



SWEDISH
COLLEGIUM
for ADVANCED STUDY

PLENARY SESSION # 4

Friday, 17 February. 13:00 – 14:30. Room: IHC – Stein Auditorium

Session: Rethinking Hegemony

Chair: Aditya Nigam, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi

After Hegemony: The Travails and Tales of a Journeyman, 1979-2011

Shahid Amin, University of Delhi

TBA

Mahmood Mamdani, Makerere Institute of Social Research, Kampala, and Columbia University, New York

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Ashis Nandy, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi

ABSTRACTS

After Hegemony: The Travails and Tales of a Journeyman, 1979-2011

Shahid Amin, University of Delhi

My offerings today are quite literally afterthoughts of an actual attempt to travel with my kind of history across anglophone certitudes, colonized affinities, and post-colonial hiatuses. This involves engaging first with the *long duree* of the dominant (European) ways of understanding the pasts of colonies --- the Indian in this case. I shall try and link this up with the larger challenges of writing up particular colonial pasts that can be read as non-area studies histories outside the nations of their location.

The last two decades have seen a critical engagement with Subaltern Studies in terms of disciplines, theoretical and epistemic engagements both within and outside India. This is not my main concern today. What I propose to do in my talk is to revisit another preoccupation which some of us have had with developments *within the nation*, and tease out its implication for a practice of history committed to an engagement with the popular. And I wish to relate this to the larger issue of the receptivity and readability of particularistic histories beyond their national provenance. This involves the question of the intellectual traffic between hegemonic models for the understanding of non-european societies in times past, and the way mainstream academic retelling of such pasts (in these societies) are in turn inflected, if not hobbled, by particularistic (dominant) nationalist narratives. This results both in the difficulty of writing alternative histories from within the nation, and also feeds into the problems that such histories encounter in traveling as tellable tales outside the nation/s of their location. I propose, briefly, some ways of going forward, and also allude to the conditions necessary for the production of newer narratives in the academic institutions of south under the new WTO dispensation re : 'Educational providers'.

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