


Standing in Cement: Possibilities Created by Ravan on the Chhattisgarhi Plains

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Framed by recent interest in the agency of materiality, this talk analyzes, through a performative-ethnographic lens, possibilities created and questions raised by the cement images of Ravan, the antagonist of the Ramayana epic tradition, found throughout the central plains of the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh. While in Ramayan verbal narratives, Ravan dies; here in Chhattisgarh, materially he stands and is much more visible than the hero-god Ram. The materiality of Ravan images create the possibility of a spectrum of Ravan-dominant ideologies/theologies and identities.

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