

**AHONA PANDA**

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**EMPLOYMENT**

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July 2022-present	Assistant Professor in History Claremont McKenna College
2021–2022	Visiting Assistant Professor in History Claremont McKenna College
2019–2021	Humanities Teaching Fellow, Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations & the College Faculty Affiliate, Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality University of Chicago

**EDUCATION**

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2012–2019	PhD in South Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago <i>Philology and the Politics of Language: The Case of Bengali, 1893-1955</i> (Won the 2020 Sardar Patel Award for best doctoral dissertation on modern India in the humanities, education, fine arts, or social sciences, UCLA Center for India and South Asia)
2011–2012	Probationary research student (towards the DPhil) Department of English, University of Oxford
2009–2011	MA in English Literature, Jadavpur University
2006–2009	BA in English Literature with Film Studies and History, Jadavpur University (First in the first class, awarded the Krishna Kripalani Award and the University Medal)

**RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS**

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Modern South Asia; British empire; decolonization and social history; linguistic and religious nationalisms; Marxism; political movements; caste and race; Sanskrit literature; translation; gender and queer theory; censorship; critical theory.

## PUBLICATIONS

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### Book Project

In progress                      *Bengal Undivided: Language and the Limits of Nationalism*

### Articles and Book Chapters

In progress                      “A Life in Politics Across Two Nation-States: What Language Meant to Abul Mansur Ahmed in Twentieth-Century Bengal”

2023                                ‘From fascism to famine: Complicity, conscience, and the narrative of “peasant passivity” in Bengal, 1941–1945’. *Modern Asian Studies* 57(5), pp. 1551–1584. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X2200021X>

2023                                “*Sabityer Communitas: simanter aḍa aḍi Baṅgali.*” *Samayer kuwaśay: Dipesh Chakrabartyr sammane prabandha guccha* (“The Communitas of Literature: Bengalis across Borders” in *Mists of Time: Essays in Honor of Dipesh Chakrabarty*), edited by Ahmed Kamal, Nusrat Sabina Chowdhury, Nazmul Sultan, Thomas Newbold, Taimur Reza and Sabbir Azam, 162-178. Dhaka: United Press Limited, 2023. (*In Bengali*)

2021                                “How to Be Political without Being Polemical: The Debate between Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and Rabindranath Tagore over the *Kṛsnacaritra*,” in *Many Mahābhāratas*, eds. Nell Shapiro Hawley and Sohini Sarah Pillai (SUNY Press, 2021), 279-304.

### Reviews and Short Essays

2024                                Mrinal Sen and the Legacies of Radical Cinema (Under consideration with *Critical Inquiry* blog)

2024                                Review of Prachi Deshpande, *Scripts of Power: Writing, Language Practices, and Cultural History in Western India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2023), *Indian Economic and Social History Review* (forthcoming)

2024                                Review essay, SherAli Tareen, *Perilous Intimacies: Debating Hindu-Muslim Intimacies After Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023), forthcoming in *Political Theology Network*

2022                                Review of Partha Chatterjee, *I am the People: Reflections on Popular Sovereignty Today* (Columbia University Press, 2020), *South Asian History and Culture*

2021                                Review of Sanjib Baruah, *In the Name of the Nation: India and Its Northeast* (Stanford University Press, 2020), *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 58:2

(2021): 283-6.

- 2015 “The Religious History of the Hindus and the Liberal Present of India,” an essay on Wendy Doniger’s *The Hindus: An Alternative History*, trans. into Hebrew by Eilat Maoz, *Theory and Criticism (Teoria U’vikoret)* 44 (2015): 303-10.

### **Public Writing**

- 2022 Review of Wendy Doniger, *Winged Stallions and Wicked Mares: Horses in Indian Myth and History* (Speaking Tiger Books, 2021), *The Telegraph*, February 4.
- 2021 Review of Bihani Sarkar, *Classical Sanskrit Tragedy: The Concept of Suffering and Pathos in Medieval India* (I.B. Tauris, 2021), *The Telegraph*, September 3.
- 2021 “Radio, Ghazals and Islami Gaan: What Nazrul’s Shift to Music said about his Syncretism” *Daily Star*, Dhaka, September 2.
- 2020 “Banglar Jugpurush Anisuzzaman”, *Kali O Kalam*, Dhaka, July 20.
- 2020 “In Memory of Professor Anisuzzaman, a Scholar of Bengals Past and Present,” *Daily Star*, Dhaka, May 22.
- 2018 “‘Kaikēyī to Dasharath’: How Michael Madhusudan Dutt’s Radical Poetry Reworked the Narrative: A translation by Ahona Panda of the Bengali poet and playwright’s most anthologized poem,” *Scroll.in*, March 18.
- 2015 “What Karna and Kunti Talked about the Night before the Battle of Kurukshetra: A New Translation of the Poem ‘Karna Kunti Samvad’, Recreating a Meeting between Them,” *Scroll.in*, November 8.

### **FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS**

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- 2022-2023 Selected as one of six “Emerging scholars in Political Theology”, Political Theology Network and Center for Political Theology, Villanova University
- 2022 2020 Sardar Patel Award for best dissertation on modern India in the humanities, education, fine arts, or social sciences, UCLA Center for India and South Asia.
- 2021 Faculty Research Grant, Claremont McKenna College
- 2020 Mellon PATHS grant for “Digital Scholarship for South Asian Studies”, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago

2018–2019	Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Franke Institute for the Humanities, University of Chicago
2017–2018	International Dissertation Research Fellowship, Social Science Research Council
2017	Dissertation Support Fellowship, Committee on Southern Asian Studies, University of Chicago
2016	Graduate Fellowship Award, Nicholson Center for British Studies, University of Chicago
2015	Pre-Dissertation Research Fellowship, Committee on Southern Asian Studies Graduate Fellowship Award, Nicholson Center for British Studies
2012–2017	Graduate Aid Initiative Fellowship, Division of Humanities, University of Chicago
2009	Krishna Kripalani Award and University Medal, Jadavpur University

## INVITED TALKS

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2023	“ <i>Not Diwali, Just Kali: A Talk on Not Really Celebrating Diwali?</i> ”, Athenaeum, Claremont McKenna College, November 1.
2023	“Bengal Divided and Connected: Popular Music in the Mid Twentieth Century”, Guest lecture for Professor Anna Morcom, <i>Ethnomusicology 46W: India through Music</i> , Department of Ethnomusicology, UCLA, October 30.
2023	“On Literary and Political Realisms: The Pakistan Movement in Bengal” at “Rethinking Nationalism”, Center for Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania, August 10.
2023	“Popular Sovereignty and the Bengali Language Movement in East Pakistan”, Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs and the South Asia Center, Syracuse University, April 6.
2022	“ <i>Bengal Undivided: Language and the Limits of Nationalism</i> ”, Friends of the Sardar Patel Association, Sardar Patel Award for 2020, UCLA, October 10.
2021	“The Muslim Periodical: Print and Identity in Twentieth Century Bengal” in <i>Rethinking the Politics and Practices of Print in Comparative Colonial Perspective</i> (January 8-9), virtual workshop at the Edinburgh Center for Global History.
2021	“Politics Through Other Means: Moral Sovereignty and Citizenship Practices in South Asia,” <i>Mutations of Sovereignty: Perspectives on Sanjib Baruah’s “In the</i>

*Name of the Nation*” (pre-conference symposium), 49<sup>th</sup> Annual South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

2018 “Kazi Nazrul Islam and the Partition of Bengal,” South Asia Seminar Series at the British Library, London, November 20.

“A Language of Hunger: Representing World War II and the Bengal Famine,” *Rethinking World War II in South Asia* (pre-conference symposium), 47<sup>th</sup> Annual South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison, October 11.

2017 “How to Be Political without Being Polemical: The Fallout of Rabindranath Tagore and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee over the *Mahābhārata*,” *Many Mahābhāratas* (pre-conference symposium), University of Wisconsin-Madison, October 26.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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2022 Chair and discussant, "The O-bhodomohila in Calcutta: Gendered Mobility, Labor and Caste in the Colonial City", 50th Annual South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison, October 20.

“Twilight of the Subcontinental Imagination”, Panel with Anustup Basu, Amit Rahul Baishya, Rochona Majumdar and Amir Mufti, 50<sup>th</sup> Annual South Asia Conference, University of Wisconsin-Madison, October 21.

2022 "Postcolonial Partitions and Borders", Beyond Partitions Working Group Annual Conference, Royal Holloway, June 11.

2021 “Fifty Years of Bangladesh: Tracing Law, Literature, and Liberty in Transition,” Panel Organizer and Presenter, American Historical Association Virtual Colloquium, March 30.

2016 “*Dobhāshī*, or the Case of an Obdurate Category: Philology and Politics in Twentieth-Century Bengal,” *MESAAS* Graduate Students Conference, Columbia University, February 25-26.

2014 “From *Sikṣā* (Education) to *Vidyā* (Wisdom): Rabindranath Tagore’s Construction of Knowledge and Selfhood, 1901-1941,” South Asia Graduate Students Conference, University of Chicago, April 17-19.

2013 “From *Nabyatā* to *Ādbunikatā*: Nostalgia and the Various Forms of the Modern,” South Asia Graduate Students Conference, University of Chicago, April 4-5.

## WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

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- 2023 Discussant, Book manuscript workshop, Stanford University, November 11.
- 2022-2023 Workshop presentation, Emerging Scholars in Political Theology, Villanova University.
- 2021 Participant, Dissertation to Book Workshop, American Institute of Indian Studies, October 20-21.
- 2018 “A Language of Unity, A Language of Loss: Kazi Nazrul Islam’s Bengali,” Theory and Practice of South Asia, University of Chicago, November 1.
- 2014 “Towards a Genealogy of Play: Rabindranath Tagore and Aesthetic Education,” Brown Bag Talk, Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago, April 15.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### *Department of History, Claremont McKenna College and the Claremont Colleges Consortium*

AY 2021- present

*Makers of Modern India and Pakistan* (Seminar)

*Sex and Censorship in South Asia* (Special Topics/Research Seminar)

*Caste, Race and Equality* (First-year Humanities Seminar)

*Gender and History in South Asia* (Seminar)

*BA advising* (have so far supervised two BA theses in history at CMC and Pomona College)

*Independent Study in South Asian History and Industrial/Labor History* (with students of CMC and Pitzer College)

### *As Humanities Teaching Fellow, University of Chicago*

AY 2019-2021

Spring *Race and Caste in South Asia*  
South Asian Languages and Civilizations, Sociology, Global Studies, Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, Stevanovich Institute on the Formation of Knowledge

Winter *The Other Woman: Sexual Deviancy in South Asia*

South Asian Languages and Civilizations, Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality

- Autumn *Readings in World Literature I: The Epic*  
Humanities Collegiate Division
- Spring *Can Women Think? The Female Intellectual in South Asia*  
South Asian Languages and Civilizations  
Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality
- Winter *Sex and Censorship in South Asia*  
South Asian Languages and Civilizations, Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality, History, History of Religion
- Autumn *Readings in World Literature I: The Epic*  
Humanities Collegiate Division

## ORGANISATION/SERVICE

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- 2023 Joint coordinator with Sarah Sarzynski, Stasneck Oral History Fellowship, Claremont McKenna College
- 2023 Member, Assessment Committee, Claremont McKenna College
- 2022-2023 Humanities Lab at Claremont McKenna College on *Caste, Race and Diaspora*
- 2016 Conference Organizer, *Dying in South Asia*  
Annual South Asia Graduate Student Conference, University of Chicago, March 3-4.
- 2014–2015 Representative, Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, Humanities Division Graduate Student Council, University of Chicago
- 2013–2014 Humanities Representative, Graduate Council, University of Chicago

## LANGUAGES

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- Bengali Native language  
Hindi Near-native fluency  
Urdu Reading and speaking proficiency  
Sanskrit Reading proficiency  
French Reading proficiency  
Russian Beginner; learning for reading knowledge

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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American Historical Association

## REFERENCES

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Rochona Majumdar

Professor of South Asian Languages and Civilizations and Cinema and Media Studies,  
University of Chicago

[rmajumda@uchicago.edu](mailto:rmajumda@uchicago.edu)

Dipesh Chakrabarty

Lawrence A. Kimpton Distinguished Service Professor of History, South Asian Languages and  
Civilizations, and the College, University of Chicago

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Anna Morcom

Mohindar Brar Sambhi Chair of Indian Music

Department of Ethnomusicology, University of California Los Angeles

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Robert Kendrick

William Colvin Professor in Music, Romance Languages and Literatures, and the College, University  
of Chicago

[rkendric@uchicago.edu](mailto:rkendric@uchicago.edu)

Wendy Doniger

Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor Emerita of the History of Religions; Department of  
South Asian Languages and Civilizations, the Committee on Social Thought, and the College

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