

# CENTRE OF GERMAN STUDIES JNU

**International Conference (Online)  
(17-20 November, 2021)**

## **AESTHETICS ACROSS CULTURES**



Every creative work be it in art, literature, music, films, photography, advertising, fashion and architecture contains invariably traces of borrowing, in bits and pieces, in a fragmentary kind of way, a phenomenon that is now commonly referred to in literary criticism as intertextuality, a term coined in the sixties by the Bulgarian-French semiotician Julia Kristeva. Around the same time, Claude Lévi-Strauss gave it an anthropological turn in the domain of mythical thought terming the phenomenon intellectual *bricolage*, a French word for a

reconstruction from whatever is available, the prior, the second-hand material. In his essay *Art of the Novel* (1988) Milan Kundera expresses it in different words with specific reference to literature that there is a spirit of continuity in the history of literature, that each work is an answer to preceding ones. Ideas received from the past enter into new narrative-discourses, consciously or unconsciously, the old signifiers combining with the new ones to create new formal and conceptual constructs. This “cross-fertilisation” is at times accepted as inspiration and influence and at times written off as imitation, appropriation, recycling or plagiarism. It could take the form of parody or nostalgia for the past as in retro narratives. It could be intermedial and cross cultural. It is equally true that structural similarities may sometimes exist between texts without their creators being aware of the existence of the other. Aboriginal art of

Canada, Australia, India and Africa shows striking similarities despite the absence of influence and different time and space. Propp analysed this phenomenon with fairy tales and Lévi-Strauss with myths. In any case there are no hard and fast rules in the semiotics of aesthetic mixing. The redistribution, realignment and remixing of the same motifs in a different time and space emancipate the old signifiers, not completely but to some extent, from the old contexts and meanings, generating new or partially new significations. The conference seeks to deliberate on the interlinkages, the continuity and the changes that accompany this process.

**Call for Papers:** We invite papers from various domains of knowledge. Please send your abstracts (250 words) by 30 July, 2021 to [singh.rosy@gmail.com](mailto:singh.rosy@gmail.com)  
You will be informed by 10. August, 2021 regarding the acceptance of your abstract.

**Language:** English and German

**(Picture credit: Setsiri Silapasuwanchal)**