



ZMO-Kolloquium

“New Perspectives on Gender and Globalization”

Thursday, 25 February 2010, 6 pm

How to Bring a Global Perspective on Gender?

Lecture by Mrinalini Sinha

Venue

Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33
Conference Hall

14129 Berlin

What, in terms of gender, does a global context have to offer? Or to put it differently: does gender as an object of inquiry or a tool of analysis in a variety of global contexts merely play out a European story with a bit of local color? These, indeed, are the kinds of provocations raised recently by a historiographical project aimed at “provincializing Europe”: that is, to putting Europe in its parochial place instead of allowing it to masquerade falsely as the universal. Yet to seek out “pure” or “autonomous” non-European alternatives, in the wake of the history of European imperialism, would clearly be disingenuous at best. The categories of European political thought, as Dipesh Chakrabarty reminds us, are both “indispensable” and, ultimately, also “inadequate” for writing Third World histories. How, then, might gender – arguably, a concept that arises out of a particular European context – contribute to the project of such a recasting of Eurocentric historiography? And, in turn, what might a global perspective add to the “usefulness” of gender as a tool of analysis? I hope to take up this two-part challenge by offering some tentative thoughts derived from what I think are the implications of much of the already-existing scholarship on women’s and gender history in Third World contexts.

Dr. Mrinalini Sinha is Liberal Arts Research Professor, Professor of History and Women’s Studies at the Department of History of Pennsylvania State University. She has received a B.A. in English Studies from Delhi University in 1980 and an MA in International Studies from Jawarhalal Nehru University in New Delhi in 1982. She then went on to study history at the State University of New York at Stony Brook where she received her MA in 1983 and her PhD in 1988.

Besides numerous articles and book chapters on Gender and Imperialism, Mrinalini Sinha is the author of *Colonial Masculinity: The ‘manly Englishman’ and the ‘effeminate Bengali’ in the late nineteenth century*, published in 1995. This study focuses on the construction of a politics of ‘colonial masculinity’ through which the British responded to the political challenge from an educated urban middle-class in India in the late nineteenth century. This book was followed by *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire*, published by Duke University Press in 2006, which studies the political transformations of the British-Indian connection in the post-First World-War period through constructions of a new collective identity for women.

Professor Sinha is currently working on a book project focusing on the concept of imperial citizenship, the demand for the rights of Indians as British subjects, in colonial India.

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