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Voices of Their Own: South Asian Women's Writing

Call for Papers

Postgraduate Conference

04 – 06 June 2015

Technische Universität Chemnitz

Convenor: Prof. Dr. Cecile Sandten (Technische Universität Chemnitz)

Keynote speakers:

Prof. Dr. Nikita Dhawan (University of Innsbruck)

Urvashi Butalia (New Delhi)

Shashikala Assella (University of Nottingham)

Prof. Dr. Sara Suleri Goodyear (Yale University) (to be confirmed)

South Asian women's writing of the last two centuries has explored issues of identity and belonging in predominantly male literary traditions. In this context, poetry, short stories, novels, and autobiographies by South Asian women have offered new formulations of traditional definitions of gender, work, and family that have accompanied the Indian Independence Movement and the Partition of India and Pakistan. More recently, they have also contributed to the transformations introduced by diaspora, which has engendered a great amount of creative responses within and outside the South Asian setting. In order to investigate this strong output of writing, conference participants will be invited to discuss two interrelated concerns: 1) how can we theorise and analyse the quest for and question of 'women's voices' and 'agency' in the South Asian context? 2) how do South Asian women writers mobilise the category of gender to create and define alternative understandings of 'individual' and 'community'? In order to answer these questions, participants are encouraged to trace the intersections between gender, caste, class, religion, and sexuality in women's creative writing and non-fiction writing with a particular emphasis on concepts such as 'tradition', 'modernity', 'nation', and 'genre' from both South Asian as well as Western positions in literary theory.

Participants are invited to discuss tools to draw connections between the particular constraints on women's writing in a South Asian framework with larger theoretical debates on the broader category of women's writing across colonial/postcolonial contexts and articulate these connections through close readings and critical analyses. The aim of the conference is to provide a platform to reflect upon the following themes:



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- Challenging the male canon? The position of the South Asian woman writer during the colonial/postcolonial period
- Voicing oneself: themes and topics in the writings of South Asian women
- Genre, gender, and the nation: the South Asian woman writer
- The dialectics of tradition and modernity in the writings of South Asian women
- "Can the subaltern speak"? Gender, class and caste in the writing of South Asian women
- Whose theory? Theorising South Asian writing by women
- South Asian Women writers juxtaposing urban cityscape and rural landscapes
- The diasporic imaginary: South Asian Women writers in a global context
- Going to the movies: Cinematographic representations of and by South Asian women

Please send abstracts (200 words) for papers, poster presentations or talks in the didactics workshop "Teaching South Asian Women's Writing" (20 minutes) to cecile.sandten@phil.tu-chemnitz.de or:

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Website: coming soon.

The call for papers will close on 25 November 2014.