



German-Indian Theatrical Relations: From the Age of Enlightenment to the 21st century

Dates: February 22-February 26, 2025

Overview

Intercultural theatre and performance, oriented towards bringing together diverging cultures through performance, has been one of the key productive areas of study in Theatre and Performance Studies. While there has been a significant corpus of works based on interculturalism by well-known directors, the critique of intercultural practice has generated concrete critical theorisation in the discipline. In the last two decades, there have been theoretical efforts to relook at interculturalism beyond the postcolonial perspective or trying to understand underexplored regions of intercultural practices. The course takes a historical approach towards transnational and cross-cultural exchanges, viewing intercultural performance practices as only one critical moment in the long history of theatrical relations between differing cultures, with a special focus on the relation between two sites: Germany and India. Since the 18th century, Germany and India have been entangled in a cultural dialogue which can be read as a reflection on larger cultural, social, and political issues. In undertaking this exploration, the course will allow students to engage with underexplored archival documents on theatre, especially the collection at the Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung at the University of Cologne that holds critical archival documents illuminating the complexity of German-Indian relation. The course would be important for scholars and students from diverging disciplines such as theatre and performance studies, history, German studies, media studies and literature as the course explores how theatre and performance as a critical media in its contingencies, from the 18th century onwards, opens out a lens for understanding societies and cultures in their entangled relations by historicising and de-essentialising established categories.

Course Objectives

- To give a historical overview and theoretical debates and perspectives on German-Indian theatrical relations from 18th c to the contemporary.
- To update the existing courses on interculturalism by developing a new framework on theatrical relation.
- A deep engagement and understanding of archival materials related to German-Indian relation and developing a historiographical method that takes on board the issues arising when dealing with archival materials as well as the possibilities that they offer. To engage in theory-practice interface through focussed theatre workshop focussing on theatrical relations and issues of representation and embodiment.
- Historicising and theorising the practices of Orientalism, cultural appropriation as well as alternate possibilities of collaboration and dialogue through the lens of theatre and performance.

Modules

Day 1: *Theatre/Performance Historiography- Introduction to Historiographical methods*

Lecture and Tutorial

Day 2: *Eighteenth and Nineteenth century Entanglements: 'Age of Enlightenment' and Theatrical Relations and Colonialism, Orientalism and Contingencies of Theatre and Performance*

Lecture and Tutorial- Key discussion points: Colonialism; Orientalism; Goethe and *Sakuntala*, Asian performers on European stage

Day 3: *Twentieth century Entanglements: Avant-garde and Cultural Exchanges*

Lecture and Tutorial- Key discussion points: Western avant-garde; Tagore and Bauhaus; Bertolt Brecht and India; Festivals, workshops and the exchange of artists

Day 4: *The Discourses and Practices of Interculturalism*

Lecture and Tutorial- Key discussion points: Critique of Interculturalism; conceptualisation of new interculturalism and interweaving performance cultures

Day 5: *21st c century Entanglements: Historicising 'Contemporary' in a Globalised world*

Lecture and Tutorial

Who Can Attend:

Students of all degree levels, teachers, practitioners of theatre and performance, history, German studies, visual studies and media studies, literature, critics, journalists, media persons, archivists. Anyone else interested in the subject can attend.

The course will be available live in GIAN site.

Preregistration and Fees

Prior registration is mandatory for all students as per the procedure provided on the GIAN web portal: www.jnu.ac.in/gian

MA students: INR 100

PhD Students: INR 1000

Faculty/professionals from other recognised educational institutions: Rs. 2000

Industry and Private Institutions (India): Rs 10000

Participants from abroad: USD 100

An application for fee waiver from students from Indian universities can be submitted for consideration via email application to the course coordinator: ameet.parameswaran@gmail.com

Registration starts from December 27, 2024

Faculty



Professor Peter W. Marx

Professor Peter W. Marx has been the Chair of Theatre and Media Studies, University of Cologne as also the Director of the Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung Köln (TWS), University of Cologne (Germany), one of the most significant archival collections in theatre from 2012 onwards. He is a specialist in the areas of Theatre History and Contemporary Theatre, Early Modern Period, Intercultural Studies, Cultural Studies, Shakespeare in Performance and Metropolitan Cultures. He is also the Editor of *A Cultural History of Theatre: In the Age of Empire (1800-1920)*. London [etc.]: Bloomsbury, 2017. His monographs include *Hamlets Reise nach Deutschland. Eine Kulturgeschichte*. (Berlin: Alexander Verlag, 2018), *Ein theatralisches Zeitalter. Bürgerliche Selbstinszenierungen um 1900* (Tübingen: Francke, 2008), *Max Reinhardt. Vom bürgerlichen Theater zur metropolitanen Kultur* (Tübingen: Francke, 2006/22018 [englische Übersetzung erscheint 2019 bei Northwestern University Press, Evanston IL.], *Theater und kulturelle Erinnerung. Kultursemiotische Untersuchungen zu George Tabori, Tadeusz Kantor und Rina Yerushalmi* (Mainzer Forschungen zu Drama und Theater. 27. Tübingen: Francke, 2003), *Heiner Müller: Bildbeschreibung. Eine Analyse aus dem Blickwinkel der Greimas'schen Semiotik* (Studien zur Deutschen und Europäischen Literatur des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts. 37. Frankfurt/Main [etc.]: Peter Lang, 1998).



Course Co-ordinator: Dr. Ameet Parameswaran

Ameet Parameswaran is Assistant Professor, School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. He was Alexander von Humboldt Experienced Researcher Fellow. His monograph titled *Performance and the Political: Power and Pleasure in Contemporary Kerala* was published by Orient Blackswan in 2017. He has co-edited with Silviya Jestrovic the special issue of *Studies in Theatre and Performance* titled, 'Worksites of the Left' (2019). Apart from book chapters, he has published in journals including *Theatre Research International*, *TDR*, *Performance Research*, *Studies in Theatre and Performance*. He is currently an Executive Committee Member of International Federation for Theatre Research. He serves as the Associate Editor for the journal *Theatre Research International*.