

**Gastvortrag**

Life of a Śaivite text

Māṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvācakam*

M.D. Muthukumaraswamy

Director of National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC), Chennai, India

DAAD Guest Lecture at Würzburg University, 1.5.2016 – 16.5.2016

Reading excerpts from the original Tamil poetry of Māṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvācakam* (3414 odd lines) and their English translations I would like to introduce, first of all, the importance *Tiruvācakam* (ninth century) enjoys among twelve canonical Tamil Śaivite texts known as Tirumuṟai. Describing the general characteristics of Tamil Śaivite bhakti poetry I would delineate the special qualities of Māṇikkavācakar's poetry as having a philosophical disposition, emotional intensity, and an easily identifiable personal voice. The recital of *Tiruvācakam* persists in the homes and temples of Tamil Nadu since the tenth century. Traditional singing of *Tiruvācakam* adheres to Tamil *paṇṇisai* and when Ilayaraja, a legendary Tamil film composer set *Tiruvācakam* to Western orchestral symphony music it did not succeed. Citing this example, I would argue that religious music preserves the integrity of the word and its possible contexts.

Tuesday, May 3 2016, 10.00 – 11.30

Am Hubland, Philosophiegebäude, Raum 8U11b

**Gastvortrag**

Narrative structures of transgender autobiographies

M.D. Muthukumaraswamy

Director of National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC), Chennai, India

DAAD Guest Lecture at Würzburg University, 1.5.2016 – 16.5.2016

Autobiography emerged as a prominent literary form in India when the marginalized such as the Dalits and the transgender people began to articulate their narratives. Revathi's *Unarvum Uravum*, *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*, Living Smile Vidya's *I am Vidya* and Priya Babu's *Mūnṛām Pālin Mukam* (not exactly an autobiography) are few of the notable examples of the transgender autobiographies. The autobiography as a literary form lends credence to the individual experiences, accommodates the spoken word, and brings the reader's attention the existential dilemma of the present. The reader is inevitably drawn into the autobiography to identify with the narrative voice, and to take a principled political stance with the author. In the transgender autobiographies, the awakening of a different sexual desire, shame of being exposed to the outside world, search for a transgender community, acceptance within a transgender community, rejection by the father and the brothers, support of the mother and the elder sister, and finding a life partner constitute the narrative elements in the structure of autobiographies.

Tuesday, May 3 2016, 16.15 – 17.45

Am Hubland, Philosophiegebäude, Raum 8U11b



Gastvortrag

*“You may take the boy out of village,
but you cannot take the village out of the boy.”*

Cultural memory and retention of identity in diasporic Tamil tales

M.D. Muthukumaraswamy

Director of National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC), Chennai, India

DAAD Guest Lecture at Würzburg University, 1.5.2016 – 16.5.2016

When the British offered the proverbial one-way ticket and forcibly migrated Tamil people to work as plantation labourers in Sri Lanka and Indian Ocean islands the people took with them a few humble cultural objects: a chutney maker, saplings of curry leaves and coriander plants, mango, coconut, and jasmine seeds, chapbook publications of Tamil folk dramas and prayers, and a lot folk tales and tunes in their memory. Today, nearly after a century, we see in Indian Ocean islands thick mango and coconut grooves filled with the fragrance of jasmine. The tales and dramas they carried with them creolized, lost their word-meanings, but persisted as sacred sound performances. Those performances united the communities and helped them to fight for their rights. Drawing upon two of National Folklore Support Centre's publications, *Indian Ocean Folktales* and *Folktales from Mauritius* I would like to explain the nature of cultural memory, which is the basis for Tamil diasporic music and cinema.

Monday, May 9 2016, 14.00 – 15.30

Am Hubland, Philosophiegebäude, Raum 8U11b

**Gastvortrag**

Crossing the borders and negotiating a dignified space

Music and Cinema of Tamil diaspora

M.D. Muthukumaraswamy

Director of National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC), Chennai, India

DAAD Guest Lecture at Würzburg University, 1.5.2016 – 16.5.2016

While the retention of cultural memory has its own benefits, it also prevents the diasporic Indian communities to take advantage of the choices offered by the foreign lands, and buries them in a racism, which is an extension of Indian caste system, as depicted in the inter-racial relationships of the film, *Mississippi Masala*. With regard to the Tamil diasporic communities while first generation of immigrants continue to carry on the fights of their homeland even in the alien soils, the second generation imagines their existence and identity through collection of images and sounds in genres accessible to youngsters. M.I.A's (born Mathangi Maya Arulpragasam, a British rap singer of Srilankan Tamil origin) music and videos offer the prototype of social imaginaries that characterise Tamil diasporic cinema. Its main message is that they cannot isolate themselves into their own world of homeland politics but they need to be active participants in the politics of their adopted homes as depicted in the film *Dheepan*.

Monday, May 9 2016, 15.30 – 17.00

Am Hubland, Philosophiegebäude, Raum 8U11b



Gastvortrag

Tamil Vaiṣṇavite bhakti texts

Nammālvār's *Tiruvaymōli* and Āṇḍāl's *Nācciyārtirumōli*

M.D. Muthukumaraswamy

Director of National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC), Chennai, India

DAAD Guest Lecture at Würzburg University, 1.5.2016 – 16.5.2016

Reading excerpts from the Tamil original Vaiṣṇavite bhakti texts of Nammālvār's *Tiruvaymōli* and Āṇḍāl's *Nācciyārtirumōli*. I would like to distinguish the two types of bhakti espoused by the Tamil Vaiṣṇavites. While Nammālvār's bhakti poems are philosophical and they demand intellectual engagement, Āṇḍāl's lyricism is sensuous, and it is direct in its expressions of sexual desire. The concept of bhakti transformed into an embodied emotion with the advent of Āṇḍāl, a woman bhakti poet. I would like to argue that the embodiment of bhakti is key to the understanding of textual foundations of religious life in Tamilnadu.

Tuesday, May 10 2016, 10.00 – 11.30

Am Hubland, Philosophiegebäude, Raum 8U11b

*Als GSiK-Vortrag
anrechenbar*

Of moustaches, turbans, and six-pack muscles and other stories:

Constructions of masculinities in Tamil cinema and contemporary paintings

M.D. Muthukumaraswamy

Director of National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC), Chennai, India

DAAD Guest Lecture at Würzburg University, 1.5.2016 – 16.5.2016

It is a well-established convention now in Tamil popular commercial cinema narratives that the woman would pursue the man, express her desire for him unabashedly and on his rejection she would embrace renunciation or death. In relation to the stereotypical projection of woman as an embodied figure of monogamous chastity, a vamp, or a whore Tamil popular cinema constructed masculinity as a pristine pure form of ideal qualities. Till the 1980s, the Tamil film heroes need not necessarily be physically handsome and many old heroes wooed heroines with wigs and unconcealed paunches. After the 1980s, the Tamil film heroes became useless vagabonds and jobless minions but they needed to have well-endowed bodies. Parallel to this development we see in the contemporary paintings of the 1970s the depiction of moustaches and turbans as expressions of Tamil masculinity. From the 1990s the contemporary paintings depict athletic male bodies and the masculinities associated with them as symptomatic of our desire to own, use, and destroy the Nature and its ecological fragility. My illustrated talk would trace the changes in the perceptions of masculinity.

Tuesday, May 10 2016, 14.15 – 15.45

Am Hubland, Philosophiegebäude, Raum 8U11b



Workshops on Gender Studies

M.D. Muthukumaraswamy

Director of National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC), Chennai, India
DAAD Guest Lecture at Würzburg University, 1.5.2016 – 16.5.2016

Relating Gender: The Invocation of Culture.

Aravannies of Tamil Nadu

Monday, May 2 2016, 16.15 – 17.45

Am Hubland, Philosophiegebäude, Room 803

A Transgender Community of North Karnataka in transregional discourses

Wednesday, May 4 2016, 14.15 – 15.45

Am Hubland, Philosophiegebäude, Room 8U6

Analysis and Interpretation of various Siri Texts

Wednesday, May 11 2016, 14.15 – 15.45

Am Hubland, Philosophiegebäude, Room 8U5

Lage Raum 8U11b

Am Hubland, Campus Süd, Philosophiegebäude

