



Prof Arundhati Virmani

Senior research scholar at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Centre Norbert Elias, Marseille

Social scientists in the civic space. The right distance for writing national history

Abstract: Humanities and social sciences have all along manifested their capacity to intervene beyond their disciplines in the civic space that includes the political arena. Researchers clearly belong to the civic space, whatever their subject of inquiry. As the social sciences are mobilized to offer responses to the multiple questions faced by contemporary societies, the role of researchers becomes an object of debates, both ethical and epistemological.

The talk explores the effects of distancing and dislocation on the historian's choice of problems, objects or methodologies. It reflects on some of the implications of this distancing for the historian's different forms of participation in the civic space, from providing a critical understanding of a given period, to militancy, to complete detachment.

Bio: Arundhati Virmani is a historian, currently senior research scholar at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Centre Norbert Elias, Marseille. She received her Ph.D. degree from Sorbonne University (1981) and was Lecturer, then Reader at Delhi University, Department of History. She has taught in the University of Bordeaux Montaigne, Aix-Marseille University and Marseille Business School. She was Fellow of the Canon Chair in Business Ethics at the Rennes School of Business. Her research on the Indian subcontinent lies at the crossroads of different fields : political history from colonisation to independence, links between religion and state, entrepreneurial cultures. She has been visiting scholar in several universities in Europe and India. Her books include *L'Inde, une puissance en mutation* (Paris, La documentation française, 2001), *India 1900-1947, Un britannique au cœur du Raj*, (Paris, Autrement, 2001), *A National Flag for India ; Rituals, Nationalism and the Politics of Sentiment*, (Delhi, Permanent Black, 2008, paperback 2015), *Atlas Historique de l'Inde* (Paris, Autrement, 2012), *Les Indiens. Voix multiples*, (Paris, Ateliers Henry Dougier, 2015, winner of the 2016 Asia Literary Prize awarded by the Association of writers of the French Language). Her edited works include *Political Aesthetics. Culture, Critique and the Everyday*, (London, Routledge, 2015, 2nd ed. 2017)

Date: April 6, 2022

Time: 03:30 – 04:45 pm

Google Meet: meet.google.com/bjx-fthp-brp