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AIPS Senior Fellowship

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Sites of research: various sites in the United Kingdom and Paris

Title of Research Proposal: **Landscapes of Desire: Memory and History in the Life of Lahore**

This project excavates the socio-spatial history of colonial Lahore from 1849 through the immediate aftermath of de-colonization in 1947. Its primary focus is on connections between (physical) space, the social/symbolic meanings attached to it, and the social practice that is attendant upon both. My research during the duration of my A.I.P.S. grant these past six months, has increasingly led me to delve into the nature of historiography itself, wherein history and memory (of it) are seen as integrally linked. The project as it now stands, has three components: the political economy of space, the shifting contours of space and sociability, and practices of remembering. Earlier I had studied numerous colonial documents, archives of educational institutions in Lahore, undertaken oral histories with individuals living in India and Pakistan prior to independence, and examined journalistic writings and representations of the city. During the period of my A.I.P.S. grant I have carried this work substantially further, with a deeper examination of missionary archives at various sites in the U.K. and one in Paris, the scrutiny of a much larger range of colonial documents which are not available in Pakistan, as well as diaries and letters of individuals living in Lahore during the colonial period, not all of whom were connected with the colonial enterprise. I have also looked at maps and other visual documents (photography in particular) which provide an additional insight into colonial spaces, their construction, and social meaning. My current research reaffirms that emphasis one needs to examine public and private, written, visual and oral archives *together*. Examining one of these alone is inadequate to understanding the complex history of place. Since these archives are scattered across multiple countries, research on Lahore during the colonial period demands transnational scrutiny. As the critique of anthropology suggested, and my research also corroborates, the study of one site -- in this case Lahore -- necessitates studying materials that are not necessarily *about* Lahore, but nonetheless essential to comprehending developments within its spaces.

This transnational emphasis enlarges the scope of Pakistan Studies considerably: it underscores the recognition that the history of Pakistan (past and present) cannot be studied in isolation from forces outside its borders. For example, to thoroughly understand missionary practices within Lahore, I have found there is no substitute for also examining the missionary archives in the U.K. and the U.S. The study's transnational focus also makes evident the permeability and malleability of borders, national, religious, and social. Private archives examined against the official, public archive, enable me to examine the relationship between macro and micro level forces, between structure and agency. Taking the colonial city literature as its point of departure, my study goes far beyond any simplistic divide between colonizer and colonized, subjecting Lahore's colonial history to an extensive and deep scrutiny

that engages larger theoretical and methodological concerns in the field of urban studies and historiography.

This project has fundamental relevance to Pakistan studies, both in the U.S. and Pakistan. It problematizes the relationship between memory and history, crucial both intellectually and in the current context in Pakistan. Taking memory and place seriously, it re-connects a recent sub-continental tendency to rupture the connections between especially Pakistan and India. In moving away from macro-politics to the experiencing of space, it nuances questions of identity and meaning. By combining official accounts with personal narratives, it draws on the insights of social historians and feminist theorists who have consistently refused the privileging of the former over the latter. Finally, it engages the emergent field of memory studies, by examining the production of social memory.

For Pakistan, this project has particular significance; however, its relevance extends beyond Pakistan, wherever individuals with connections to Lahore live. It illuminates a period in Lahore's history, memories of which are fading with each successive generation. This erasure of memory is of course not simply 'natural' and organic but assisted by official histories on all sides which have sought to re-write the history of Lahore in ways that fit within dominant agendas. In Pakistan in particular, there is a dearth of serious social history and sociological studies overall. This study will serve to ameliorate both shortcomings. As an antidote to hegemonic narratives, this study is designed to remind us of different possibilities, without sacrificing analytical rigor. Given the continued attachment of folks to Lahore across the three locations (the U.K., India and Pakistan) that constitute part of this study, this work makes an intervention in current geo-politics by bringing private histories into the public domain.

During the course of my AIPS grant - in addition to my extensive study of the archives scattered in various sites in the U.K. and at one location in Paris - I have had a chance to interact with a variety of scholars of Pakistan. I went to the annual Lake District conference on Pakistan. This year's theme -- the Politics of Space in Pakistan -- was extremely relevant to my research project. There I met numerous scholars from all over Europe and benefitted from their insights and exchanges. These interactions carry the possibility of future collaborations, which should further help extend the field of Pakistan studies, theoretically and spatially. I feel that such exchanges can only serve to further strengthen the field of Pakistan Studies not only in the U.S. and Pakistan, but also beyond. While my research is not yet concluded, the basic structure of the work is not only now in place, it is far stronger than when I began my grant. Many archival materials available in Europe are not accessible in Pakistan, and without this grant from A.I.P.S. it would have been far more difficult for me to undertake this work. For this I am most grateful.