

**Project Title: Occult Intrigue: Sikhs, Anti-Colonial Resistance, and the Theosophical Society**

I examine alliances the Theosophical Society forged with Sikhs in the Punjab and the role these alliances played in Maharaja Duleep Singh's attempt to overthrow British rule at the end of the 19th Century. By foregrounding the dynamic nature of Theosophy, Sikhism, and tradition in general, I contend that colonized subjects constantly refashioned Theosophy to each other under very specific local contexts and forms of power that were also continuously encroached upon by British and Russian imperial projects. In my project, therefore, Theosophy emerges as a site of contestation that allowed colonized subjects to generate and imagine worlds grounded within their own political and religious traditions and practices, which were not bound within the conceptual rubric of the nation state or of utopian contact that scholars typically associate with Theosophy. Instead, drawing upon colonial and vernacular archives, my dissertation emphasizes the continuously disputed and imaginative form of Western and non-Western traditions thereby unsettling assumptions of incommensurability and contradiction that structure our understanding of tradition and politics in Punjab.