



Proposal for a reading Group

Working title: "Body, Crossings"

We are Marco Del Din and Zifei Wang, two doctoral students at the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies. As two young researchers committed to interdisciplinary scholarship, we believe in the importance of identifying and exploring trends within humanities and social sciences. We consider "Body" and "Crossings" as two keywords that can lead to productive discussions that enrich our understanding of various disciplines, including, but not limited to, gender studies, history, visual arts, and anthropology. Anchored by our primary interest in feminist theories and Asian studies, we aim to expand our frames of investigation through conversations with scholars from diverse backgrounds.

OVERARCHING THEMES OF THE GROUP

Body: The body is a site of both personal and societal negotiations, where various discourses intersect and entangle. Exploring the body as a locus of power, resistance, and embodiments allows us to unpack complex issues such as gender, sexuality, race, disability, and other axes of identity. Our aspiration is to investigate how the bodily existence of social beings is situated within various environments— encompassing metaphysical, discursive, and political dimensions. We plan to delve into key concepts such as "violence," "trauma," "memory," and "Anthropocene" in our exploration.

Crossings: We envision 'crossing' as an intricately complex and multifaceted notion. It encompasses not only the physical act of traversing borders, whether national or geographical, but also the profound transcendence of conceptual boundaries. These boundaries include, among others, those of gender, as well as the metaphysical divide between life and death. By embracing such a comprehensive understanding of 'crossing', we hope to incorporate diverse perspectives and pay meticulous attention to the liminal spaces, the "in-between", where the convergence of places, states, and ideas occurs.

INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

Our reading group will serve as a platform for interdisciplinary collaboration, bringing together scholars, researchers, and artists from different fields. This inclusive approach will enable us to draw upon the insights, methodologies, and theories from various disciplines, fostering a rich and multifaceted exploration of the themes at hand. Through collaborative discussion and

engagement with various perspectives, we aim to generate new insights, challenge disciplinary boundaries, and develop innovative research approaches.

SCHEDULE

The reading group will take place on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, depending on the preferences of the participants. We may also consider a hybrid format to maximize student participation and contribution and to allow students abroad to join.

Each week will revolve around a specific theme, accompanied by a designated common reading to facilitate discussions. Initially, Zifei and Marco will organize the sessions to streamline the launch of the reading group. However, we intend to collaborate with all participants in organizing future themes and readings. This inclusive approach aims to incorporate diverse academic perspectives and foster a non-hierarchical, mutually beneficial environment.

If there is interest among the participants, we are open to dedicating a few sessions for members to present their original research. This opportunity would allow them to receive feedback and test their ideas before a supportive audience of peers.

ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

The reading group will consist of regular meetings where participants will discuss key readings, present their research, and engage in critical conversations surrounding the themes of “Body” and “Crossings”. Additionally, in case the reading group proves successful, we plan to organise guest lectures, workshops, and interdisciplinary panels, inviting scholars and practitioners from various fields to share their insights and expertise.

We envision several outcomes resulting from this reading group:

1. **Knowledge Exchange:** Participants will have the opportunity to share their research findings, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches, fostering intellectual growth and cross-pollination of ideas.
2. **Community Engagement:** We are committed to building a sense of community beyond our reading group. To achieve this, we will organise public lectures and film screenings that explore the themes of “Body” and “Crossings.” These events will not only create opportunities for dialogue among scholars but also actively involve the wider academic community and the general public. By facilitating these interactions, we hope to promote a broader understanding and appreciation of the subjects under exploration.
3. **‘Visualization’ of the reading group:** in order to make the progress and state of the reading group visible, we would create a ‘project’ to be jointly conducted by all participants. This could potentially take various forms, such as an edited volume or a

blog, and its final format would be decided based on the preferences and ideas of the participants. Through this initiative, we aim to foster continuous engagement, knowledge dissemination, and collaboration both within our own community and with the academia more at large.

BUDGET

The requested funds will primarily be allocated to cover various expenses essential to the success of our project. These expenses include fees for guest speakers, materials required for workshops, and the organization of public events. A comprehensive budget breakdown will be provided once the initial project is approved, and further discussions with the other participants have taken place to finalize the schedule.

CONTACTS

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