



RUHR-UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM

BODY TROUBLE RELIGIOUS BOUNDARIES FOR SEX, GENDER, AND CORPOREALITY

10–14 March 2014 | San Millán de la Cogolla

Conveners: Alexandra Cuffel, Georgios Halkias, Ana Echevarría



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Monday, 10 March 2014

- 10:00 Bus trip to the monastery and accomodation
20:30 Supper

Tuesday, 11 March 2014

- 9:00 **Introduction**
Georgios Halkias, Alexandra Cuffel, Ana Echevarria
1st SESSION: MAKING WOMEN (UN)HOLY
Chair: Georgios Halkias
- 9:30 **The Manipulation of the Female Body: Interreligious Encounter in the Late Medieval Art and Society**
Sarit Shelev Eyni, (Hebrew University, Jerusalem)
- 10:15 **Giving Body by Losing One's Soul? Pregnancy in Islamic Religious Perspective**
Ana Echevarria (UNED, Madrid, Spain)
- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 **Representations in Gəʿəz Texts about Ethiopian Women: The Early Modern Genre of Female Saints' *Gädl* and the Modern Biography of Baf•na**
Selamawit Mecca, (Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia)
- 12:15 **Mary Magdalene: A Paradigmatic Mystic in Counter-Reformation Art**
Marion Steinicke (Ruhr University, Germany)
- 13:00 **Discussion**
- 14:00 Lunch
- 2nd SESSION: GENDER & SEX AS A DEFINITION OF "THE OTHER"
Chair: Jose Cabezon
- 16:00 ***Semper aliquid haeraet!* The Accusation of Fornication and of Sexualized Cults as a Means of Demarcation in the Bible**
Christian Frevel (Ruhr University, Germany)
- 16:45 Coffee break
- 17:15 **"They Will be too Scared to Notice that They're Naked!" Gender and Sex-related Questions in the Masā' il Abdallāh Ibn Salām**
Ulisse Cecini (Ruhr University, Germany)
- 18:00 **Discussion**
- 20:30 Dinner

Wednesday, 12 March 2014

3rd SESSION: MYSTICAL BODIES

Chair: Christian Frevel

- 9:30 **Sublimating the Body and Transcending a Gender in Indian Tantric Buddhism**
Vesna Wallace (University of California, Santa Barbara, USA)
- 10:15 **Coming Together in the Air: Mysticism and the Queering of Jesus in the *Toledot Yeshu***
Alexandra Cuffel (Ruhr University, Germany)
- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 **Damaging One's Body for the Sake of the Dharma? Aspects of Self-Immolation in Medieval Chinese Buddhism**
Christoph Anderl (Ruhr University, Germany)
- 12:15 **The Dangers of the Body in Early Jewish Mysticism**
Rebecca Lesses (Ithaca College, New York, US)
- 13:00 **Discussion**
- 14:00 Lunch

4th SESSION: GENDERED AMBIGUITIES

Chair: Amy Remensnyder

- 16:00 **A Buddhist Theory of Biological Sex, Gender and Sexuality**
Jose Cabezon (University of California, Santa Barbara, USA)
- 16:45 **St Francis's Ambivalent Body**
Nora Berend (University of Cambridge, UK; currently KHK Fellow)
- 17:30 Coffee break
- 18:00 **Changing Gender, Becoming Asexual or Acquiring the Marks of the Great Man: Taoist Modes of Sexual Bodily Alteration**
Stephen Eskildsen (The University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, USA; currently KHK Fellow)
- 18:45 **Discussion**
- 20:30 Dinner

Thursday, 13 March 2014

5th SESSION: PHYSICAL BODIES

Chair: Alexandra Cuffel

- 9:30 **The Formation of Daoism in the Light of the Theme "Body": Theories from Early Imperial China**
Licia di Giacinto (Ruhr University, Germany)
- 10:15 **Hoc Est Corpus Meum! Body-Talk in Orthodox Lutheran Protestantism in 18th-Century Germany**
Knut-Martin Stünkel (Ruhr University, Germany)

- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 **The Problem of a Body: Death, Corruption, and Eternal Life in the Sathya Sai Movement**
Tulasi Srinivas (Emerson College, Boston)
- 12:45 **Between Ithyphallism and Retraction: Representing the Male Organ in South Asian Pantheons**
Jessie Pons (Ruhr University, Germany)
- 13:00 **Discussion**
- 14:00 Lunch
- 16:00 **Guided Visit to the Monastery (de Suso, 6–11th centuries)**
- 17:30 Coffee break
- 18:00 **Research Roundtable: Future Collaborative Projects**
Conductors: Volkhard Krech & Ana Echevarria
- 20:30 Dinner

Friday, 14 March 2014

6th SESSION: MASCULINITY AND RELIGION

Chair: Nikolas Jaspert

- 9:30 **Fishing for Cod: The Role of the Penis in European Imperial Expansion**
Adam Knobler (Ruhr University, Germany)
- 10:15 **Masculinity of the Buddha: Supramundane Aesthetics and the Ambivalence of the Buddha's Body in Early India**
Sven Bretfeld (Ruhr University, Germany)
- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 **Ambivalent Models of Manliness in Medieval Islamic Hagiography**
Linda Jones (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain)
- 12:15 **Bodies of Praise: Strong Men and Erotic Women in Sinhala Buddhist Poetry**
Stephen C. Berkwitz (Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri)
- 13:00 **Discussion**
- 14:00 Lunch
- 16:30 **Guided Visit to the Monastery (de Yuso, mostly 15–18th-Century)**
- 17:30 Coffee break
- 18:00 **Final Roundtable and General Discussion**
Conductors: Amy Remensnyder (Brown University, USA), Nikolas Jaspert (Heidelberg University, Germany) & Georgios Halkias (Hong Kong University, HK)
- 19:00 Closing of the conference
- 20:00 Dinner

ABSTRACT

This conference will address the inherent ambiguity of religious approaches concerning the body in its multiform expressions that render them as 'myriad bodies,' which constitute the domain of religious subjects, instruments or mediums for doctrinal exegesis, interpretive and regulatory practices, disciplinary measures, and constructions in terms of sexuality and gender, while equally serving as markers of differentiation between different religious traditions, within the same tradition and between the religious and non-religious spheres.

The body as a site of religious colonization has been constructed and deconstructed from within a binary frame that invents and reinforces divisions and hierarchies between the 'male and female,' 'natural and unnatural,' 'eternal' and 'temporal,' 'physical and spiritual,' 'outer and inner,' 'pure and impure,' etc.; while as Foucault has pointed out, systems of power, like religions, define and reproduce the subjects they subsequently came to represent.

The stability and instability between these binary terms give rise to a number of challenges that may take the form of exploration, question and problematic: when and how does the body becomes a topic of doctrinal discourse, scriptural exegesis and institutional regimentation (i.e. monasticism, clerical hierarchies, public rituals, taboos, dressing codes, food abstention, and consumption, etc)? Can there be salvation, or even religion, with and without the body? How does religious language construct the categories of the body and its conflation in terms of sexual appetites, its gender (dis)continuities and the alleged relations between these? How does the differentiation between body and soul operate in the formation of religious discourse and institutional practice? Is there a recurring tension between Eastern and Western conceptions of body and religion even during a recent acceptance of Eastern prayer and concentration techniques? What is the agency of sexuality and gender in spiritual transformation? On the other hand, how is religion embodied and why do we feel the need to situate intellectual and gender excellence in the body?

If a stable notion of 'body' no longer proves to be a foundational premise of religious discourse, perhaps a new sort of religious exegesis is desirable to contest the very reification of gender and desire, one that would take the variable construction of corporeal identity as a normative prerequisite and an embodied soteriological goal.

VENUE

Hostería de San Millán
Monasterio de Yuso
26226 San Millán de la Cogolla
La Rioja, Spain
www.sanmillan.com/EN/hotel.html



Picture: Monasterio San Millán de la Cogolla, de Yuso
(cc) Luis Javier Modino Martínez

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