

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Constructing Tamil Worlds: Circulation, Marginality and Plurality

Fifth Annual Tamil Studies Conference  
University of Toronto, May 13-15, 2010

Plenary Speakers: Sanjay Subrahmanyam, University of California, Los Angeles  
Raj Gauthaman, Post Graduate Centre, Pondicherry

The conference organizers invite papers that examine, from different disciplinary perspectives, the Tamil regions, worlds, world views and practices as a product of circulation rather than permanence. Constant movement, across time and space, has played an important role in both establishing and destabilizing notions of culture and identity. We would like the papers to focus on the circulation of people, ideas, and goods, as a way of understanding the past and the present.

We invite papers on the circulation of people, ideas and things that emphasize how movement constituted margins and centres of social, cultural and political worlds and organized difference in different historical periods. In addition, how are these worlds out-of-place made through narrative, economic relations, and social practices? And, how, as a result are the future and the present of place and people re-imagined? We welcome individual or panel proposals from all disciplines, and from scholars, students, artists, writers and activists.

This theme of constructing Tamil worlds can be explored through some of these suggested questions focusing on circulation and the emergence as well as the institutionalization of centres and peripheries. Circulation: How have circuits of communication shaped the traffic in ideas? How have trade routes and networks affected cultural, institutional and material practices? What is the nature and impact of Tamil Diaspora circulation? Does movement reorganize gender roles or relations? In what ways do language and translation bear the imprint of movement? What modes of travel have determined people's sense of time and space? Why has labour migration been central to economic production but marginal to political citizenship? How does the movement of people encourage new forms of collective and personal identification? How has pilgrimage produced economic and sacred geographies? How does circulation help us to understand the past and the present?

Centres and Peripheries: What are the models of centrality that have served to orient evaluations of difference? How might peripheries and internal difference be said to constitute the centre? We invite papers that address these questions in relation to: how local and regional power structures relate to encompassing forms of governance; the organization of living space around hierarchical forms of interdependence; asymmetrical relations of political authority and economic production; the recreation of older topographies in the service of new centres; the constitution of canons against a plurality of textual practices; normative vs. transgressive conceptions of the self; the changing production of linguistic standards in the face of diversity, and alternative models of cosmopolitanism.

### Requirements

- ❖ Submission of an abstract and biographical statement, or the full details of a panel by August 31, 2009 to: [info@tamilstudiesconference.ca](mailto:info@tamilstudiesconference.ca)
- ❖ Confirmation of participation by registering and paying the registration fee within two weeks of the organizers official acceptance in September/October 2009.
- ❖ Ability to meet costs of the registration fee, travel and accommodation costs.
- ❖ Attendance and participation during the full duration of the conference.

### Paper Proposals: Abstracts and Biographical Statement

- ❖ A 300 word abstract stating the argument to be presented.
- ❖ A one paragraph biographical statement, including: current affiliation, publications and research interests. Please note that this will be the biographical information used in conference publicity and introductions. Even if you have submitted a biographical statement in past years, please resubmit it along with your abstract. (See sample statement, p.4)
- ❖ Abstracts must be submitted in the language in which you intend to present, English or Tamil. Tamil abstracts, should be accompanied by a Tamil bio, and an English translation of the abstract and bio.
- ❖ Panel proposals must include an abstract for the whole panel, and the abstracts and bios of each individual presenter and the chair.

### Acceptance and Registration

- ❖ Participants will be selected based on the recommendations of the abstract evaluation committee.
- ❖ You will be informed in September/October if your proposal has been accepted for presentation at the conference.
- ❖ You will confirm your participation in the conference by completing the registration form and paying the registration fee on the conference website within two weeks of receiving notice of the acceptance of your proposal. Please note there will be no refund of the registration fee and that registration fees and your place are not transferable to others.

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Finances and Costs

- ❖ All proposals are accepted on the understanding that scholars can meet the costs of their registration fee, travel and accommodation.
- ❖ If your participation depends on receiving any financial support from the conference organizers you must request this when you submit your abstract and not after acceptance of the abstract.
- ❖ Canadian graduate students (citizens of Canada, or students registered in graduate programs in Canadian Universities) will be exempted from the registration fee. They may also apply to the organizers for accommodation support.
- ❖ Graduate students who present work on Sri Lanka or the Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora may be eligible to receive a small grant of \$300 from the American Institute of Sri Lankan Studies (AISLS) to participate in the conference. For further details information contact: [treasurer@aisls.org](mailto:treasurer@aisls.org)
- ❖ South Asian scholars and graduate students based in South Asia do not need to pay the registration fee.
- ❖ The registration fee covers the costs of the opening reception (May 13), meals, (breakfast, lunch and dinner on May 14, breakfast, lunch and dinner on May 15) refreshments, and the conference brochure.
- ❖ Transport from the Airport to the University area is approximately \$100 by taxi (both trips), and \$6.00 by public transport.
- ❖ Accommodation costs will range from approximately \$50 a night (university rooms) to \$140 a night (hotel accommodation). We will make some suggestions on this after your registration.

Conference Duration and Participation

- ❖ The conference begins with a reception on the evening of Thursday, May 13, 2010 at 7.30 p.m. and it will end approximately at 9.00 p.m. on Saturday, May 15, 2010.
- ❖ Because these conferences aim at academic excellence but to also engage scholars, students and interested community members in a dialogue about Tamil Studies, we do ask that all those who are presenting papers be present for the full duration of the conference and participate in all the events of the conference.

### Sample Biographical Statement

Leslie Orr is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Religion at Concordia University. Her research interests include religious and social history of medieval South India, especially Tamil Nadu of the Chola period (9th to 13th centuries); women in pre-colonial South Asia; Hindu temples; devadasis; interaction of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism; Brahmins (Brahmans); food and feeding; asceticism. She is the author of the book, *Donors, Devotees and Daughters of God: Temple Women in Medieval Tamilnadu* (2000) and numerous articles, including, most recently, "Identity and Divinity: Boundary-Crossing Goddesses in Medieval Tamilnadu," in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 73:1 (2005) and "Processions in the medieval South Indian temple: Sociology, sovereignty and soteriology," in *South Indian Horizons: Felicitation Volume for François Gros* (2004).

### Academic Organizers

Chelva Kanaganayakam  
Professor, Department of English, University of Toronto

R. Cheran  
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Assistant Professor of Anthropology, University of Toronto

Sudharshan Duraiyappah  
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### Contact

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