

**EMORY**  
UNIVERSITY

**RUBY LAL**

D.Phil. (Modern History), University of Oxford  
Professor of South Asian History  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
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## Academic Appointments

2015- Tenured Professor, Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, Emory University.

2007-2015 Tenured Associate Professor, Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, Emory University.

2002–2005 Assistant Professor, Anthropology and History; Associate Director, Program for Women, Gender and Sexuality, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

## Books

2019 *Rebel Princess: The Great Adventures of Gulbadan* (New Haven: Yale University Press; New Delhi: Penguin, India; Contracted in June 2019; In Progress).

2019 *In Pursuit of Playfulness: The Girl-Child/Woman and Nineteenth Century India* (New Delhi: Primus Books). A New India Edition of *Coming of Age*.

2018 *EMPRESS: The Astonishing Life of Nur Jahan* (NY: W.W. Norton).

2013 *Coming of Age in Nineteenth Century India: The Girl-Child and Art of Playfulness* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York).

2005 *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York).

*For Reviews of Books, Contact Ruby Lal*

## Eighteen Refereed/Peer-Reviewed Articles, among them

2018 Co-authored with Beverly Bossler, 'Gender Systems: The Exotic Asian and Other Fallacies, in Sheldon Pollock and Benjamin Ellman (ed.) *What India and China Once Were: The Pasts that May Shape the Global Future* (Columbia University Press).

2017 'Harem and Eunuchs: Liminality and Networks of Mughal Authority,' in Almut Höfert, Matthew M. Mesley, Serena Tolino (ed.), *Celibate and Childless Men in Power: Ruling Eunuchs and Bishops in the Pre-Modern World* (London: Routledge, 2017).

2016 'From the Inside Out: Spaces of Pleasure and Authority,' in Sonya Rhea Quintanilla, (ed.), *Art and Stories from Mughal India* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art).

### Public Scholarship, Select Entries

July 2018 'Empress Nur Jahan and the Politics of Erasure in Modern India,' LitHub, New York  
<https://lithub.com/empress-nur-jahan-and-the-politics-of-erasure-in-modern-india/>

July 2018 'The One Who Ruled,' Vogue India.  
<http://rubylal.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/VogueIndiaJuly2018.pdf>

July 2004 'Hail the Modern Media', *Economic and Political Weekly*: 3080-3082.

June 2004 'Hazardous Journeys', *Economic and Political Weekly*: 2423-2424.

May 2004 'Who Are We?', *Economic and Political Weekly*: 1870-1971.

April 2004 'Who Decides Our Elections', *Economic and Political Weekly*: 1446-1447.

March 2004 'The Unashamed Political Violence of Our Times', *Economic and Political Weekly*: 1011-1013.

(The *Economic and Political Weekly* is an outstanding intellectual and political journal published from Bombay since the 1960s: the nearest parallel in the US is *The New Republic*. All recent op-eds and lectures are posted on RubyLal.com)

### Thirty Grants, Awards, and Fellowships, Select Entries

2019 *EMPRESS: The Astonishing Life of Nur Jahan*, Winner, Georgia Author of the Year Award in Biography

2019 *EMPRESS: The Astonishing Life of Nur Jahan* History, Finalist of the Los Angeles Times Book Prize

2018 *EMPRESS: The Astonishing Reign of Nur Jahan*, Ten top picks by the Time Magazine; Telegraph London, Best History Books; Prospect Magazine, UK, Best History Book; NY Times Editors Pick/Staff Choice.

2017 Emory University Research Council for Arts and Sciences Fellowship

2016 Distinguished Visiting Professor/Speaker, University of Victoria Wellington, New Zealand

2015 Nominated and Appointed Alfred B. Howell Visiting Professor in Islamic Studies, Department of History and Archaeology, The American University in Beirut (Declined due to prior academic commitments)

## Distinguished Lectures and Keynote Addresses, Select Entries

February 22, 2020 Keynote Address, title TBA, The Association of British Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies, Savannah.

January 29, 2020 Keynote Address, title TBA, The Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, Emory University, Atlanta.

March 14, 2019 'Isn't this Representation? The Question of the Archive and the Great Woman Mughal, Nur Jahan,' The American University, Beirut. The first Annual Distinguished Lecture in Women and Gender Studies.

March 12, 2018 'Empress: The Astonishing Reign of Nur Jahan,' Mary Devereux Distinguished Lecture or Women's History Month, St. Bonaventure University, NY.

March 1, 2018 'The Small Things of History': The question of the Archive and the Great Mughal, Nur Jahan,' Keynote Address at the Annual South Asia Conference of the Pacific North West, University of British Columbia Canada.

February 14, 2017 Feminist Landscapes: Teaching and Writing the History of India,' Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong, Inaugural Lecture for the new Gender Studies Concentration.

July 5, 2016 'The Small Things of History,' The Australian Association of South Asian Studies, Canberra. Keynote Address.

## Literary Festivals

JLF Boulder Literary Festival, Boulder; Jaipur Literary Festival, Jaipur India; Los Angeles Times Book Festival, Los Angeles.  
(For details, see [www.RubyLal.com](http://www.RubyLal.com))

## Media and Public Appearances

EMPRESS on BBC; Monocle Sunday Brunch, UK, Weekend Read by Ruby Lal; Politics and Prose, Washington DC; NPR City Lights, 90.1 FM WABE; KPFA 94.1 (Radio and Podcasts and Discussions at National and International Bookstores, All links on [www.RubyLal.com](http://www.RubyLal.com))

## Invited National and International Talks

January 17, 2019 'Empress, The Astonishing Reign of Nur Jahan,' Department of History, Miranda House, University of Delhi.

January 17, 2019 Discussion of Ruby Lal's Mughal Books,' Department of History, St. Stephens College, University of Delhi.

October 19, 2018 'Empress, The Astonishing Reign of Nur Jahan,' Departments of English and Gender Studies, Middlebury College.

October 18, 2016 'Light of the World, Nur Jahan: History, Historiography and the Archive,' The Dhar Center, and the Departments of History and Islamic Studies, Indiana University.

September 5-7, 2014; June 7-9, 2013; September 15, 2012  
Invited participant in a three year workshop entitled, Comparative China-India Project, Princeton University, Princeton.

May 22, 2014 'Opening the Door: Methods, Texts, and the Question of Chronology in Writing the Girl-Child,' Department of History, Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan.

May 20, 2014 'History, Historiography and the Archive: Writing the Indian Girl- Child,' Department of History, Kyoto University, Japan.

March 3, 2013 'Coming of Age in Nineteenth Century India: The Girl-Child and the Art of Playfulness', Cornell University, Department of History and the South Asian Studies Program.

August 28-30, 2013 'Nur Jahan, The Light of the World: Networks of Authority and the iconic Mughal sovereign,' The University of Zurich, Switzerland. Presentation at a conference entitled, Orders of Gender, Knowledge and Rule: Hermaphrodites, Eunuchs and Priests in Western Europe and the Middle East.'

March 19, 2013 Book discussion, *Coming of Age in Nineteenth Century India: The Girl-Child and the Art of Playfulness*. Hosted by The South Asia Seminar Series, MESAS, Emory University.

March 14, 2013 Book discussion, *Coming of Age in Nineteenth Century India: The Girl-Child and the Art of Playfulness*. Brown India Initiative. Brown University, Providence.

January 13, 2012 'Opening the Door: The Girl-Child/Woman and the Art of Playfulness,' The Nehru Memorial Library, New Delhi.

November 22, 2011 'In Pursuit of Playfulness: The Girl-Child and Woman in Nineteenth Century India', Department of History, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh.

June 19-21, 2011 'Nur Jahan: The Uncrowned Empress,' at an International Conference entitled, The Court and its Critics,' held at a retreat in Sedona, Arizona.

January 19, 2011 'The Woman of the Forest: The Question of Desire and History in Nineteenth Century Northern India,' South Asian Studies Council and the Macmillan Center, Yale University. New Haven, Connecticut.

April 19, 2011 'Becoming Woman: Ethnographic Encounters'. South Asian Studies Centre, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

July 12-14, 2010 'Invocations of the Dead in a Wandering, Peripatetic World', at an International Conference entitled Death at Court, Greifswald, Germany.

January 27-31, 2010 'Gulbadan Banu Begum's *Ahval-i Humayun Badshah*: Thinking a Pre-Modern Genre,' at an International Conference entitled 'Women's Autobiography in Islamic Societies' University of Texas, Austin.

September 17, 2009 'In Pursuit of Playfulness: Historical Debates and Literary Imaginings on the Girl-Child in Nineteenth Century India,' Department of English and Women's Studies, York University, Toronto.

May 21, 2009 'Women and the Colonial Modern: Investigations from Nineteenth Century Northern India'. Department of South Asian Languages and Cultures, The University of Chicago, Chicago.

December 7-8, 2007 'The Girl-Child in the Colonial Encounter, 1815-1875' at a conference entitled 'Subaltern Citizens and Their Histories: Investigations from India and the USA', Emory University.

July 15, 2007 'In the Wake of Colonial Ascendancy: Rethinking Muslim Respectability,' at a conference marking the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Indian Mutiny of 1857, Department of South Asian Studies, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh.

January 29, 2007 'Colonialism and the Debate on Muslim Respectability,' Department of History, Ryukoku University, Osaka, Japan.

November 16, 2006 'Portraits of Respectability: Rereading Nazir Ahmad,' Department of South Asian Studies, University of Texas, Austin.

October 2006 'The history of the family: Some Historiographical Reflections', at a panel entitled, 'Family in Early Modern and Modern South Asia,' Wisconsin, Madison, The Annual Conference on South Asia.

March 15, 2006 'Domesticity and Power in Early modern Muslim Courts: an Initial Comparison,' Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, Tokyo.

March 14, 2006 'Pre-colonial India: Historiographical Issues,' Department of History, University of Kyoto, Kyoto.

May 13, 2005 'Love and Marriage in a Peripatetic Court,' at a One-day workshop entitled Friendship, Love, Sex, Kin, and Marriage: Early Modern and Modern Transformations,' Center for Middle Eastern Studies and Committee on Degrees in the Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Harvard University, Boston.

February 7, 2005 'Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World: Some Historiographical and Historical Questions,' Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

November 5, 2004 'Conceptualizing the Domestic in the Early Mughal World,' Black Studies/Women's Studies Department, William and Mary College, Williamsburg.

June 24-27, 2004 I. 'Islamic and Non-Islamic Traditions in Medieval India: An Introduction.' II. 'Rethinking Akbar: Unsettling the Polarities of Contemporary Discourse'; Presented the above two talks at the NEH sponsored program on 'Religion and Politics in India: Culture, History, and Contemporary Experience,' East-West Center, University of Hawaii, Hawaii.

August 27, 2004 'Historicizing the *Haram*: the Challenge of a Princess' Memoir' Department of History and South Asian Studies Program, National University of Singapore, Singapore.

May 26, 2004 'Genealogy of the Mughal *Haram*: the Challenge of a Princess' Memoir,' Department of History, University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg.

March 17-21, 2004 '*Haram* and Beyond: Domesticity and Politics in the Mughal Imperium,' at a conference entitled 'Palace Women and Court Life across the World,' University of California, Irvine.

April 14, 2003 'Where was the *Haram* in a Peripatetic World? The Domestic Life of Babur and Humayun,' Department of History and Women's Studies, Villanova College, Pennsylvania.

April 12-13, 2002 'Writing Women's Histories,' at a One-day conference entitled 'Cracking India: Literary and historical perspectives,' Hamilton College, Clinton, NY.

September 8-9, 2001 'The Construction of the Oriental *haram*: European Accounts of Mughal 'private' Life,' at a conference entitled 'Hazard and Necessity: Debates in the Present Panorama of Science and Culture,' Cursos da Arrabida Lisbon.

April 23, 2000 '*Haram* and Beyond: the Memoir of a Mughal Princess'. Department of History, Middle Eastern Studies and the Women's History Program, Ohio State University, Ohio.

21 February 2000 '*Haram* and Beyond: the challenge of Gulbadan Banu Begum's *Ahval-i Humayun Badshah*,' Department of History, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

## Conference and Workshops

March 28, 2014 *Coming of Age in Nineteenth Century India: The Girl-Child and the Art of Playfulness*, a panel discussion, The Association of Asian Studies, Philadelphia.

January 6, 2011 'The question of Difference: girl-child/woman in the Colonial Encounter,' presented at a panel entitled, 'Subalternity and Difference: Conversations from India and the USA,' The American Historical Association, Boston.

October 21, 2009 'Figure and Desire: Inshallah Khan's Rani Ketki ki Kahani,' Invited to a preconference panel on the theme, 'Sexualities,' Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, Wisconsin.

January 2-5, 2009 'The girl-child in the Colonial Encounter, circa, 1815-1870,' panel entitled, 'Reclaiming Family History: Global Perspectives,' The American Historical Association, NY.

October 16-19, 2008 'The girl-child in the Colonial Encounter, circa, 1815-1870,' panel entitled, 'Modernist Redactions: Writings on Family, Caste, Culture,' Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, Wisconsin.

March 3-4, 2006 'A pre-history of rights: thinking about early modern Islamic societies,' at an International conference entitled 'All in the Family? Islam, Women and Human Rights,' The Law School, Emory University.

February 6, 2006 'Modern' Muslim families: Investigations from North India (1750-1850),' Annual Research Workshop, Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, Emory University.

January 8, 2006 'Babur's Peripatetic Mughal Court Society,' panel entitled 'Comparative Studies in Cultural History: New Research into the Everyday Life and Legacy of Mughal Emperor Babur, 1483-1530,' The American Historical Association, Philadelphia.

October 15, 2004 'Historicizing the *Haram*: a History of Early Mughal Domestic Life,' at a panel entitled 'Transversing the public/private,' Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, Wisconsin.

April 9, 2004 'Public/Private: Historicizing the *Haram*,' at a one-day workshop on 'The Question of Public and Private,' Departments of Anthropology and History, Program for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

June 6-9, 2002 'Representations of the *Haram*: the Challenge of a Mughal Princess' Memoir,' at a panel entitled, 'Recovering Sources for the Study of Elite Women in Early Modern China, India, and France: A Comparative Approach', Berkshire Conference on History of Women, University of Connecticut, Storrs..

March 30, 2002 'The Invention of "the *haram*": the Mughal case,' at a one-day workshop on 'Women and Islam in Historical and Contemporary Perspectives,' Program for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

## Seminars and Conferences Organized

February 18-19, 2011 Co-organizer along with Gyanendra Pandey of two-day workshop, entitled, 'Un-archived Histories'.

August 1-15, 2009 Co-organizer along with Gyanendra Pandey of four one-day workshops involving American and Indian scholars on the theme 'Subalternity and Difference in International Perspective,' held at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Bombay); English and Foreign Language university (Hyderabad); Centre for Studies in Social Sciences (Calcutta); and Jamia Milia Islamia (New Delhi).

March 3-4, 2006 Co-organizer along with Martha Fineman of a two-day international conference entitled 'All in the Family? Islam, Women and Human Rights,' The Law School, Emory University.

October 15, 2004 Organized and participated in a panel entitled 'Debating the Public/Private in South Asia,' Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, Wisconsin.

March 30, 2002 Organized and participated in a one-day workshop entitled 'Women and Islam in Historical and Contemporary Perspectives,' Departments of Anthropology and History, Program for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

April 9, 2004 Organized and participated in a one-day workshop entitled 'The Question of Public and Private,' Departments of Anthropology and History, University, Baltimore.

### Public Lectures and Discussions

September 18, 2018 EMPRESS: A panel discussion. The Fox Center for Humanist Inquiry, Emory University, Atlanta

September 15, 2018 Public talk on EMPRESS: The Astonishing Reign of Nur Jahan, The Carlos Museum, Emory University

July 18, 2018 *New Books by Asian Writers*, Lecture and discussion, Asian American Writers' Workshop, New York.

September 14, 2016 'Nur Jahan: The Great Mughal of India,' The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland. Talk in conjunction with the launch of the exhibition *Art and Stories from Mughal India*.

January 8, 2015 'Uncrowned Empress: Nur Jahan,' The India International Center, New Delhi.

December 19, 2013 A panel discussion of *Coming of Age in Nineteenth Century India: The Girl-Child and the Art of Playfulness*, The Indian International Center and Cambridge University Press, New Delhi.

11 January, 2007 Public talk introducing the opening of the exhibition, 'Domains of Wonder,' The Carlos Museum, Emory University

7 August, 2006 Public talk at the launch of my book, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World*, The Nehru Centre (Cultural Centre of India), London, and Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

December 18, 2000 'Domesticity and Power: Mughal Births and History,' The Nehru Centre (Cultural Centre of India), London.



## Professional Organization

2009-2012 Committee of Women's Historians, American Historical Association (AHA)

Duties included organization of special panels sponsored by the Committee at the AHA; selection of the annual speaker at the Women's Breakfast Meeting of the AHA; and preparation of a national report on gender inequalities in income in academic institutions.

2008-present Emory Trustee to the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS); Since 2016, position redefined as Delegate to the AIIS

Duties include, discussion of ranks for universities that house South Asian Studies; assessing membership application by colleges and universities for AIIS; graduate programming in India; funding situation of the AIIS, which includes reviewing the President's Report, Director-General's Report, Treasurer's Report, Development Report, Selection Committee Report. In addition, discussion of Language Committee Report, International Learning Committee Report, Art and Archaeology Committee Report, Ethnomusicology Committee Report, and Publications Committee Report.

## Editorial Experience

2010-present Editorial Advisory board, *Intersections: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Book series, Routledge Press, London.

2007-present Editorial Advisory board, *The Southeast Review of Asian Studies*, the annual journal of the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (SEC/AAS)

2005-present Editorial advisory board, *Encyclopedia of the Middle East and South Asia*

2014- Editor, *Islamic South Asia*, I. B. Tauris London. New Book Series. Published four books; two in process.

## Reader for Juried Journals

Journal of Asian Studies, Feminist Studies, Religion and Law, SOAS Bulletin, Indian Economic and Social History Review, Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, SIGNS.

## Reader for Book Manuscripts

Routledge Press, London; Cambridge University Press, NY; Cambridge University Press, Delhi; Oxford University Press, Delhi; Indiana University Press.

## University Service

### Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies

Fall 2015-present Member, Advisory Board, *The South Asia Seminar Series*.

Fall 2013-present Faculty Member of Islamic Civilizations (ICIVs) Executive Committee, The Graduate Program of MESAS; and Faculty Member, ICIVs.

Fall 2005-2015 Director, *The South Asia Seminar Series*. Duties include meetings with South Asia faculty, discussion of names for the lecture series, and hosting of speakers.

2007-2008 Member, Curriculum Committee. Designed two courses for the South Asian track of the Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies major (MESAS 100, 202); and a MESAS 300 course intended both for the students of South Asia as well as the Middle East. Also designed elective offerings such as Women in India, Family in South Asia, Women and Islam, and freshmen seminar, Harem Tales.

2005-2006 Joint Coordinator, Events Committee.

2005- present Member, South Asian Studies Committee. Duties included the development of the South Asian track of the Major in Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies; currently, matters related to courses taught, development of new courses, student matters in South Asian Studies, Intellectual development of the track and its relationship to the department.

### Emory University School of Arts and Sciences

Fall 2014-Fall 2017 Representative of Emory College Faculty, Honorary Degree Committee.

May 2012 Faculty Member, The Halle Institute Faculty Development Trip to China and South Korea to encourage increased undergraduate admissions at Emory.

August 1-15, 2009 Along with Gyanendra Pandey led Emory faculty to India, for four one-day workshops involving American and Indian scholars on the theme 'Subalternity and Difference in International Perspective'. Meetings held at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Bombay); English and Foreign Language University (Hyderabad); Centre for Studies in Social Sciences (Calcutta); and Jamia Milia Islamia (New Delhi).

2008-present Emory Trustee to the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS)

2008 Emory Fulbright Committee

2005-2006 Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies liaison to the Honor Council, Emory University.

## Graduate Committee and Dissertation Supervision Committee

Parker Hamilton Cook (Committee Member, 2015-2019), Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, 'A Muslim Humanist of the Ottoman Empire: Ismail Hakki Bursevi and the Politicization of the Perfect Man.'

Sayali Bapat (Committee member 2015-2018), Emory Law School, 'The Rights of the Child in Indian Law'.

Faiza Rahman (Advisor, 2017-2019 onwards), Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, 'Muslim Women's Poetry, Desire and Shariah Law in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Pakistan'.

Durba Mitra (Co-Advisor, 2008-2013), History, 'Restraining Desire: Women and the Regulation of Sexuality in Colonial Bengal, c. 1830-1930.'

Aditya Pratap Deo (Committee Member, 2008-2013), History, 'Spirits, State Effects and Peoples' Politics: Negotiating Sovereignty in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Kanker, Central India.'

## Emory University Courses

**Undergraduate:** Introduction to South Asian Civilizations; South Asian History and Identity; Gender, Sexuality and Modern Islam; Harem Tales; Women in India; Family in South Asia; Women and Islam.

**Graduate:** Gender, Sexuality and Modern Islam; South Asia Research Seminar; History and Literature: South Asian Perspectives; South Asian Feminist Landscapes: History, Historiography and the Archive.

## Johns Hopkins University

Fall 2001-Spring 2005 Member, Advisory, and Curriculum *Committees*, *Program for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality*.

Fall 2001-Spring 2005 Associate Director, *Program for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality*. Duties included: coordination of courses for a Minor in WGS, student and faculty activities, outreach programs, publication of three newsletters a year, organization of an annual seminar series and a one-day international workshop.

## Membership of Professional Societies

The American Historical Association.  
Association for Asian Studies.  
American Institute of Indian Studies.