**Oct 24** **Francis Zimmermann** EHESS **(**Paris**)**

**Tramping up the road in silence on his way to Benares;** Anthropological remarks on silence, voice-over, and iconicity

The lonely wayfarer, fugitive, pilgrim or renouncer who takes the road to purposely cultivate voicelessness and anonymity, actually develops a pragmatics of silence which, far from being a solely personal act of the single individual, entails interactive gesture and intersubjective processes of naming. This presentation will be based on the story of Paramu Asan in the 1880s, who renounces his position as the head of a prestigious Nayar family and departs for Benares. It is part of a forthcoming book on *Naming in reported thought* for which illustrations are taken from Malayalam literature where techniques of stylization like reported speech, skaz and parody are used extensively by a number of most talented writers. Paramu Asan's tribulations are recounted by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai in *Kayar (Coir)*, a saga composed from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s which reconstructs the social, political and cultural history of Kuttanad in Kerala, a land famous for its polders reclaimed from the backwaters for rice cultivation and for its being the birthplace of communism.

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