

THE HUBLIC SPHERE

EPISODE 4

'Radical Vulnerabilities: Identities, intersections, and reclaiming power in South Asia'



Artwork by the brilliant Pakistani artist Shehzil Malik. You can learn more about her here: <http://www.shehzil.com> and on Instagram @shehzilm

In keeping with the theme of power and its modalities, this episode is about identities and how minoritizing and racializing minorities can limit our power in patriarchal power structures, but how that very oppression can be subverted by those identities to reclaim power.

We were joined by Dr Arpita Chakraborty, Zoya Rehman, and Mariya Salim, for the discussion.

Dr Arpita Chakraborty is an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at the Ireland India Institute, Dublin City University. Her areas of interest are masculinity, political violence, and relations between gender relations and religious practices in contemporary India. She holds a Masters in Media and Cultural Studies from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, during which she co-directed 'Bharatmata Ki Jai', a national award winning documentary film. She worked as an Editor in Sage Publications India before undertaking her PhD in 'Violence, Religion, and Masculinism in Contemporary India' at DCU.

Zoya Rehman is a feminist researcher and organiser based in Islamabad, Pakistan, where she is working as a Special Projects Manager at Media Matters for Democracy, a Pakistan based

not-for-profit geared towards independent journalism and media and digital rights advocacy. She has been working on gender and legal issues from a multidisciplinary approach through her practice and research. Zoya is a recipient of the Chevening Scholarship Award, and holds MA in Gender Studies and Law at SOAS, University of London.

Mariya Salim is a women's rights activist, researcher, writer and feminist, based in New Delhi, India. She undertook her second Master's degree in human rights law from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London as a Felix scholar. With over ten years of experience in the development sector, she has lent herself to many feminist concerns, especially those related to the rights of Muslim women. Mariya writes extensively in various media outlets including Al Jazeera, on issues related to women's human rights as well as themes of Nationalism, Identity Based Violence and Muslim women's rights. Her work with women survivors of sexual violence in the Muzaffarnagar riots has made substantial contribution to the narrative around women's access to justice and rights in the context of Communal Polarization.

We think it best for you to learn more about the many issues and topics discussed today, through the words of the guests themselves. Below is a non-exhaustive list of some of their finest and most relevant pieces of writing:

Arpita in RTÉ: 'Why are 250 million people protesting in India?' 13 Jan, 2020
<https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2020/0113/1106057-why-are-250-million-people-protesting-in-india/>

Arpita in the Economic & Political Weekly: 'Can Postcolonial Feminism Revive International Relations?' 20 May, 2017 (Vol. 52, Issue No. 20)
<https://www.epw.in/journal/2017/20/special-articles/can-postcolonial-feminism-revive-international-relations.html#sthash.YHvmoJy9.dpuf>

Arpita's presentation titled 'Decolonising European Academia: Race, gender, and the immigrant student embodying the 'imagined history':
https://www.academia.edu/37094925/Decolonizing_European_Academia_Race_gender_and_the_immigrant_student_embodiment_of_the_imagined_history_pptx

You can find more of Arpita's research on <https://dcu.academia.edu/ArpitaChakraborty>

And look for her on Twitter @DrArpitaC

Zoya in the Digital Rights Monitor: 'Feminist Memories in the Digital Age: Honoring the Feminism of Yesteryear and Today' 31 July, 2019:
<http://www.digitalrightsmonitor.pk/feminist-memories-in-the-digital-age/>

You can find Zoya on Twitter @pind_wave

Mariya in The Wire: 'The Many Reasons Why I Left My Job at Amnesty International India' 20 Sept, 2018: <https://thewire.in/rights/the-many-reasons-why-i-left-amnesty-international-india>

Mariya in AlJazeera: 'Rape as a political tool in India' 19 Apr 2018: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2018/4/19/rape-as-a-political-tool-in-india>

Mariya in Kafila: 'Cow Slaughter- Can a Directive Principle trump fundamental rights of the most marginalized?' 18 Sept, 2015: <https://kafila.online/2015/09/18/cow-slaughter-can-a-directive-principle-trump-fundamental-rights-of-the-most-marginalized-mariya-salim/#more-26063>

For all of Mariya's writing in Aljazeera: https://www.aljazeera.com/author/mariya_salim_160621151237375

For all of Mariya's writing in The Wire: <https://thewire.in/author/mariya-salim>

Find Mariya on Twitter @MariyaS87

Zoya highly recommended that listeners read some excellent pieces that we think will be of interest of to you:

'A Rising Movement' by Tooba Syed in the Pakistani English language daily newspaper, Dawn, 18 Mar, 2019, about the Aurat March held in Pakistan: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1470333>

'Yaariyan, Baithak, Gupshup: Queer Feminist Formations and the Global South' by Naveen Minai and Sara Shroff, in *Kohl: a Journal for Body and Gender Research*, Vol. 5. No.1 (Spring 2019): https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341299753_Yaariyan_Baithak_Gupshup_Queer_Feminist_Formations_and_the_Global_South

Some other explainers that are useful:

There was mention of India's 'Love Jihad Law'. Learn more about it here, in a piece by Michaela Stone Cross in The Juggernaut, 10 Dec, 2020: https://www.thejuggernaut.com/india-love-jihad-law?mc_cid=00ad297f48&mc_eid=b13ea89060

There was also lots of conversation about the 'Mera Jism Meri Marzi' (Urdu for 'My Body My Choice') slogan that came out of the Aurat March in Pakistan. Read more about that here: <https://images.dawn.com/news/1184791>

And here: <https://design.voxfuse.com/blog/17/aurat-march-why-placards-are-important>

The placard in question:



Zoya also told us about a placard that said 'Lo, beth gayi sahi se' (roughly translated to: 'There! I'm sitting properly now!'):



To learn more about the Aurat Azadi March, which is the Islamabad chapter of the annual marches and of which Zoya is one of the organisers, visit their facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/auratazadimarch>

And lastly, Mariya mentioned her most recent project called 'Zariya: Women's Alliance for Dignity and Equality' which she co-founded in December, 2020. You can find out more about that here: www.zariyaorg.in and can follow it on Twitter @zariya_2020