2ⁿᵈ International PhD Student Symposium

Organized by Patrick Heinrich & Federica Casalin

Venue: Ca' Dolfin Aula Magna Trentin, Ca'Foscari University of Venice

Date: 17-18. November 2021

17 November 2021

https://unive.zoom.us/j/86107407430

08:45-09:00 Patrick Heinrich: *Welcome and Introduction to the Symposium*

09:00-09:45 Prof. Boike Rehbein (Humboldt University): *Center and Periphery in Global Capitalism*

Chair: Patrick Heinrich

09:45-10:05 Simone Petrillo (La Sapienza): *Centralizing the Peripheral: Andalusi Islam Between 8th and 9ᵗʰ Century*

10:05-10:25 Liya Cheng (Tohoku): *How Agent in a Sentence is Specified or Omitted? A Corpus Study in Japanese*

10:25-10:45 Tonio Savina (La Sapienza): *Beyond the 'Chinese Space Threat': US-PRC Satellite Cooperation*

10:45-11:05 Alessia Iurato (Ca'Foscari / Bremen): *Combining Corpora and Experimental Data in Studying the Acquisition of the Chinese* 是 *shì…*的 *de Construction by L1 Italian Learners: A Triangulated Methodological Approach*

11:05-11:25 Yoko Kagami (Tohuku University)
The Function of Polite Language as a Marker of Communication Awareness

11:25-12.15 Discussion of papers

Chair: Pierantonio Zanotti

https://unive.zoom.us/j/87640072559

14:00-14:20 Elisabetta Crupi (La Sapienza): *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji: Adaptation, Parody and Innovation of a Literary Canon*

14:20-14:40 Judhajit Sarkar (Heidelberg): *Re-routing Expression: The Progressive-Modernist Interface in South Asian Poetry and Criticism*

14:40-15:00 Giulia Baquè (Ca'Foscari / Heidelberg): *Environmental Disaster: Movement and Immobility in the Works by Tawada Yōko*

15:00-15:30 Discussion of papers

Coffee break

Chair: Francesca Tarocco

15:45-16:05 Anna Scarabel (Heidelberg / Ca'Foscari) *To worship or not to Worship? The Words of Dayānanda Sarasvatī and Svāmī Karapātrī*

16:05-16:25 Sona Prabhakaran (Heidelberg): *In Possession of the Goddess: Local Temple Politics and Warring Claims of Ownership Rights*

16:25-16:45 Miriam Al Tawil (La Sapienza / Vienna): *Bedouin Arabic between Margins and Urbanisation*

16:45-17:05 Federica Cicci (Ca' Foscari / Heidelberg): *In the Name of the Chinese Red Cross: "Feminine" Virtues in Humanitarian Discourses during Wartime*

17:05-17:35 Discussion of papers

19:00 Conference dinner

18 November 2021

https://unive.zoom.us/j/81313315527

09:00-09:45 Prof: Federico Squarcini (Ca'Foscari): *Clouds, Winds, Rains and Terrains: On the 'Evaporation' of Area Studies versus the 'Solidity' of Meteorology*

09:45-10.30 Keynote speaker to be announced: *Title to be announced*

Coffee break

Chair: Daniele Brombal

10:45-11:05 Xinru Wang (Heidelberg): *Japanese Perception of Nature: A Transcultural Analysis*

11:05-11:25 Zifei Wang (Heidelberg): *Re-Orienting the Roads to Everywhere: The Cultural Logic of Border-Crossing in a Sino-Egyptian Context*

11:25-11:45 Ali Razmkhah (Ca'Foscari): *Governance Institutions of Transhumant Pastoralists of Iran: Understanding and Applying Biocultural Rights*

11:45-12:05 Alberico Crafa (La Sapienza): *Aryan Texts, Indian Commentaries, and European Ideology: The Italian Reception of the Debate on Native Indian Commentaries in 19th century Vedic Studies*

12:05-12:35 Discussion of papers

Chair: Toshio Miyake

https://unive.zoom.us/j/83861533858

14:00-14:20 Abbas Siavash Abkenar (Ca'Foscari): *Alliance Israélite Universelle in Qajar Persia: Schools as New Public Spaces of the Modern Era*

14:20-14:40 Marco Del Din (Heidelberg): *Dangerous Intellectuals and Titillating Flappers: The New Woman and the Modern Girl in Japan and Korea*

14:40-15:00 Theresa Deichert (Heidelberg): *Cast out of Invisibility? The Don't Follow the Wind Exhibition and its Collaborative Engagement with the Ecologies of the 3.11 Exclusion Zone and its Disaster Victims*

15:00-15:30 Discussion of papers

Coffee break

Chair: Federica Casalin

15:45-16:05 Peiyao Wu (Tohoku University): *The Discourse on "Faith" and "Cult" in Japan: An approach on the Religious Studies of Anesaki Masaharu*

16:05-16:25 Korefumi Nakano (Tohoku): *What is the Reality of Magic? Focusing on a Guru and his Clients in Cambodia*

16:25-16:45 Silvia Luzzietti (La Sapienza): *Piṇḍaśāstra, an Āyurvedic Text in Khotanese*

16:45-17:05 Amani Braa (Montréal / Ca'Foscari): *A Journey into the Life of the Mothers of the Jihadists, between Italy, Québec and Tunisia*

17:05-17:35 Discussion of papers

Abstracts of student presentations

Abbas Siavash Abkenar (Ca'Foscari University of Venice)

Alliance Israélite Universelle in Qajar Persia: Schools as New Public Spaces of the Modern Era

The Persia of the mid-nineteenth and the early twentieth century was a place of rapid political and social transformation. Reformist and revolutionary aspirations ushered in a new "modern" era for the Qajar empire characterized, in part, by a burgeoning elite class and a new intelligentsia composed of the so called "roshanfekrān" and "motejaddedīn". Political, social, and cultural transformation, during this period, resulted in the creation of new public spaces such as modern companies, theaters, chambers of commerce, hotels, and other civil institutions. One type of area not often associated with public space are schools run under the auspices of religious communities, foreign missionaries, and trans-imperial institutions. This presentation sets out to study the formation and development of the Alliance Israélite Universelle's schools in Persia to shed light on aspects of Jewish communal transformation and public engagement in the progressist atmosphere of "tajaddod", a common term to describe the spirit of the abovementioned modern era which embraces two distinct period of pre-and post-constitutional reforms. It tends to explore cultural, economic, and socio-political affinities of such advent and will focus on how modern aspirations find grounds of contact with communal life to influence the field of education in minority context. The emergence of schools, as a key element, seems essential to any reconstruction of the events which tends to highlight the role of education as a means of social transformation or political hegemonization. This standpoint will help to understand how minority schools had a fundamental role in shaping the modern social consciousness of Jewish communities in Persia while revealing reasons for their political agency under trends of belonging or unfolding causes of foreign intervention in the Persian public sphere of modernity.

Miriam Al Tawil (Sapienza University of Rome / Vienna University)

Bedouin Arabic between margins and urbanisation

According to the definition of periphery ("the outer limits or edge of an area"), the Bedouin tribes of the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula have been living in desertic marginal zones of the eastern Arabic world, moving from one place to another. For this reason, they have been culturally and linguistically distinguished from the sedentary populations inhabiting this geographic area. Arabic dialectology has subdivided Arabic dialects into sedentary and Bedouin according to the lifestyle of the speakers. Bedouin Arabic has generally been considered more archaic by dialectologists in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. This is due to the spatial distance between the tribes and the sedentary people of the Levant and the consequent lack of language-contact. Nevertheless, nowadays after the settlement of most of Bedouin people, the differences in lifestyle are being levelled. The present study, based on ethnographic and linguistic data from the

geographic area called al-bādiya al-šamāliya of North Jordan collected in 2020 and 2021, aims to describe the cultural and linguistic situation of today's Bedouins in that area, to understand in which terms the social changes (e.g., urbanisation and globalisation) have had an impact on their identity and on their linguistic variety. Can we affirm that Bedouin people and Bedouin Arabic today are still a marginal reality, or the process of settlement has definitely changed their identity?

Giulia Baquè (Ca' Foscari University of Venice / Heidelberg University)

Environmental Disaster: movement and immobility in the works by Tawada Yōko

Tawada Yōko's literary production has often been concerned with movements across borders and the challenging of boundaries. Her characters are often travelers crossing both physical, national, and spatial borders, but also navigating temporal borders, the frontiers between species, and those between the human and the other-than-human. Since the triple disaster that hit the Tohoku region in March 2011, the theme of environmental degradation has become a recurrent topic in the literary works and performances of Tawada Yōko. Nuclear accidents and their subsequent effects on the human and the environment permeate her stories. Border crossing is – both in its physical and metaphorical meaning – affected by disaster. In particular, movement across borders is disrupted, as a result of closures and travel limitations. Passports and nationalities have become associated with nuclear contamination and are no longer connected with freedom of movement. At the same time, however, the borders between the human and the other-thanhuman seem to become more porous by creating a new movement across species. Focusing on this double effect of environmental disaster illuminates Tawada Yōko's critique towards the reinforcement of national borders and discourses. This paper concludes that, if the disruption of transnational movements and the suspicions of physical pollution are one effect of environmental disaster, interspecies flows and mobilities between the human and the other-than-human are – in Tawada's works – a way to address the question of how to go beyond the distinction between 'I' and the 'other'.

Amani Braa (Montreal University / Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

A Journey into the Life of the Mothers of the Jihadists, between Italy, Québec and Tunisia

Valeria Khadija Collina, Nathalie Haddadi, Zoulikha Aziri et Saida Sakhir, madri rispettive di Youssef Zaghba , Belabbas Bounaga , Mohamed Merah et Youssef , sono solo alcuni degli esempi di donne che hanno subito numerose critiche ed attacchi dalla parte dei media e dei giornali riguardo al loro percorso di vita. L'obiettivo di queste inchieste: capire come e perché i loro figli siano diventati dei terroristi. Dove hanno sbagliato queste madri? La loro «eccessiva visibilità» per ottenere informazioni sui figli jihadisti dopo il «passaggio all'atto» è l'occasione per constatare che: 1) dal 2014 le madri dei jihadisti sono presenti sulla scena della radicalizzazione, il più delle volte dopo che i giovani hanno commesso l'atto terroristico (sia partendo per unirsi a gruppi armati in Siria o in Iraq, sia attraverso la loro partecipazione a compiere un attacco sul suolo del loro paese di residenza). Queste madri vengono dipinte come responsabili delle azioni dei loro figli, in nome della religione islamica. Perché il primo riflesso è di cercare una spiegazione nelle famiglie?

E perché questa eccessiva responsabilizzazione delle madri in particolare? 2) Queste donne non sono prese di mira nello stesso modo, secondo criteri di etnia e religione. Quando si tratta di madri musulmane, il percorso famigliare viene studiato ed analizzato nei minimi dettagli, dalla traiettoria personale, professionale, coniugale o anche religiosa, tutto pur di capire l'origine delle azioni dei figli. Quando si tratta di madri non musulmane, invece, pochissime sono le informazioni e i dettagli privati che vengono resi pubblici. Alcune di queste hanno scritto libri, per testimoniare le loro esperienze con ciò che i loro figli avevano fatto, ma, a differenza delle madri musulmane sopra menzionate, nessun aspetto della loro vita intima, privata e personale è messo in discussione o posto sotto lo sguardo inquisitorio sociale.

La nostra tesi di dottorato prosegue delle ricerche iniziate nel corso della nostra tesi di laurea magistrale dedicata al processo di radicalizzazione dei jihadisti. Questo lavoro mirava a comprendere l'importanza della famiglia nelle traiettorie degli individui che si uniscono ai gruppi terroristici. Durante la nostra indagine sul campo, siamo venuti a conoscenza della paradossale esperienza familiare dei genitori dei terroristi. Nel corso di questo lavoro abbiamo osservato che, più che la famiglia, sono le madri, e in particolare le madri musulmane di origine africane, il vero bersaglio degli interventi istituzionali e tendono ad essere considerate come responsabili delle azioni dei loro figli.

Liya Cheng (Tohoku University)

How is the agent in a sentence specified or omitted? A corpus study in Japanese

In order to achieve simplicity of linguistic expression while reducing labor consumption, arguments (i.e., noun phrases required for making predication) are sometimes ellipted when constructing sentences (Lyons, 1968). The argument ellipsis is known as one of the distinguished characteristics of East Asian languages including Japanese (Kim, 1999), as shown in dialog (1).

(1)   A: Ken-ga   rouka   de   urotsuitei-ta   yo.

      Ken-NOM   corridor   in   wandering-PAST   SFP

      'Ken was wandering around in the hallway.'

    B: nanika-o   sagasitei-ta-n-da   yo.

    (∅) something-ACC   looking for-PAST-NOMZ-COP   SFP

    '(He) was looking for something.'

(Notes: NOM [nominative], ACC [accusative], PAST [past], NOMZ [nominalizer], COP [copula] SFP [sentence-final particle], ∅ [ellipsis])

In (1), although the subject argument is not expressed in B's utterance in response to A, the ellipted subject can be easily inferred to as 'Ken', since it was mentioned as the subject in the preceding utterance. To investigate how the argument ellipsis is realized in Japanese, a corpus study (Ueno & Polinsky, 2009) compared the occurrence frequency of the argument ellipsis in one-argument verb (i.e., intransitive) sentences, which require a subject, and two-argument verb (i.e., transitive) sentences, which require a subject and an object. They revealed that arguments were more likely to be ellipted in two-argument verb sentences than in one-argument verb sentences. However, it remains unclear what kind of argument is preferred to be ellipted in two-argument verb sentences in Japanese. In this presentation, I will introduce our recent corpus study (Cheng & Kiyama, 2021) to examine which grammatical relation (i.e., subject/object) and semantic role (i.e., agent/patient of verb) matter in determining the argument ellipsis in Japanese sentences, with a focus on intransitive-and-transitive verb pairs of Japanese origin, such as a verb pair of somaru/someru (meaning 'dye' in English) that describes the same semantic role with different grammatical relations, as in (2) below.

(2a)   Kimono-ga   somaru.

        Kimono-NOM dye

        'Kimono is dyed.'

(2b)   Ken-ga   kimono-o   someru.

        Ken-NOM   Kimono-ACC dye

        'Ken dyes a Kimono.'

The results revealed that, among the three types of arguments of (1) subject/patient in intransitive sentences, (2) subject/agent in transitive sentences, and (3) object/patient in transitive sentences, the argument ellipsis easily occurs in subject/agent arguments in transitive sentences. This suggests that the argument ellipsis occurs depending on the semantic role rather than the grammatical role, because the argument of agent was likely preferred to be ellipted than the patient argument, but the comparison in terms of the subject/object was not consistent.

Federica Cicci (Ca' Foscari University of Venice / Heidelberg University)

In the name of the Chinese Red Cross: "feminine" virtues in humanitarian discourses during wartime (1937-1945)

The role of Chinese women in humanitarian war efforts is an issue that remains to be fully investigated. The presentation not only aims to integrate women as the main agents within the history of the Chinese Red Cross although the difficult global hierarchies, but also to comprehend their aid to victims during the years of the War of Resistance and the Second World War. By investigating the power relations and humanitarian actions in the Red Cross, the analysis of newspaper, magazines, and pictures of the that time focuses on the reconstruction of war activities by Chinese women. The presentation emphases the mobilisation of traditional activities of women

in fundraising campaigns. Suffering, in this context, became a means of mobilizing sympathy, thanks to which it was possible to increase the generosity of donors. This can be seen from the total amount of donations collected for the rescue operations; they were gathered among the national and international population, thanks also to the efficient propaganda of Chinese newspapers. A series of publications, focusing on the themes of charity, blood donations and the principles of the Red Cross, were printed by the major publishing houses of the time. Foreign fundraising projects arrived during those years in favour of the Communists. It was the case of the China Defense League 中国福利会, for instance, particularly important because it was chaired by one of the most influential women of the time, Soong Qingling 宋庆龄 (1893-1981). The League was significant in collecting donations abroad and from people in Hong Kong, as retrieved in the Foreign Office Files for China. During the long years of the war, however, Chinese army medical services had to deal with many obstacles, including a lack of medical employees and materials, poor sanity conditions and the spreading epidemics among the soldiers. The cooperation with Western supporters played a key role in providing medical aid at the front line for Red Cross's work in China. The presentation aims to show how the work of Chinese women also inspired by Western models' activism in the humanitarian context served as a window on which gender shaped the meanings of freedom, war and nation building in modern China, while offering the opportunity to re-discuss the social values and traditional roles of women.

Alberico Crafa (La Sapienza University of Rome)

Aryan Texts, Indian Commentaries, and European Ideology: The Italian Reception of the Debate on Native Indian Commentaries in 19th century Vedic Studies.

The status of indigenous commentaries on the restoration, translation and interpretation of the Vedic texts – particularly the Ṛgveda – holds a key position in nineteenth-century Orientalist debate. As a matter of fact, the Vedas come to be regarded as a European's legacy, instead of an Indian one, the quintessence of the Indo-European past and the cultural depository of the ancient forebears of the Germanic race. The native commentarial tradition, then, could not supersede the European cultural hegemony based on the achievements of Western knowledge over Indians. This paper discusses the Indological debate on ancient Indian commentators that took place between German and British Indologists in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, it sheds light on how Italian Indologists received and responded to the debate, that opposed scholars from two different schools and, above all, reflected different national concerns. I will discuss the reasons why some Italian scholars, although trained under the most eminent German philologists, disagreed on the status of native commentaries as an unreliable guide to interpreting the Vedas and other texts. Italian criticisms of the German approach to ancient Indian texts, moreover, reflected different ideological concerns underpinning the hegemonic discourses between Europe and India. Because of both transnational reception and nation- building concerns, the history of Italian Indological studies represents a unique perspective in the European context.

Elisabetta Crupi (La Sapienza University of Rome)

Nise Murasaki inaka Genji: adaptation, parody and innovation of a literary canon

The cultural landscape of Edo period (1600-1867) popular literature encompasses all manners of texts, but it is in the specific context of gesaku production that it is possible to find an impressive number of works displaying heavy influences from theatrical tradition. Among such works we can find Nise Murasaki inaka Genji ('A false Murasaki and a bumpkin Genji', 1829-1842) by Ryūtei Tanehiko – pen-name of Takaya Hikoshirō (1783-1842). Based on the Heian classic by Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 973-1014), Nise Murasaki inaka Genji is essentially an adaptation of the Genji monogatari ('The tale of Genji', completed around 1007-9) performed through the use of compositional methods and tropes characteristics of kabuki theatrical tradition. Nise Murasaki inaka Genji is also one of the latest embodiments of a phenomenon which led to the vernacular transposition of the most representative Heian classical works from the XVIII century onwards. Such phenomenon is part of a much wider process of cultural appropriation of the Heian literary canon brought forth by a series of sociological transformations which caused court culture to be passed down from aristocracy to commoners. The present study aims to describe in detail how the influence and example set by previous Genji monogatari vernacular adaptations from the Genroku era (1688-1704) and his involvement with some kokugaku scholars might have inspired Ryūtei Tanehiko to give his personal contribution to this particular production, creating a work which embraces parody, adaptation and innovation of a literary canon.

Theresa Deichert (Heidelberg University)

Cast out of invisibility? The Don't Follow the Wind exhibition and its collaborative engagement with the ecologies of the 3.11 exclusion zone and its disaster victims

In the run-up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, the Japanese government pursued a strategy of reconstruction within the region affected by the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster of March 2011. Before being thwarted by the emergence of the coronavirus, the Olympics as "Reconstruction Games" was intended to celebrate Japan's full recovery from the triple disaster, despite parts of the evacuation zone remaining inaccessible and radioactively contaminated. Conjointly with the government's official narrative of having the situation under control, post-disaster amnesia gripped the Japanese public outside of the disaster region, with victims increasingly being pushed out of public consciousness. Concurrently, the disaster prompted many Japanese artists to interrogate what the role of art could be in a state of socio-political and environmental crisis, developing ongoing collaborative projects to keep the disaster memory alive and cast victims out of invisibility. The collaborative exhibition project Don't Follow the Wind (DFW) initiated by artist collective Chim↑Pom is probably the best-known long-term project addressing the making visible of 3.11 disaster victims. Co-curated by Chim↑Pom and an international collective of curators, the exhibition opened on March 15th , 2015. Supported by locals who granted access to their properties, the curatorial collective installed the works of twelve Japanese and foreign artists or artist collectives at four venues inside of the Fukushima exclusion

zone. The curators thus sought to align the timelines of the victims with that of the exhibition. When the exhibition would become accessible to the public, evacuees would be able to return. As an invisible exhibition constituted by its claim to elicit a "critical imaginary," DFW has to rely on constant mediation. For this reason, the curatorial collective has organized numerous satellite exhibitions, so-called Non-Visitor Centers, as access points in places such as Tokyo, Sidney and New York. While Japanese and foreign media coverage largely reiterated the aims of the curators, this paper takes on an ecological approach based on a transcultural perspective to critically examine the exhibition's potential political efficacy. Aided by Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory such an approach takes into account the nonhuman agency of radioactivity and the Fukushima environment and its effects on the works indefinitely left in the exclusion zone. The prefix trans is understood not only as going beyond cultural delimitations, but also as an imperative to overcome a strict division between nature and culture. Thus, examining DFW's site-specific artistic practices, the approach takes into account how nonhuman agents, such as radiation and environmental forces shape the exhibition and its artworks' efficacy. Setting the works in the zone into relation with the satellite exhibitions, the paper attends to such questions as what does it mean for an exhibition to be invisible and inaccessible? How did (international) collaborations play out within the exhibition and its satellite renditions? Did the exhibition's inaccessibility reinforce or counter the invisibility of human and nonhuman disaster victims? And lastly, how did the nonhuman agency of radioactivity and environmental forces contribute to the overall efficacy of the exhibition and its works?

Marco Del Din (Heidelberg University)

Dangerous Intellectuals and Titillating Flappers: The New Woman and the Modern Girl in Japan and Korea

In the early 1910s, newspapers reported on a group of women who adventured freely in the pleasure quarters of Yoshiwara, Tokyo, where they consumed liquors and challenged the ideas of femininity promoted by the state. Labelled as 'New Women' by the press, these individuals were closely associated with the Bluestocking (Seitō 青鞜) magazine, where they published translations of Western works and their own originals and advocated for female independence. A decade later, Western-dressed girls -the so-called ʿModern Girls'- became the target of attacks from the government and mainstream newspapers, upset by their attire and their allegedly scandalous sexual behaviour. Approximately at the same time, similar figures appeared in colonial Korea, attracting the attention of the public and sparking analogous controversies in the public debate. As these new female models emerged in both countries, they received extensive coverage in the news, which generally described them in pejorative terms and reduced them to oversimplified, negative figures, eventually creating standardized models which hardly corresponded to reality. And yet, it was through these representations that various actors, such as the Japanese government and the New Women and Modern Girls themselves, negotiated their own identities within Japan and Korea, as well as articulated their position vis-à-vis the 'West'. Therefore, the aim of my presentation is to investigate the New Woman and Modern Girl phenomena in the 1910s and 1920s in Japan and

Korea, focusing in particular on their standardized representations in mainstream newspapers. While indeed an investigation of these figures 'in flesh and blood' would require longer and thorough analysis, the representations offered in the press are remarkably uniform and provide illuminating insights on the anxieties and self-perception of actors such as the Japanese and colonial governments. The presentation will include both 'individual' analyses of each of the models examined and systematic non-hierarchical, transcultural comparisons, so as to avoid simplistic binary oppositions and highlight similarities and differences. Such an investigation, which engages with secondary literature and primary sources in Japanese, reveals the Japanese New Woman and Modern Girl as often overlapping and mutually shaping phenomena, despite differences in terms of both chronology and specific characteristics which ultimately identify them as distinct figures. Similarly, a comparative analysis between the Korean and Japanese case unveils transcultural processes of localization and the role of racist and racialized discourses in the construction of the Korean New Woman, thus resisting her definition as a simply imported phenomenon. The presentation will be divided in two main sections, the first focusing on Japan and the second on Korea. The former will analyze the Japanese New Woman and Modern Girl, tracing their emergence and specificities and comparing them, thus identifying points of overlap and illuminating their role as sites of transcultural interactions. In the following section, starting from the characteristics delineated earlier, the Korean New Woman will be investigated both individually and in comparison with her Japanese counterparts, thus unveiling her specificities as a localized phenomenon and eventually proving the deeply transcultural character of the phenomena investigated.

Alessia Iurato (Ca'Foscari University of Venice / Bremen University)

Combining corpora and experimental data in studying the acquisition of the Chinese 是 shì⋯的 de construction by L1 Italian learners: A triangulated methodological approach

The Chinese 是 shì⋯的 de construction, often thought to be similar to cleft constructions, poses a challenge for L2 learners because it has very different properties from it- or pseudo-clefts in languages like English (Paul & Whitman 2008, Xu 2014). This construction has been widely studied both from the theoretical point of view (Cheng 2008, Hole 2011, Shyu 2015) and from the perspective of Second Language Acquisition (Mai & Yuan 2016, Su & Tao 2018). However, a uniform treatment in the literature cannot be found; most of the confusion arises from the fact that shì…de is generally used as a cover term for at least four distinct constructions (Paul & Whitman 2008: 413). I will only focus on the acquisition of the shì…de pattern proper (Paul & Whitman 2008); it consists of a positionally determined contrastive focused component (Jing-Schmidt 2017) and a presupposition, where future oriented temporal adverbs are excluded, and has a past-tense reading only (Simpson & Wu 2002, Paul & Whitman 2008), as e.g. in

(1)   他是昨天来的

tā	shì	zuótiān	lái	de
3SG	COP	yesterday	come	DE

'It was yesterday that he came'(Jing-Schmidt 2017: 213).

I adopt a multi-method triangulated approach, grounded in Learner Corpus Research (Granger 2008), consisting in the combination and analysis of both corpus data and experimental data, in order to provide different insights into the phenomenon under study (Callies 2013).

I collected written and oral data of 103 L1 Italian BA and MA students at Ca' Foscari University of Venice (grouped into proficiency levels according to their HSK Chinese language proficiency test score) through open-ended tasks to compile an error-tagged learner corpus. A pragmatic annotation was also added to the corpus. Moreover, I collected experimental data elicited through experimental tasks to counterbalance potential avoidance phenomena and construct underrepresentation (Tracy-Ventura & Myles 2015, Gilquin 2021). Finally, I gathered comparable spoken and written data of 30 L1 Chinese speakers who serve as control group.

The study will address the following research questions:

- Do the learners across different proficiency levels use the shì…de construction, and if so, do they have (explicit) knowledge of its pragmatic meaning?

- What types of grammatical errors emerge from learners' data and what are the error rate and the accuracy rate of the shì…de construction across different proficiency levels?

- Are there any differences in the use of the shì...de construction by L1 Chinese speakers and L2 Italian learners to highlight information and to produce contrastive focus?

Preliminary results of quantitative and qualitative analysis show that learners use the construction with a low frequency and a low accuracy rate. Learner errors primarily involve the underuse of the construction due to an overgeneralization of the perfective aspect marker 了 le, followed by the misuse of the construction in sentences with atelic verbs and future-oriented temporal expressions, attributed to learners' deficient knowledge of the constraints of their usage.

Results also indicate that learners are not aware of the appropriate pragmatic functions (highlighting information and corrective contrast) of the shì…de construction.

References

Callies, Marcus (2013). 'Triangulation'. S.J. Schierholz & H.E. Wiegand (eds.), Wörterbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft [WSK] online. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Cheng, Lisa Lai-Shen (2008). 'Deconstructing the shi...de construction'. The Linguistic Review, 25: 235–266.

Granger, S. (2008). 'Learner Corpora'. A. Lüdeling & M. Kytö, Corpus Linguistics. An International Handbook. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 259-275.

Gilquin, Gaëtanelle (2021). 'Combining learner corpora and experimental methods'. N.Tracy-Ventura & M. Paquot (eds.), The Routledge Handbook of Second Language Acquisition and Corpora. New York: Routledge, 133-144.

Jing-Schmidt, Z. (2017). 'Grammatical construction and Chinese Discourse'. Shei, C. (ed.), Routledge Handbook of Chinese Discourse Analysis. London: Routledge, 209-230.

Hole, Daniel (2011). 'The deconstruction of Chinese shì…de clefts revisited'. Lingua 121: 1707-1733.

Mai, Ziyin & Yuan, Boping (2016). 'Uneven reassembly of tense, telicity and discourse features in L2 acquisition of the Chinese shì…de cleft construction by adult English speakers'. Second Language Research 32 (2): 247-276.

Myles, Florence (2015). 'Second language acquisition theory and learner corpus research'. Granger, Gilquin & Meunier (eds.), The Cambridge Handbook of Learner Corpus Research. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 309-331.

Paul, Waltraud & Whitman, John (2008). 'Shi...de focus clefts in Mandarin Chinese'. The Linguistic Review 25 (3/4): 413-451.

Shyu, Shu-ing (2015). 'Shì 是......de 的 sentences'. Sybesma Rint (edited by) Encyclopedia of Chinese language and linguistics. Consulted online on 03 April 2020 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2210-7363_ecll_COM_00000092> . First published online: 2015.

Simpson, Andrew & Wu, Zoe (2002). 'From D to T- Determiner incorporation and the creation of tense'. Journal of East Asian Linguistics 11: 169-209.

Su, Danjie & Hongyin Tao (2018). 'Teaching the shi...de construction with authentic materials in elementary Chinese'. Chinese as a Second Language Research 7(1): 11—140.

Tracy-Ventura, Nicole & Myles, Florence (2015) .'The importance of task variability in the design of learner corpora for SLA research'. International Journal of Learner Corpus Research, 1(1): 58-95. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Xu, Yi (2014). 'A corpus-based functional study of shi…de constructions'. Chinese Language and Discourse 5 (2): 146-184.

Yoko Kagami (Tohoku University)

The Function of Polite Language as a Marker of Communication Awareness

This presentation focuses on the Japanese copula "desu," which is a form of honorifics in modern Japanese and conveys a polite attitude toward someone by using the statement at the end of the sentence. In practice, conveying politeness with "desu" does not suffice to express many

statements. Therefore, it is necessary to reexamine the meaning of "desu." Hence, there's a need to clarify that in modern Japanese, this copula is not only used to mean politeness, but also for communication awareness. Thus, explaining how honorifics are used in modern Japanese. In this presentation, three case studies will be discussed.

To begin with, unlike in the past, the use of "desu" depends on the impression the speaker or writer wants to express, rather than the hierarchical relationship. Around the end of World War II, "desu" was used to address parents, teachers, and other superiors. Nevertheless, it has become less stringent in recent years, and the choice is based on the level of intimacy and mutual personality with others.

Secondly, there are instances where determining fact use of "desu" are semantic, regardless of whether it is polite or not. Another copula, "da," is a plain copula for the polite copula "desu." However, it is not as straightforward compared to "desu." Some sentences can use "desu" but cannot use "da" because "desu" has a communicative meaning that "da" does not, such as "I am talking to you directly." In other words, there is also a semantic difference between "desu" in polite copula and "da" in plain copula.

Lastly, there are cases where sentences with "desu" and sentences without "desu" can be used in the same sentence. Even in a text written in a plain style, the polite copula "desu" can be occasionally used after a sentence. Since the author-reader connection remains the same. The use of "desu" does not depend on whether it is polite or not. In this situation, "desu" is used to draw the reader's attention through communicative awareness that "desu" possesses and emphasizes the sentence's essential points.

Thus, in recent years, "desu" has been widely used in modern Japanese in the sense of communication awareness as well as politeness. We can see that Japanese honorifics are not limited by the relationship with the other party but can be used according to what the speaker or writer wants to express.

Silvia Luzzietti (La Sapienza University of Rome)

Piṇḍaśāstra, an Āyurvedic Text in Khotanese

The key position of Khotan, located on the southern branch of the Silk Road, led this small kingdom to become one of the most important religious and trading centres in Central Asia during the first millennium CE. As Khotan was a major centre of Mahāyāna studies, a large part of its literature, written from the 5th to the 10th century, has Buddhist contents. However, a significant number of non-doctrinal works are also extant, among which the medical texts of Āyurvedic tradition are of great relevance. Khotanese medicine is primarily preserved in two main prose translations of Sanskrit originals found in the Caves of Thousand Buddhas near Dunhuang and datable to the 10th century: Ravigupta's Siddhasāra and the Jīvakapustaka. Other little examined Khotanese medical texts of the same period exist besides these two most widely known works.

My research focuses on one of these less-studied texts, a collection of prescriptions contained on the reverse of the Dunhuang manuscripts Pelliot chinois 2893 (P 2893) of the Bibliotheque Nationale de France and Ch. 00265 of the Stein collection at the British Library (shelf number IOL Khot S 9) that once formed a single scroll manuscript originally devoted to a Chinese Buddhist text, written on the obverse. The Late Khotanese text offers a wide range of medicated pastes or poultices (Sanskrit piṇḍa(ka)-), classified by types of diseases, and is now identified by the conventional title of Piṇḍaśāstra. The research aims at the revision and completion of the late Ronald E. Emmerick's unfinished work, who spent decades investigating the topic of Khotanese medical texts and left an unpublished provisional interpretation of about one-third of the Piṇḍaśāstra.

The presentation highlights through examples some of the discoveries, such as new etymologies and reinterpretations, and the various difficulties faced during the edition and translation of the text, due to our incomplete knowledge of the Khotanese medical terminology, such as the identification of ingredients and body parts.

Korefumi Nakano (Tohoku University)

What is the reality of magic? Focusing on a guru and clients in Cambodia

The purpose of this presentation is to clarify what is the "reality of magic." In Japan, we often hear the opinion that "magic is irrational and unscientific." Nonetheless, in societies there are people who are involved in magic practice.

This holds true in the case of Cambodia where I conducted research. Although some do not want to get involved in magic because they believe it is ineffective, others rely on magic and visit gurus called the Kru Khmers. What is the reason therefore for their reliance on magic, or the "reality of magic"? Moreover, how is this manifested in practice and how does it affect clients? To examine these questions, this presentation will use, as a case study, magic as practiced by Kru Khmers in Cambodia.

In Cambodia, many Kru Khmers practice magic. These practices include bone setting, massage, herbal prescriptions, and divination. Different Kru Khmers specialize in their own fields of magic practice. In the case of one Kru Khmer who specializes in divination, magic is performed in a room at his residence, but it is not a closed space. The neighbors know when the practice is taking place, and they are free to come and go to watch it happening. There are always a dozen onlookers during the practice, as well as a few clients waiting for their turn to be cured. The Kru Khmer shares the client's personal information and problems with all the other participants, sometimes interjected with chit-chat and humorous remarks that elicit laughter from the onlookers, while explaining the cause of the problem and other issues in accordance with the magical cosmology being used to solve the problem. However, it is not only the Kru Khmer and the client who have conversations during these sessions.

When some of the onlookers chatted with the people around them, adding their own interpretations to the Kru Khmer's words and actions, he neither interrupted nor denied them, and sometimes

nodded in agreement. Listening to these onlookers' "chats about the interpretation of magic" while waiting their turn, one client skeptical of magic said, "I don't understand what the Kru Khmer says, but I can understand what they say," showing that an initially skeptical attitude toward magic gradually changed to a positive one. Since then, this person has started to visit Kru Khmer more often.

As described above, in the practice of magic in modern Cambodian society, not only the words and actions of the guru, but simple language explanation and interpretation by other participants can also change the attitude of someone who is skeptical of magic to a positive one. Thus, the seemingly irrational and unrealistic experience of magic is understood through the words and attitudes of the guru and other participants, and then becomes a "reality of magic" when combined with the client's previously acquired "general" knowledge and experience.

Wu Peiyao (Tohoku University)

The Discourse on "Faith" and "Cult" in Japan: An approach on the Religious Studies of Anesaki Masaharu

As described in the past scholarship in religious studies, the appropriation of the concept "religion" in modern Japan made "Buddhism" enter a transformation process that led, ultimately, to the reimagining of its very content: according to the historian of religions Isomae Junichi, one of these elements was, for instance, an emphasis on "belief (verbalized belief system such as doctrine)" to the detriment of "practice (non-verbal customs such as rituals)." Recently, it has been pointed out by several related studies that the dichotomy of "belief" and "practice" needs to be reconsidered. This presentation intends to approach the issue from a new perspective by focusing on the re-interpretation of "faith" (shinkō) and "cult" (girei)—all-important factors of "belief" and "practice" respectively—in the field of religious studies in 1900s.

This presentation explores the discourse on "faith" and "cult" in the work of Anesaki Masaharu (1873-1949), a leading intellectual in the Meiji period. As the first professor of the newly-established academic department of religious studies at Tokyo University in 1905, he played a central role in depicting "religion" as a "sui generis" phenomenon. Having received his PhD in 1898 at Tokyo University, Anesaki published his work on religious studies An Introduction of Religious Studies (1900) before going on a study trip to Europe from 1900 to 1903. While lesser known than being the epitome of religious studies, Anesaki was also one of the first scholars who attempted to situate "cult" in the history of religions, which is already evident in An Introduction of Religious Studies.

For Anesaki, rather than being merely a means (hōben) to the goal of religion, "cult" itself, as well as "faith," are both manifestations of the inner "religious consciousness" or "religious will." Moreover, it is through the practices of "rites" (saigi) and "cult" that people enter the presence of God (kami) and enhance their "faith" towards it. In other words, "faith" and "cult" are connected in the way that "faith" is acquired and affirmed through the practice of "cult," while "cult" is performed out of the passion of "faith." In addition to analyzing the relationship between "faith"

and "cult" in Anesaki's work, this presentation intends to consider Anesaki's intellectual enterprise in the larger context of the 1900s, during which period a discursive space of shūyō was created. A number of Buddhist and Christian intellectuals involved in the discussions including Anesaki. Anesaki demonstrated the development of religion from "egoism" (shugashugi) "heteronomism" (taritsushugi) to "ethical autonomism" (jiritsushugi), and explained the differences of each stage by focusing on religious morality and shūyō. It is no surprise that he deemed "ethical autonomism" as the ideal of shūyō, characterized by the combination of "faith" and "cult."

As a key figure in the history of Japanese religious studies who vigorously engaged in the discussions regarding "religion" both in Japan and in the Anglophone world, Anesaki's work illustrates the complex way that European thought was appropriated in Japan, and how these ideas were re-constructed in the heated-debate of shūyō at the turn of the century.

Simone Petrillo (La Sapienza University of Rome)

Centralizing the Peripheral: Andalusi Islam Between 8th and 9th Century

Traditionally, medieval narratives of the events surrounding the early Islamic community pay little attention to Spain, an exotic, peripheral land at the western end of the known world. Moreover, the high degree of independence of al-Andalus has made its history an "exception" from the rest of the Arab-Muslim world. Nevertheless, Andalusi history can be read as a continuous effort to centralize what geography had placed on the periphery. Starting from the arrival of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (138/756) and especially with the consolidation of the Umayyad state during the 9th century, al-Andalus embarked on a season of commercial and political contacts and close cultural confrontation with the Abbasid East, looking for knowledge worth-acquiring and bringing it back to the homeland (Ar. waṭan) to re-elaborate it in an original way. In this regard, Ross Brann has recently spoken of "tropes of Andalusian exceptionalism." Indeed, this singularity has influenced the social, political, economic, and literary history of al-Andalus on many levels.

Within this framework, my presentation aims at retracing the religious history of al-Andalus, highlighting the original aspects compared to the tradition emerging in the East. In particular, I will discuss the peculiar meaning of the hermeneutical category "Islamization" concerning the Iberian context. Special attention will be given to the weight that the Mālikī school had in the Andalusi society, and the strategies implemented by the first generation of fuqahāʾ (such as Ibn Ḥabīb, d. 238/853) to impose such an Islamic orthodoxy.

Sona Prabhakaran (Heidelberg University)

In Possession of the Goddess: Local Temple Politics and Warring Claims of Ownership Rights

Vernacular forms of religiosities practiced in rural Tamil Nadu (India) worship female deities, most predominantly Goddess Mariamman, who is conventionally considered the Guardian deity of a village. Most of the rituals performed for her correspond to her name and manifestation, which is validated by oral narratives. My ethnographic work revolves around one such Goddess in a peri-

urban village panchayat called Valangaiman. Through this paper, I shall attempt first to explore how the divinity and subjectivity of the Goddess are perceived and constructed by the interlocutors whose contesting caste identities play a vital role in the narration of myths and memorates associated with her. Following which I shall explore how these narratives play a prominent role in negotiating religious 'truths' within the communities, which are often appropriated to solidify ownership rights over religious praxis and spaces. This paper shall, therefore, seek to understand how the goddess and her ritual space becomes a contested site where the dominant caste, Padayatchi, attempts to exert its control by relying on oral narratives and institutional interventions, and how the marginalised caste, Dalits, uses the same site, to organise their resistance against exclusionary tactics, to claim their rightful ownership. At the heart of these conflicts and negotiations lies an undeified deity, space, an icon on whom continuous claims are made by different castes to re-align themselves within their social order.

Ali Razmkhah (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

Governance institutions of transhumant pastoralists of Iran; understanding and applying biocultural rights

Among the magnificent sociocultural diversity of Iran, the transhumant pastoralists have played a key role in social-political history and nature conservation. To govern the social ecological relations pertaining to their territories and regulating relations with other societal groups, the tribes have established specific governance institutions. Transhumant tribes have established these institutions based on their tribal social and hierarchical structures and fit their own worldviews, values, norms, knowledge, and practices as much as their climatic and environmental diversity and complex ecological conditions. However, in the recent past, transhumant pastoralists were forced to face issues that threatened their existence. Since the establishment of the modern nation-state and the influence of Western modernisation concepts, almost all governments have attempted to replace the traditional institutions of natural resource governance and the livelihood systems of transhumant pastoralists with modern governmental institutions. These and other ecologically damaging policies, as well as changing climatic conditions, have severely affected the natural resources, biodiversity and livelihoods of transhumant pastoralists and other local communities. Transhumant pastoralists have been facing serious consequences such as losing governance of their ancestral territories, insecure livelihoods, rural unemployment, migration to urban areas, and weakening of sociocultural identity. They have become impoverished and marginalised. Against this background, in this presentation, I focus on the governance institutions of the transhumant pastoralists of Iran to explore how transhumant pastoralists perceive their collective rights and responsibilities to conserve nature on their territories to better argue for ways to secure such rights and responsibilities. To examine and understand the social-ecological features, institution functioning, current status and role in nature conservation of transhumant tribes of Iran, two key concepts have guided us: 'territory of life' and 'biocultural rights'. I show that the study of Iranian transhumant pastoralists and their governing institutions within their territories of life significantly highlights the biocultural diversity, capacities, and rights of relevant communities in the particular socio-political conditions of the 20th Century's Iran. Through various case examples from several

transhumant tribes, I depict and explain the traditional institutions of transhumant pastoralists for governance and management of natural resources, how their own sense of their collective rights and responsibilities has unfolded in the past. Additionally, I try to examine to what extent they are applicable now and how biocultural rights can assist in this regard. In this context, I discuss various aspects of our ongoing research, specifically, the applied research component and using its process and results to strengthen existing governance institutions of transhumant pastoralists in Iran or support the endogenous bottom-up development of new ones.

Judhajit Sarkar (Heidelberg University)

Re-routing Expression: The Progressive-Modernist Interface in South Asian Poetry and Criticism

In this presentation, I would like to provide some glimpses from of my ongoing dissertation. The objective of my dissertation is to trace the genealogies of what may be called the instrumentalist and expressionist views of literature in three interrelated literary cultures of the Indian subcontinent, namely Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali. More specifically, I am examining the impact of these conceptual and frequently ideological polarizations on the production and reception of poetry in these languages in the mid-twentieth century. The period that I am looking at stretches from the late 1920s to the early 1960s, a tumultuous period in the political, social, and intellectual history of South Asia, which marked its transition from a colonial to a postcolonial entity. Consequently, the literary and cultural developments I elaborate upon in my dissertation were variously informed by contemporary international and domestic political events, including freedom struggle and the Partition of the subcontinent, the rise of fascism and the Second World War, and subsequently, the emergence of the Cold War global order.

Ever since the nineteenth century, with the consolidation of colonial educational and administrative apparatuses, literature in the 'vernacular' languages of India had been at the front line of negotiating questions of 'modernity' and in interpreting and disseminating the steady influx of concepts and practices associated with it. At this late hour of colonial rule in South Asia too, literature continued to play this role. As a result, the notions of 'newness', of modernity and modernism, of progress at both the intellectual and socio-economic fronts became major sites of contestation and negotiation, albeit always mediated by the experience of colonial subjugation and the then-going struggle for decolonization.

In this context, I am investigating the dual impact of 'progressivism' and 'modernism' on South Asian literary cultures. 'Progressivism' related to the Progressive Writers' Movement, a Marxist cultural movement that began in 1936 and eventually spread across all the major languages of South Asia. The aim of the Progressive Writers' Movement, according to its manifesto, was "to give expression to the changes taking place in Indian life and to assist the spirit of progress in the country". The implicit goal, however, was nothing short of a combined articulation of literature and politics, inspired by the Marxist view of history and socio-political transformation. My central concern is to offer a comparative perspective on the diverse consequences that this movement triggered in the three chosen languages of my study. These consequences also entailed, as opposed

to the overt politicization of the aesthetic that the progressivists proposed, an emphasis on literature's autonomy and on the primacy of self-expression. As a result, literary and cultural discourse in these languages remained embroiled in the dichotomy of social realism and expressionism for a long time in the twentieth century. This situation was further exacerbated by the cultural politics of the Cold War era, and played out differently in the newly independent nations of India and Pakistan, which were on different sides of the ideological divide characteristic of this period.

I do not intend to delve into the empirical details of these literary and discursive formations in the proposed presentation. Instead, I want to delineate the methodological questions that approaching such formations in the context of current academic trends like "global modernisms" or "world literature" much necessarily address. This would entail problematizing the notions of 'tradition', 'rupture', or 'innovation', with which the (predictably Eurocentric) discourse of aesthetic modernism is replete and examining the contradictions they trigger when applied to the South Asian context.

Tonio Savina (La Sapienza University of Rome)

Beyond the 'Chinese Space Threat': US-PRC satellite cooperation

As is known, China-US space relations are currently at a standstill. Indeed, the rise of Beijing in the space domain has caused a lot of concerns to US politicians and analysts, who look at the development of Chinese satellite and anti-satellite capabilities as a growing threat to US national security. That is why existing analyses of this topic have overwhelmingly focused on US-China space rivalry, describing the relation between the two powers as competitive for its entire existence (Hunter 2018). It was especially during the Trump presidency that the Chinese space threat paradigm – used up to that time only by the Congress, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense – was adopted by the White House to condemn the alleged Chinese theft of industrial secrets, espionage, military use of space technology, and weaponization of outer space.

However, the representation of US-China space relations as a timeless competition is nothing but an ahistorical political outlook: indeed, from 1972 to 1999, both sides also cooperated in commercial satellite launches. Looking beyond the Chinese space threat, this talk analyses space cooperation between China and the US, specifically focusing on the satellite market. It will first discuss US-China diplomatic talks on satellite ground stations during Nixon's era. Then it will focus on the commercial space industry, briefly examining the US willingness to use the Chinese Long March Rocket to launch American-built communication satellites. Finally, it will present some attempts made by G. W. Bush and Obama to establish a new path for cooperation; these efforts − although failed – have been seen as quite remarkable by some Chinese scholars (Wang 2004, Wu 2017), who have looked at them as an opportunity to start a cooperation in civilian space exploration.

Anna Scarabel (Heidelberg University / Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

To worship or not to worship?

The words of Dayānanda Sarasvatī and Svāmī Karapātrī Dayānanda Sarasvatī (1824 - 1883) was the founder of the cultural reformist movement Ārya Samāja (1875). He believed that the Vedas are the source of every truth and the testimony of an ancient past, when the Vedics were at their most of spirituality and technological development. Living at the time of the British domination of India, Svāmī Dayānanda wanted his countrymen to return to the splendor of the Vedic era and thus be able to stand up against foreign domination. In his view, modern India is a degenerated form of what used to be the Vedic society, where many of the 'modern aberrations' did not exist. In Dayananda's eyes, one of these aberrations is in fact the icon worship (mūrti pūjā), a devotional act directed towards unconscious beings, and thus sign of a decayed and superstitious society. According to the Ārya Samāja's tenets, there is only one God recipient of devotion, the formless (nirākara) Īśvara, who is both nirguṇa, free from the properties of matter, like sound, touch and form, and saguṇa, as its attributes are omniscient, all holiness and the similar qualities of infinite character. Svāmī Karapātrī (1907 - 1982), an influential monk of Vārāṇasī, voiced a critique to Dayananda's theology and thought, analyzing his positions from a traditionalist perspective. In fact, in order to criticize his opponent's statements and readings of the Vedas, he attempted to demonstrate that most of Dayānanda's words were either in contrast with the Vedas, or self-contradictory, or resembling the reasoning of a child. Svāmī Karapātrī lived almost a hundred years after Dayānanda and yet felt the urge to confute the Ārya Samāja's positions on icon worship, thus entering the 19th - 20th century vast and problematic debate on this topic. This paper illustrates a relevant case study fitting the colonial and post-colonial scholarship dealing with 'neo-Hindu' and 'traditionalist' groups. These two terms label two opposing Anna Scarabel PhD Workshop at Ca' Foscari 24.08.2021 2 tendencies underlying organizations and assemblies arising from the 19th century India onwards, respectively characterized by the impulse to reinterpretation of Hindu religious traditions and that of their preservation. While Svāmī Dayānanda (like other neo-Hindu oriented groups, e. g. the Brahmo Samāja) challenged the establishment with his views on devotional practices, Svāmī Karapātrī tried to preserve the practice of icon worship, fighting for the 'old' against the 'new'

Wang Xinru (Heidelberg University)

Japanese Perception of Nature: A Transcultural Analysis

It is generally believed that Japanese people are sensitive to the beauty of nature and their affection for nature has long been cultivated through their intimate interaction with it. This kind of narrative can be seen from pamphlets advertising the seasonal beauty of nature in Kyoto, to the labels attached to the bottled water sold in the vending machine, from the preface of an anthology of ancient waka poetry, to the first session of an introductory course dealing with Japanese aesthetics, so on and so forth. While the belief that Japanese have a deep love towards nature is not only pervasive in Japanese cultural context but also taken as something timeless, if we attempt to

scrutinize its history closely with a special focus on the Meiji period, then it would be clear that this belief is a transcultural formation.

In 1889, centering around the very concept of "nature," an argument broke out between two celebrities. In contrast to Iwamoto Yoshiharu's proposal that "the greatest literature is to reflect nature as it is" (最大の文学は自然の儘に自然を写し得たるもの也), Mori Ōgai contends that merely documenting nature cannot make fine art. It has been pointed out that their disagreement with each other was caused by their different understanding of "nature." Whilst Iwamoto perceives "nature" in a traditionally Japanese way, Mori's understanding of "nature" is a direct translation from the German word "Natur" that is embedded in Western context. However, it is arguably that Iwamoto's "nature" is not something that purely Japanese but a fusion where Western taste has also been added.

Starting with an investigation of the aforementioned thought-provoking debate, this presentation would analyze how the concept of "nature," as an object to be appreciated and worthy of love was formed at around the end of 19th century, and later prevailing the literary world during the first decades of the 20th century, in which various dynamics are involved. In a nutshell, Japanese' recognition that their love of nature is deep-rooted in their tradition, is in fact a reflection to the Romanticism at that time which mirrors westerners' sad eyes longing for returning back to a harmonious relationship with nature after it has been damaged by the light of Enlightenment.

Zifei Wang (Heidelberg University)

Re-Orienting the Roads to Everywhere: The Cultural Logic of Border-Crossing in a Sino-Egyptian Context

In his 1937 poet, W.H. Auden writes: "I'll love you, dear, I'll love you/ Till China and Africa meet." The encounter of China and Africa, deemed as remotely possible by the English poet, was used as a hyperbole to describe his eternal affection towards his lover. Little did the poet know, China and Africa had already established their connections centuries ago, as early as the Han Dynasty. Despite the extensive research on the global migration of Chinese, the Chinese diaspora in Africa has received little attention. In comparison to the Chinese immigrants in other parts of the world, Chinese in Africa are few in their numbers. It is estimated in 2012 that there are around 1 million Chinese residing in the continent of Africa, in contrast to the 30 million in Asia, 7.9 million in the Americas, and 2.5 million in Europe. Different from the Chinese diasporas elsewhere who prone to seek for permanent residency, Chinese in Africa are unique for their temporary nature. More Chinese immigrants only aspire to stay in Africa for the short term to boost their financial prospects and achieve upward mobility. What drives Chinese to move to Africa? How do China and Africa meet against the backdrop of an expanding China and an industrializing Africa? Are Chinese immigrants neo-imperialists who are making a raid on the developing land or agents of change that bring new perspectives and opportunities? Through exploring these questions, I hope to provide a tableau of the vibrant and complex transnational exchanges between China and Northern Africa. By focusing on the Chinese immigrants in Egypt, this article aims to shed light

on the cultural logics of border-crossing in a Sino-African context. With the objective to debunk the dramatic charges that Chinese immigrants have been accused with in the Western media, my paper introduces the transcultural dynamics that set ablaze the relations between Chinese immigrant population, the locals, and the respective governments of China and Egypt. By bringing to the forefront the diverse array of Chinese immigrants in Egypt, which encompass international students, religious refugees, middle-class entrepreneurs and low-income labourers, I will delineate how Chinese immigrants develop their flexible citizenship in the age of information. Ultimately, I intend to offer a bottom-up narrative on China's Belt and Road Initiatives, and complement to the lacking scholarship on the Chinese diaspora in Africa.