

Brief Summary of the Issue

World History Connected, Volume 19, number 2 (June/July 2022) has as its major focus “India in world history,” which figures in its four Forum articles, in its featured “Interview with a World Historian,” and in several of its individual articles and book reviews. Other articles and reviews are devoted to broader aspects of research and teaching world history. The following is a brief summary of the contents of this issue. A brief biography of each contributor appears at the conclusion of their articles.

The Forum

The Forum’s theme, addressing research and teaching about India through the lens of its experience of pandemics, past and present, was devised by its Guest Editors, Gary G. Gibbs and Whitney A. M. Leeson and incisively introduced by Leeson and Pramod K. Nayar. Each of its four articles address in different ways a perennial problem: introducing students outside of India and even students in India, as has been previously addressed in this journal,¹ to the benefits of engaging the Indian subcontinent in terms of the field of world history. They also demonstrate how, with India, research and teaching world history are often complimentary spheres.

The first Forum article, by Sonia Kapur, addresses teaching American students about India, including, at the time of writing, when a pandemic inhibits students from classroom visits by representatives of India’s artistic traditions, discourages student participation in most community events, and prevents school trips to museums with holdings in Indian art.

The second Forum article, by Meeta Mehrotra and Gary G. Gibbs, engages those who may use Indian films to overcome these obstacles. They note the unique difficulties associated with using Indian films in a Western classroom, as the subjects of these films and their cultural content and context require great care when teaching students unfamiliar with India. Gibbs and Mehrotra then offer the means of overcoming these obstacles to multicultural understanding.

The third Forum article, by Ghulam A. Nadri, seeks a reevaluation of pedagogical paradigms often employed in world history classrooms when addressing India. Standard

world-history textbooks published in the United States often regard the Mughal Empire as an “Islamic” empire, eliding India’s diversity, even among Muslim traders themselves. This claim is supported by his research into Armenian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim merchants that brings their history alive in a region which is closely tied to the history of pandemics.

The fourth article in the Forum, by John Maunu and this journal’s editor, Marc Jason Gilbert, explores the connection of trade to pandemics in India,² among other entries in an annotated digital database that identifies numerous approaches and resources useful for research and teaching of pandemics in India in world history perspective. Its entries offer analyses of the global setting and impact of individual outbreaks. They also offer resources that can be used to encourage comparative research, as well as support the development of comparative and other world history critical thinking skills, such as the ability of students to recognize multicausality, and to ascertain change over time from premodern India through to the colonial and post-colonial eras.

An Interview with a World Historian

The problems and rewards of teaching India’s complex, diverse, and politically contested history, while also including its trans-regional nature, are among many issues raised in one of this journal’s newest features, “Interview with a World Historian,” whose interview subject is Michael H. Fisher. Fisher’s work illuminates India’s trans-national character, including the impact of the “counterflow of Indians,” Indians going to Britain and Europe from the early 19th century (*Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travelers and Settlers in Britain, 1600–1857* (2004)). His is also the author of *Migration: A World History* (2013) and *An Environmental History of South Asia: From Earliest Times to the Twenty First Century* (2018).

Individual Articles

The India theme of this issue is continued in an individual article, Peter N. Stearns’ comparative study of “Manners in World History,” which includes modern Indian manners. It is joined by two other individual articles. Thomas Mounkhal, who writes on teaching methodology as well as comparative world history for this journal, offers long-sought means by which archival researchers, as well as scholar-teachers, can transform academic articles into active learning exercises in the classroom. Thomas E. Keefe and Christopher W. Berg discuss curricular reform at their college prompted by two developments: the production of the U. S. Higher Education Commission of new standards of accreditation so as to address diversity in higher education,³ and their observation that the subsequent deaths of George Floyd and later other Black Americans was empowering students to seek diversity initiatives in K–12 and post-secondary education as well.⁴

Book Reviews

India features prominently in two of this issue's five book reviews. Ian Abbey reviews Ashley Cohen's examination of the impact of Britain on India and the Atlantic world from literature to colonial policy. Timothy Nicholson reviews Radhika Singha's treatment of the global impact of the service of Indian coolies in the docks and trenches of what was then called, "The Great War." Other reviews include Andrea Carolina Loucil's analysis of Jaraleesse Hoffnung-Garskof's study of New York's role in racism, immigration, and revolution in the Spanish Caribbean. The remaining two book reviews address a transformative moment in the societies of Japan and Korea and their significance for world history: Jonathan Dresner addresses Mark Ravina's effort to set the Japan's Meiji Restoration in the context of world history, while Robert Shaffer examines Theodore Jun Yoo's history of the emergence of the two Koreas.

Each component of this issue thus offers rich content of value to researchers and teachers, and thereby fulfills the journal's mission to build a community of world historians by connecting and serving the interests of archival researchers, instructors in classrooms, and all those with an interest in this still-growing field.

Submissions and Style Guidelines

<https://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/submissions.html>

NOTES

¹ See Rajeshwari Dutt, "Art in the Teaching of World History in the STEM Classroom: India's Institutes of Technology as a Case Study," *World History Connected* 16, no. 3 (October 2019), https://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/16.3/forum_dutt.html.

² See, for example, Amina A. Issa, "Dhows and Epidemics in the Indian Ocean Ports," *Ziff Journal* (2006): 63-70, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/781a/f9762befe7122720fe9c64ed7a09b9ef7bef.pdf>.

³ "Criteria for Accreditation," *Higher Learning Commission*, last modified February 2019, <https://www.hlcommission.org/Policies/criteria-and-core-components.html>.

⁴ Terry Nguyen, "Student Activists Want Change—and They're Starting in the Classroom," *Vox*, July 29, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2020/7/29/21345114/students-diversify-curriculum-change-antiracist>.