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German  
Historical  
Institute  
London

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# Emotional Journeys

## Itinerant Theatres, Audiences, and Adaptation in the Long 19th Century

— *Call for Papers* —

**Date:** 19-20 November

**Deadline:** 14 July

In the nineteenth century, theatre was one of the most popular and important means of entertainment. Although only major cities could sustain more than one playhouse, theatrical touring companies brought successful plays to smaller towns and sometimes even performed in the countryside. Most of these troupes stayed within their country of origin, but some ventured further afield and performed before audiences of other cultural backgrounds. For instance, British touring companies travelled throughout the entire British Empire, while Parsee itinerant theatres performed before diverse audiences all over India and as far away as Southeast Asia.

This raises some interesting questions, not least for the history of emotions. Popular theatre entertained by addressing the emotions of its audiences: comedies appealed to humour, melodramas to fear and compassion. Emotions being culturally constructed, what happened when a play was performed in a different cultural context? How were humour, melodrama, and other genres translated? And what were the local (perhaps vernacular) idioms that mediated the feelings that genres are (in theory) supposed to make legible to an audience? How did touring companies adapt their repertoires? And if they did not, what kinds of cultural work were they doing by expecting audiences to comprehend their plots, idioms, and, of course, genres?

The workshop wants to address these questions by looking specifically at touring companies that crossed cultural borders, like, for example, European companies in Asia and South America, Parsee companies in India and Asian companies in Europe. It asks how these troupes were set up, which audiences they catered to and how these audiences perceived the performances.

We welcome proposals for twenty-minute presentations. Please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words, along with a short CV, by 14 July 2015 to both Kedar Kulkarni (Max Planck Institute for Human Development) at [kulkarni@mpib-berlin.mpg.de](mailto:kulkarni@mpib-berlin.mpg.de) and Tobias Becker (German Historical Institute) at [becker@ghil.ac.uk](mailto:becker@ghil.ac.uk). Accommodation during the conference will be covered. Up to 200€ for airfare will be reimbursed to those traveling within Europe; 800€ for those traveling from elsewhere.

**Venue:**

German Historical Institute  
17 Bloomsbury Square  
London WC1A 2NJ