

Institut für Geographie

Bremer Geographisches Kolloquium

Geography H₂O: Compounding water studies

Prof. Dr. Kimberly Peters

Universität Oldenburg

The topic of water has been consistently afflicted with binary thinking even as geographic work has sought to challenge it, and indigenous scholarship has long spoken of entanglements that move beyond dualisms. The marginalisation of the sea in much geographic work, for example, has been a result of the centrality of 'earthly', grounded thinking, creating a land/sea binary that has long endured. The study of rivers has been characterised by a predominant focus on landed processes of erosion and deposition over that of liquid flow itself. Ironically, even where water is now taking centre stage, binaries persist with a lack of dialogue between 'salt' and 'fresh' water studies where the two rarely meet, mix or mingle. Even work on oceanic excess, fails to extend to other watery domains (the politics of drinking water, questions of supply, instances of toxicity and pollution). However, rather than positing that we simply move beyond binaries or echo (or worse claim) ontologies of watery relation, this paper argues – controversially – that we split water further, (re)configuring it by its chemical composition – H₂O. In doing so it asks whether it might be possible to reframe the question of what water is (salt; fresh; solid, liquid, gas, its socio-cultural and political connotations, and our relations with its character), to instead ask what water's formulation of two-parts hydrogen and one-part oxygen does or can do through its complex material form. Focusing on a perhaps surprising case study of fire - this paper demonstrates how H₂O has been harnessed and applied – not as an either/or, but as a compound with unique capacities for society and space.

Datum: Mittwoch, 01. November 2023

Uhrzeit: 16:15 Uhr

Ort: GW 2 (B1150)

Alle Interessierten sind herzlich willkommen!