

## **Department of Germanic and Romance Studies**

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### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

**CONFERENCE: India in other literatures**

**6-8<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

The gaze of the Other, the foreigner has fascinated but also repelled host cultures over time. It has straddled various disciplines in the humanities like philosophy, anthropology, history and literature. While deeply indebted to Edward Said who in *Orientalism* (1978) deconstructed the power – knowledge nexus inherent in colonialism, latter day scholars have in turn pointed to the differences between colonizing and exoticizing imaginaries of writers and intellectuals and non reductive Orientalist traditions that were detached from binary oppositions useful to imperialism. Indeed the varied social backgrounds of travelers who were often marginal figures in their own countries point to the existence of counter cultures of modernity in the West which valorized the desire for difference. These counter cultures range in time and space and include the 19<sup>th</sup> century German Romantics and their discomfort with modernity as well as Allen Ginsberg and the Beat Generation.

In the post colonial period, Said's paradigms continue to hold sway but the frequency of illustrious anthropologists and philosophers like Levi Strauss (*Tristes Tropiques*) and Octavio Paz (*Conjunctions and Disjunctions*) who maintained that philosophy had always been hybrid and had benefited from non Western traditions has enriched the canvas of cross cultural understandings. If some encounters are still riddled with power relations, others have resulted in a range of literary expressions in the essay, novel and poetry genres. Writers have skillfully maneuvered in new meaning systems and yet remained politically detached. More importantly they have transcended the stultifying binary discourses of colonialism and participated in the clash and conversation of Self and Other.

With these perspectives we invite papers on a seminar on *India in other Literatures*. We will address questions on how writers with multiple cross purposes negotiate in a terrain that is historically mined with power relations. Has the portrayal of cultural difference abandoned essence and environment for global mutuality? Has the Eurocentric surveillance gaze given way to the stereoscopic? The limitations of the Orientalist discourse and its oppositions can best be studied if we include the precolonial period in our analytical time frame together with the colonial and post colonial. With a wider

corpus of texts on India over time we hope to avoid the pitfalls of categories and typologies of cultures.

[Deadline for submission of abstracts (200-300 words): 10 January 2014]