

Departamental Colloquium - History Department Summer Semester 2023

Material hermeneutics and visual remediation: missionary messaging in colonial and postcolonial India, 1820-1950

Prof. Tim Allender
(University of Sydney)

This paper concerns the projection of the image as it portrayed the flawed business of bringing traditional Indian children into Western colonial educational and medical spaces. From the early nineteenth century, the paper also explores the semiotics engaged in such transitioning, though from a Western standpoint, but with a surprising Western cognisance of this as well. In the hands of missionaries in



particular, the image was a controlled and controlling medium. Its projections could have a dual meaning – relieved of text which could otherwise convey only one message of order and hygiene as eugenic discourses pulsed through both sides of the colonial coin.

In the twentieth century, these visual and spatial cues of missionary cognisance and dissonance persisted, travelling over the rough terrain created by the British raj. As the tide went out on empire in 1947, they then helped some Roman Catholic orders in particular, to disentangle themselves from the colonial project itself and to 'stay on' on when the empire to which they had once belonged had long past. This talk is based, in part, on the speaker's forthcoming book: *Empire Religiosity* (Manchester University Press: Studies in Imperialism Series).



More information

Thursday 06.07.2023
Room CATS 010.01.05 - Hörsaal
16:15 CEST