

# **A New Poetics and Politics of Thinking Latin America / India. SUR / SOUTH and a Different Orientalism**

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## **1. From Global South to SUR / SOUTH**

Globalisation today entails a vast array of interconnected relationships worldwide: economic, political, social, cultural and communicative processes of interaction and their development within diverse interwoven contexts. 'South-South Relationships' are not limited to those within the BRICS countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, but rather extend to a multitude of other combinations, as is evidenced by the transnational movement of goods, capital, people and imageries in diverse directions throughout the Global South.

In the recent critical historiography of Globalisation, these *histoires croisées* or 'entangled histories' of the 'South' have been seen as an increasingly relevant field of research.<sup>1</sup> But while the majority of such studies concentrate on economic and sociopolitical interrelationships in the present and the past,<sup>2</sup> they rarely focus on exchanges with a cultural, spiritual and intellectual perspective.<sup>3</sup> Such transareal South-South interrelationships on

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1 Compare, for example, Conrad/Eckert 2007; Osterhammel 2008; Amin 2011; also Iggers/Wang/Mukherjee 2008.

2 See the bibliography of Reinknecht 2000, Kumar/Messner (eds.) 2010; for Latin America-Asia see Naranayan/Nafey/Gupta (eds.) 2000, Rosales/Kuwayama 2007, RIS (ed.) 2008 on the IBSA-Initiative, Lima/Hirst (eds.) 2009, Nafey/Guzman/Feldmann (eds.) 2012.

3 Specifically Conrad/Eckert 2007: 34; see also Eckert 2011: 160. One exception which has been well-received, particularly in Latin America, is Gruzinski 2004. More recently, Mishra (2012) and Anderson (2013) have published important studies on cultural and intellectual interrelationships in the Global South.

a *cultural* level<sup>4</sup> remain, with a few exceptions, largely unacknowledged,<sup>5</sup> whereas the cultural North-North (or East-West) relationships, as well as the cultural North-South relationships – often shaped by colonialism and dependency – have repeatedly been highlighted in the Social Sciences and in Cultural Studies, historically, politically and culturally, as complex interwoven histories. The cultural South-South relationship has been overlooked not only in research in the ‘North’ but also within the Global South itself.<sup>6</sup> The reasons for this become apparent when one reads the observations of the Indian researcher Ketaki Kushari Dyson regarding her studies on Rabindranath Tagore and Victoria Ocampo in Argentina. Writing already before the global political transformations of 1989 which led to the contemporary Globalisation movement, the Tagore expert and translator described the complicated nature of cultural and academic South-South cooperation:

Argentine intellectuals are still mostly concerned with their identity as Westerners, ‘peripheral’ Westerners, perhaps, to use a currently fashionable term, yet drawn by powerful gravitational forces towards the cultural ‘centres’ of the West in Europe and North America. As so often in the West, interest in the South Asian region among scholars tends to restrict itself either into an academic study to the region’s (admittedly rich, complex, fascinating) past or a Third-Worldism which confines itself to the vocabularies of politics and economics. This ‘lean and hungry’ Third-Worldism of our times is inadequate to generate genuine cultural appetites. Winds of change are, however, perceptible among the younger generations, many of whom, because of the felt exigencies of the world situation, appreciate the need to build cultural bridges

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4 The terms ‘South’ or ‘South-South’ (as with the generalisations of the terms ‘North’, ‘West’ or ‘East’) do not refer to fixed categories in the sense of presumed geocultural, historical or political entities (Lewis/Wigen 1997, Coronil 1996), but rather indicate historical and contemporary relations and processes and the circulation of people, ideas and objects outside of the Europe/North America-dominated sphere. This takes into account the imaginary and performativity of these locations, as well as the relationality and instability of the positioning, especially of the speakers and their respective identification. In this sense, the term ‘Global South’, which has been in circulation since the 1980s, implies a new exploration of the tensions between universality and particularity, difference and similarity in the context of plural modernities.

5 One of the best-known exceptions is the research on the reception of Magical Realism in different areas of the Global South (cf. for example the early study of Slemon 1995 as well as the comprehensive survey by Siskind 2011).

6 An interesting recent publication by Caro Vargas (2014) intends, in a way, to fill this gap, with the author tackling a broader panorama of economic and historical relations between Latin America and India which also takes into consideration some relevant cultural features. The study aims to provide an orientation mainly for politicians, economists and businesspeople.

and have much curiosity, but do not know where to turn for further information, guidance, or the necessary tools. (Dyson 1988: 352)

Against this background, it is hardly surprising that Dyson's pioneering study of Tagore and Ocampo needed many years to earn the respect it deserved in the realm of Latin American academia. Although much has changed in the development of global communication in the age of World Wide Web, still this example shows how important it is for research to be systematically focused on concrete actors and their contexts (as in, e.g. Cooper 2001; Hausberger 2006).

If it is to remain socially relevant, knowledge in a globalised world urgently requires a clearer understanding of the dynamics of cultural South-South relations – and this means insight into a South-South knowledge of mutual understanding (*Verständigungswissen*) as well. Moreover, such understanding is necessary to better reflect, evaluate and integrate the multiple possibilities for negotiation within a global dynamic without disregarding the different claims of validity within social discourse.

This volume provides an exemplary contribution to these considerations. It deliberately shifts the perspective from the often theoretically and conceptually determined cultural relationships within the Global South. Instead, it illuminates a concretely focused complex geocultural relationship, here denoted as 'SUR / SOUTH', based on examples of cultural, literary and intellectual exchanges and interrelationships between Latin America and India, in the past and present. The term 'SUR / SOUTH' thus serves as a figure of thought for a change of perspective, for a shift of focus towards the concrete framework of exchange, signified through the materiality of topics, forms of knowledge and experiences.

Previous academic contributions to the intercultural exchange between these two cultural spheres have produced only selective and limited offerings. Mutual exchange processes may have been the subject of previous studies (often in the form of cultural comparisons of reciprocal imageries and experiences), yet these are often found by chance or in particular contexts (for example in memoirs or commemorative publications) or in anthologies with a wide variety of genres and themes (e.g. Chaudhary 1990, Ganguly 1995). Studies and anthologies with more focused themes, such as Dhingra (1997) and Ganguly/Chakravarty (2011) rely frequently on individual initiative; they are rarely part of broader systematic research contexts and thus often get lost in the inchoate transnational and transcultural

tural academic landscape.<sup>7</sup> This volume thus aims to systematically unite perspectives and themes from various disciplines and scientific communities in Latin America, India and further regions in order to discuss the theme “SUR / SOUTH: Latin America / India” and to enable a productive reflection upon such unexamined processes of knowledge production.

## 2. Theory Production as an Epistemological Challenge

Within the field of global knowledge production, knowledge produced in the South occupies a complicated position, as noted by Dyson above. The anthropologists J. Comaroff and J.L. Comaroff, in their pertinent study, describe the situation thusly:

‘The Global South’ has become a shorthand for the world of non-European, postcolonial peoples. Synonymous with uncertain development, unorthodox economies, failed states, and nations fraught with corruption, poverty, and strife, it is that half of the world about which the ‘Global North’ spins theories. *Rarely is it seen as a source of theory and explanation for world historical events.* (Comaroff/Comaroff 2012: 113, our emphasis)

With this observation, the authors join and accentuate the critical discourse that began with the conceptual and epistemological revision of Anglo-Indian historiography in the 1980s and passed through Postcolonial Studies and the reflections of the Latin American project ‘Modernidad/Colonialidad’ to reach a comprehensive critical analysis and reclassification of epistemic locations within the global circulation of knowledge. This redetermination is based, for example, on the ties between location and knowledge production, as Stuart Hall’s *The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power* (1992) and Chakrabarty’s *Provincializing Europe* (2007) make clear, or as can be seen in the increasingly popular postulation of a “Southern Theory” (Connell 2007) or of an “Epistemology of the South”

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<sup>7</sup> See also Dey 1992, Chattopadhyay 1995, Uchmany 1998, Dey/Gupta/Dhingra/Satchidanandan 2001, Loundo/Misse 2003. See in particular also Dyson 1988 (and reprints). On the relationship between Mexico and India cf. as well the little-known systematic survey of Duque-Saberi (2003), the historiographic article on the institutionalisation of indological studies in Argentina of Cattedra (2012) as well as the works of the Argentinian philosopher and former ambassador in New Delhi, Vicente Fatone (1972).

(Sousa Santos 2007, etc.). Yet the crux of the analysis in these two suggestions focuses chiefly on the power relationship between North and South, or rather ‘Centre’ and ‘Periphery’, precisely *because* these (power) relationships arise from the historical ‘colonial difference’, which has dramatically deepened during the process of modernisation.<sup>8</sup>

Only recently has there been an epistemological shift, within and beyond these theoretical approaches based on the concept of ‘difference’, towards an integrated ‘world’ model, in which horizontal interrelationships within the South are addressed. Thus already in 1996 Coronil problematised the gradual discursive transformation from an epistemic ‘difference’ to an essentialising concept of (cultural) ‘Otherness’ and suggested instead, following Fernando Ortiz (1940) and Edward Said (1993), a “contrapuntal perspective”:

In my view, challenging an imperial order requires overturning the Self-Other polarity that has served as one of its foundational premises. This requires that cultures be seen, as Ortiz and Said propose, in contrapuntal relation to each other rather than taken to be autonomous units, that their difference be historicized rather than essentialized, and that their boundaries and homogeneity be determined, not assumed. This contrapuntal perspective may encourage the development of a decentered “transcultural anthropology” [...] that avoids confirming a Self-centered standpoint from which difference is turned into Otherness either through Self-confirming objectification or Self-questioning exoticisation. (Coronil 1996: 73)

An increasingly hegemonic thinking based on ‘difference’ was also criticised by Alberto Moreiras, who confronted the danger of the appropriation of the ‘local’ – which he saw also in certain translation processes – with a “dirty atopianism” (Moreiras 2001: 23). In line with the warning of Hardt/Negri against the global “Empire” (2000), Jean Franco (2002) in turn criticised the hidden essentialism of alterity discourse, which dominated Latin American Studies, as the flipside of imperialistic appropriation. The Bolivian sociologist and advocate of subaltern theories Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui pointed out the dangers of appropriating and essentialising the indigenous voices in the postcolonial subaltern discourse and thereby perpetuating the asymmetry in the geopolitics of knowledge (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012: 95-109). A similar warning is found in Arundhati

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<sup>8</sup> See Mignolo 2000 as well as the contributions in Lander (ed.) 2000; in this context also Dube (ed.) 2009 and Dube 2011.

Roy's critical reflection on Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence, based on the writings of Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (Roy 2014).

Nonetheless, despite the widespread and powerful mindset of a thinking based on difference, there have recently been significant attempts to promote other, integrative and epistemic non-violent "world" concepts: Enrique Dussel, for example, proposes a "trans-modern pluriverse" as a discursive positioning (Dussel 2009: 512, 514; also López-Calvo 2012). Kwame Appiah (2006) pleads in turn for a critical "cosmopolitanism", pointing out the possibility of realising non-violent and epistemically open dialogues. Breckenridge postulates a cosmopolitan agency in terms of a "translational process of culture's in-betweenness" (Breckenridge/Pollock/Bhabha/Chakrabarty 2002: 6) beyond occidental conceptions of modernity. The concept of a constructive translational negotiation as a practice of horizontal exchange and transcultural understanding is also advocated by Sousa Santos as an opportunity to overcome the effects of a thinking based on the concept of difference:

Post-abysal thinking can thus be summarized as learning from the South through an epistemology of the South. It confronts the monoculture of modern science with the ecology of knowledges. It is an ecology because it is based on the recognition of the plurality of heterogeneous knowledges (one of them being modern science) and on the sustained and dynamic interconnections between them without compromising their autonomy. The ecology of knowledges is founded on the idea that knowledge is inter-knowledge. [...] It all depends on the use of adequate procedures of intercultural translation. Through translation, it becomes possible to identify common concerns, complementary approaches, and, of course, also intractable contradictions. (Sousa Santos 2007: 10, 16)

### 3. SUR / SOUTH: Perspectives for a New Poetics

Our research perspective is based on the following consideration: an appropriate handling of positions, theories, attitudes, opinions and statements from the 'South' remains problematic so long as the theoretical location of the concrete exchange is viewed solely from the perspective of a thinking based on the concept of difference. For in order to overcome a certain epistemic blindness with regard to the positions of the Global South, a blindness diagnosed using the postcolonial criterion of 'colonial difference', one *also* requires a precise understanding and appreciation of

universal concepts – such as humanity or mankind, human beings, cosmopolitanism, the world – and claims to validity, which have been formulated from different positions in the South. These concepts are not necessarily based on a mindset of contrasts, boundaries and differences. The verticality deriving from asymmetries and power structures ('North vs. South', 'Centre vs. Periphery') certainly plays a role in the articulation of such concepts. But within the South-South Relationship there is also a *horizontality*, which leads to an articulation of *similarities* with relation to a third party (Europe, occidental modernity discourses), without the entire constellation of the bipolar vertical structure of 'difference' necessarily taking effect.

Insight into such formations requires a shift in the interpretative approach, which applies even in the case of European-mediated symbolic systems and discourses (e.g. concepts of Orientalism and exoticism). These complex similarity relationships can only be properly analysed with the multifaceted cultural expertise produced through pluricultural competence and teamwork. Mutual processes of cultural appropriation of the Other, according to one central hypothesis in this volume, often occur in the horizontal encounters of the Global South beyond the 'colonial appropriations' (so long as these appropriations are not linked to claims of geopolitical hegemony). The question now is how such an epistemological nonviolent 'appropriation' can be described, how it can be understood and evaluated. All this requires, necessarily, a discussion of the concepts of 'difference' and 'similarity'.<sup>9</sup>

In this connection one must also note that a significant number of the narratives and configurations which circulate within South-South relationships are also geared towards a performative expansion of epistemological boundaries, especially when emotional knowledge of spiritual or corporeal experience comes into play. This *mélange* of heterogeneous experiences, in conjunction with intellectual dialogue and transfer processes, is one of the keys to grasping the horizontal knowledge of a mutual SUR / SOUTH understanding which explores the spaces between scholarship, aesthetic/poetic discourse and a heterodox agency.<sup>10</sup>

9 For a new discussion of 'similarity' as an epistemological concept beyond the thinking based on 'difference', cf. Bhatti et al. 2011.

10 In this connection cf. also Guha, who, after rereading Tagore's works, acknowledges a *poetic* insight along with the academic historiographic knowledge: "If poetic insight added new dimensions to pasts already interpreted by the history manuals, it probed,

#### 4. SUR / SOUTH and a New Orientalism from the South

In the works cited at the beginning, which deal with the cultural relations between India and Latin America (see footnote 7), the question of relationships within the Global South does not yet play a significant explicit role. The emphasis lies rather on the relations and encounters between the Orient and the Occident, as well as on the images, experiences and Orientalisms, which are primarily interpreted in the context of traditional (European) Orientalism. Edward Said's epochal revision of European Orientalism from the perspective of discourse theory is here an ambivalent reference: The discussion sparked by Said's book was at the time less of a starting point for a far-reaching critical debate on Orientalism<sup>11</sup> than a point of departure for an epistemological reassessment of postcolonial thinking and of global historical debates on an increasingly intertwined world, nonetheless characterised by asymmetrical relationships. Said's analysis of Orientalism thus became a 'general' concept for a multi-faceted theory production in which the formerly marginalised perspectives of the Global South are now increasingly moving to the forefront as active elements in the discourse.

Our volume of essays nonetheless focuses once again on the *concrete* relationships between the Occident and the Orient, though from a different perspective: the West-East relationships it examines originate not in Europe but in Latin America and India, and are thus SUR / SOUTH relationships as well.

Since the turn of the century, interest in the phenomenon of Orientalism has seen an international resurgence, spurred by the increasing conflicts arising through Globalisation. Now this has been enriched through a fresh perspective: the significant presence of contributions from the Global South, which offer a viewpoint neither from Europe nor from the West, thereby 'de-orienting' traditional Orientalism. This signifies a productive de-centering in the genealogy of Orientalism in Latin America, in

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in the other instance, the deep structure of historicity in everyday life and represented it in narratives beyond the power of academic historiography to produce." (Guha 2003: 91).

11 One relevant exception is Kushigian's critical discussion of Orientalism (1991; cf. also Al-Azm 1981). More frequently Said's thesis of Orientalism has triggered analyses of the implicit 'Occidentalism' contained within it. See, for example, the comprehensive discussion of Clifford 1988: 255-276, esp. 271, as well as Bhabha 1994: 71 ff.; Carrier (ed.) 1995: 1-32; Coronil 1996 et al.

that the Latin American discourses (as in Spanish-American *modernismo*) can no longer be identified and analysed as a mimesis of European-style Orientalism. On the contrary, they evince their own logic, context and agenda (Camayd-Freixas 2013, Siskind 2014: 223-260). Already in 1991, in her critical analysis of Said's concept, Julia Kushigian referred to the more open, intercultural Orientalism in the Spanish-American sphere. Recent studies, such as Bergel (2006), López-Calvo (2007, 2009, 2012) and Taboada (2012), speak of an "inverted", "alternative" or "peripheral" Orientalism, while Gasquet (2007) postulates an "Orientalism of the South" and ultimately the concept of "Orientalismes désorientés" (Dubost/Gasquet 2013). Noteworthy in all of these new readings is their focus predominantly on Latin American relationships with the Arabic world (in particular Palestine and Egypt) and Muslim cultures, as well as with the Far East (China, Japan) (Tinajero 2004), whereas the Indian subcontinent and its cultures rarely appear. On the other hand, a relatively broad corpus of Latin American texts (fiction, essays, didactic texts and travelogues,<sup>12</sup> as well as texts from Indian travellers to Latin America, such as Rabindranath Tagore or M.N. Roy) indicates a pronounced interest in India within Latin America since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

##### 5. 'Latin America / India' as a Paradigm for Concrete Relationality

Against the background of these new Orientalism Studies it is imperative to examine the transareal intellectual and cultural interchange between India and Latin America on a concrete basis, supported by examples. The contemporary research on Orientalism seeks not merely to establish a new epistemological position. Its overarching aim is rather to provide a material survey of the cultural and intellectual relationships between the occidental culture of the South and the "Orient", or rather those regions within the Global South associated with the "Orient", *beyond* the powerful traditional Orientalism discourse fixed upon the bipolar vertical North-South axis mentioned above. Such research is only at a beginning stage. As previously noted, ascertaining the significance of complex life experiences

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<sup>12</sup> E.g. A. D'Halmar, E. Gómez Carrillo, R. Güiraldes, E. Mallea, L. Mansilla, P. Neruda, V. Ocampo, O. Paz, S. Sarduy, J. Vasconcelos, and others.

and personal exchange processes and the way in which these influence the production of knowledge in India and Latin America presents a particular challenge.

The present volume therefore addresses in particular the *concrete* interconnections between Latin America and India on a literary and cultural, historical and intellectual level. It provides a multi-perspective elaboration of processes of reception, appropriation and knowledge circulation, mostly intertwined, but occasionally from a purely comparative perspective as well. Certain questions will continually arise, such as: Which structures of knowledge predominate and which options of agency arise during and as a result of these cultural South-South encounters? What epistemological conditions of comprehension and historical premises are they based upon? What potential do these structures of knowledge and options for agency have to question, to deconstruct, to justify or to complete allegedly universal paradigms of knowledge and agency? Our collection of essays seeks to illuminate these questions and further expand the field of discussion.

## 6. SUR / SOUTH: A New Politics of Thinking Latin America / India

It is our belief that a theoretical *and* practical knowledge of the structures and processes of cultural South-South relationships, from both a historical and contemporary perspective, is an indispensable component of today's knowledge of a globalised world. Such knowledge is highly relevant to transcultural communicative processes aimed at mutual comprehension. Against this background, the research programme requires a transregional approach in Cultural Studies as well as Intellectual History, based on multi-perspective cultural knowledge and the concrete materiality of exchange processes. This approach was in evidence at the interdisciplinary and international conference *SUR / SOUTH. Nuevos Pasajes a la India: América Latina / India. Literature and Culture* (Freie Universität Berlin, 6-8 October 2011) as well as at the International Workshop on the theme *Cultural Flows. Indien / Lateinamerika* (Freie Universität Berlin, April 2012), and will be developed further. The systematic, pragmatic building of relationships with the Indian academic community which engages with Latin America, as well as with the India-orientated scholars of Latin American universities, serves not only to promote reciprocal exchange but is also of

utmost importance for the transcultural reflection of diverse perspectives on historical and contemporary India scholarship in Latin America and, conversely, Latin America scholarship in India.

Although the city of Berlin appears here as the locus of academic enunciation, this does not imply that an organised ‘centre’ is at work, but rather that we are facilitating or simply enabling the collaboration between actors from two regions which still remain quite distant from one another. This triangulation has the advantage of providing the Indian researchers access to the strong Latin American Studies community in Berlin; Berlin’s geographical location midway between Latin America and India provides an obvious plus and benefit. For these reasons, we have developed at Freie Universität Berlin a research focus on Latin America / India in the academic field of Latin American Literatures and Cultures.<sup>13</sup> In this way we aim to create a dynamic network which supports the realisation of a transareal research perspective on the literary, cultural and intellectual exchange processes SUR / SOUTH between Latin America and India. Our desire is to promote a relatively unknown knowledge of mutual understanding based not only on difference, but also on similarity.

The contributions to this volume were written from a variety of disciplines and academic perspectives. They derive from scientific discussion and interdisciplinary reflection; some texts also contain personal observations and express specific experiences in the transareal spaces between Latin America and India.

In “The Tagore-Ocampo Encounter: Tangled, Complex Realities. A Personal Research Survey”, **Ketaki Kushari Dyson** explores the complexity inherent in such an intellectual and cultural relationship, focusing on what she calls a “communicational ambivalence” between the Nobel Laureate Tagore and the powerful lettered woman Victoria Ocampo: a situation in which the expectations and imaginaries of the Other came up against in the actual and personal interaction between these two figures. Accurately recreating a series of moments on the basis of her archival work on three continents, Dyson offers a differentiated portrait of the encounter to conclude that a South-South dialogue can only function properly through the medium of a common language in which the subtle nuances

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<sup>13</sup> “Fokus Lateinamerika/Indien“ access at <[http://www.lai.fu-berlin.de/disziplinen/literaturen\\_und\\_kulturen\\_lateinamerikas/Fokus\\_LA\\_Indien/index.html](http://www.lai.fu-berlin.de/disziplinen/literaturen_und_kulturen_lateinamerikas/Fokus_LA_Indien/index.html)>.

of cultures are embedded. Another kind of cultural encounter is recreated in **Vibha Maurya's** "Cruces revolucionarios: la recepción de la poesía de Pablo Neruda en la India", in which two of the visits of Nobel Laureate Pablo Neruda to independent India are reexamined. Although extensively documented in Neruda's *Memorias*, both visits are offered here from the point of view of testimonies, discourses and poems dedicated to the Chilean Poet in different Indian languages, part of a wide corpus of writings on translated texts which emerged during the first years of independence at the end of the 1940s. In a second step, Maurya's article analyses these prolific dynamics of reception and translation from the point of view of the actual debates on the "Epistemologies of the South" to explore aspects such as a critique of Eurocentrism and Colonialism, as well as issues related to the production of knowledge in the Global South.

Concentrating on another iconic figure of Latin American-Indian entanglements, "Analogy and Convergence in Paz's *The Monkey Grammarian* or India as a Source of Liberation and Reconciliation" by **Anthony Stanton** analyses the complex construction of *El mono gramático*, the famous prose text written by Octavio Paz in 1970, and published in Spanish in 1974. The book reconstructs a journey made by the poet to the Monkey Temple of Galta in Jaipur, India. Focusing on its transgressions of genre categories, Stanton argues that this ambitious experiment subverts traditional generic expectations and cultural stereotypes associated with Western Orientalism. Through an analysis of the mechanisms of analogy and convergence, the article seeks to show that the process of reading/writing is experienced as an act of liberation and reconciliation with the Other, a lesson stimulated by the philosophical and religious traditions of Indian thought. In a similar line of reflection, **Georg Wink** dedicates his article to a rather marginal text in Julio Cortázar's literary production. In "*Prosa del observatorio* de Julio Cortázar como crítica epistemológica y manifiesto poético-político: ¿una vislumbre budista?" the multifaceted relations between Cortázar's writing and Oriental Philosophy, in particular Buddhism, are explored and read as a moment of crystallisation of Cortázar's thought and world vision. Wink argues that Cortázar's text is more than just an experimental piece, it is a poetical-political manifesto shaped by experience. The article also postulates that Oriental Philosophy is a continuum in Cortázar's literary work from his early writings, with *Prosa del observatorio* being an exemplary case of the condensation of these influences, simultaneously forming a metalinguistic composition through

word-image interaction. **Julia A. Kushigian**, in “The Politics of Orientalism and Self-Orientalism in a South-South Dialogue: Revisiting Hispanic Orientalism from Said to Sarduy”, revisits several arguments from her early pioneering publications in the 1990s related to her appeal to abandon generalisations and to recognise instead a certain counter-knowledge of Orientalism in contrast to Western knowledge. For Kushigian, the power of the “antihuman West” to dominate and produce the East is an exhausted metaphor that offers no contestatory space for reflection. In this sense she proposes Self-Orientalism as a space of counter-discourse carved out by Hispanic Orientalism, a platform for everyday acts of resistance that upset authority and power hierarchies through cultural displacements. Severo Sarduy’s work serves Kushigian as a paradigmatic example of that kind of Self-Orientalism, one that engages in the pursuit of social and philosophic transformations through cultural change by relying on slippages and traces of meaning.

In her contribution “La Goa de Gilberto Freyre. Laboratorio lusotropical para el pensamiento transareal desde el Sur”, **Susanne Klengel** moves to the Indian ‘Lusosphere’ of former Portuguese colonies when she explores the starting point of the controversial cultural concept of ‘Lusotropicalism’ elaborated by Gilberto Freyre, who travelled to the “Portuguese Overseas Territories” in Africa and Asia in 1951. She tries to go beyond the polemics provoked by Freyre’s journey, which was organised by the colonialist Salazar Regime, calling attention to the ambivalent textual and argumentative structure of Freyre’s travelogue and collection of documents. She demonstrates the tension between personal experiences and reflections in Goa and the Indian Union and the opportunity seized by Freyre to propose a future South-South cooperation within and beyond the lusotropical sphere. In “Beyond the Trans-Atlantic Matrix: Tagore in Spain and Latin America”, **Shyama P. Ganguly** examines Rabindranath Tagore’s literary presence in Spain and Latin America. Ganguly argues that the “Atlantic Dialogue” between Spain and Latin America must also be understood via a third component (India and Tagore), a triangulation which would allow the universalist dimension of literature, beyond the constraints of the East-West dichotomy, to be revived. Thus, the Tagorean reception is reinterpreted in this article as a space that has created an enabling environment for South-South transactions of knowledge.

**Alexandra Ortiz Wallner** revisits the canon of Spanish-American *modernismo* through an exploration of travel narratives to India at the be-

ginning of the twentieth century. Focusing on the letters written by María Cruz during her time in India as an active member of the Theosophical Society in Adyar between 1912 and 1914, the article “Narrativas de viaje a la India. Escritura del yo y género en el modernismo hispanoamericano” analyses the construction of an own cultural chronology based on a deep revision of subjectivity and gender issues shaped in tension with the constraints of national boundaries. **Marta Elena Casaús Arzú** dedicates her article “Alberto Masferrer: la influencia de la teosofía y de las corrientes hinduistas en las redes intelectuales centroamericanas (1890-1930)” to the outstanding and sometimes ambivalent influence of Theosophical Vitalism on Central American intellectual thought and its networks during the 1920s and 1930s. Focusing on the role of the Salvadorian intellectual Alberto Masferrer, Casaús shows how in those decades, Theosophical Societies became spaces for sociability as well as authentic opinion generators for the elites. Thus, Theosophical Vitalism constituted in this particular context, and as a result of diverse processes of translation, reception and hybridisation of Indian thought and Theosophy, an alternative ideology to Positivism and Marxism – with a considerable influence on philosophical thought, pedagogical projects and the social and political movements that shaped the regional idea and political project of the “unionismo centroamericano”.

Also focused on the field of intellectual history, “Epistemología de la historia y estudios desde la subalternidad” by **Guillermo Zermeño Padilla** is a detailed revision and re-reading, from a strictly historical point of view, of the Subaltern Studies Group’s theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding logics of domination and cultural formations in early and late Modernity. Concentrating on the central figures of subaltern thought such as Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Ch. Spivak, the article discusses the limits of the modern historiographical institution and in a further step emphasises the productivity of a radicalisation of the “subalternist option” towards a “new historiographical Illustration”. From a literary comparative perspective, **Ashwani Kumar’s** article “Las voces desde el margen en la poesía afro-caribeña y en la de los dalits: una perspectiva comparada”, deals with two concrete forms of resistance literature in the Global South: Afro-Caribbean poetry writing and Dalit poetry writing are analysed across a series of topoi related to the representation of colonial experience and marginality. Considering such writing capable of registering actual political struggles ‘from below’, Kumar pays particular attention

to the forms of representation of the voices of the silenced, their versions of history and their identity consciousness. A further analysis of entangled histories is offered by **Javier Pinedo** in his article “Apuntes en torno a los conceptos de postcolonialidad y subalternidad, su uso y significados entre los intelectuales de América Latina e India”, in which he reviews contrastively the uses of the concept “postcoloniality” over the last decades, in particular in the context of the origins of the Subaltern Studies Group and the Grupo Latinoamericano de Estudios Subalternos.

“De-territorializing Experiences: Translating between Indian and Brazilian Post-colonial Languages” by **Dilip Loundo** draws upon what the author calls foundational multiculturalism and linguistic orality, defined as instrumental anthropophagous forms of cultural resistance that are to be taken as important features of the contemporary historical circumstances that inform the “common ground” shared by Brazil and India today. This dynamic, so the author, ensures cultural translatability – a cultural translatability in which active re-creations are implemented and pseudo-universalist jurisdictions are dropped. In this sense, the cultural and linguistic territorialities of both Brazil and India are entrusted with a dynamics of cultural inclusion and a dynamics of imagination that operate as fundamental structures for articulating diversities and overcoming dichotomies.

In “Cinema as a Cultural Bridge between Brazil and India? A Comparative Approach out of Personal Experience”, **Franthiesco Ballerini** offers a reflection on Indian-Brazilian cultural relations, focusing on his own experiences as a film director and film producer and enquiring of the potential for a South-South relationality to displace the North-South axis that continues to shape Brazilian cinematic production. **Sonya S. Gupta**, on the other hand, offers an in-depth discussion on film in her article “Post-colonialism in India and Latin America: Neo-liberal Modernity, Urban Dystopia and Youth Experience in Cinema”. Using the postcolonial discussion in India and Latin America and the genre of youth films to study the shifting contours of modernity, globality and postcoloniality as experienced in India and Latin America, she takes up two films as texts for an analysis of youth experience in the rapidly urbanising modern metropolis of the Global South.

Finally, also in the field of popular culture, **Cláudio C. Pinheiro** explores in “Las muchas encarnaciones de Tagore y las escrituras de su espíritu” a series of publications which appeared in Brazil between 1947 and 2011 attributed to “the spirit of the poet Rabindranath Tagore”, whose

death had already occurred in 1941. For Pinheiro, this rather eccentric corpus offers a unique way of studying the circulation of ideas and the production of images related to India and to the Orient in Brazil. Through these texts, Pinheiro shows how the circulation and reception process of Tagore's Afterlife publications not only shaped a local and autonomous thinking about India, but also extrapolated the dominant context of Portuguese and British Colonialism.

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