

# NEW HISTORIES

## Feminist, Black, Dalit, Ecological

Introduction to History

HSS343a

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# New Perspectives

- Emerged in the post- World War II period
  - Defeat of Fascism: the most grotesque form of modern state
  - Spread of Decolonisation
  - Rise of Welfare State
- Post-Structuralist ideas
  - Gaze
  - Power-Knowledge Grid; Alternate Epistemologies
  - Reading history through one's own self

# Her-story

- History as a story of women
- Women as agents of history
- Women's Work Hidden
  - Women work more than men in pastoral and agricultural societies
  - Society is held up by women's domestic and reproductive work
  - Unpaid and Invisible
- Women's Actions Hidden
  - What are the sources; who tells women's history: GAZE is always male
- Women as Autonomous Agents of History

# Black History

- NEGRITUDE
  - The state of being Black in a world where White is the Norm
- Questions the idea of progress
  - Development is a result of colonialism
  - Colonialism and Slavery were not a result of backwardness
- Role of Slavery and Colonialism in the making of the White World
- Do Africans have a history which is outside the Europe-centered global history
- How do we bring out the history of Africans and blacks
  - Evidence and methods





# Dalit History

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- History of India is a history of establishing the supremacy of Brahminism
- Buddhism (and other Lokayat traditions) were constantly undermined
  - The greatest Buddhist empire was forgotten
- Indian history was equated with Hindu history
  - Category of Hindu excluded the producers and workers: Shudra, Untouchable
  - Upper Caste GAZE
- Caste division was the cause of Indian backwardness, inability to challenge Central Asian / European invaders
- Shudra and Untouchables have their own history which needs to be unearthed
- It is the very opposite of Brahmanical history of India

# Anthropocentrism

- Understand and Interprets the world in terms of human experiences and values
- The Human Gaze
- Ecological History
  - Humans are just one species in a world with millions of life forms
  - De-centre the Homo Sapien in the living world
- Started with history of forests, of rivers...
  - Foreground the natural feature and humans are one of the elements interacting and changing this feature
- History as the story of the victory of one species (Homo Sapiens) over all others
  - What consequences does it have?
  - When did it start, how did it progress and how will it end?

# Limits of New Histories

- Partial Story of the Past
- Does not even claim to be able to tell a universal story
- We can only recount the history of the Fragment
- No global, or universal, history possible
- History is possible only within a well defined, bounded context
  - Any history which tries to go beyond the Fragment is condemned to commit epistemic violence
- One history has no link with the other

