



**India/Latin America  
Emerging Epistemological Options &  
Inter/Cross/Transcultural Dialogues**



A Sur/South Conference

Organised by the Department of Germanic & Romance Studies (GRS), University of Delhi  
and India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi

Seminar Halls 1, 2 and 3, Kamaladevi Complex, IIC  
10, 11, and 12 November 2016.

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Contestations of the claims to political and cultural universality of the geopolitical imaginary emanating from processes of globalization are new and old, are diverse and plural. Yet the reality of this violent homogenization process is that those geohistorical areas that were affected by colonialism and are now experiencing the consequences of neoliberal imperatives are not only skeptical about the one-dimensional “Northern” logic. They are questioning the right of the Eurocentric local histories to design global projects that effectively amount to “an epistemic solipsism of subsuming the ‘other under the same’” (Dussel, *Invention*, 45). Therefore, foundational dichotomous narratives constitutive of the polarization of the world into North/South, West/East, and Occident/Orient are being challenged by and from the Global South.

In the wake of the decay of colonial rule and the emergence of nation-building projects, historical connections between southern nations and regions (e.g. Asia and Latin America) in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are witness to the existence of cross-cultural dialogues. As Araceli Tinajero has pointed out, “Orient did not constitute for Latin America a part of the imperial power in that period, on the contrary, it was slowly influencing the forming of an imaginary which was syncretic, eclectic and its own” (2004:18). Latin American modernists consciously proposed and used wider geographical imaginaries, thus along with twentieth century figures like M.N. Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Pablo Neruda, Cecilia Meireles or Octavio Paz, to mention just a few, provided the possibility of intense engagement and transcultural exchanges between India and Latin America. Even cultural phenomena as magic realism and the genre of testimonio bear witness to these interactions across the South. However, for various reasons, these have been systematically marginalized and subsumed by the universal cultural discourses of modernity.

In today’s global scenarios, epistemic discourses at all levels are passing through a complex and disjointed phase, placing demands to recognize alternative approaches produced by the plural “others” as part of a new agenda. Thus, the need to articulate and suggest new epistemological options that are emerging from the locations placed outside the universality of European rationality has become a necessary task and an on-going practice. In this process, the South, though in a scattered manner, has been responding to the Global North by recovering and asserting its own epistemological diversity. Local actors from the South are rethinking the terms of

their response to stimulate transversal conversations that aim for intellectual and cultural symmetry within a critical conception on knowledge production under the logic of the global.

Thus the questions that frame our SUR/SOUTH-Conference address the conditions related to the circulation of knowledge, ideas, and intercultural dialogues across and between the Souths. Which practices and agendas are emerging towards re-groundings of a decentered epistemology in locations other than the North? How southern epistemological options are conceptualized without falling into old dichotomies? In constructing transcultural dialogues, what are the realities, experiences, voices, and inequalities of the internal “others” - be they gender, caste, race, religion, language or ethnicity? Rather than falling into stultifying autarchies, are there emergent cosmopolitanisms of the South, a truly multiple directionality of ideas and influences that may be claimed? In this sense, we examine also as to how to rearticulate our reflections in order not to fall in the discourse of an excessive/fundamentalist localization, which would not concede space to cover wider historical, political and cultural territories and practices.

The Conference would be an attempt to engage with aforementioned debates and examine the efficacy and potential of these critical enunciations for empowering the South to produce and develop another/a new body of knowledge and promote wider and plural conversations at the global level. Main reference point would be the cultural relations and transfers between Latin America and India/Asia as these are once again emerging as a heterogeneous and multi-layered field of cultural interactions and knowledge production.

The Conference will take place at the India International Center, New Delhi, India, during 10, 11, and 12 (Thurs, Fri, and Sat) of November 2016.

Broad thematic areas are:

- Cultural and political economies of epistemological diversity
- Imaginaries for a new intercultural dialogue
- Disentangled indigenous knowledge and their discontent
- Thinking the other “other”: India and Latin America
- Imaginary and other journeys: from transatlantic to transpacific configurations
- Configuring new canons (re-readings of the avant-garde, magical realism, testimonio)
- Gender identities and body politics in the Global South

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