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Crossing Boundaries: Transforming Experiences in Indian Literature and Art

The present volume of *Cracow Indological Studies*, “Crossing Boundaries. Transforming Experiences in Indian Literature and Art”, is mainly, though not exclusively, a collection of articles based on papers presented at the International Seminar under the same title held in Cracow in September, 2016.

The subject of the 2016 Cracow Seminar originated from the idea proposed by Professor C. Rajendran (Calicut University; Sree Sankaracharya University, Kaladi) during the discussion closing the annual meeting of scholars associated with the research group formed almost twenty years ago by the South Asian Studies centres of five universities: University of Milan, Charles University in Prague, Jagiellonian University in Cracow, University of Warsaw and University of Cagliari. Initially, the seminar planned to take place in Cracow in 2016 was intended to concern the topics of commercial trade, bazaars, the migration of peoples, ideas and objects and transforming influences of such encounters as reflected in Indian literature and art. The reformulation of the topic, however, allows reflection on the crossing of borders—not only natural, political or cultural boundaries but also those between the spiritual and the material, between the worlds of ideas and human existence. Crossing the border implies also the presence of liminal spaces. The categories of limit and liminality form one of the paradigms

of human thought. Furthermore, the very setting of boundaries elicits the question of what it means to cross them and provokes thought about their aims.

The participants of the Seminar addressed many of the possible aspects of the topic proposed in its title by delivering 27 speeches. Most of their contributions to the subject as well as the papers sent for publication later on by the researchers not present during the Seminar but willing to share their views will form two parts of *Cracow Indological Studies*: vol. 21 No 2 and vol. 22 No 1.

One of our colleagues will not see the volume with her article in it. Klara Gönc Moaçanin passed away on the 10th of October 2019. She and our colleague Przemysław Piekarski, who worked at the Department of Indian Studies in Cracow for many years, have crossed the boundary which unavoidably limits our earthly existence but they both will stay in the memory of those who knew them and esteemed them. To bid them farewell we dedicate this volume to their memory.

While talking about crossing the borders, one of the first associations which comes to mind will be travelling. If we talk about distant travels, it often means contact with other cultures. **David Pierdominici Leão** speaks about such an encounter with a distant and exotic culture in his paper based on the 7th canto of *Os Lusíadas* written by Luís Vaz de Camões, a Portuguese poet and traveller, who stayed in India in the period 1555–1567. The first part of the article provides a brief account of the poet's life. The second part analyses selected *ottavas* describing the arrival of Portuguese sailors and their first meeting with emissaries from the Zamorin. Camões provides a general description of Indian landscapes, reports on different ethnic groups inhabiting the subcontinent and depicts political organization, social structure and religious traditions of Malabar. He vividly describes the marvel of the Portuguese in front of a Hindu temple. Pierdominici Leão shows that to some extent the poet's perception of India derives from his educational formation but one should not underestimate his powers of observation. Camões's travels should not be described as only a crossing of physical boundaries: "they were an attempt to understand a different culture".

Four papers included in the volume are dedicated to different aspects of boundary crossing in classical Sanskrit literature (*kāvya*).

Thus, **Klara Gönc Moaçanin**'s article discusses various ways of boundary crossing in selected *kāvya* works. Firstly, she examines how Kālidāsa transforms well-known mythological stories in his dramas, the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* and the *Vikramorvaśīya*. Various alternations of the plots are analysed here in relation to the story of Śakuntalā in the *Mahābhārata* and the story of Purūravas and Urvaśī in RV 10, 95 respectively. The subject of the second part of the article is prose novels (*gadyakāvya*). Gönc Moaçanin deals with the question of crossing geographical boundaries in Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita*. Then Subandhu's *Vāsavadattā* is briefly referred to as an example of a novel which draws extensively on earlier works and mythological motifs. Finally, she demonstrates how boundaries are crossed in Bāṇa's *Kādambarī* through characters' reincarnations in space and time.

In turn, **Anna Trynkowska** deals in her paper with the metaphor of boundary crossing in classical Sanskrit literature, particularly in *mahākāvya*s. To analyse instances from court poetry she applies the theory of 'conceptual metaphor' as defined by cognitive linguistics. Trynkowska demonstrates that in classical Sanskrit literature a non-physical boundary of propriety/lawful conduct is regularly expressed as a physical boundary. In most analysed examples the crossing of these boundaries results from intense emotions and is viewed negatively. Staying within the boundaries of proper conduct is consistently advised. A person staying within/crossing the boundaries of propriety is most frequently conceptualized as the ocean, normally staying in its designated location but overflowing its shorelines at the time of the destruction of the universe.

The next article, authored by **Danielle Feller**, concerns the sphere in which the topics of nourishment and sexuality meet. They both were the subject of different studies but in the article *Food and Love in Sanskrit Poetry: On the Margin of Desires*, as the title itself suggests, they are studied in combination and in the corpus of the texts belonging to *kāvya* tradition. Feller asks the question if in Sanskrit poetry the body,

or its parts, is compared to food-items. She also focuses on the issue whether “eating together, or feeding each other in the case of a couple of lovers, are common manifestations of love, or lead to love-making, or form a part of love-play as such.” The reader is guided carefully through the collected expressions comparing parts of the body and items of food or drink. Feller concludes this section with the statement that “comparisons between parts of the body and edibles are rare, because food and eating are generally not considered to be romantic in Sanskrit poetry.” On the other hand, drinking forms one of the indispensable subjects for a *mahākāvya*, a fact which results in the great number of comparisons between mouths, lips and breasts and ambrosia, nectar, honey, wine, and so on.

As far as the question of eating and drinking together as a prelude to love scenes is concerned, it turns out that the erotic mood is generated by the descriptions “of couples sharing drinks and food mostly in the case of animal couples, not humans”, although the *Mahābhārata* (3.110–113) and the *Brhatkathāślokaśamgraha* (18.257–313) provide us with such rare instances. However, drinking wine as well as chewing betel frequently introduce erotic sequences in the poems. The last part of the paper brings negative evidence, i.e. it shows what longing for love causes: lack of appetite and loss of weight. Finally, food can be also used in order to create sentiments other than erotic, namely comic and disgusting *rasas*. Danielle Feller closes her in-depth investigations with a couple of conclusions, showing that the analogies between parts of the body and edibles concern exclusively female bodies. She also points to the literary theories and food analogies (*rasa* theory and *kāvya-pāka*) and gives plausible explanations why the subject of food could be considered by Sanskrit poets as lacking *decorum*.

Hermina Cielas deals with the question of crossing boundaries of a literary genre in Dharmadāsa’s *Vidagdhamukhamanḍana*, “The Ornament of the Wise Man’s Mouth” (ca. 11th century). The first part of the article discusses the scope of *citrakāvya* (Sanskrit figurative poetry) focusing on *bandhas*, i.e. verses which can be presented

in a visual form of natural objects. The second part of the paper is dedicated specifically to the work of Dharmadāsa, a popular collection of literary riddles and *bandhas*. The text was composed with the aim of helping adepts willing to participate in scholarly debates. Cielas provides a thorough analysis of the selected *bandhas* to demonstrate in which way Dharmadāsa crossed the rules regulating the composition of specific *bandha* figures. Modifications introduced into well-known patterns significantly increased the level of difficulty of his riddles.

With the paper of **Chiara Neri** and **Tiziana Pontillo** we are taken to the realm of religious literature. The article examines *yogakṣema/yogakkhema* compounds in Sanskrit and Pali sources. The compound *yogakṣema* in the *Taittirīya-upaniṣad* is usually translated as a *dvandva*. Similarly, the occurrence of the compound in the *Bhagavadgītā* is regularly interpreted by translators as a *dvandva* in the light of commentarial literature, whereas the cognate *yogakkhema* in the Pali Canon is consistently analysed as a *tatpuruṣa*. Neri and Pontillo show that in both, the *Taittirīya-upaniṣad* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, the compound in question should be interpreted as a *tatpuruṣa*. They also demonstrate that the compound is used here in the sense of the *Summum Bonum*, understood as the ultimate rest and freedom from exertion. Such an understanding of the compound might have been influenced by early Buddhism.

Renate Söhnen-Thieme deals in her paper with crossing border lines between the Jain textual traditions and the visual representations of Jinas. The article elaborates three stages of pictorial representations. Firstly, it analyses sculptures of Jinas belonging to the early and possibly pre-textual period (ca. 500 BC–500 AD). The second part of the paper is dedicated to narrative illustrations included in manuscripts of Bhadrabāhu's *Kalpasūtra* (ca. 6th cent. AD), containing accounts of the four most popular Jinas. Interestingly, miniatures are not restricted to the stories presented in the text which they are meant to illustrate. Finally, the article explores the miniatures found in the *Bhūpālastotra*, ascribed to Āśādhara (first half of 13th cent. AD). The *Bhūpālastotra* praises the 24 Jinas, which are

visually depicted in traditional sequence, with their typical attributes. Söhnen-Thieme points out the efforts made by artists to translate various parts of the eulogies into the visual medium.

Ewa Dębicka-Borek's article deals with yet another aspect of crossing borders, namely in the sense of leaving the domesticated space and entering the realm of forests and tribal people. The case under study is a procession taking place during hunting festivals. Hunting processions were performed mainly on two occasions: during a "great festival" (*mahotsava*) and during the festival for Vīralakṣmī (*vīralakṣmyutsava*). The author of the paper, in historical perspective, delves into all relevant text passages from Pāñcarātra *saṃhitās* that are available to us, also comparing them with Śaiva sources. Moreover, Dębicka-Borek not only traces the historical development of a hunt ritual but also explores its connections to the royal circle against the background provided by the political situation in the Vijayanagara kingdom. She points to the presence of two different patterns in the hunt ritual mapping a ruler's relation to his realm: 1. a ruler who enjoys it (as in the case of a hunting game in a garden), 2. a ruler who expands it (as in terms of subjugation of new territories traversed while hunting in a forest).

The subject of **Jacek Woźniak**'s paper, based on works of the *ālvārs*, Tamil Vaiṣṇava poet-saints from the early Medieval period, is a peculiar way of crossing boundaries between God and a soul. The article provides textual evidence presenting devotees in a very unusual position: instead of remaining slaves of God they take control over him. Woźniak analyses, one after the other, the *ālvārs*' stanzas which depict the following situations: possessing God (1), devouring or swallowing him (2), the erotic relation to him (3), threatening him (4), parental love towards God or treating him as a child (5) and enshrining Him in a temple (6). These acts of devotees are motivated by love and irresistible desire to unite with God. On the other hand, God "loves them so much that He allows them to do all these things to Him".

In turn, **Danuta Stasik**'s paper deals with the concept of *lakṣmaṇ-rekhā*, a strict moral boundary that should not be crossed. First,

the article explores the textual evidences from popular Hindi works, such as: Tulsīdās's *Rāmcaritmānas*, Sūrdās's *Sūrsāgar*, Keśavdās's *Rāmchandracandrikā* and the *Rādheśyām Rāmāyaṇ*. The second part of the paper provides definitions of *lakṣmaṇ-rekhā* from dictionaries of modern Hindi and discusses the usage of *lakṣmaṇ-rekhā* in popular parlance, quoting several examples from books and the media. The last part of the paper views the concept of *lakṣmaṇ-rekhā* in the light of Epstein's theory of symbolic boundaries. Stasik shows that *lakṣmaṇ-rekhā* is a symbolic boundary that divides "the known, unfamiliar, and permissible from the unknown, unfamiliar, dangerous, impermissible". Even unintentional transgression of this boundary unavoidably incurs danger. *Lakṣmaṇ-rekhā* symbolises also social control of women.

The articles collected in this volume explore and demonstrate different interpretative possibilities and the potential of the proposed topic. They refer to different literary works in various Indian languages and other texts of culture originating in various contexts and periods of Indian history.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the authors who decided to contribute to such a volume as well as to all the assessors of the articles, who kindly agreed to evaluate the papers.

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