the City University of New York, Makerere University, Uganda, and Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. He has published on issues of violence, citizenship, law and justice claims. He holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Columbia University in New York. A previous editor of the journal *Social Dynamics*, he is a current co-editor of the *MISR Review*, a journal based at the Makerere Institute for Social Research in Kampala, Uganda. He also writes a postscript column for Economic and Political Weekly (EPW).



DR. PETER HALLWARD

Professor, Modern European Philosophy
Kingston University, United Kingdom

TITLE:

'THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE AND THE WEIGHT OF THE PAST'

ABSTRACT

Debates about the nature and value of popular sovereignty have returned to the centre of political discussion in recent years, and the once-revolutionary idea that sovereign power rests with 'the will of the people' is now a widely acknowledged principle. Just what we mean by either 'will' or 'people', however, let alone this combination of the two, remains obscure and controversial. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that popular desires ('the people's want', so to speak) are shaped largely by the past, whereas any sort of will is oriented to the future. 'We poor devils', Robespierre observed in the midst of the first great struggle to equate sovereignty with the popular will, find ourselves obliged to 'build the temple of liberty with hands still scarred by the fetters of servitude' – and in the case of the French colonies, there was nothing metaphorical about these fetters. This talk will look at the several ways that past injustices cast a shadow over political self-determination in the present, and drawing on some distinctions in Rousseau, Marx, Gramsci and Fanon, it will pay particular attention to the way these two dimensions conflict in the accounts of popular will that were debated during the French and Russian revolutions.

PROFILE

Dr. Peter Hallward is Professor of Modern European Philosophy at Kingston University in London. After working in the French department at King's College London (1999-2004), he joined the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy in 2005, when it was based at Middlesex University, and then moved to Kingston with other members of the CRMEP in 2010. His research interests include, recent and contemporary political philosophy, theories of democracy, popular empowerment and political change; conceptions of political will; recent French Philosophy, especially Sartre, Foucault, Deleuze, Badiou, Ranciere; contemporary critical theory; existentialism; theories of globalization; and postcolonial theory. Peter is currently working on a project, *The Will of the People*, whose goal is to develop and defend a notion of democratic political will, understood as a rational, deliberate, and autonomous capacity for collective self-determination. He is also working on a series of more focussed projects on political will, engaging with Rousseau, Blanqui and Marx respectively.



DR. MINOLI SALGADO

Reader, English Literature; Director, Centre for Colonial and Postcolonial Studies
University of Sussex, United Kingdom

TITLE:

**'WRITING WRONGS: LITERARY REFLECTIONS ON
TESTIMONY AND TRAUMA IN SRI LANKA'**

ABSTRACT

My paper explores the crisis of witnessing in Sri Lanka - one in which the very terms and conditions of speaking out, writing and finding expression for traumatic experience are deeply conflicted and compromised - and its relationship to the generation of contexts of healing. Drawing upon my experience of writing 'A Little Dust on the Eyes', I reflect on different testimonial modes to reveal how they not only show the displacement marked by trauma but also offer a process of healing without closure, allowing for the restoration of self and community while giving space for accountability and justice to be addressed.

PROFILE

Dr. Minoli Salgado is Reader in English and Director of the Centre of Colonial and Postcolonial Studies at the University of Sussex. She is the author of the critically acclaimed study, *Writing Sri Lanka: Literature, Resistance and the Politics of Place* (2007) and the novel, *A Little Dust on the Eyes* (2014), which was longlisted for the DSC Prize in South Asian Literature. Her current research focuses on literatures of terror and trauma, transnational writing and the aesthetics and ethics of bearing witness to politically sanctioned violence.



DR. SABYN JAVERI

Assistant Professor, Arzu Center for Literature and Languages,
Habib University, Pakistan

TITLE:

'TEACHING FEMINIST FICTION IN THE PAKISTANI UNDERGRAD CLASSROOM'

ABSTRACT

This paper examines student perceptions of gender and identity when introduced to fiction by postcolonial authors in the context of postcolonial feminism in particular. Based on my experience of teaching an elective titled 'Borders & Boundaries: Feminist Fiction of South Asian and Middle East' in two of Pakistan's leading undergraduate universities, it explores students' perceptions as they assess their relationship to these fictional 'feminist' texts and their place in the contemporary world, examining the relevance of feminism today through the lens of intersectionality. The course surveyed the relationship between fiction and feminism by using gender as a category of literary and cultural analysis in the classroom. Using reading responses and self-reflection papers as tools of research, the papers examines how students thought other vectors of social experience such as race, class and sexuality were equally, less or more important than gender.

PROFILE

Dr. Sabyin Javeri is an Assistant Professor at the Arzu Center for Literature and Languages at Habib University. She has a Masters from Oxford University and a doctorate from the University of Leicester. She is an award-winning short story writer and the author of bestselling novel, *Nobody Killed Her*. Her texts on creative writing have also been widely published. Sabyin is interested in rediscovering our creative heritage and literary past. Her research is currently exploring the works of forgotten literary heroes of the subcontinent and developing a discourse related to cultural identity through creative writing.



DR. CRAIG PHELAN

Professor, Comparative Liberal Studies
Habib University, Pakistan

TITLE: 'POSTCOLONIAL LABOR RELATIONS'

ABSTRACT

The European powers carved up Africa in the late nineteenth century and simultaneously sowed the seeds of their empires' destruction. They established schools designed to educate an African elite capable of administering the colonies but the students also learned about nationalism and other dangerous ideas that generated resistance to colonialism itself. In the economic realm, European trade unions established branches in almost all colonies designed to carry on the wage struggle overseas. Trade unions in the colonies became allies in the nationalist struggles that sprang to life across Africa after the Second World War. Once independence was achieved, however, these erstwhile allies were instantly transformed into potential threats to the new one-party regimes that dominated the continent, and trade unions were either suppressed or absorbed into the state apparatus. They survive today, and at times play a critical role in organizing protests. But African trade unions remain hampered by their European roots. Like their forebears, they are still designed to represent those who work for wages, and they are ill-equipped to promote the interests of the vast majority who toil in the informal sector. Perversely, Western-dominated NGOs and the UN-affiliated International Labor Organization (ILO) have assumed responsibility for organizing the informal sector, while the trade unions remain wedded to an outmoded colonial view of the working-class. Unless African trade unions are prepared to shed their European notions of what trade unionism is and adopt a postcolonial vision that more accurately reflects economic circumstances, one of the most progressive forces on the continent will soon wither and disappear.

PROFILE

Dr. Craig Phelan is Professor of Comparative Liberal Studies at Habib University's School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Prior to this, he was a Professor of Modern History at Kingston University London which he had joined in 2008. Dr. Phelan is an expert in trade unionism. As well as teaching and researching this area, he is editor of the academic journal *Labor History*, and editor of a book series entitled *Trade Unions Past, Present and Future*. He is interested in the variety of trade union activity around the globe, and although trained as an historian, he is equally interested in the contemporary scene and historical development. He is delighted to be part of Habib University and looks forward to contributing to its success.



DR. SHAHRAM AZHAR

Assistant Professor, Social Development and Policy
Habib University, Pakistan

TITLE:

'WAS MARX A EUROCENTRIC THINKER? REVISITING MARX'S THEORY OF COLONIAL ECONOMY'

ABSTRACT

It is fashionable in many circles to posit Marx as just another 'Eurocentric' thinker looking at the rest of the world with Western-tinted spectacles of 'progress' and 'modernity'. His journalistic articles on India, often taken out of context, are presented as proof of his 'orientalism' and little evidence beyond scattered statements is presented from his mature theoretical works to genuinely understand his views on colonialism, and its unique features as a state and economy. While Marx devotes an entire chapter to the "Modern Theory of Colonization" in Capital, notes from his prospective works published as the Grundrisse ("ground-work") suggest that colonialism would have received a much deeper examination in the remaining volumes of Capital, which Marx left unwritten. In this paper, I examine these notes to show that: 1) Marx's theory of global capitalism rested crucially on an explicit understanding of conquest and colonialism, and 2) Marx's theory does not posit a teleological understanding of linear progress that critics and supporters alike have believed. Instead, Marx's original work was to set historically constituted institutional structures---economic, political, cultural---associated with a subjugated society in contradistinction with the subjugator and these differences in turn, Marx believed, would uniquely shape production, distribution, exchange and consumption in the colonized economy.

PROFILE

Dr. Shahram Azhar is Assistant Professor of Social Development and Policy at Habib University. He is an economist, researcher and musician. He did his doctoral studies in Economics at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst as a Fulbright scholar. His doctoral study, entitled "The colonial and post-colonial origins of development" analyzes the impact of colonial institutions and post-colonial developmental policy in shaping current outcome differentials using the natural experiment of the partition of Punjab between India and Pakistan in 1947. His graduate work at Amherst exposed him to a number of heterodox traditions in Economics, including the Marxian and Institutional approaches.



DR. AMMAR JAN

Assistant Professor
University of Punjab, Pakistan

TITLE:

**'MARXISM RECONFIGURED:
THE FORMATION OF COMMUNIST THOUGHT IN COLONIAL INDIA'**

ABSTRACT

Intellectual history often posits Europe as the site for the “production” of ideas and the colonized world as the site for their “reception” and “application”. In this paper, I aim to move beyond this binary by studying the relationship between Marxism and the anti-colonial movement in India. While acknowledging that Marxism as an idea opened new horizons for Indian political actors, the reverse was equally true; Marxism’s encounter with the anti-colonial movement re-configured Marxism itself, expanding its horizons and making certain aspects redundant. I argue that the task for us is to view the trajectories of Marxism and anti-colonialism as immanent to each other. “Indian communism” was an incomplete and contingent political project that brought together the historical specificity of the region’s politics and Marxism, resulting in the reconstitution of both terms of the divide. This encounter should neither be seen as Marxist hegemony over Indian consciousness, nor a fusion of two different ideologies, but the dialectical inter-locking of two disparate political trajectories that continuously interrupted, and propelled, each other to produce a novel practice of politics.

PROFILE

Ammar Ali Jan is a doctoral candidate in the faculty of History at Cambridge and an Assistant Professor at the University of Punjab. He is also a member of the People's Solidarity Forum.

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