

Seminar: Conversations on Social Reproduction

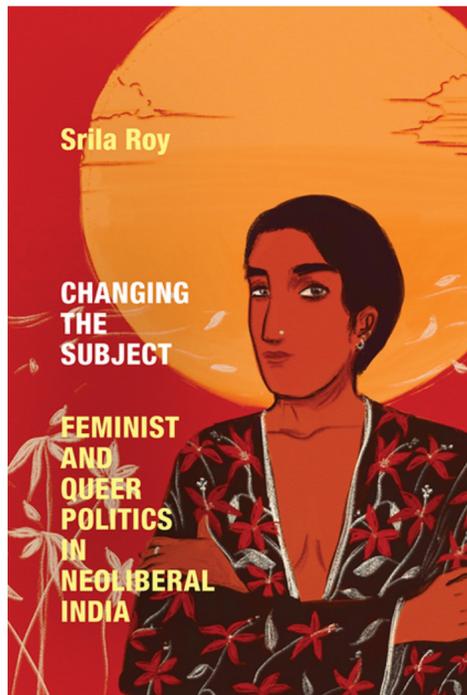
TITLE: Changing the Subject: Feminist and Queer Politics in Neoliberal India

SPEAKER: Professor Srila Roy, University of the Witwatersrand

READER: Professor Catherine Rottenberg, American & Canadian Studies, University of Nottingham

WHEN: Friday, November 11th, 12 - 1.30pm GMT/5:30-7.00pm IST

WHERE: Teams; [Follow the link to join](#)



Srila Roy is Professor of Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and 2022 Hunt-Simes Visiting Professor in Sexuality Studies at the University of Sydney. Her long-standing research and teaching expertise is in the area of transnational feminist studies. Her latest books are the co-edited, *Intimacy and Injury: in the wake of #MeToo in India and South Africa* (Manchester University Press, 2022) and the sole-authored, *Changing the Subject: Feminist and Queer Politics in Neoliberal India* (Duke University Press, 2022). She is a co-editor of the journal, *Feminist Theory*, and the recipient of the inaugural FTGS Global South Feminist Scholar Award from the International Studies Association (ISA). At Wits, she leads the *Governing Intimacies* project, which promotes new scholarship on gender and sexuality in Southern Africa and India, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon foundation.

ABSTRACT: In *Changing the Subject* Srila Roy maps the rapidly transforming terrain of gender and sexual politics in India under the conditions of global neoliberalism. The consequences of India's liberalization were paradoxical: the influx of global funds for social development and NGOs signaled the co-optation and depoliticization of struggles for women's rights, even as they amplified the visibility and vitalization of queer activism. Roy reveals the specificity of activist and NGO work around issues of gender and sexuality through a decade-long ethnography of two West Bengal organizations, one working on lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues and the other on rural women's empowerment. Tracing changes in feminist governmentality that were entangled in transnational neoliberalism, Roy shows how historical and highly local feminist currents shaped contemporary queer and nonqueer neoliberal feminisms. The interplay between historic techniques of activist governance and queer feminist governmentality's focus on changing the self offers a new way of knowing feminism—both as always already co-opted and as a transformative force in the world.

SEMINAR SERIES: This social reproduction seminar series is part of the *Laws of Social Reproduction* project led by Prof. Prabha Kotiswaran, and based at King's College London and IWWAGE Delhi. Feminist scholars have long demonstrated the invisibility of women's reproductive labour, with feminist economists striving to get international agencies and national governments to redraw the "production boundary" to ensure the recognition of women's unpaid labour.

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