



GENDER CONVERSATIONS

Presented by the Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research

Monday, November 2nd

11:45 a.m-12:45 p.m. Ustler Hall, 3rd Floor Library

Intersections of Gender and Development

Muscles and (Mal)development: Hypermasculinity and the Legacy of the Domination of Nature in India

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ABSTRACT

Under British colonialism, common tropes of masculinity in India were reimagined and cast in the mold of the British ideal. Indian society adopted characteristics of English masculinity that exalted domination, industrial progress, and muscularity as inherently “manly.” Feminist scholars and activists, Vandana Shiva and Arundhati Roy, have criticized the acceptance of these external categories as a continuation of mental colonization that subjugates indigenous knowledge and the roles of women. In my talk, I will examine contemporary billboard advertisements of Indian concrete companies, which demonstrate the continuing presence of these stereotypes. The advertisements exemplify an underlying equation of domination and industrial progress with muscularity and manliness playing with visual rhetorical categories of strength and domination.

Brief Biographical Sketch:

Caleb Simmons is a *doctoral student in the Department of Religion*. Mr. Simmons graduated from the Missouri State University with a B.A. in Religious Studies. He received his master's degree from the Florida State University in Asian religious traditions with an emphasis in Hinduism (Thesis: *She Who Slays the Buffalo Demon: Divinity, Identity, and Authority in Iconography of Mahishasuramardini*). He has taught Religions of South Asia, Introduction to World Religions, and Asian Humanities at various institutions and has authored several encyclopedia articles covering a wide range of topics in South Asian History.