

# Queering the **INDIAN OCEAN**

*Gender, Sexuality  
and Language in  
Recent East African  
Indian Writing*

**Speaker: Dan Ojwang**

Dan Ojwang is Associate Professor of African Literature in the School of Literature, Language and Media at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

**Sept 30, 2013 • 11:30am-12:30pm  
English-Philosophy Building (304 EPB/Gerber Lounge)**

Inaugural East African Indian writers, such as Peter Nazareth and Bahadur Tejani who began their writing careers in the 1960s, usually took for granted the heterosexual character of the diasporic cultures they sought to depict. For this generation, nationalism—whether Indian diasporic or African—was primarily a heterosexual romance, a figure that came to mediate the representation of categories such as ethnicity, race and class. Writing in their wake, a younger set of writers, most notably Shailja Patel and Ghalib Shiraz Dhalla, have produced works that show explicit concern with alternative sexualities. This paper tracks shifts in the representation of sexuality across different generations of East African Indian writers, but with a specific focus on Patel and Dhalla who, in their writing, seek to name homoeroticism against a background of discretion and silence on same-sex eroticism.



Shailja Patel



Ghalib Shiraz  
Dhalla



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