

**Zukunftsphilologie: Revisiting the Canons of Textual Practice**

Lecture cum Seminar

**Wednesday, 12 January 2011, 10.00 – 13.00**

Freie Universität Berlin, Raum JK 24/122d, Habelschwerdter Allee 45

**Dhruv Raina (Heidelberg / New Delhi)**

*Decolonisation of Philology:*

*Contemporary Perspectives on the Entangled Histories of Science and Philosophy in India*

**Chair: Manan Ahmed (Freie Universität Berlin)**

**Abstract:** The 1950s was a remarkable era in more ways than one. For one, the process of decolonisation provided the opportunity for re-interpreting intellectual and cultural history of societies formerly constructed through the colonial gaze – as one post-colonial theorist writes about the "the loss and recovery of self". In this discussion I take up the case of how the identity of the history of sciences of India and Indian philosophy were constructed and reconstructed in the half century that followed by historians and philosophers. I shall argue that both confronted very similar problematics as the new nation state staked its claim to modernity and scholars attempted to challenge, reject or dissociate themselves from received social theory and history. This manner of reading in the sociology of scientific knowledge extends the methodological tenets of the social studies of science to its own history.

**Dhruv Raina** is Professor of History of Science and Education at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He studied physics at Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai and received his Ph.D. in the philosophy of science from Göteborg University. His research has focused upon the politics and cultures of scientific knowledge in South Asia. He has co-edited *Situating the History of Science: Dialogues with Joseph Needham* (1999) and *Social History of Sciences in Colonial India* (2007). *Images and Contexts: the Historiography of Science and Modernity* (2003) was a collection of papers contextualizing science and its modernity in India. With S. Irfan Habib, he co-authored *Domesticating Modern Science* (2004) that again addressed the encounter between modern science and the so-called "traditional sciences" in colonial India. He has published papers on related subjects in journals of the history and philosophy of science, social studies of science and

social and political history. Over the last couple of years he has been working on cultures of history and science policy in postcolonial South Asia, in addition to a decade long preoccupation with postcolonial theory of science and the historiography of Indian mathematics. He has just finished a book on transnational networks of historians of science, and co-edited with Feza Günnergün a volume on the adaptation of ideas and techniques traveling between Asia and Europe that is to appear in the coming months. In addition, he has been a fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and is the first holder of the Heinrich Zimmer Chair of Indian Philosophy and Intellectual History at Heidelberg University.

### **Lecture cum Seminar**

The Lecture cum Seminar series is a central element of the scholarly program of the Zukunftsphilologie project. It is conceived as a working seminar of 3 to 5 hours. The lecture (approx. 45-60 minutes) is meant to introduce the audience to the research problem and provide the general analytical and theoretical framework for the topic. This is followed by a practical seminar, wherein the speaker demonstrates his or her case by reference to texts in the original language and in English translation. It is hoped that this Lecture-cum-Seminar series, a combination of theory and a direct engagement with texts, will enable scholars to examine the comparative aspect of the problematic without neglect of the local and singular nature of the texts examined.

### **Zukunftsphilologie: Revisiting the Canons of Textual Scholarship**

The project **Zukunftsphilologie** endeavours to promote and emphasize primary textual scholarship beyond the classical humanistic canon. In an age of advanced communication, intellectual specialization, and unprecedented migration of knowledge and people, the discipline of philology assumes new relevance. Zukunftsphilologie aspires to support research in neglected varieties of philology with the explicit aim to integrate texts and scholarly traditions from Asia, Africa, the Middle East as well as from Europe itself.

Zukunftsphilologie refers to the polemic between the classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Friedrich Nietzsche around the method and meaning of classical studies. As a project it sees itself as part of a growing trend towards a more global intellectual history. It is inspired in particular by the work of Edward Said and Sheldon Pollock.

In order to promote historically-conscious philology, Zukunftsphilologie will foster research in the following areas: genealogies and transformations of philological practice, philology's place in the system of knowledge (e.g. its relation to science, theology and jurisprudence), and philology and the university. Furthermore, Zukunftsphilologie aims to support critical reviews of historical and philological practice. In revisiting important "philological wars", the goal is not to merely evaluate the argumentative worth of these debates, but to reflect on the wider cultural and political context in which these "philological wars" emerged and how they have shaped our knowledge of the past.

The project Zukunftsphilologie is co-directed by Angelika Neuwirth and Islam Dayeh (both Freie Universität Berlin) and is associated with and located at the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School for Literary Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. Zukunftsphilologie is a project at the Forum Transregionale Studien.

## **Forum Transregionale Studien**

The **Forum Transregionale Studien** is a new research platform of the Land of Berlin designed to promote research that connects systematic and region-specific questions in a perspective that addresses entanglements and interactions beyond national, cultural or regional frames. The Forum works in tandem with already existing institutions and networks engaged in transregional studies and is supported by an association of the directors and heads of universities, research institutes and networks mainly based in Berlin. It started its activities in 2010 by identifying and supporting three transregional research projects based in Berlin research institutions in the different fields of Law, Philology, and Urban Sociology. The Forum Transregionale Studien is funded by the Senate of Berlin.

For more information please see:

[www.forum-transregionale-studien.de](http://www.forum-transregionale-studien.de)

<http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/friedrichschlegel/promotionsprogramm/kooperationen/Zukunftphilologie/index.html>

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