

Transcultural Bodies – Transboundary Biographies. Border crossings in Asia and Europe

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, India, 21. – 24.02.2010

**University Research Priority Program *Asia and Europe*, University of Zurich
Cluster *Asia and Europe in a Global Context*, University of Heidelberg
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi**

Conference synopsis

Recent research in transboundary travels of concepts, (institutional) practices, and material culture has provided new perspectives in cultural and historical studies. Not only have transcultural biographies been the subject of recent scholarly interest, but there has also been an increasing interest in questions of space. Research related to border crossing interrogates the boundedness of national political space. Research in this field, which focuses on global sites and migrant trails in the present and in the past, evinces a new interest in processes of border crossing as well as border making. The transnationalisation of law or the study of multicultural organisations provides yet other promising fields to investigate these processes.

This conference critically investigates border crossings in different media and in a variety of colonial and post-colonial contexts. It also explores the production of transcultural bodies and seeks to understand how biographical research is transforming our understanding of transcultural entanglements.

Conference program:

Sunday, 21.02.2010

14:00 – 15:30 Welcome speeches and reception (Prof. Jyotindra Jain, IGNCA/Christoph Uehlinger, University of Zurich/ Rudolf G. Wagner, Heidelberg University)

15:30-16:00 High Tea

I. Daya Bai

Chair & discussant: Prof. Jyotindra Jain

16:00 – 16:30 Film Doordarshan (30 min)

16:30 – 17:30 Discussion with Daya Bai, Rukmini Sekhar

19:00 Dinner on the lawns of IGNCA

Monday, 22.02.

II. Negotiating cross-cultural knowledge

Chair & Discussant: Prof. Madeleine Herren-Oesch (Heidelberg University)

9:00 – 9:30 Angelika Malinar (University of Zurich)
Translating India – Annie Besant between colonial and spiritual realms

9:30 – 10:00 Axel Michaels (Heidelberg University)
Lost in disciplinary transitions – Heinrich Zimmer and his India

10:00 – 10:30 Jyotirmaya Sharma (University of Hyderabad)
'Religion as Mother and Teacher': Vivekananda and the Politics of Hinduism as Religion

10:30 – 11:00 coffee break

11:00 – 11:30 Rudolf G. Wagner (Heidelberg University)
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11:30 – 12:00 Sven Trakulhun (University of Zurich)
Negotiating cross-cultural knowledge in seventeenth-century Siam and France: Kosa Pan and Constantine Phaulcon

12:00 – 13:00 panel discussion

13:00 – 14:30 lunch

III. Gender crossings

Chair & Discussant: Brinda Bose (DU)

- 14:30 – 15:00 Barbara Mittler (Heidelberg University)
Transboundary Bodies: Eunuchs and the Making of (Event) History in China
- 15:00 – 15:30 M. D. Muthukumaraswamy (IGNCA)
Imaginary Boundaries and Real Crossings Folklore of the Transgender Community in Tamil Nadu
- 15:30 – 16:00 coffee break
- 16:00 – 16:30 Laura Coppens (University of Zurich)
Lesbi in Jakarta: the formation of queer bodies within transcultural circuits of queer knowledge
- 16:30 – 17:30 panel discussion
- 20:00 Dinner Reception at the Residence of the Swiss Ambassador, New Delhi

Tuesday, 23.02.

IV. Aesthetic and religious transgressions

Chair & Discussant: Dr. Kavita Singh (JNU School of Arts & Aesthetics)

- 9:00 – 9:30 Melanie Trede (Heidelberg University)
Aesthetic Transgressions: China and Japan in German art appreciation
- 9:30 – 10:00 Franziska Koch (Heidelberg University)
Posing and disposing of a transcultural body and a transboundary biography: the Swiss collector Uli Sigg and his collection of contemporary Chinese art on display
- 10:00 – 10:30 Rudolf Heredia (Indian social institute, Delhi)
Interrogations from the Margins: Conversion as Critique
- 10:30 – 11:00 coffee break
- 11:00 – 11:30 Hans Harder (Heidelberg University)
The Indo-Bangladeshi Border and Hindus in Bangladesh: Dynamics of Border Crossing and Diaspora at Sitakunda

- 11:30 – 12:00 Roberta Tontini (Heidelberg University)
One thousand and one purity temples: Liu Zhi's creation of a ritual space for Islam in China
- 12:00 – 13:00 panel discussion
- 13:00 – 14:30 lunch

V. Law and migration

Chair & Discussant: Shalini Randeria (University of Zurich)

- 14:30 – 15:00 Andrea Büchler (University of Zurich)
Islamic Family Law in Europe? Legal transplants, normative pluralism and entangled legal histories
- 15:00 – 15:30 Ratna Kapur (Centre for Feminist Legal Research, Delhi)
Un-becoming citizens and subaltern migrants: law, gender and belonging in a global age
- 15:30 – 16:00 Pratiksha Baxi (Centre for Law and Governance, JNU)
Pyar Kiya To Darna Kya: Notes on Law, Love and Violence
- 16:00 – 16:45 panel discussion
- 16:45 – 17:00 Coffee break

VI. Jahaji Music

Chair & Discussant: Rukmini Sekhar?

- 17:00 – 17:15 Intro *Jahaji Music* (Tejaswini Niranjana / Surabhi Sharma)
- 17:15 – 19:15 *Jahaji Music* (112 mins)
- 19:15 – 19:30 Outro (Tejaswini Niranjana / Surabhi Sharma)
- 20:00 Dinner at *Fire Restaurant*, the Park Hotel

Wednesday, 24 Feb

VII. Biographies and identities

Chair & Discussant: Axel Michaels (Heidelberg University)

- 9:00 – 9:30 Rohit Jain (University of Zurich)
Biographicity, cultural translation and translocality in the representations of "Indianness" among second generation Indians grown up in Switzerland
- 9:30 – 10:00 Somnath Batabyal (Heidelberg University)
Transboundary biographies in environmentalism
- 10:00 – 10:30 Henning Trüper (University of Zurich)
Lives, letters and other letters: subject-matters of scholarly biography in 19th-century oriental studies
- 10:30 – 11:00 coffee break
- 11:00 – 11:30 Christoph Uehlinger (University of Zurich)
(Re-)Discovering Assyria in the 19th century: a comparison of three intellectual profiles (P.-E. Botta, A.H. Layard, Hormuzd Rassam)
- 11:30 – 12:00 Farhana Ibrahim (Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi)
Performance and transgression: borderline identities among a pastoral community in western India
- 12:00 – 12:30 Tobias Delfs (University of Zurich)
A missionary gone astray in India. Lambert Christian Fruchtenicht (1772 – ca. 1806) and the problem of border crossing
- 12:30 – 13:30 panel discussion
- 13:30 – 15:00 lunch

VIII. Transboundary professionals – transcultural bodies

Chair & Discussant: Prof. AK Ramakrishnan (JNU)

- 15:00 – 15:30 Madeleine Herren (Heidelberg University)
Cars and Pianos, performing the transcultural body in the League of Nations' secretariat 1920 – 1939
- 15:30 – 16:00 Joachim Kurtz (Heidelberg University)
The Messenger of Zikawei: The Transboundary Life of a Chinese-Jesuit Journalist in Nineteenth-century Shanghai
- 16:00 – 16:30 Nikola Kosmatopoulos (University of Zurich)
How «ethnic conflict» was introduced as a novel border concept between war/peace after the Cold War and how transboundary expert biographies helped to do so in Lebanon
- 16:30 – 17:30 panel discussion
- 17:30 Farewell