

Editor's Note

This issue comes out a few days after the German funding agencies announced their decision to extend the life of the Heidelberg Cluster—now retooled as “Asia and Europe in a Global Context: The Dynamics of Transculturality”—for another five years. This is good news for the growing field of transcultural studies. It also places a big burden and responsibility on the shoulders of the scholars working in this group to make the best of this unique chance. *Transcultural Studies* will strive to attract and present—together with contributions from other researchers in this field—some choice studies from the Cluster’s harvest.

Recent months have seen a lively discussion in academic circles and the press about the heavy financial burden that subscriptions to scholarly journals pose on universities. This has, as in the case of the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences, been accompanied by appeals to publish scholarly results in open-access formats. Many young scholars especially in the humanities, however, are concerned that most academic bodies making decisions on hiring, promotion, or tenure have yet to shed their set opinion that things not printed on paper are somehow “lightweight,” even if, as is the case with *Transcultural Studies*, the electronic journal features as strong a peer-review process as any respectable printed journal. This is where senior scholars can make a difference by deciding to embrace this format and actively contribute to establishing professionally run and academically vetted open-access journals as accepted venues for top-quality publications. From my personal experience I can say that the technical options offered by this medium and the reactions to my piece on “China ‘Asleep’ and ‘Awakening’” in TS 2011.1 has been most gratifying. Within days, I had readers’ reactions, some suggesting further supporting evidence, others taking issue with the translation in a footnote, and still others writing that they were using it for their teaching. A Chinese translation was started within weeks and two parts of it have now been published. Not least among the gratifications was the information that several thousand people had opened the file and the majority of them had downloaded it. It is my hope that this experience will encourage others. We have a steadily growing readership not least due to our recent inclusion into the lists and indices of various e-content aggregators and directories such as EBSCO and DOAJ.

This issue opens with Philipp Stockhammer’s study of the transcultural appropriation of Mycaenean pottery in a new environment in the Southern Levant. Through this shift of context, the complex interaction between the agency of the pottery forms and the humans fitting them to their uses leaves traces on the pottery shards themselves which can serve as silent evidence for the

underlying dynamics. Stockhammer therefore takes the evidence from his case study to critically probe the ability of different recent archaeological approaches to account for these dynamics, especially the agency of objects and their role as actants that prompt actions of humans. We hope this is the beginning of a discussion that others will join.

The study by Derya Bayır and Prakash Shah nicely inverts the European focus on Turkish immigrants by asking how British settlers in Turkey adjust to their new legal environment. Based on both the legal stipulations and interviews with British settlers and their Turkish neighbors, the article explores to what degree the capacity of the nation state is undermined by the messy transcultural mix of rights, assumed entitlements, and prejudice in law enforcement.

The series on multi-centred modernisms assembled by Monica Juneja and Franziska Koch continues with two contributions. Shukla Sawant, an artist and academic, draws our attention to vibrant collectives of artists in the Indian city of Bangalore whose experiments have yet to find a place in mainstream narratives of modernism, which still privilege canonical perspectives that have come to stand for the nation. Sawant brings to light untold stories of a movement the precedents of which go back to colonial times: engaged, collaborative art practices are seen as a gesture of opposition and re-humanization. These artists' collectives seek to restore social bonds by transcending the instrumentality of the market and by rejecting object-based contemporary art as being consumerist. The commitment which, according to Sawant, energizes this work suggests a renewal of the avant-garde's blurring of the line between art and life. Stray references to the links between early modernist artists from India and Expressionism point to an uncharted field of study, where hidden tracks cutting across the nation, the colony, and the metropolis need to be recovered, though many might be lost due to a significant, if often deliberate, lack of documentation.

The second contribution to the series, a talk by Christine Guth, is an experiment that goes back to the interactive format of the lecture series. We feature here a podcast of Guth's lecture of May 31, 2010, "The Multi-centred Modernities of Hokusai's 'Under the Wave off Kanagawa'," in which she explores the conflicting scholarly ascriptions wherein Japanese Ukiyo-e prints were cited as examples of "modernity" in the context of Edo urban culture and at the same time viewed as "traditional" in their role as precursors of Western modernism. A response by Daniel Shapiro, a young art historian and musicologist who participated in the seminar, is in the works and will be posted shortly under the comment section. We will study your reactions to this format to see whether it should be further pursued.

Rudolf G. Wagner