DH ASIA WEBIAR

Locating Digital Archives for An Indian Digital Commons

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10:30am GMT 5:30+

Zoom Registration: https://bit.ly/3vnH6vC

SYNOPSIS

In digital times, when several objects and collections are available online, the transnational effort to decolonise takes on new possibilities. Given the large amount of Indian materials that are housed outside of India, both as a function of empire and postcolonial accidents (such as the PL 480 programme), the last two centuries and more of Indian archival materials are to be found outside of the Indian state. With digital catalogues, it is now possible to share the materials of collections housed remotely, especially given that several materials that reside in the Indian subcontinent are yet to be made available online. It is in this context that we look to digital repatriation—the return of cultural heritage to the communities of relevance—as one component in the complex process of decolonizing archives. The influences of colonial mediations have left a deep trace on institutional archival methods and this act of repatriation shall also return the possibility of scrutiny of these authorising processes to those whom the collections represent. While clamours to decolonise flourish, it is such acts of digital repatriation that shall eventually attain the stated ends of decolonising thought.