

Chewing the West: Occidental Narratives as Nation-Building Nutrition

Selected and Digested by Asian and African Literatures in Indigenous Languages

Call for papers >

5-7 December 2002
Leiden,
The Netherlands

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) is organizing an international workshop on Asian and African literatures to be held from 5 to 7 December 2002 in Leiden. The workshop sets off from the premise that within the processes of modernity and globalism, non-Western and, in particular, formerly colonized or semi-colonized cultures have not been mere passive or subordinate receptors but have actively reacted towards Western cultures. They selected, also rejected, adjusted and functionalized Western literary models (thus models of thought) to make them serve their own discourses and to use them within the process of self-definition. The workshop intends to compile and analyse data from various (post-colonial) non-Western traditions in order to help reveal the adaptation processes concerning Western literary forms, styles, and content within different local contexts. With its broad comparative approach the workshop is designed to open up insights into indigenous discourses that to date have not been paid due attention.

The objective is to establish overarching models and methods that accommodate the hybridity of non-Western literatures produced in the cultural grey area of postcoloniality and nation-building. Theorems that connect nation, nationalism, and narration (as also formulated by Homi Bhabha) are an essential stepping stone, but they ignore altogether the discursive dynamics of literatures in indigenous languages in the debate on national and cultural identity. The organizers of the workshop intend to work towards filling this gap. They are thus focusing on Asian and African literature which, apparently 'inspired' or provoked by Western models, was not written in a Western but in an indigenous language.

Paper presenters are encouraged to target various literary milieus in order to discuss the impact of the foreign literature. Contributions may also cover different text sorts ranging from so-called high literature to popular fiction, from drama to graphic literature. One possible approach is to

examine the implementation of literary tools in fictional writing, such as characterization, choice of themes or narrative modes to represent - or debate - concepts of identity. However, the specific socio-cultural context and the critical discourse surrounding the texts under discussion should not be entirely ignored.

With a comparative intercultural approach in mind, the organizers wish to bring together experts on and from mul-

tifarious cultural regions. We will therefore attempt to avoid any over-representation of one region. Please submit proposals for individual papers and round table discussions by **no later than 15 May 2002**. Abstracts should **not exceed 500 words**.

A volume of selected papers (possibly supplemented by a documentation of the discussion) will be published as soon as possible following the workshop. <

Asian Contributions to the Formation of Modern Science: The Emergence of Artificial Languages

Agenda >
General

20-21 September
2002, Leiden,
the Netherlands

Contact >

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www.iias.nl/iias/agenda/modernscience/

The history of ancient and medieval science can only be studied properly if the Eurasian continent is treated as an undivided unit rather than a collection of impermeable cognitive worlds. Some of the classical languages of science (Chinese, Sanskrit, Greek, Arabic, and Latin) were formalized, but none were universal or formal enough to express abstract relationships in a systematic manner. What was needed was a revolution in language, viz., the construction of formal languages that grew out of natural language, artificial notations and practical devices. It is only in the eighteenth century that Euler and others translated Newton's cumbersome Latin into the language of algebra, a greater revolution perhaps than the so-called European scientific revolution. The roots of that revolution in language lie in Asia and this workshop focuses on these roots without excluding other Asian contributions to the formation of modern science.

Featured speakers:

Charles Burnett (London), Karine Chemla (Paris), Jens Høyrup (Copenhagen), Kim Plofker (Providence), Frits Staal (Berkeley), and Michio Yano (Kyoto).

Chairs of sessions:

Kamaleswar Bhattacharya (Paris), Christoph Harbsmeier (Oslo), Jan.P. Hogendijk (Utrecht), and Dominik Wujastyk (London). <

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Contextualization of Christianity in China: An Evaluation in Modern Perspective

Agenda >
China

6-7 June 2002
Leiden,
the Netherlands

Contextualization in the study of the history of Christianity in China has become increasingly popular of late. As a result, it has become a key research criterion in evaluating the strategies of Christian mission, of missionary behavior, of conflicts between Christian and local cultures, and of the success or failure of a given church mission in China. In addition, there has been a tendency to conclude that the more contextualized a given church mission has been during its residence in China, the more successful the evangelical process has been. Some recent studies have even concluded that the slow growth of Christianity in China can be attributed in major part to a failure by some churches to contextualize their approach to the missionary process.

Given the strong impression that studies of this kind have been increasing in number in recent years, the time would seem to be ripe to attempt a thorough evaluation of this particular scholarly approach. Is it useful to adopt contextualization as a scholarly approach? If the answer is affirmative, there is a need to seek to illuminate its major strengths and weaknesses as a research methodology. Once this has been established, we must ask what role contextualization has played in the evangelical process and how successful or unsuccessful it has been in spreading the gospel among the Chinese at a given time or place. Also, we may want to ask how mission boards and individual missionaries responded to the ideas and requirements of contextualization? And to what extent did Chinese converts appreciate various considerations implicit in such a process? These and other related questions may well come up in a serious

discussion of the issues involved in such an analysis.

The International Institute for Asian Studies is therefore pleased to announce its sponsorship of the above conference to examine these various issues at close hand. The host institution will cover individual travel and living costs. Distinguished scholars from Asia, Europe, and the Americas will be invited to attend this conference where they can present

scholarly papers relating specifically to the issues defined above. These papers will later be collected and published in a conference volume. In this way it is believed that a deeper understanding of the theoretical concerns involved in the research process and the larger history of the Christian church in China will be usefully illuminated. <

Global E-Quality Rethinking ICTs in Africa, Asia and Latin America

Agenda >
General

25-27 March 2002
Maastricht,
the Netherlands

More info >

Conference organizer:
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Herewith I would like to draw your attention to the conference "Global E-Quality - Rethinking ICTs in Africa, Asia, and Latin America" (25-27 March) organized by the International Institute Of Infonomics.

Today's world can very well be considered to be a wired one, encapsulated by what is known as the World Wide Web. As the digitization of society unfolds, there is an increasing need to know whether bytes indeed travel freely across the world. What are the consequences of the digitization of society at a global scale? What happens when global bytes arrive at particular local sites? Will this enhance e-quality globally? This work-conference will confront these issues by analysing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), with a particular focus on the Internet, in countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Global E-Quality will bring together scholars, policy makers, NGOs and innovative thinkers from around the world. The work-conference is dialogue-driven; its main format will be a series of workshops chaired by leading experts in the field. The number of participants will be limited in order to facilitate an open and in-depth debate.

Global E-Quality is being organized by the International Institute of Infonomics, a new venture of the University of Maastricht and Hogeschool Zuyd, sponsored by the European Commission. <

More info >

You can find further details on:
www.infonomics.nl/globalequality/
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The Annual Asia-Europe Workshop Series 2002-2003

See p. 55 in the Asia Alliance News for more info!