



– Institute’s Colloquium –

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**Producing Indigeneity in India –
Colonial Ethnography, Media Infrastructures, and
Romance Through the Lens of a Santali Music Video**

Together with artists from the Santal “indigenous” community, I participated in the production of a music video album in India. In my presentation, I acknowledge the prominence of popularized markers of Santal “tradition” such as costumes, tunes, and instruments like the flute in the hit music video “Injurious to Health” deriving from colonial ethnographic writing. The video’s narrative form of a jokey anthem underscores its typified display of ‘Santalness’. In producing such songs, however, artists explained me as being in a distance from their own culture which they reflect on and partially criticize through their work. Furthermore, they see themselves to be part of wider global/ South Asian fields of cultural production and are inspired by recent trends in South Asian film industries at a large. If indigenous pop songs are seen as mediated versions of “indigenous culture”, I argue, the song can truly contribute to a revitalization of Santal culture. But even more significantly for its primary audience of Santal youth, the video offers a means of celebrating the culturally-specific emotions that are shared at village dances, including the forms of romancing associated with such events. This, however, stands in contrast to more conservative understandings of Santal values. I thus present my ethnography of the production process of the song “Injurious to Health” as evidence that “indigenous media” are important part of producing an indigenous belonging. However, at the same moment film maker are breaking away from and are criticizing concepts and ideas related to the idea of being indigenous.

Wednesday, June 26th 2019
4-6 p.m.
Institute of Ethnology
Stuttstraße 21, Raum STU 105 (2.10)

Everybody is welcome!