

## Identifying New Themes in South Asian History

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**Datum, Ort:** 15.07.2010-17.07.2010,

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The objective of the workshop at the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin was twofold: firstly strategic, to encourage productive exchange between young South Asianists and secondly thematic, to address new fields and research areas in the social history of South Asia. This initiative both reflects and aspires to contribute to the recent rise of Modern South Asian Studies in German speaking countries for which the organizers felt to develop a closer collaboration, especially of the researchers at their doctoral and post-doctoral stages. Though the disciplinary focus was on history and on the researchers based in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, applicants from the UK and the Netherlands as well as researchers from related disciplines like political science, arts, anthropology, media and literature studies also participated in the workshop. By doing so they supported the transnational and interdisciplinary approach to the field.

Interested in identifying current trends and future research potential within South Asian studies Michael Mann, the recently appointed chair of South Asian Studies at the Humboldt University, analyzed the scope of the presentation topics in his opening key note address. He found that the „cultural turn“ is well represented in the field, noting that many of the projects were concerned with cultural issues or more specifically with the phenomena of print media. Furthermore, innovative approaches to „classic“ topics were pursued by the projects on labour history informed by subaltern studies or by those on education which reflected the recent debates on the civilizing mission. Mann highlighted global history as another influential new approach that was represented by a number of projects on diverse topics such as psychoanalysis, slavery or on-

line matrimonials. Though the workshop certainly reflected a wide range of highly debated issues and allegedly also the practical side of the ‘politics’ of funding, Mann pointed out the absence of a number of topics such as environmental or urban history, or the study of minorities. He stressed that these subjects score very highly on the South Asian research agenda in South Asia and suggested that their absence on European or more precisely German research agendas might reflect a particular European interest which diverges from the main and current research interests within the region itself.

A selective overview will illustrate the diversity of papers:

PRABHAT KUMAR (Heidelberg) dealt with the history of cartoons in late 19th and early 20th century Hindi periodicals of North India. He addressed the question of intertextuality between literary and visual texts through his analysis of the genre of satire. Additionally, he suggested looking behind the scenes by investigating the process of production and the actors involved, i.e. analyzing the cartoonists and their self-perception.

MONIKA FREIER (Berlin) drew attention to the question how in late colonial India Hindi advisory literature became a widespread means firstly of education commissions of the colonial state and later of social reformers to launch moral education. By analyzing this popular genre Freier found that it did not only propagate rules of manners and conduct, but also postulated certain norms of feelings and the expression of emotions, for instance certain emotions such as female bashfulness, male pride and marital love.

In his presentation on stereotypes of the Indian diaspora in American mainstream TV serials, PIERRE GOTTSCHLICH (Rostock) pointed out that ethnic minorities are particularly prone to become subject to stereotyping. Ethnic markers such as the color of the skin, foreign accent, or certain modes of clothing set them apart from the American mainstream. By focusing on the Indian American Apu of the famous TV serial *The Simpsons* whose character traits defined „Indianness“ for a mainstream American audience for twenty years, Gottschlich vividly demonstrated how the initially broad stereoty-

pe developed into a more differentiated key figure, a process reflecting the economic, social, and cultural coming of age of the Indian diaspora in the United States.

MARIA MORITZ (Bremen) analyzed the increasing awareness of the global dimension in late colonial India by presenting the case study of the Indian intellectual Bhagavan Das. By using the concept of „rooted cosmopolitanism“ Moritz argued that though Das never left India his membership in the transnational theosophical network and the indigenous globally oriented elite as well as his background in regional forms of global awareness led to his multifaceted transnational identity. Rather than focusing on mechanical processes of globalization Moritz emphasized the need to reflect the cultural implications and meaning of globalizing processes for social actors within an increasingly integrated world.

LISA STURM (Berlin) was one of the presenters who were at the outset of their research and received suggestions and encouragement for their Ph.D.-projects and research agendas at the workshop. In a transnational project on the America-India trade in late 18th and early 19th century, Sturm intends to investigate its socio-cultural dimension as she wants to analyze not only the functioning of this trade but also how the influx of Indian luxury products contributed to a consumer revolution and contributed substantially to a commercialization of the US-American society.

JAMILA ADELI's (Berlin) presentation on Indian art in the international market was aptly supported by a slide show of contemporary Indian art by artists such as Shilpa Gupta. Adeli bases her research on the fact that since the Indian liberalization in 1990, Indian art and thus its media coverage is booming internationally. Together with other qualitative research methods Adeli intends to interview art world players such as artists, gallery owners, collectors, auction houses and museum directors as well as art critics in order to find out how they reflect this boom and the extensive media coverage.

In the concluding session Prof. DIETMAR ROTHERMUND, Prof. HARALD FISCHERTINÉ, PD Dr. DIETRICH REETZ and PD Dr. MARGRIT PERNAU made an attempt to evaluate the outcome of the workshop and dis-

cuss future perspectives. Though not all important subjects such as middle class studies or studies of the informal sector could be addressed, all discussants were impressed by the quality of the presentations and a general productive atmosphere that prevailed during the three-day workshop. Another observation made was the lack of studies on early modern and medieval history that reflects the closing down of chairs in different universities in Germany. A major concern of the concluding round was the question how South Asian studies could more effectively interact with European history and similarly reach out to the general public, thus enhancing its influence. All participants were called to express their experiences of the workshop, make suggestions for future initiatives and criticize. Although so far no critical appraisal has come directly from the participants, but some of them have in fact found it to be an 'inspiring workshop', particularly those who presented their Ph.D. projects (and not individual papers). Furthermore, it was suggested to establish the workshop as an annual meeting on a rotating basis and thus encourage further collaboration. This idea has already been taken up successfully as the workshop has been given a name: YSASM (Young South Asia Scholars Meet). This has already been invited by various participating universities to host its annual workshop. A preliminary schedule is as following:

2011: HU, Berlin

2012: SAI, Heidelberg (coinciding with its Jubilee year foundation).

2013: ETH, Zurich

2014: University of Göttingen.

(written by Maria Framke and Maria Moritz)

### **Workshop-Programm:**

Michael Mann (Humboldt University, Berlin):  
Keynote

*Panel 1: Print, Satire and Colonialism*

Chair: Heike Liebau (ZMO, Berlin)

Swarali Paranjape (University of Heidelberg):

Marathi satire in the era of colonialism

Chaiti Basu (University of Heidelberg): Pan-

chu Thakur: Indranath Bandyopadhyay's (1849-1911) Response to the Colonial Cultural Encounter in Late 19th Century Bengal

Prabhat Kumar (University of Heidelberg): Situating Cartoon in the Hindi Literary Sphere

*Panel 2: Print, Identity and Nationalism*

Chair: Michael Mann (Humboldt University, Berlin)

Dhrupadi Chattopadhyay (University of Heidelberg): 'Transcreating' spaces? A review of nineteenth century Indian Writing in English, with a special focus on Toru Dutt

Simin Patel (Oxford University): A Cosmopolitan Crisis: The Bombay Riots of 1874

Pragya Dhital (SOAS, London): Paper chains: an investigation of crossborder commerce in north Indian print-media

Luzia Savary (ETH, Zürich): Muslim Reformist Discourse on Women in Late 19th-Century India: Discussions on Pardah in the Hyderabad Urdu Magazine for Women Mu'allim-i nisvān

*Panel 3: Islam and Identity in South Asia*

Chair: Dietrich Reetz (ZMO, Berlin)

Shazia Ahmad (SOAS, London): Proselytizing through Print: The Ahmadiyya from 1880-1908

Sadia Bajwa (Humboldt University, Berlin): The Genealogy of the Nationalist Historiography of Pakistan: An Analysis of Historiography in the Context of the Emergent 'Muslim Nationalist' Discourse, 1857-1947

*Panel 4: Transnational History, Knowledge and Communication*

Chair: Harald Fischer-Tiné (ETH, Zürich)

Uffa Jensen (MPI, Berlin): Universal Knowledge of the Self? The Transnational History of Psychoanalysis in Calcutta (and Berlin and London), 1910-1940

Maria Moritz (Jacobs University, Bremen): A South Asian Cosmopolitan: Bhagavan Das and the critique of the Theosophical Society, (1913-1914)

Amelia Bonea (University of Heidelberg): Telegraphy and news: Changing perceptions of time and place in nineteenth-century Indian newspapers

Tobias Delfs (Zürich University): Between individual freedom and external necessities: Misbehaviour of Protestant missionaries in 18th and early 19th century India

*Panel 5: Politics of Imperialism and (Post-) Colonialism*

Chair: Aditya Sarkar (University of Göttingen)

Manuela Ciotti (Leiden University): Fairs and counter-fairs': Colonial and postcolonial India through the exhibition 'The Empire strikes back: Indian art today', London Saatchi Gallery, 2010'

Alexis Wearmouth (University of Dundee): The Origins and Growth of Foreign Direct Investment in the Calcutta Jute Industry by a Scottish Multinational Enterprise – a Case Study of Thomas Duff & Co, 1872-1896.

Panel 6: Labour: Technology, Identity, Policies  
Chair: Rana Behal (International Research Centre, Humboldt University, Berlin)

Anna Sailer (University of Göttingen): The Many Names of Jute. Concepts of Labour in Late Colonial Dictionaries and Manuals

Nitin Varma (International Research Centre, Humboldt University, Berlin): Making tea: technology, labour process and coolie labour on Assam tea plantation

Sara Elmer & Christine Whyte (ETH, Zürich): Why is Slavery bad? The Global anti-slavery movement in Nepal and Sierra Leone, 1920 - 1930

*Panel 7: New Media and Social Identities*

Chair: Anna Sailer (University of Göttingen)

Mette Gabler (Humboldt University, Berlin): The Good Life – Buy 1 Get 1 Free. Messages of Outdoor Advertising for Social Change in Urban India

Fritzi Titzmann (Humboldt University, Berlin): Translocal and local dynamics of a global media phenomenon: Changing female subjectivity and agency in the Indian online matrimonial market

Pierre Gottschlich (University of Rostock): Apu, Neela, and Amita: Stereotypes of the Indian Diaspora in Mainstream American TV Shows

*Panel 8: Individual Project Presentation*

Chair: Maria Framke (Jacobs University Bremen)

Patrick Hesse (Humboldt University, Berlin): Dialectics of freedom and tradition: Religion and the communist movement

Lisa Sturm (Humboldt University, Berlin): The American-India Trade in the Context of Global Transformations 1784-1830

Jamalia Adeli (Humboldt University, Berlin):

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Art, market and the media: Contemporary art (worlds) in India since economic liberalization

*Panel 9: Education in South Asia: Experiments and Controls*

Chair: Nitin Sinha (ZMO, Berlin)

Monika Freier (MPI, Berlin): Teaching Ideals and Feelings: Moral Education in Colonial Northern India

Jana Tschurennev (ETH, Zürich): Imperial Experiments in Education. Monitorial Schooling in India and Britain (1789-1835)

*Round Table*

Harald Fischer-Tiné (ETH, Zürich), Margrit Pernau (MPI, Berlin), Dietrich Reetz (ZMO, Berlin), Dietmar Rothermund

Tagungsbericht *Identifying New Themes in South Asian History*. 15.07.2010-17.07.2010, in: H-Soz-Kult 24.09.2010.