

MAGAZIN DES BEREICHS

GAMSZINE

GENDER AND MEDIA STUDIES FOR THE SOUTH ASIAN REGION



IMPRESSUM



COPYRIGHT © BRDNK VISION ON UNSPLASH

GAMSzine

No 1, Winter 2020

Magazin des Bereichs Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region

Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Redaktion

Nadja-Christina Schneider & Alexa Altmann

Beitragende zu dieser Ausgabe

Alexa Altmann, Rosalia Namsai Engchuan, Reyazul Haque, Jenson Joseph, Dhanya Fee Kirchhof, İclal Ayşe Küçükırca, Anna-Kathrin Oswald, Elena Schaetz, Nadja-Christina Schneider, Anna Schnieder-Krüger, Salma Siddique, Sebastian Sons

Layout & Gestaltung

Alexa Altmann

Kopien und Vervielfältigungen sind nur nach einer schriftlichen Genehmigung durch die verantwortliche Redaktion möglich.

Prof. Dr. Nadja-Christina Schneider

Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region

Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Invalidenstraße 118

10115 Berlin

INHALT DIESER AUSGABE

3

5

9

13

15

19

21





COPYRIGHT © MILA ALBRECHT ON UNSPLASH

23

25

29

33

LIEBE LESER:INNEN,

wir freuen uns sehr, Ihnen die erste Ausgabe unserer *GAMSzine* vorzustellen.

Das halbjährlich erscheinende Magazin des Fachbereichs Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region (GAMS) enthält Auszüge aus neu erschienenen Fachpublikationen und Abschlussarbeiten von Studierenden des Instituts für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften.

Wir stellen Ihnen neue Mitarbeiter:innen und Gastwissenschaftler:innen an unserem Bereich vor und informieren Sie über unsere aktuellen Forschungsprojekte. Besonders freuen wir uns, Ihnen im Gastbeitrag Projekte junger Forschender vorzustellen. In dieser Ausgabe reflektiert Rosalia Namsai Engchuan über die methodische Herangehensweise zu ihrem Filmprojekt „Complicated Happiness“, in dem sie sich mit dem *Thai Park* in Berlin auseinandersetzt.

Das Pandemie-Jahr 2020 hat es vielen Studierenden und Promovierenden besonders schwer gemacht, ihre empirischen Forschungen wie ursprünglich geplant durchzuführen. Über-

zeugen Sie sich in der Fotostory unserer Doktorand:innen selbst von den Mühen des Forschens zu Corona-Zeiten - und von den gefundenen Lösungen.

Wir freuen uns umso mehr mit allen Bachelor- und Masterstudierenden, die ihre Abschlussarbeiten trotz mitunter großer Hürden in diesem Jahr fertigstellen konnten und gratulieren Ihnen sehr herzlich zum erfolgreichen Studienabschluss!

Reyazul Haque danken wir für die Möglichkeit, einige seiner wunderbaren Gedichte hier veröffentlichen zu können, in der Hindi-Originalversion sowie in englischer Übersetzung.

Das kreative Brainstormen mit Alexa Altmann über Form und Inhalte der ersten *GAMSzine*-Ausgabe war ein Vergnügen und die gestalterische Umsetzung ist allein ihr zu verdanken.

Viel Freude mit dieser Erstausgabe wünscht Ihnen

NADJA-CHRISTINA SCHNEIDER

GASTBEITRÄGE

»Fictionalizing Realities: Artistic Approaches to Ethnographic Research«
»New Delhi Notebook«



COPYRIGHT © MANNY MORENO ON UNSPLASH



STILL FROM *COMPLICATED HAPPINESS*, 2020 © ROSALIA NAMSAI ENGCHUAN

FICTIONALIZING REALITIES: ARTISTIC APPROACHES TO ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Complicated Happiness pivots around the *Thai Park* in Berlin, a space famous for its “delicious street food” and “authentic” atmosphere. It was built organically by a growing community of diasporic Thai women for decades. In 2021, the Berlin city administration will formalize the market, pushing out the most vulnerable members of this community to create the figurative impossibility of an “authentic” but “formal” food market experience, one that is legible to the bureaucratic system.

This research started many years ago, when I was driven by an urge to make sense of an uncan-

ny feeling that shaped my experience of growing up in Germany, as the daughter of a Thai father and German mother. “I saw in theory then a location for healing” (bell hooks 1991: 1), reading critical theory was transformative as it made me realize that the problem was not within me.

I began to comprehend that *The Thai Woman*, this object of promiscuous and submissive desire is a product of an encounter with alterity that went terribly wrong. The Western Man’s fascination with, desire for and repulsion by otherness, led to the compulsive construction of something that could be made tangible and

ultimately be governed.¹ These unfortunate negotiations went down the path of colonial othering and fetishization and culminated in the figure of *The Thai Woman*. She operates as an expectation and a yardstick, against which Thai women all over the world are measured. She is floating as a surrogate discourse that defines Thai women in hypervisible mediations that leave no room for the complexity and contradictions of real human beings. *The Thai Woman* is

¹ SEE FOR EXAMPLE PETER A. JACKSON, ‘THE PERFORMATIVE STATE: SEMI-COLONIALITY AND THE TYRANNY OF IMAGES IN MODERN THAILAND’, *SOJOURN: JOURNAL OF SOCIAL ISSUES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA* 19, NO. 2 (2004): 219–53 AND EKSUDA SINGHALAMPONG, ‘PICTURING FEMININITY: PORTRAITS OF THE EARLY MODERN SIAMESE WOMEN’, *SOUTHEAST OF NOW: DIRECTIONS IN CONTEMPORARY AND MODERN ART IN ASIA* 3, NO. 1 (9 APRIL 2019): 49–75.

projected onto my body, and it is this projection that I share with the women in the *Thai Park*. Beyond this surface we have very little in common.

Because of my history, the persistently idealized positionality of the neutral observer is not available to me. I found in film a language to communicate with others on the level of feeling, as opposed to a more fact-based conversation within the exclusive and elitist rigidity of academic knowledge dissemination.

I started the project at a time when I was becoming increasingly concerned about my own positionality, as an outside researcher working with and making a career out of the stories of other people, and the inherent violence of cognitive extractivism, a mode of knowledge production that “assumes that the sources of extraction are available up to their total exhaustion; what is of no interest to the extracting process is irrelevant and can be discarded as useless, as trash or chaff, and, ideally, no research time should be wasted on

it” (Grosfoguel 2018: 130). I began to understand that I need to read people who have an experience that is - still fundamentally different - yet closer, to mine, as a woman of color. After spending much of my teenage life trying to make myself legible to those who failed to make sense of me, Édouard Glissant’s thinking allowed me to see beauty and power in opacity. He reminds us that not everyone “interesting” needs to make their story comprehensible to the framework of understanding, defined by the other. Reading up on the diverse attempts to investigate the *Thai Park*, I realized that researchers who entered the space before me have failed in establishing a common ground for insightful conversations with the women, making them open up about their lives.² Why would they? In a precarious situation, where they navigate their status as sellers without permit, even with the best of intentions, an outsider’s intrusion into the space can easily become a contestation of their presence. In the discourse around *Thai Park*

² SEE FOR EXAMPLE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR ETHNOGRAPHIE (GFE) AND INST. F. EUROP. ETHNOLOGIE (HU-BERLIN) (HRSG.) (2004). VON SONNENSCHIRMEN UND WILDEN HORDEN LIT, BERLIN U.A., BERLINER BLÄTTER. ETHNOGRAPHISCHE UND ETHNOLOGISCHE BEITRÄGE. VOL. 33

transparency is a means of oppression and control and a refusal to talk to outside researchers becomes a powerful claim of the right to stay opaque.

Yet, the non-presence of the Thai women’s experiences and articulations in mainstream discourse and in policies derived from there led to unfortunate consequences in the administration of the space. At the time when I was starting the research, it was already decided that the space would be “formalized”. For the women, issues with local authorities were constantly up in the air, making it dangerous to render transparent life stories that expose “illegal” activities. In a situation, where the power structures I wish to critique in theory were also fundamental obstacles to the practice of doing research, I found an avenue in artistic research. I wanted to offer the women the opportunity to open up in their encounters with me, while at the same time giving them the right to remain opaque in the further disseminations of the research. The video is deeply anchored in the social reality of the women and our conversations and interactions, but it is decidedly not a representation or documentation.

I wanted to offer the women the opportunity to open up in their encounters with me, while at the same time giving them the right to remain opaque in the further disseminations of the research. The video is deeply anchored in the social reality of the women and our conversations and interactions, but it is decidedly not a representation or documentation.

Entering the space as an artist made all the difference because attempting to evoke rather than represent I was not looking for “facts”. It was okay to not *know* everything about the women and focus on asking questions *with* them. I was seeking something that Werner Herzog calls an *ecstatic truth* - “a kind of truth that is the enemy of the merely factual ... it is mysterious and elusive, and can be reached only through fabrication and imagination and stylization” (Herzog 1999). Attempting to produce “legitimate” academic knowledge the reviewers’ demand for “facts” are always already looming, fundamentally changing how research is being conducted. To the women, the *Thai Park* constitutes a happy space, an interstice from often difficult and lonely homes. I did not want

to enter a happy place to ask sad questions about their legal status, family relations or life trajectories. Instead, I asked them what happiness meant to them and let the conversation unfold without ever pushing them to talk about things they did not want to. Artistic research as a method is about formulating better questions, much more than it is about arriving at answers.

At that time, I had various conversations on the implications of deconstructing and historicizing, the critique of hegemonic notions and the careful unpacking of their historical emergence. We had a feeling that this was not enough, because all we can see through this prism is lives limited by external and alien forms. Working on a topic that I deeply care about, the question

of “what comes after critique” became central to me. How can we move from reacting to carving out spaces for being? Imagination and speculation is the most critical portal towards other futures. The video became this space where I perform this choreography of responsive imagination. The work holds space for elements that reveal “hegemonic structures and operational contingencies, to be exposed, critiqued and counteracted” as well as those “that are deployed as holes to let in the future or abstract outside” (Shaw and Reeves-Everson 2017: 8) or - in José Esteban Muñoz’ words - the ones that “we can feel (it) as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality” something that “can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future” (Muñoz 2009:1).



STILL FROM *COMPLICATED HAPPINESS*, 2020 © ROSALIA NAMSAI ENGCHEUAN

The work begins with an immersion into *Thai Park*. In contrast to usual visitors, the camera is on eye level with the women who set up their stalls on the floor - looked down upon both literally and figuratively. An encounter on equal level is unthinkable in a space, where most interactions do not go beyond the ordering of food. We hear stories that visitors never hear and the soundscape makes a comment: beyond the beautiful surface and smiles, there is a lot of labor involved in the making of this space.

The video sculpture is the materialization of a now impossible Naga goddess who predated colonial intrusion and at the same time becomes a placeholder for other futures. She acts as a storyteller, rendering explicit larger entanglements and histories that cannot

be captured with a camera, but are ever present in the making of *Thai Park*: migration, post-colonial power structures and gender dynamics.

Conceptually, the ending scenes of *Complicated Happiness* are a proposition for other futures in the context of the *Thai Park* in Berlin. The women are not pushed away but have left on their own terms. Far from the administrating grasp of the state and neoliberal capitalism we witness an abundant and joyful celebration of a community of care. A space by and for the community that is not geared towards extractivist consumption. In contrast to the warm beauty of this other space, the former *Thai Park* is empty, haunted by a dancer as a reminder that once things were different.

HOOBS, BELL. THEORY AS LIBERATORY PRACTICE. 4 YALE J.L. & FEMINISM, 1991.
GLISSANT, ÉDOUARD. POETICS OF RELATION. UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS, 1997.
HERZOG, WERNER. 'MINNESOTA DECLARATION: TRUTH AND FACT IN DOCUMENTARY CINEMA - DÉRIVES AUTOUR DU CINÉMA', 1999. [HTTP://DERIVES.TV/MINNESOTA-DECLARATION-TRUTH-AND/](http://derives.tv/minnesota-declaration-truth-and/).
MUÑOZ, JOSÉ ESTEBAN. CRUISING UTOPIA: THE THEN AND THERE OF QUEER FUTURITY. NYU PRESS, 2009.
SANTOS, BOAVENTURA DE SOUSA. THE END OF THE COGNITIVE EMPIRE: THE COMING OF AGE OF EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE SOUTH. DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2018.
SHAW, JON K., AND THEO REEVES-EVISON. FICTION AS METHOD. STERNBERG PRESS, 2017.

*How can we move from reacting to carving out spaces for being?
 Imagination and speculation is the most critical portal towards other futures. The video
 became this space where I perform this choreography of responsive imagination.*

**ROSALIA NAMSAI
 ENGCHUAN**

Rosalia Namsai Engchuan is a social anthropologist and filmmaker based in Berlin and Southeast Asia. She pursues a PhD at Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle on practices of community filmmaking in Indonesia as collective modes of worldmaking, investigating how cinematic epistemologies produce and socialize knowledges. She curates screenings and dialogical encounters, often in collaboration with the Berlin based collective **UN.THAI.TLED.**



COPYRIGHT © ROSALIA NAMSAI ENGCHUAN

NEW DELHI NOTEBOOK

Reyazul Haque

सरहद

जो मेरी और तुम्हारी नज़रों के बीच है
भरोसे को नफ़रत में बदलती हुई
मुल्क वह सबकुछ है अब
जो इसके बीच में है.

Rift

It's what lies between my eyes and yours
Trading trust for hate
Country is now everything
That endures in between.



COPYRIGHT © RITESH BOTSHA ON UNSPLASH

इस तरह ली जाती है राय
सबने कहा
हां!

ना कहने वालों से
वसूल ली गई थी जुबानें

और कहा गया
जम्हूरियत जीत गई.

Votes Are Counted

Yes

Said the complicit.

Seized were the tongues
Of those who differed.

Democracy was declared.



COPYRIGHT © DAVINDERJIT KAUR ON UNSPLASH

लोकतंत्र

हांका करती भीड़
वोट डालती है
हत्यारे पद की शपथ लेते हैं.

Democracy

Lynch mob
Casts votes
And slayers
take the oath.

रास्ते की निशानियां

क्रतार यहां से शुरू होती है
भट्टी आगे है

फ़र्क बनाए रखें
और दाहिनी तरफ़ रहें

बाई तरफ़
एक तीखा मोड़ है.

Signposts

Queue starts here
Pyre is ahead.

Maintain the gap
And be on the right.

On the left
There is a sharp curve.

दस्तूर

संदिग्ध होने के लिए
नाम एक क्रायदा है

संदिग्ध होना काफ़ी है
मार दिए जाने के लिए

मौत

क़सूर की निशानी है

ज़िंदगी किसकी निशानी है
क़सूरवार मौत के इस क्रायदे में?

Convention

Name is the norm
To become a suspect.

Being a suspect is enough
To be killed.

Death

Is guilt.

What is life

In the regime of culpable death?



COPYRIGHT © BEAZY ON UNSPLASH

मुल्क

सरहदें तामीर की जा रही हैं
ईंट तराशी जा रही है
हाथ मज़बूत हो रहे हैं

सड़कों पर कुचली हुई लाश में
तब्दील कर दिए जाने का खौफ़
कर रही है मर्दमशुमारी.

वाल्टर बेंजामिन के लिए

दलील का नाकाम होना
शिकस्त नहीं है

शिकस्त है एक सही दलील का न होना
जब ताक़त हो
सबसे बड़ी दलील.

Country

Borders are raised
Stones are sharpened
Impunity is given reins.

Death by lynching on streets
Conducts its census.

For Walter Benjamin

Failure of the argument is
Not a defeat.

Defeat is being left with no argument
When force is
the ultimate argument.



COPYRIGHT © JAMIE STREET ON UNSPLASH



REYAZUL HAQUE

In between his work as journalist, editor, playwright, translator and now as a researcher at the Department of Gender and Media Studies (IAAW), HU Berlin, Reyazul Haque uses his notebook to put into words that which cannot be said otherwise.



NEUERSCHEINUNGEN

»Family Norms and Images in Transition: Contemporary Negotiations of
Reproductive Labor, Love and Relationships in India«

»Arbeitsmigration nach Saudi-Arabien und ihre Wahrnehmung in Pakistan.
Akteur*innen und Strategien der öffentlichen Sichtbarmachung«



INTERMEDIAL REFERENCES AND INTERTEXTUAL BORROWINGS »THE HOUSE OF SURROGATES«

Excerpt from the book "Family Norms and Images in Transition. Contemporary Negotiations of Reproductive Labor, Love and Relationships in India", co-edited by Nadja-Christina Schneider and Fritzi-Marie Titzmann (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2020). The excerpt is from a chapter in which Nadja-Christina Schneider discusses the communicative figuration surrounding gestational surrogacy in India (Chap. 2: Present Absence of the 'Other Mother')

As indicated above, it is particularly interesting to observe that documentary films create images and tell stories which are often taken up and developed further in various other documentary or fictional formats. The novel titled »The House of Hidden Mothers« by British-Indian actress, comedian, screenwriter and novelist Meera Syal which was published in June 2015, shall serve to illustrate this observation. The novel was well received by critics and audiences, especially in the UK. Syal was also willing to play her role as an »insider« and »authentic expert« and spoke engagingly in television interviews

about the perils of the surrogacy industry in India. This is of course a phenomenon which has been apparent particularly in the »packaging« and marketing of documentary and fictional films for quite some time now: In view of the competitive and profoundly changing nature of national and transnational television production, it is becoming crucial to raise interest in essential issues through credible testimonials, such as »authentic« actors or other »experts«, and to communicate relevant stories which inform and engage audiences in an equally entertaining and instructive manner. Against this background, the question regarding the role of the production and transfer of knowledge through and »around« the broadcasting of such films (or in this case, the publication of a novel by a well-known TV actress, comedian and screenwriter), seems justified. Regarding the transnational communicative figuration which has formed around the theme of reproductive tourism, split parenthood and commercial surrogacy in India, I found two aspects in the newspaper articles about the novel quite telling. First, that some authors

expected the novel to be adapted for a feature film very soon and also mentioned the fact that Syal already had an eye on the film rights when her book was published.¹ Second, Syal also mentioned in one interview that it was in fact a BBC documentary which inspired her to write the book²; after watching this documentary, she says that she knew immediately what her third novel would be about, and there can be hardly any doubt that Syal was referring to the documentary »House of Surrogates« (2013) made by director Matt Rudge. Rudge's film »House of Surrogates« features fertility specialist Dr. Nayana Patel from Gujarat very prominently. On many photos, Patel is surrounded by »her surrogates«, as she likes to call them in interviews. She became instantly famous all over the world after the screening of Lisa Ling's report about her clinic on the Oprah Winfrey Show in 2007 and was subsequently treated like a spokesperson for the Indian surrogacy industry by international media. It is not difficult at all to imagine who the model for the renowned fertility specialist in Meera Syal's novel must have been:

1 SUSAN ELKIN (2015). »THE HOUSE OF HIDDEN MOTHERS, BY MEERA SYAL - BOOK REVIEW: AN ANGLO-INDIAN FICTION WITH HARD TRUTHS LURKING BENEATH, SCREAMING OUT TO BE MADE INTO A FILM«, THE INDEPENDENT. JUNE 20, 2015.

2 SEE FOR INSTANCE THE BBC TV INTERVIEW »MEERA SYAL ON INDIA'S SURROGACY INDUSTRY«, PUBLISHED ONLINE ON JUNE 02, 2015.

»Then there's Dr Passi, the internationally respected doctor who convinces herself, and half convinces the reader, that she is providing a service which overseas couples want while giving Indian women the chance to improve their lot and educate their children - as she funds her own Western lifestyle and puts her own three children through medical school. Is it advantageous for all concerned or is she simply an unscrupulous exploiter?« (Susan Elkin, »The House of Hidden Mothers«, by Meera Syal - Book Review: An Anglo-Indian Fiction With Hard Truths Lurking Beneath«, Independent online. June 20, 2015).

In an article published in August 2017 in the *The Guardian*, the author Ellen E. Jones ponders about the question why infertility, parenthood and surrogacy have become such prominent features in a number of highly successful TV productions recently, most notably Jane Campion's »Top of the Lake: The China Girl« and a series based on Margaret Atwood's novel »The Handmaid's Tale« (1985) which was adapted for television under the same title in 2017¹. In spite of the fact that the article explores television's most recent »obsession with surrogate mothers«, a longer section of it is actually about the reception and long-lasting impact of the before mentioned BBC documentary from 2013.

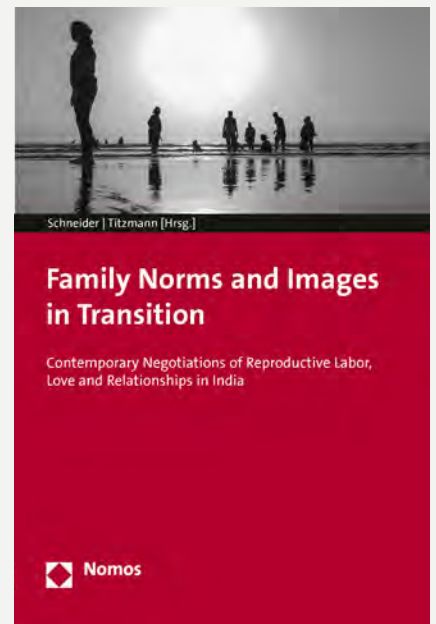
Director Matt Rudge says in the same article that when he first visited Dr. Patel's fertility clinic in Anand he thought that viewers would have impulsive

reactions and Jones agrees that »House of Surrogates« depiction of a vast global wealth gap, as well as the careless way the bonds of baby and birth mother were severed, remained upsetting. In the years following the screening of Rudge's influential documentary, Nayana Patel's Akanksha infertility clinic has become the central visual symbol of a permanent surveillance of surrogate mothers in the so-called surrogacy hostels in Anand where they had to spend a large part of their pregnancy. The »visual overrepresentation« of Dr. Nayana Patel and her Akanksha fertility clinic in Anand is the most obvious evidence for the borrowings and intertextual references between different films and media formats which add to the establishment and reiteration of more or less »standardized« stories and framings.

¹ ELLEN E. JONES (2017). »EMPTY NESTS: WHY HAS TV BECOME OBSESSED WITH SURROGATE MOTHERS?« THE GUARDIAN. AUGUST 14, 2017.

NADJA-CHRISTINA SCHNEIDER

is professor in Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.



COPYRIGHT © NOMOS VERLAG

SCHNEIDER, NADJA-CHRISTINA, & TITZMANN, FRITZ-MARIE: *FAMILY NORMS AND IMAGES IN TRANSITION: CONTEMPORARY NEGOTIATIONS OF REPRODUCTIVE LABOR, LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS IN INDIA*. MÜNCHEN: NOMOS VERLAG, 2020

ISBN 978-3-8487-5225-6



COPYRIGHT © NADJA-CHRISTINA SCHNEIDER



KHALLI WALLI „JA JAWAZAT“, 2013.

„JA JAWAZAT“ DIE PASSKONTROLLE KOMMT

Die Künstler fordern mit ihrem Video das Narrativ heraus, welches die Migranten als schutz- und wehrlose Opfer von asymmetrischen Machtverhältnissen darstellt, in denen sie und ihre Probleme kaum wahrgenommen werden. Dies erregte vor allem in den sozialen Medien Aufmerksamkeit.

Ihr Videoclip brach Tabus und wurde ein viraler Hit: Im Juni 2013 veröffentlichte die pakistanische Comedy-Gruppe Khalli Walli ihr Musikvideo „Ja Jawazat“ („Die Passkontrolle kommt“) auf YouTube (The Khalli Walli Show, 24.06.2013). Die Mitglieder der Gruppe leben und arbeiten alle seit vielen Jahren in Saudi-Arabien und leiden dort

ähnlich wie andere pakistanische Arbeitsmigranten* unter den vorherrschenden prekären Lebensbedingungen. In ihrem Video schildern sie in künstlerischer Form ihren alltäglichen Kampf gegen Behördenwillkür, Diskriminierungen und strukturelle Gewalt. Sie fliehen vor einem saudischen Beamten der Passkontrolle, der sie ausweisen will.

„Wo sollen wir uns verstecken? Beeilt euch!“ singen sie auf Arabisch: „Versteck Dich im Bett, im Schrank, im Kühlschrank, im Müll.“ Und sie flehen: „Bitte verhafte uns nicht.“ Dazu tanzen sie. Es entspinnt sich eine abenteuerliche Flucht von ihrer Unterkunft im Mehrbettzimmer durch Straßen, Hinterhöfe und Wohnungen. Immer wieder

gelingt es den pakistanischen Männern, ihrem Häscher mit List und Geschick zu entfliehen, sich zu verstecken oder ihn auszutricksen.

Khalli Wallis künstlerischer Aufschrei hat mit Hinblick auf die Situation pakistanischer Arbeitsmigranten in Saudi-Arabien durchaus Seltenheitswert und ist deshalb bemerkenswert: Sie werden von ihrer Entsende- sowie ihrer Aufnahme-gesellschaft zumeist politisch, gesellschaftlich, sozial und wirtschaftlich marginalisiert, exkludiert und stigmatisiert. Ihre rechtlichen, alltäglichen und beruflichen Probleme werden selten in der medialen oder politischen Öffentlichkeit sichtbar. Vor diesem Hintergrund kann „Ja Jawazat“ als ungewöhnlicher Versuch gesehen werden, die Situation der pakistanischen Arbeitsmigranten sichtbar werden zu lassen, da Khalli Walli neue Räume der Öffentlichkeit zu Migration erobern will, um tabuisierte Themen wie Diskriminierung von pakistanischen Migranten in Saudi-Arabien auszuhandeln. Die Künstler fordern mit



جوازات إيجي يا صديق
jawazat is coming oh friend

KHALLI WALLIS „JA JAWAZAT“, 2013.

ihrem Video das Narrativ heraus, welches die Migranten als schutz- und wehrlose Opfer von asymmetrischen Machtverhältnissen darstellt, in denen sie und ihre Probleme kaum wahrgenommen werden. Dies erregte vor allem in den sozialen Medien Aufmerksamkeit: Immerhin hatten bis Ende Mai 2014 fast drei Millionen Menschen das Video bei YouTube aufgerufen. Als sich Taha Siddiqui das 4:45 Minuten lange Video auf seinem Mobiltelefon anschaut, ist er äußerst irritiert und überrascht. Immer wieder schüttelt der pakistanische Journalist den Kopf; das Video sehe er zum ersten

Mal. Ich treffe Siddiqui an einem sonnigen Februartag im Jahr 2016 in der pakistanischen Metropole Lahore während meiner Feldforschungsreise. Ich frage ihn, ob in pakistanischen Medien über dieses Video berichtet worden sei. Er verneint, was mich wiederum verwundert. Immerhin war in mir im Vorfeld meiner Feldforschungsreise nach Pakistan von Januar bis April 2016 das Erkenntnisinteresse gewachsen, herauszufinden, welche öffentliche Wahrnehmung Khalli Walli in ihrem Heimatland Pakistan erfahren hatte. Da ich während meines beruflichen Werdegangs bereits seit 2009 regelmäßig Sau-

* SEBASTIAN SONS VERWENDET IN SEINER DISSERTATION ZUMEIST DAS MASKULINUM VON „MIGRANTEN“, DA ES SICH BEI DEN PAKISTANISCHEN MIGRANTEN MEHRHEITLICH UM MÄNNER HANDELT UND EINE GESCHLECHTSNEUTRALE BEGRIFFSBEZEICHNUNG DIE GRAVIERENDEN AUSWIRKUNGEN DER ARBEITSMIGRATION AUF DAS GESCHLECHTERVERHÄLTNIS IN PAKISTAN IGNORIEREN WÜRD. IN FÄLLEN, IN DENEN EXPLIZIT DIE MIGRATION VON FRAUEN THEMATISIERT WIRD (WIE Z.B. BEI HAUSANGESTELLTEN), WIRD DIES INHALTLICH UND SPRACHLICH KONTEXTUALISIERT.

Auszug aus der Dissertation von Sebastian Sons, veröffentlicht unter dem Titel „Arbeitsmigration nach Saudi-Arabien und ihre Wahrnehmung in Pakistan. Akteur*innen und Strategien der öffentlichen Sichtbarmachung“ (Heidelberg/Berlin: CrossAsia, 2020).

di-Arabien besuche und mir deswegen die prekären Arbeitsbedingungen pakistanischer Arbeitsmigranten bekannt sind, hatte ich vermutet, dass Khalil Wallis provokantes und tabubrechendes Auftreten auch in Pakistan zu einem gewissen Widerhall hätte führen müssen, zumal Saudi-Arabien in Pakistan als wichtigstes Empfängerland von Arbeitsmigranten eine omnipräsente mediale, politische, gesellschaftliche und wirtschaftliche Präsenz zukommt. Doch offenbar hatte ich mich geirrt. Ich frage Siddiqui nach den Gründen für diese fehlende Aufmerksamkeit in pakistanischen Medien. Daraufhin lehnt er sich nachdenklich zurück, zündet sich eine Zigarette an und schweigt für wenige Momente, ehe er antwortet: Es könne seiner Meinung nach daran liegen, dass Migration in Pakistan als ein „alltägliches Phänomen“ wahrgenommen werde. Das Schicksal der Migranten werde negiert, ignoriert und tabuisiert, da es längst zur Normalität geworden sei. Es herrsche ein weitreichendes „Schweigen“ in der Öffentlichkeit, sich kritisch mit der Migration und ihren sozialen, wirtschaftlichen, politischen und kulturellen Konsequenzen auseinanderzusetzen. Seit Jahrzehnten verlassen Millionen von unterprivilegierten

Menschen ihre Heimat, um in Saudi-Arabien ihr Glück zu suchen und Migration als „Flucht aus der Armut“ zu nutzen, wie er sagt. Dass sie dort oftmals einen Albtraum erleben, werde von der pakistanischen Politik und den Medien schweigend hingenommen. Siddiqui wirkt konsterniert. Diese Ignoranz sei symptomatisch für das elitäre pakistanische System: Nur wenige Akteur*innen aus Medien, Zivilgesellschaft oder Politik zeigten Interesse oder gingen das Risiko ein, bestehende Narrative über die Migration herausfordern zu wollen. Diese Haltung sei typisch für das „Klassendenken“ („class bias“) innerhalb der pakistanischen Gesellschaft, in der Eliten nach wie vor postkoloniale Privilegien in Anspruch nehmen würden und die Diskurse in der Öffentlichkeit mit ihrer Macht, ihrem Einfluss und ihren finanziellen Ressourcen bestimmen könnten. Eine öffentliche Diskussion über die Anliegen der „Schwachen“ - wie die Migranten - werde dadurch marginalisiert. Aus Taha Siddiquis Perspektive herrschen noch immer postkoloniale Abneigung, Bevormundung und Stigmatisierung gegenüber den Migranten durch eine Elite, die vor allem englischsprachige Medien konsumiert, kontrolliert und adressiert.

SEBASTIAN SONS

promovierte 2019 am Fachbereich Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region des Instituts für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften (HU Berlin). Seit Oktober 2019 ist er Berater im Regionalprogramm „Zusammenarbeit mit arabischen Gebern“ der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH und lebt derzeit in Jordanien.

Anmerkung der Redaktion

Taha Siddiqui ist ein renommierter Journalist aus Pakistan. Seitdem er 2018 knapp einer Entführung und Bedrohung seines Lebens entkam, lebt er im Exil in Paris. Er setzt sich weiterhin für Meinungsfreiheit in Südasien ein und veröffentlicht Beiträge zu unterrepräsentierten Themen aus Pakistan in internationalen Printmedien. Über die Risiken des journalistischen Berufs und die Frage, wie sicher er sich in Frankreich fühlt, sprach Siddiqui im Oktober 2020 in einem Interview mit [WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE](#).

Das Buch von Sebastian Sons ist im Oktober 2020 open access erschienen und kann kostenlos [ONLINE](#) gelesen oder als PDF heruntergeladen werden. Darüber hinaus ist es als Hard- oder Softcover-Publikation bestellbar.



CREATIVE-COMMONS-LIZENZ CC BY-ND 4.0

SONS, SEBASTIAN: *ARBEITSMIGRATION NACH SAUDI-ARABIEN UND IHRE WAHRNEHMUNG IN PAKISTAN: AKTEUR*INNEN UND STRATEGIEN DER ÖFFENTLICHEN SICHTBARMACHUNG*. HEIDELBERG/BERLIN: CROSSASIA EBOOKS, 2020 (MEDIA AND CULTURAL STUDIES, BAND 1)

ISBN 978-3-946742-76-0 (PDF)
ISBN 978-3-946742-77-7 (HARDCOVER)
ISBN 978-3-946742-81-4 (SOFTCOVER)



COPYRIGHT © SEBASTIAN SONS

NEU IM TEAM

Dr. Jenson Joseph
Anna-Kathrin Oswald
Dr. İclal Ayşe Küçükırca
Reyazul Haque
Dr. Salma Siddique
Elena Schaetz



Jenson Joseph is Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow at the Department of Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region, Humboldt University, Berlin (Nov. 2020-April 2022). He did his PhD from Sarojini Naidu School of Arts & Communication, University of Hyderabad, India, in 2013, and was Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB), India (2016-2017). His PhD thesis, titled "Industry, Aesthetics, Spectatorial Subjectivities: A Study on Malayalam Cinema of the 1950s", analyzes the film business in the region of Kerala, India, between the late 1940s and the early-1960s, primarily focusing on the aesthetic of social realism and its dissents. He has taught courses in History of Media, Cinema Studies, Media Research

Methodology, Media Laws and Ethics at various media schools in India. His current projects look at the changes in media cultures in India, post-1990s, beginning with the arrival of private satellite television and leading to today's reign of informatic media forms. His project at the Department of Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region, Humboldt University, will analyze the contemporary new wave Malayalam cinema as an entry point into understanding the changing notions of subjectivity, agency and desire in popular imagination in the region of Kerala, using mediation as the central theme of enquiry. His research interests are history of media, theories of the subject and desire, cinema studies and theories of contemporary media transformations.



COPYRIGHT © JENSON JOSEPH



COPYRIGHT © ANNA-KATHRIN OSWALD

Anna-Kathrin Oswald holds a BA in Historical and Cultural Anthropology and Business Studies from Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen and an MA in Global Studies from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her research interests include visual anthropology, matters of representation, secularism, liberalism, nationalisms and gender. She wrote her Master's thesis on the visual politics of contemporary far right parties focusing on the AfD's 2017 federal election campaign and regimes of visibility. Currently, she is pursuing a PhD in Global and Area Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin funded by the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies. Her PhD project is based on her Master's thesis and

explores the global entanglements of far right visual politics, focusing on Germany's AfD and India's BJP. Anna-Kathrin Oswald is currently scrutinizing matters of (in) visibility, gendered nationalisms and nation branding as they relate to anti-Muslim narratives. Taking a genealogical approach on the employed visual topoi her project uses the far right visual politics as a lens to critically examine the body of knowledge they are drawing on, as it relates to i.e. narratives of secularism and liberalism. The project also traces these narratives to broader societal discourses and thus proposes a reading of the visual politics that allows to question a body of knowledge that is often considered 'neutral' or 'universal'.

ANNA-KATHRIN OSWALD



COPYRIGHT © İCLAL AYŞE KÜÇÜKKIRCA

İclal Ayşe Küçükkırca's research field can be summarized through two interrelated axes: gender/sexuality studies particularly feminist/women's movements in Turkey and feminist political philosophy; and space with a particular emphasis on homelessness and homemaking practices. Her two recent writings on these subjects are "Women's/Feminist Movements in Turkey in Light of the Concepts of Coalition, Solidarity and Conflict 2002-2018" and "Thinking Suriçi through the Home Space". Currently she is working on her book based on a comparative spatial analysis of homelessness and homemaking practices in the cities Suriçi, Diyarbakır and Nusaybin, Mardin. She has worked at two different universities (Binghamton University and University of Wisconsin, River Falls) in the USA both as an

instructor and teaching assistant for four years and she has worked at Mardin Artuklu University in Turkey, both as a research assistant and assistant professor, for eight years. Finally she has taught digital courses at the Off-University and Humboldt University for three semesters. Currently she works on her research as a Philipp Schwartz Initiative fellow (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation) at the Department of Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region (IAAW) of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

REYAZUL HAQUE

Reyazul Haque started as a journalist and ended up being a researcher. Currently he is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region, HU Berlin, and a research fellow at ZMO under the MIDA project. He holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish, a master's degree in aesthetics and an M.Phil. in theatre, however, his PhD project is on German newsreel films made in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) between 1946 and 1980. He is working on *Der Augenzeuge* newsreels focusing on India. This project seeks to study and analyze the aesthetic and cultural-political structures of newsreels. By studying these aspects, Reyaz seeks to outline

the history of Indo-GDR entanglements in this specific area. Before he moved to Berlin, Reyaz spent a long time at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, where he studied cinema, theatre and visual arts. At the School of Arts and Aesthetics he wrote his M.Phil. dissertation on theoretical methods of BR Ambedkar and Bertolt Brecht. At the university Reyaz spent most of his time in drama collectives for which he wrote plays that mapped the country's descent into the current darkness, and recorded the ongoing destruction of this premier university of India. While he has a few publications in poetry, his main contribution lies in translating significant bodies of work of thinkers and writers like Anand



COPYRIGHT © REYAZUL HAQUE

Teltumbde, Arundhati Roy, Eduardo Galeano, Khaled Hosseini, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, and Pablo Neruda.

SALMA SIDDIQUE

Born in Nigeria to Indian parents, Salma Siddique is a witting historian and an unwitting ethnographer, who specializes in South Asian cinema and immigrant media studies. Her first book *Evacuee Cinema: A partition history of cinema in South Asia* recovers film genres and biographies from national amnesias shaped by partition based on new archival discoveries made in India, Pakistan and the UK. In 2020, she co-edited a special issue "Televisual Pakistan" for *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies*, the first international scholarly publication focussed entirely on television cultures in contemporary Pakistan. She has recently concluded a European Research Commission backed postdoctoral project, which was designed as a feminist ethnography of the Indian Muslim diaspora online. Her work has been published in the journals

Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East, Social Text, Feminist Media Histories, Third Text and *BioScope*. In 2021, Siddique will commence a new research project on film spectatorship in urban South Asia entitled "Nitrate Cities" at the Department of Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region (IAAW, HU). Funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, this research investigates spectatorial exertions and identity politics of film reception in India and Pakistan in the 21st century. Trained as a film practitioner in New Delhi, she has edited a number of documentaries, including her first independent film "Road Less Travelled" (India, 2009), an intimate portrait of an Australian migrant's bitter-sweet relationship with Delhi and more recently a co-produced ethnographic documentary "Nationalism 2.0"



COPYRIGHT © SALMA SIDDIQUE

(Germany, 2020) on social media practices and political influence in India. Since 2015 she has been the associate editor of *BioScope: South Asian Screen Studies*. She has worked and taught at Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, München.

ELENA SCHAETZ

Elena Schaetz is a student of African Studies (MA) at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin. She holds a Bachelor's degree in German Literature and Area Studies Asia/Africa. Her work focuses on literature, culture, gender and queerness in South African regions. Since 2020 she has been working at the Institute of African and Asian Studies as a student assistant in the Department of Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region.



COPYRIGHT © ELENA SCHAETZ

NEU BEWILLIGTE FORSCHUNGSPROJEKTE

DFG-Projekt »Nitrate Cities«
BUA-Verbundforschungsprojekt
»Beyond Social Cohesion –
Global Repertoires of Living Together (RePLITO)«



Drei Jahre lang forscht eine Gruppe von Wissenschaftler:innen der Freien Universität und Humboldt-Universität in einem neu bewilligten Verbundprojekt der Berlin University Alliance (BUA) zu globalen Repertoires des Zusammenlebens, durch die Ansätze des „sozialen Zusammenhalts“ kritisch reflektiert und konzeptuell erweitert werden können. In Zusammenarbeit mit Off-University, einer Selbstorganisation gefährdeter Akademiker:innen, sollen die Ergebnisse in einem interaktiven digitalen Archiv zugänglich gemacht und im Dialog mit außeruniversitären Wissensakteur:innen weitergedacht werden.

GLOBAL REPERTOIRES OF LIVING TOGETHER: ZUSAMMENLEBEN NEU BETRACHTET

„Eine Gesellschaft funktioniert nur gut, wenn ihre Bürgerinnen und Bürger friedlich und respektvoll zusammenleben. Die Basis hierfür ist ein Grundkonsens gemeinsamer Werte, der auf unserer freiheitlich demokratischen Grundordnung beruht. Aber auch soziale Regeln des Miteinanders, die Verbundenheit mit dem Gemeinwesen und das Vertrauen in Institutionen sind Kitt für unseren gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt. Diesen zu erhalten und zu fördern, ist gemeinsame Aufgabe von Staat und Gesellschaft.“ (BfM)

Ob der mit diesen Worten definierte „Kitt hält“ und wie er in kulturell, sozial und religiös heterogener werdenden Gesellschaften „erneuert“ werden könnte, darüber macht sich in Deutschland gegenwärtig nicht nur das Bundesministerium des Inneren, für Bau und Heimat (BMI) Gedanken. Eine Vielzahl neuer Förderinitiativen und Forschungsprogramme bezieht inzwischen auch eine größer werdende Zahl an Wissenschaftler:innen aus unterschiedlichen Disziplinen in die Suche nach „Lösungen“ mit ein, durch die dem wahrgenommenen „Schwinden“ des Zusammenhalts entgegengewirkt werden soll.

Hierzulande weniger bekannt und teilweise noch kaum erforscht sind hingegen neue ethische Ansätze und Vorstellungen des Zusammenlebens, die angesichts globaler Herausforderungen wie der wachsenden sozialen Ungleichheit, beschleunigten Urbanisierung, der Sorge um den Erhalt der biologischen Vielfalt sowie nicht zuletzt um die öffentliche Gesundheit gegenwärtig von Wissensakteur:innen in vielen Regionen der Welt entwickelt werden. Häufig knüpfen diese Diskussionen an ältere oder marginalisierte Wissenstraditionen an und interpretieren sie neu. Sie fokussieren nicht nur auf die Koexistenz von Menschen in

lokalen, nationalen oder trans-regionalen Kontexten, sondern berücksichtigen ebenso die Beziehungen zwischen Menschen, Tieren und Pflanzen. *Living together* dient unserer Forschungsgruppe deswegen als Arbeitsbegriff, durch den eine größere Offenheit für diese Dimensionen ermöglicht wird und der zugleich weniger normativ und moralisch aufgeladen ist als der Begriff des gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalts oder der sozialen Kohäsion.

„Beyond social cohesion“ verweist wiederum auf die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalstaat und seinen Institutionen als Ausgangspunkt unseres Vorhabens. Viele der in diesem Projekt beleuchteten trans/regionalen Kontexte in Asien, Afrika, Lateinamerika und Eu-

ropa werden durch eine zunehmende – freiwillige oder erzwungene – Mobilität von Menschen geprägt, die folglich nicht dauerhaft am selben Ort oder im selben Land ansässig sind. Entsprechend wichtig ist es, auch nach Vorstellungen und Praktiken des Zusammenlebens zu fragen, die die permanente Veränderung von Populationen und translokale Verbindungen mitberücksichtigen und nicht primär auf gegebene Gemeinschaften oder Gruppen ausgerichtet sind. Von besonderer Relevanz für unseren Forschungszusammenhang ist schließlich die Frage, wie Gesellschaften in so genannten Post-Konflikt-Situationen, also mit fortbestehenden Erinnerungen an Gewalt und Terror, Vorstellungen eines guten Zusammenlebens neu entwickeln und aushandeln.

Wir erwarten uns neue Erkenntnisse über die Frage, welche transkulturellen Verbindungen, Ähnlichkeiten oder Unterschiede es bezüglich der Vorstellungen und Praktiken des Zusammenlebens gibt, die in den von uns untersuchten Kontexten gegenwärtig diskutiert, ausgehandelt oder politisch durchgesetzt werden. Gerade mit Blick auf marginalisierte Denktraditionen und Gruppen hoffen wir auch Aufschluss über die „Wege des Wissens“ zu gewinnen, die diese in längerer historischer Perspektive zurückgelegt haben und auf welche Archive sie sich stützen.

WEITERFÜHRENDE INFORMATIONEN ZU DEM BUA-VERBUNDFORSCHUNGSPROJEKT:
BEYOND SOCIAL COHESION - GLOBAL REPERTOIRES OF LIVING TOGETHER (REPLITO)



COPYRIGHT © NADJA-CHRISTINA SCHNEIDER

**NADJA-CHRISTINA
SCHNEIDER**

leitet das HU-Teilprojekt des BUA-Verbundforschungsprojekts „Beyond Social Cohesion – Global Repertoires of Living Together (RePLITO)“.

Sprecherin des Projekts ist Prof. Dr. Schirin Amir-Moazami (FU Berlin).

NITRATE CITIES: SPECTATORIAL EXERTIONS AND FILM EXPERIENCE IN URBAN SOUTH ASIA

Nitrate Cities seeks to investigate urban transformations in South Asia through embodied spectatorial practices and identity politics around cinema. The project proposes to examine the way spectators alter their lived urban environment through peaceful as well as agitational activities. I invoke the nitrate materiality of celluloid, which once made film stock highly unstable and combustible, as a metaphor for local sensitivities that have existed for as long as filmmaking in the South Asian region. Liable to hurt and offense, these sensitivities are predominantly connected to religious beliefs, caste-class identities and historically constituted inter-community dynamics. Yet, at the same time cinema has spawned its own fan-communities, idiosyncratically soaking themselves in a collective leisure. The implications of film sensitivities mediated by inter-community contestations and religion-based identification are immense both for film theory and South Asian studies, given that the region is the largest producer of films in the entire world.

Since the colonial period, the film spectator in South Asia has mostly been understood as an embodiment of one or the other 'communal sentiments' transposed by urbanisation, modernisation and technological advances. Constituting a politicised identity, "attached to its own exclusion" located in past injuries, these sentiments correspond to what political theorist Wendy Brown has identified as "wounded attachments" (Brown, 1993: 406). The cinema in this scheme plays a critical role - it is both a purveyor and an appropriator of these attachments and injuries, integrating structures of feeling on the level of the narrative as well as film publicity. Here the producers and script-writers who are not always part of the intellectual elite, imagine their audiences as religious and urbanising demographics. Foregrounding spectatorial exertion and material practices that shapes the urban space and experience, the project examines the ways in which stakeholders articulate a community through urban violence, judicial and ex-

trajudicial activism, informal infrastructures and archival practices. Through a transregional comparative perspective, the project seeks to build on the new scholarship of "active audience" in the region (Srinivas, 2014), whereby the spectators not merely see but also contest, create and collect. Shifting emphasis from an inactive spectatorial position of being imagined and addressed, *Nitrate Cities* draws attention to the imaginative, innovative and incendiary work performed by the film audiences.

Nitrate Cities expands on my previous research on the translocal entanglements between Bombay and Lahore as they transitioned from colonial cities marked by an exchange of personnel, capital and narrative repertoire to national filmmaking centres separated by a border that restricted mobility. Shifting focus and methodology, from the colonial to the postcolonial and from the archival to the anthropological and the phenomenological, *Nitrate Cities* re-examines the continuing religious contesta-

Shifting focus and methodology, from the colonial to the postcolonial and from the archival to the anthropological and the phenomenological, Nitrate Cities re-examines the continuing religious contestations, the framing of the spectator primarily in communal terms and the expanding urban space in India and Pakistan in the 21st century.

tions, the framing of the spectator primarily in communal terms and the expanding urban space in India and Pakistan in the 21st century. The key objective of this proposed research is to conceptualise spectatorship in terms of attachments – old and new – that cinema hurts, sustains and spawns. It is to investigate spectatorship as spectrum where exertions of cinephiles and cinephobes alike are central to understanding an active relationship with cinema. The purpose in identifying spectatorial activity as an ‘exertion’ and not engagement or work, is to underline the creative labour, affective energy and bodily force (rioting, squatting, burning, picketing) involved in the phenomena of spectatorial attachments. With city as the arena of exertion, the study ethnographically delves into the linkages between historical grievances and contemporary marginalisation. Visible here is the assertion of an emergent masculinity that operates through the networked bodies of the unemployed and dispossessed. *Nitrate Cities* will also seek to reduce the indeterminacy of the spectator by investigating the various roles they assume as collectors, cult members, and political pressure groups. The role of new aesthetic infrastructures in architecture and archives,

which rework cinematic forms and religious formations in crystallising new attachments and collectivities will also be central to the research. Through a trans-local comparative approach, the project seeks to investigate film publics constituted from a constant exchange between the two ends of the spectatorial spectrum – that of an ultra-spectator (fans, kinetomaniacs) and an anti-spectator (cinephobes).

While *Nitrate Cities* is invested in the embodied, gendered and historically situated spectators, it also seeks understand how the ultra/ anti-spectator is constituted by ambient discourses and ideologies. The research will focus on the “lived experience” (Meyer, 2015) and “everyday competencies” (Hubbard, 2003) of the spectator by bringing together the archival, the anthropological, and the phenomenological. Each of the case studies will be historically contextualized using newspaper reports, social media mobilization, police reports, legal petitions and judicial decisions. The anthropological component for this research will include open-ended interviews with political activists, local journalists and national film journalists, film industry personnel, cinema hall owners, archivists and their network of cinephiles. The field

data will be triangulated by integrating the phenomenological method of reading film as “experience expressing experience” (Sobchack, 1992). This approach which sees cinema as the communicative system that relationally links films, filmmakers and spectators (Sobchack, 2004) and considers senses other than seeing, will proceed from a participative spectatorial body taking cognizance of the various facilitation and inhibition effects. This mixed approach is to proceed beyond the thick description and historical narrative of an anthropological-history, by bringing in a film phenomenological approach to understand the sensorial dimension of film experience.

REFERENCES:

- BROWN, W. (1993). “WOUNDED ATTACHMENTS.” *POLITICAL THEORY* 21(3):390-410.
- SRINIVAS, L. (2016). *HOUSE FULL: INDIAN CINEMA AND THE ACTIVE AUDIENCE*, CHICAGO: CHICAGO UNIVERSITY PRESS.
- HUBBARD, P. (2003). “A GOOD NIGHT OUT? MULTIPLEX CINEMA AS SITES OF EMBODIED LEISURE.” *LEISURE STUDIES*, 22(3): 255-272.
- MEYER, B. (2015). *SENSATIONAL MOVIES: VIDEO, VISION AND CHRISTIANITY IN GHANA*. BERKELEY: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS.
- SOBCHACK, V. (1992). *THE ADDRESS OF THE EYE: THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF FILM EXPERIENCE*, PRINCETON: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS.
- SOBCHACK, V. (2004). *CARNAL THOUGHTS: EMBODIMENT AND MOVING IMAGE CULTURE*, BERKLEY: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS.



SALMA SIDDIQUE

Salma Siddique is a witty historian and an unwitting ethnographer, who specializes in South Asian cinema and immigrant media studies. Her first book *Evacuee Cinema: A partition history of cinema in South Asia* recovers film genres and biographies from national amnesias shaped by partition based on new archival discoveries made in India, Pakistan and the UK.



ABSCHLÜSSE AM FACHBEREICH WIR GRATULIEREN HERZLICH ...

METTE GABLER

zur Verteidigung ihrer Doktorarbeit
Creating Slogans for Social Change. An Inquiry into
Advertising, Gender Imagery and the Politics of
Change in Urban India

WENKE SOMMER

zur Verteidigung ihrer Masterarbeit
(MA-Studiengang Moderne Süd- und Südostasienstudien)
Fashion for Empowerment? Die Textilindustrie als
Motor für die wachsende gesellschaftliche
Anerkennung nepalesischer Frauen

MINA JONI ROSHAN SCHMIDT

zur Verteidigung ihrer Masterarbeit
(MA Afrikawissenschaften)
Challenging the ‚White Saviour Complex‘ and stereo-
typical narratives of ‚Africa‘ through social media

ANNA SCHNIEDER-KRÜGER

zur Verteidigung ihrer Masterarbeit und zum
Erhalt eines Humboldt Research Track Scholarship
(MA Moderne Süd- und Südostasienstudien)
Wofür steht die JNU? Der Campus der JNU als ein
Stellvertreterkörper im Deutungskampf um die
Definition von Citizenship im heutigen Indien

JANOSCH ANGENE

zur Verteidigung seiner Masterarbeit
(MA Afrikawissenschaften)
Der Ghana-Putsch 1966 in der deutsch-
deutschen Medienlandschaft

CHING CHONG

zum Abschluss ihres Masterstudiums
(MA Global Studies)
Inherited Homeland and Memories of Return:
The 1962 Sino-Indian Conflict and Homecoming
for India’s Chinese

EMILY ERDMANN

zum Abschluss ihres Bachelorstudiums
(Regionalstudien Asien/Afrika)
The NGOization of Research on the Conflict in the
Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

ANNA SCHUBERT

zum Abschluss ihres Bachelorstudiums
(Regionalstudien Asien/Afrika)
‘Jitambue ukinitazama’ - ‚Reflektiere dich, wenn du
mich ansiehst‘. Eine Untersuchung geschlechtsspe-
zifischer Dynamiken im Bongo Fleva

REBECCA ROHE

zum Abschluss ihres Bachelorstudiums
(Regionalstudien Asien/Afrika)
El-Taharrush el-Ginsy - Sichtbarmachung von se-
xueller Belästigung im öffentlichen Raum in Kairo

STUDIERENDENPROTESTE AN DER JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY IN DELHI: PERFORMATIVER ALLTAG UND EIGENSINNIGE KÖRPER

Auszug aus der Masterarbeit von Anna Schnieder-Krüger zum Thema „Wofür steht die JNU? Der Campus der JNU als ein Stellvertreterkörper im Deutungskampf um die Definition von Citizenship im heutigen Indien“ (MA Moderne Süd- und Südostasienstudien, IAAW, 2020).

*JNU hamara hai!*¹

Trotz der tiefgreifenden Veränderungen konnte ich beobachten, dass die allgemeine Stimmung bei den Protesten auf dem Campus deutlich ausgelassener empfunden wurde als bei Veranstaltungen außerhalb. Dies ließ sich unter anderem an der Kleidung erkennen. Während viele Studierende es mittlerweile vermeiden, im öffentlichen Raum ihre Zugehörigkeit zur JNU zu visualisieren, trugen bei den Veranstaltungen auf dem Campus ein Großteil der anwesenden Personen die JNU-Pullover. Auch der bei vielen Events gerufene Slogan „JNU hamara hai“ verdeutlicht, dass ein Großteil der Studierenden nach wie vor einen rechtmäßigen Anspruch auf den Campus erhebt und sich als legitimiert empfindet, dessen Alltag und Zukunft mitzugestalten. Dies wird sowohl im Kontext von Protestaktionen als auch im Alltagsleben erkennbar. Die für den Widerstand genutzten Alltags-

praktiken stellen ein Gegengewicht zu der strukturellen Ordnung dar, indem sie sich durch das Erinnern, das Festhalten an eingeübten Verhaltensmustern und das Sich-nicht-ändern-Wollen zumindest vorübergehend den Raum rückaneignen. Als Basis für kulturelles und soziales Leben ist das Alltagsleben an flüchtige Momente wie Emotionen und Erinnerungen geknüpft.

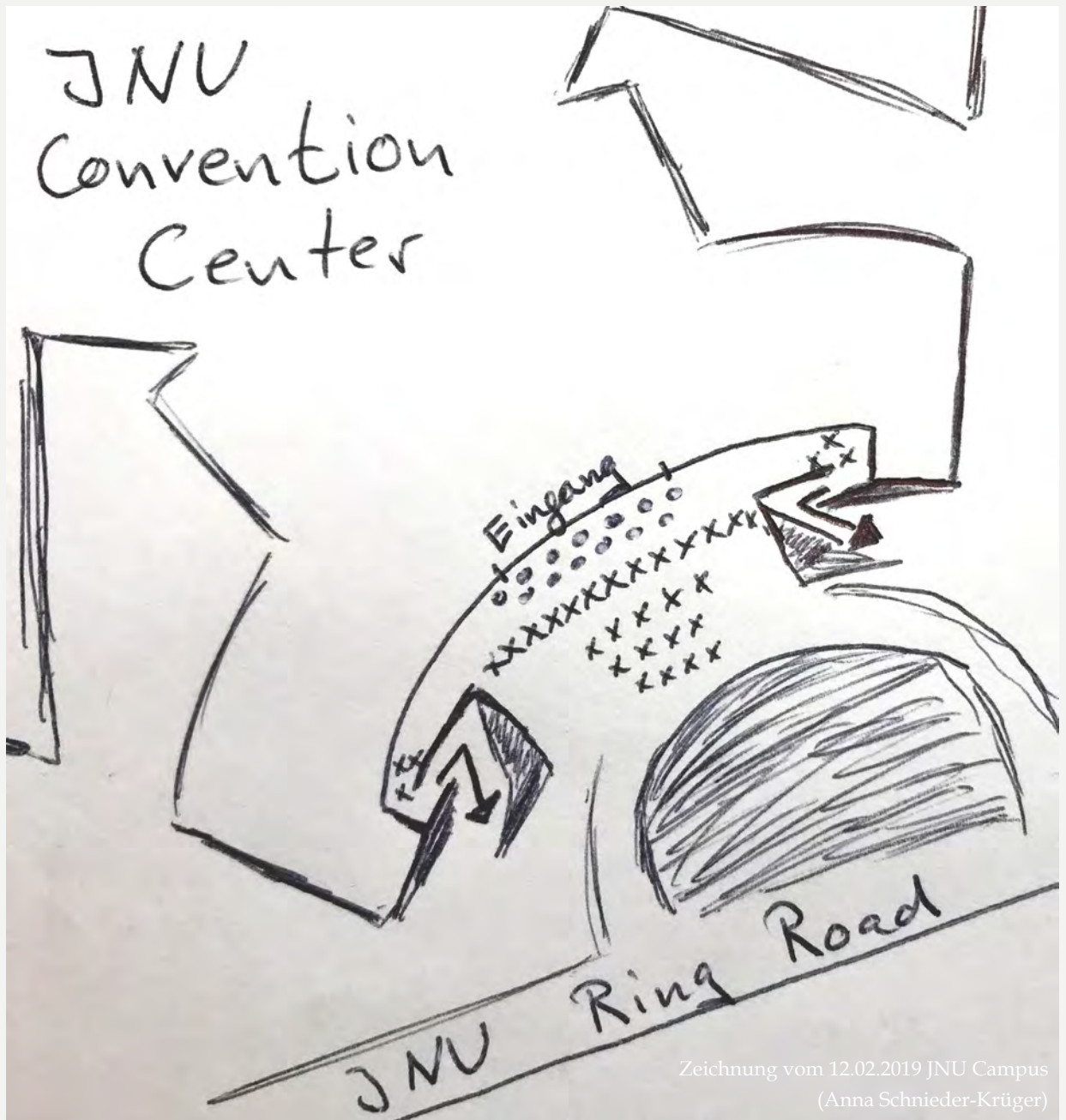
Obwohl die Körper der Studierenden stetigen Disziplinierungsmaßnahmen ausgesetzt sind, nutzen diese eben auch ihre Körper, um Widerstand zu leisten. Auch während meiner Feldforschung konnte ich beobachten, wie Studierende ihre Körper als Instrument im Protest nutzten. Als Protest gegen ein am 12. Februar 2019 auf dem Campus stattfindendes *Academic Council Meeting*, zu dem keine Studierendenvertreter*innen eingeladen worden waren, blockierten einige Studierende das für das Treffen vorgesehene Gebäude. Schon in der Nacht vor diesem Event wurden die Türen von den Körpern dort schlafender Studierender versperrt. Die dort schlafenden Personen wechselten sich in Schichten ab und wurden den Großteil der Nacht von anderen anwesenden Studierenden begleitet, die vor Ort ein Lagerfeuer entfachten, musizierten, Geschichten erzählten und Fußball spielten. Durch diese Aktionen bekam die Nacht einen unbeschwerteren und auch ermächtigenden Charakter,

da die Studierenden sich den Raum auf spielerische Weise aneigneten. Bei Ankunft der Gäste und des Wachpersonals am nächsten Morgen wurden weitere Studierende über WhatsApp mobilisiert, sich den schon anwesenden Protestierenden anzuschließen, um den ankommenden Gästen des Treffens den Zutritt zum Gebäude zu verwehren. Die folgende Grafik verdeutlicht die Dynamiken dieses Ereignisses.

Die Körper des Wachpersonals werden in dieser Zeichnung als Punkte dargestellt, während die Körper der Studierenden durch Kreuze symbolisiert werden. Die Pfeile symbolisieren die Bewegungen der Studierenden, sobald sich ein von ihnen als unwillkommen empfundener Körper dem Eingang näherte. Die gesamte Szene war höchst performativ, da die Körper in einem konstanten Dialog standen bzw. sich in ihren Handlungen stets dem Geschehen um sich herum anpassten. Verschwand die unerwünschte Person oder versuchte es an einem anderen Eingang, so zogen sich die blockierenden Körper wieder auf ihre Startposition zurück. Die Bewegungen wurden von dem Slogan „JNU hamara hai“ begleitet, welcher stets von den aktiv blockierenden Körpern gerufen wurde.

Im Verlauf dieser Arbeit wurde an verschiedenen Stellen bereits auf die Nutzung des Körpers als Instrument im Widerstand

¹ DIE JNU GEHÖRT UNS! [EIGENE ÜBERSETZUNG]. PROTESTSLOGAN. UNTERANDEREM GERUFEN BEI EINEM PROTEST AM 12.02.2019. JNU CAMPUS.



Zeichnung vom 12.02.2019 JNU Campus
(Anna Schnieder-Krüger)

hingewiesen. Neben der oben beschriebenen Nutzung zur Blockade wurde am Beispiel des *Administration Blocks* bzw. *Freedom Square* ebenso wie in der Darstellung der *Guerilla Dhaba* erläutert, wie die Studierenden die Anwesenheit ihrer Körper nutzen, um sich Räume anzueignen und für sich umzudeuten bzw. umzugestalten. Des Weiteren wurde die Planung eines Hungerstreiks erwähnt, wobei darauf hingewiesen wurde, dass Hungerstreiks auf Grund der man-

gelnden Plattform deutlich seltener geworden sind. Auch wenn viele Studierende des Protestierens müde geworden sind, antwortet eine Gruppe von Studierendenvertreter*innen nach wie vor auf jede Veränderung. Dabei geht es weniger um die tatsächliche Hoffnung, die Neuimplementierung rückgängig zu machen, sondern eher darum, den Widerspruch visuell zu symbolisieren und darzubieten.

„The campus is alive because it is fighting on an everyday basis. [...] we are alive just because we are fighting the everyday basis. The day we will stop, the campus will die. [...] It is all about the moment, it's all about strategy, it's all about how do you fight that.“

Auch wenn viele der Studierenden sich nicht mehr aktiv an diesen performativen Protesten beteiligen, betonten mehrere befragte Personen die Wichtigkeit dieser Handlungen. Ein Doktorand betonte, es sei entscheidend zu zeigen, dass die von der Administration eingeleiteten Veränderungen nicht als „normal“ oder „gegeben“ wahrgenommen und akzeptiert werden.² Die Tatsache, dass Kleingruppen von Studierenden nach wie vor während der Essenszeiten in die Wohnheimkantinen kommen, um von einer Trommel begleitet Slogans zu rufen, Flugblätter zu verteilen und über konkrete Veränderungen, Forderungen und Veranstaltungen zu informieren, folgt einem rituellen bzw. eingeübten Verhaltensmuster. Die Aussage eines aktiven Mitglieds einer kleinen linken Studierendenpartei und Organisators verschiedener Protestaktionen, „there will be protest where nobody will come, and we don't expect anyone to come“³ spiegeln somit eine Idee wider, die den Aufruf zur Resistenz über die tatsächliche Durchführung einer konkreten Veranstaltung stellt.

Dieselbe Person betont dennoch die Wichtigkeit der Sichtbarkeit im digitalen Raum:

„Visibility has become very important. Social media visibility for political organizations has become more important than doing actual work. [...] And even in the physical space there is a lot of conversation about what is happening in the virtual space.“

(S.B. 09.02.2019, JNU CAMPUS.)

Einhergehend mit diesen sichtbaren und hörbaren Aktionen kommt es zu zahlreichen alltäglichen, nicht sichtbaren Widerstandsmethoden. Die alltäglichen widerständigen Praktiken werden insbesondere dann erkennbar, wenn man statt der Veränderungen auf dem Campus das betrachtet, was gleich geblieben ist. Anhand der gut besuchten außerplanmäßigen Lehrveranstaltungen lässt sich erkennen, dass es nach wie vor ein hohes Interesse an außerkurrikulärer Lehre gibt. Die Analyse der Interviews zeigte zudem, dass viele Studierende in ihren Schilderungen

und Wahrnehmungen auf wissenschaftliche Theorien zurückgriffen. Die Rhetorik und viele visuell kreierte Bilder symbolisieren einen „intellektuellen“ Widerstand gegen die von außen erfahrene, rohe Gewalt.⁴

Des Weiteren ist auch das nach wie vor sehr liberale Miteinander zwischen Personen verschiedener Geschlechterzugehörigkeiten ein wichtiges Merkmal der „JNU Kultur“, das immer noch gelebt wird. Dieses teilweise sehr enge Miteinander, welches auch von Lehrenden in Diskussionsrunden offen benannt wird, ist insbesondere in den sich auf dem Campus verortenden Romanen ein zentrales Thema. Auch das nächtliche Beherbergen von campusexternen Personen ist trotz der zuvor benannten Zimmerkontrollen weiterhin gängige Praxis. Sowohl beim Zurückgreifen auf wissenschaftliche Theorien und nostalgische Erinnerungen, ebenso beim performativen Repräsentieren nach außen als eine Einheit, wird aus dem Mythos der Universität Kraft geschöpft, wobei dieser auch mit einer Verantwortung für die Zukunft einhergeht.

² D.M. 09.03.2019, JNU CAMPUS.

³ S.B. 09.02.2019, JNU CAMPUS.

⁴ H.B. 25.02.2019, JNU CAMPUS; BALAJI 24.02.2019, JNU CAMPUS; G.K. 07.03.2019, JNU CAMPUS.

ANNA SCHNIEDER-KRÜGER

schloss 2020 ihr Masterstudium der Modernen Süd- und Südostasienstudien ab. Sie wurde mit einem sechsmonatigen HU Research Track Scholarship ausgezeichnet und bereitet aktuell ihr Dissertationsprojekt vor. Ihr Forschungsinteresse an Studierenden-Aktivismus und Protestkulturen in Indien entwickelte sich während ihres Studiums an der HU (Berlin), JNU (Delhi) und UNIBO (Bologna). Ein von ihr gemeinsam mit Romina Elbracht für die Konrad Adenauer Stiftung verfasster **LÄNDERBERICHT** über Indiens Umgang mit Covid-19 ist im April 2020 erschienen.



© TOLGA WEIGEL

FOTOSTORY

»Research in Times of Corona«



COPYRIGHT © DAUD ABISMAIL ON UNSPLASH

RESEARCH IN TIMES OF CORONA

ANNA

As someone who has just started working on their PhD fulltime I most notably felt the academic repercussions of Covid-19 regarding the planning of my project. Luckily, I can obtain most of my material online. However, the pandemic leads me to think about adjusting my research plan, i.e. as far as possible interviews go. This includes contemplating the implications of doing interviews online and reflecting on this methodologically. Moreover, my project also deals with tracing shifts in political and public discourses to the right and the subsequent further normalization of certain figures of speech, for example. Consequently, the protests against the government actions in multiple cities in Germany also provided me with new material in this regard...

Anna, Alexa, Reyaz and Dhanya are PhD candidates at the Department of Gender and Media Studies (IAAW) of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. In spite of their very different research foci, they quickly found many surprising intersections and talking points and have been meeting for regular discussions of their progress over lunch since autumn of 2019. In March 2020, they started to meet regularly on Zoom and share not only research related questions but also their everyday lives and struggles in the pandemic. These days they host weekly digital lunch breaks for the growing group of PhD candidates of the Department.



REYAZ

As I was finalising my content analysis for my PhD chapters, some of the streets in Delhi were closed by courageous protesters, while other parts of the city were being burned by murderous mobs. Spring came through the traces of bodies being found in sewers in the neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods where my family and friends live and dream, where they celebrate and suffer. Dread was still in the air when pandemic struck: bodies started piling up again, this time the address was the world map. To stop this raging virus, the lives we led had to be put to halt. Unwarranted was to meet and share, to see and to touch. While distancing was to be physical, media reaffirmed itself to be social. Now, it was difficult to go back to ongoing research: a research trip to India was implausible, even a visit to the Berlin archives was not possible. Meeting people to have conversations seemed like a preposterous idea. But above all, personally and mentally it seemed awful to work in a situation that had overwhelmed and destabilised everything. Making sense of it was needed to remain sane. This is what I did: with a friend I read, tried to understand what was happening, to define and give it a name—if not for others—just for ourselves....

ALEXA

Writing about 2020 by necessity implies an uncomfortable introspection with your eyes and ears glued to media channels reporting on the New Death in the World, imminent and yet disparate. It is also almost impossible for me to reflect on teaching and researching in 2020 without having to somewhat disclose the composition and living arrangements of my family and its geographic mappings; the sonic legacies of its histories vibrating through my home. Yet, this is something I feel deeply protective of. When your private life is politicized on the basis of speculation without your consent or volition, 'the personal is political' gains an increasingly tangy aftertaste. Similarly, an established and important practice within your scholarly field, public self-reflection on your positionality, can—from a marginalized vantage point—also feel intrusive, exposing or even forced...

**DHANYA**

The main challenge for me was to do research at all with a toddler at home. I established the new routine to get at least one task done right after getting up in the morning to blow away bad feelings of not having done enough. My research practices did not change very much. I am working with various digital communication technologies anyway in a research field that is characterized by extreme hypermobility in terms of mobile communication and physical movement. Large parts of my ethnographic field work in Germany and India are already completed and I stay in contact with my research participants through digital media technologies...

ANNA

... As many have observed, the heterogeneity of the people coming together in these protests is not to be denied. However, there are clear indicators that these protests haven't been "hijacked" by actors of the far right. Rather, these actors have played a crucial role from the beginning onward. The protests thus both provide the opportunity to trace the normalization of certain discourses and illustrate the ways in which some media amplify the agenda of far right actors, for example by adopting their terminology.

ANNA-KATHRIN OSWALD

is currently pursuing her PhD in Global and Area Studies at HU Berlin funded by the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies. Her PhD project explores the global entanglements of contemporary far right visual politics focusing on Germany's AfD and India's BJP.



Anna-Kathrin Oswald

REYAZUL HAQUE

A cinema researcher at the Department of Gender and Media Studies (HU), Reyazul Haque's essays on Covid-19, pandemic and democracy, and music and movement can be read on TOI, EPW, ThePrint, and Hakara journal.

Reyazul Haque
COPYRIGHT © ALEXA ALTMANN

... and we shared dreams. In the most dreadful period of pandemic, with a friend I would talk about the dreams from nights. It helped to address the anxieties and fears in the midst of the vulnerabilities. And then among HU colleagues, we started discussing the emerging ideas and situations. We talked about everything. In the end, this is what helped the most to cope with the depressing times. Slowly I began to watch the films I am studying, then started reading about them and I could formulate my thesis structure when things attained a relative stability. A whole phase has passed. But the world stands still. The fear is in the air. The people still in prisons. The world is falling ill and dying. And Delhi, a city that was once home, witnesses yet another protest. And as I write in Berlin, the last leaves on trees wait to welcome the deep winters.

ALEXA

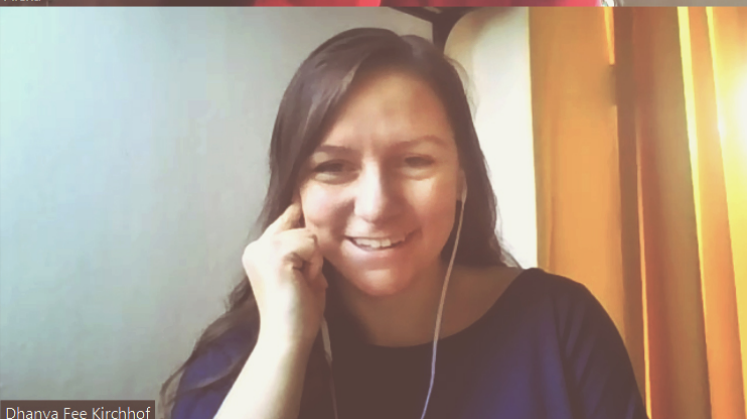
... However, with all my grand reserach plans for 2020 suddenly abandoned, I found myself looking through old family photographs—many of people whom nobody could teach me to recognize—and began to engage with the unknowable stories of my women forbearers. Survivors and victims of World Wars, pandemic, pogrom, displacement and genocide all. I look for traces of their aspirations and hopes, for how they speak to my own ambitions, fears and wishes. How I can make sense of their stories and the material objects I was left with, and how they intersect and collide with what and how I am trying to understand in my own queries. The inevitable blanks and blind spots I try filling with story telling and imagining, make me revisit ambiguity and the potentials and perils of the researcher as unreliable narrator.



Alexa

ALEXA ALTMANN

is a PhD candidate and lecturer at the Department of Gender and Media Studies (IAAW) of HU Berlin. Her research explores imaginations of space and belonging in contemporary Jewish Israeli musicvideo. She teaches memory and spatial theory and language practices in transregional popular cultures.



Dhanya Fee Kirchof

DHANYA FEE KIRCHHOF

is a PhD candidate at the Department of Gender and Media Studies for the South Asian Region at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Her research explores the interrelatedness of media communicative change, mobilities and subjectification in the context of the globally dispersed socio-religious Ravidassia community of North Indian origin.

DHANYA

... I feel extremely grateful for my own situation despite having to manage my dissertation and a toddler at home. I am following the news from India 24/7 through all the communication channels that I am using for my research. Corona regulations hit my research participants very hard who already face multiple difficulties. This impacts my emotional involvement in my research very strongly. My research participants helped me so much throughout my whole research. It feels wrong to just sit at home and to observe their miseries. It is a strange feeling that the news coverage by German media does not affect me emotionally very much, while news from within my research field feel so close. The current situation made me rethink my role as a researcher very strongly.