

Shaping Asia

Energetic Inheritance

Sensing the Heritage of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi (1207-1273)

Dr. Çiçek İlengiz

Max Planck Institute for the Study
of Religious and Ethnic Diversity

Thursday, 27 Jan. 2022

10:15–11:45 (CET)

Zoom event

Every year more than 2.5 million people from all around the world gather in Konya, a city in central Anatolia in contemporary Turkey, to visit the musealized tomb of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi. The teachings and poems of the 13th century Sufi philosopher have influenced not only Muslim communities but have reached a global crowd through diverse policies of heritagization. Thanks to UNESCO's promotion of Mevlana, today his tomb host believers of Abrahamic religions along with hippies, shamans, Osho followers, mediums and fortune tellers among many others. The yearly gatherings during the month of December to commemorate his "merging with God" is called the love-pilgrimage. In contrast to the Turkish government's and UNESCO's framings of Mevlana's heritage, the love-pilgrims gather to mingle with the energy of love that the tomb of Mevlana radiates. Visiting his tomb and participating to ecstatic rituals organized by the pilgrims are ways to get aligned with Mevlana's spiritual love. Analyzing the multilayered policies of heritagization of a Sufi mystic, the presentation illustrates the intertwined relationship between the processes of culturalization and spiritualization. Based on ethnographic research the presentation conceptualizes the love pilgrim's sensory experience as a modality of spiritual inheritance. It argues that a focus on sensing allows us to grasp genealogies of inheritance that are not necessarily based on shared historical and/or geographical references, but on the shared capacity of sensing instead.

Dr. Çiçek İlengiz is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Empires of Memory research group hosted by the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity. Her work is situated at the intersection of politics of emotions, nationalism, critical heritage and memory studies. She completed her Ph.D at the Research Center for History of Emotions hosted by the Max Planck Institute for Human Development (2019). She received her first master's degree in Cultural Studies at Sabancı University, Istanbul (2013), and her second one in Sociology and Social Anthropology at the Central European University in Budapest (2014). Her writings dominantly engage with temporality, cultural and religious heritage, commemoration and memorialization.

Zoom registration Link:

https://uni-bielefeld.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMrcO6vqT8uHtUQk2X8tARywPZ_t2WdMe2V