CALL FOR PAPERS

Communication, Postcoloniality, and Social Justice: Decolonizing Imaginations

A four-day conference: Sponsored by the Waterhouse Family Institute for the study of Communication and Society (WFI) at Villanova University, PA

26th-29th March, 2015, Location: Villanova University (Specifics to be announced later)

About Waterhouse Family Institute: Founded in 2010, the WFI’s mission is to foreground the centrality of communication scholars, activists, and professionals to the study of and advocacy for social justice. To that end, the WFI is dedicated to creating opportunities for the productive and collaborative exploration of these issues in ways that cross sedimented boundaries, whether they be academic, methodological, or national. The WFI annually sponsors research grants for scholars whose projects embody and extend its mission (typically awarding a total of $40,000 to scholars across the globe), and supports projects that highlight communication scholars’ abilities to advocate for social change. Since its inaugural launch in October, 2010, the WFI has sponsored events, lectures, and symposia creatively engaging the essential link between communication/media and social justice. Past symposia have addressed the communicative production and contestation of truth (2011-12), the clash between institutional values and social justice advocacy (2012-13), and dialogic approaches to diversity in secondary and higher education (2013-14). Continuing the social justice focus, the WFI is very pleased to announce a conference on “Communication, Postcoloniality, and Social Justice: Decolonizing Imaginations,” and hopes that this important scholarly event will chart some possible pathways for Communications research (broadly conceived) in the 21st century.

Conference Organizers: Bryan Crable; Raka Shome (Biographies of organizers presented at the end of call for papers)

Keynote Speakers: Arjun Appadurai (New York University, USA)
Inderpal Grewal (Yale University, USA)
Ravi Sundaram (Center for the Study of Developing Societies, India)

Plenary Speakers: (confirmed) Sudeep Dasgupta (Netherlands); Boulou Ebanda De B’Beri (Canada); Mohan Dutta (Singapore); John Erni (Hong Kong); Nitin Govil (USA); Ramaswami Harindranath (Australia); May Joseph (USA), Aniko Imre (USA); Shanti Kumar (USA), Soyini Madison (USA); Radhika Parameswaran (USA); Sandra
Ponzanesi (Netherlands); Raka Shome (USA); Ramesh Srinivasan (USA), Audrey Yue (Australia).

**Three Plenary Sessions:** 1) Significance of postcolonial studies for communication and media research 2) Postcolonial feminist and queer approaches 3) Postcoloniality and the Global South: Logics of Modernity beyond the West/North

In the past two decades, postcolonial theory has become increasingly influential in various spaces in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Recent communication and media scholarship has also shown some interest in postcolonial frameworks. However, there has not been a focused and sustained conversation in Communication/Media Studies in the United States and we think, even outside, that has engaged the ways in which communication and media studies, and postcolonial studies can mutually inform each other in the advancement of social justice projects. The conference emerges from the recognition that diverse logics, networks, and trajectories of communication and media today (as well as in the past) play a significant role in the production of colonial power relations in contemporary globality.

The organizers of **Communication, Postcoloniality and Social Justice: Decolonizing Imaginations** thus invite proposals from scholars who employ postcolonial frameworks to study various communication and media phenomena—including their embedded-ness in various logics of transnationality. We are interested in exploring how communication/media scholarship, with its varied rich perspectives, may make contributions to broad field of postcolonial studies by foregrounding the importance of communication/media frameworks for understanding colonial cultures, and transnational relations. At the same time we recognize that many of the core concepts and assumptions in the fields of Communication and Media Studies are rooted in Western/Northern exclusionary intellectual frameworks. Thus, we wish to explore how postcolonial analytical frameworks may productively enrich our understandings of various communication and media phenomena and enable us to decolonize normative frameworks in the field so as to be responsive to various struggles engendered by contemporary (and past) post/colonial logics. The conference aims to provide a productive space that can facilitate dialogue and interconnections amongst scholars conducting postcolonial scholarship in communication and media studies. We also hope that this conference can provide a space for building intellectual solidarities amongst scholars in Media and Communication who are concerned with the politics of colonialisms (including their varied transnational logics) as they inform our research and influence our social, economic, cultural, and academic practices.

This call for papers will be available for download on the Communication Department of Villanova University website by the end of week of May 5th. A conference website will be put up by the end of May—please check there for updates.

**REGISTRATION FEES:** $250 (includes some meals and coffee; specifics will be confirmed in fall, 2014)
FORMAT: We welcome proposals from scholars, activists, and researchers from various parts of the world. Papers must demonstrate an engagement with the field of postcolonial studies. (Just any descriptive study of colonialism, while suitable for other venues, will not fit the goals of this conference). Submissions must be made by **August 30, 2014. Acceptance of papers will be announced sometime in October 2014.** PLEASE EMAIL SUBMISSIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY TO: Bryan Crable (bryan.crable@villanova.edu) and Raka Shome (r.shome@yahoo.com). In subject heading please write: “Submission for Communication, Postcoloniality and Social Justice conference.” Given the volume of submissions we expect to receive, we will not be able to acknowledge receipt of every submission.

Please choose any one format:

1) **Panel proposals:** Panels on a theme relevant to the conference are welcome. A panel should have between 3-4 panelists (including discussant. Chair may be one of the presenters, or you may select your own Chair/moderator who is not a presenter). Please submit title, panel abstract (which should include names/affiliation of participants, description and justification of panel). **REQUIRED:** 350 word panel description/justification, and approximately 200 words abstract of each paper to be presented.

2) **Individual paper proposals:** Please send an abstract of around 350 words. Name, paper title, and institutional affiliation must be included.

*A statement of commitment to attend is required of all participants. Please include that in your proposal submissions.*

**Potential topics of interest are (and these are not exhaustive):** Postcoloniality and the Global South; Feminist and Queer Approaches; Transgendered subjects and/in colonial cultures; Gay imperialism; Homonationalism; Heterosovereignties; Modernity beyond the West/North (*Papers dealing with Islamic modernities from a postcolonial/transnational perspective especially welcome*); Memor(ies) and Postcoloniality; Diaspora (especially new logics of diaspora) and Hybridity; Media and Migrations; Post/colonial Visual cultures; Cultural Studies and the Postcolonial; Nation, nationalisms, national identity; Asylum and Exile; Colonial Necropolitics; Colonial Biopolitics; Subalternity and Communication (e.g., the ‘impossibility’ of communication in the politics of subalternity); Cosmopolitanism(s); Politics of Cultural Translation; Engagements with works of key postcolonial scholars in terms of their relevance for media/communication studies; Communication of “human rights;” Consumption, Cultural Industries, and Postcolonial/Transnational Power relations; Environment and the Postcolonial (papers on mediations of “climate change” are particularly welcome); Intellectual and Cultural Property Issues; Affective regimes and post/colonial relations; Celebrities and Colonialism; Materialities of colonialism; Fashion, Identity and Colonialisms; New Media; Postcolonial Urbanisms; Traveling technologies and colonial circuits; Techno-cities; Transnational Temporalities; Postcoloniality and computer cultures; Postcolonial Piracy; The “global” city; Technological Colonialisms; Science and the Postcolonial; Electronic Others; Postcolonial Securitizations; Politics of Representation; Global
health and colonial relations; “Humanitarianism,” “Natural Disaster” and Contemporary colonial logics; Decolonizing Pedagogy and the field of Media/Communication Studies; The contemporary university and (the possibility of) postcolonial interventions

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

Dr. Bryan Crable is Professor of Department of Communication at Villanova University, and the Founding Director of Villanova’s Waterhouse Family Institute for the Study of Communication and Society. His scholarly work connects critical race theory, rhetorical studies, and the philosophy of communication, specifically by engaging Burkean rhetorical theory. He is the author of Ralph Ellison and Kenneth Burke: At the Roots of the Racial Divide (University of Virginia Press, 2012), a book awarded inclusion in the Mellon Foundation’s American Literatures Initiative, excerpted in Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, vol. 286 (Gale, 2013), and reviewed in such journals as African American Review, Callaloo, and Rhetoric Review. He is also the editor of a volume of essays connecting Burkean studies to the concerns of social justice, Transcendence by Perspective: Meditations on and with Kenneth Burke (Parlor Press, 2014). Dr. Crable is a two-time winner of the Charles Kneupper Award for best article of the year from the Rhetoric Society of America (2003, 2009), and, for his scholarly and professional contributions to the discipline, was awarded the Kenneth Burke Society’s Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011. In addition to scholarly chapters and reviews, his essays have appeared in top rhetoric and communication journals, including The Quarterly Journal of Speech, Rhetoric Society Quarterly, Rhetoric Review, Argumentation & Advocacy, Human Studies, Communication Quarterly, and Western Journal of Communication. In addition to his work as WFI Director, Dr. Crable has served on the editorial board of leading journals in his field, has served in a leadership role in the Kenneth Burke Society, the National Communication Association, and the Eastern Communication Association, and in 2011 was invited to serve as an Associate in the international scholarly network, the Taos Institute. CONTACT: bryan.crable@villanova.edu.

Dr. Raka Shome is a Media, Communication, and Cultural Studies scholar who writes on postcolonial cultures and transnational feminism. Currently based in New York, Dr. Shome has published numerous articles and book chapters in leading journals and anthologies in the field of Media and Communication Studies. She is the author of Diana and Beyond: White Femininity, National Identity, and Contemporary Media Culture (University of Illinois Press, 2014) -- a book that examines how new sets of postcolonial relations in contemporary western cultures are mediated through images of white femininity. Under her co-guest editorship the first-ever special issue on ‘Postcolonialism’ was published in the field of Communication Studies in the International Communication Association journal Communication Theory (August, 2002). She recently also guest edited a special issue on ‘Asian Modernities’ (2012) in the (Sage) journal Global Media and Communication, which included several internationally recognized scholars working on the question of what it means to be “modern” outside of liberal western frameworks. Some of her essays have been reprinted in key texts in the field of global communication and media studies. Dr. Shome has delivered talks, including keynotees and plenaries, nationally and internationally on issues of postcoloniality and racism in contemporary global contexts. In 2011-2012 she served as the Inaugural Harron Family Endowed Chair of Communication and Justice at Villanova University, Pennsylvania. Prior to this, she held full time faculty appointments at London School of Economics, (UK), Arizona State University, and University of Washington. She serves on the editorial boards of several leading journals in Communication. She has been a past chair of the Cultural Studies Division of National Communication Association (NCA) and has also received awards for her research from National Communication Association. Her current research interest is in the logics of non western modernities. CONTACT: r.shome@yahoo.com.