

**Workshop „A postcolonial moment in academic collaboration and higher education:
openings - resources - relations“ (July, 1st-2nd 2019)**

**Bremen University, The Postcolony Lab/Worlds of Contradiction-Network (WoC)
Religious Studies Department, IFEK – Dept. of Anthropology and Cultural Research,**

supported by Impulse Program, University of Bremen

Venue: University of Bremen

Discussions on postcolonialism in Germany might draw inspiration from what Helen Verran projects as a *postcolonial moment*: “occasions for theorizing, for telling differences and sameness in new ways” (2002:729) and an „ambiguous struggling through and with colonial pasts in making different futures“ (2002:738).

The workshop focuses on the German-Pacific context, which in public discussions in Germany on (post)colonial memory politics is often overlooked. Questioning hierarchical asymmetries in postcolonial settings, the workshop will explore how differences and heterogeneity can be recognized and acknowledged. With Verran’s insights in mind, the aim is to look for new forms of collaboration between academic and cultural institutions, museums, civil society initiatives and / or communities in Papua New Guinea and Germany. How can research, learning and teaching together become collaborative, when both social-discursive communities are stuck in uneven power relations since colonial times? What kind of relations, practices, approaches, infrastructures could make a difference?

On a theoretical but also practical level the workshop wants to think through and design new ideas to establish various (infra-)structures that can contribute to a responsible way of dealing with the aftermath of (German) colonialism. The workshop seeks to create a platform for exchange in international cooperation. On the one hand, it invites multilayered narratives and new approaches to the history of German colonialism in parts of today’s Papua New Guinea. On the other hand, it discusses first steps and possibilities for a cooperation with the University of Papua New Guinea - a national academic institution in the Pacific, and other educational and cultural institutions.

The workshop „A postcolonial moment in academic collaboration and higher education: openings - resources - relations“ brings together different layers of the colonial heritage debates that are inseparably intertwined -- historical, political, academic -- and will primarily look at institutions of higher education and museums.

Various debates expose the contradicting approaches to colonial heritage. Public controversies are often shaped by ignorance, by active forgetting, and a deep-rooted inability to speak about the colonial experience. Many topics that link past and present are still in need of substantial research with regard to the role of knowledge, academia, collectors and collections. There is a huge gap in research concerning the perspectives of the colonized and their descendants, their experiences, their knowledge and their stories. German colonialism in general did not result in a significant culture of remembrance in Germany (neither in the former East nor West) and the colonial occupation of parts of Papua New Guinea and of several Pacific islands is radically underrepresented both in German public consciousness and in German academic research. In order to get to a more polyphonic history of German colonial rule in the Pacific and its aftermath we not only have to overcome amnesia, apathy, and aphasia but we also need to find innovative ways for mutual encounters that do not simply reproduce established power relations and reiterate epistemic violence and ignorance. This concerns the role of knowledge production in different and variously interacting fields, including “scientific colonialism” still affecting academic fields today.

As a starting point we take it for granted that a respectful treatment of the issue implies acknowledging the existence of multiple perspectives and rethinking past approaches of colonial politics, museum collections, and of Western academic knowledge production. In full awareness of the power inequalities involved, the workshop wants to tentatively explore a new perspective on “sharing” and to imagine collaborative futures -

going against the invisibilities of power differences and the denial of practical, economic and epistemological issues. What does it mean to share stories, things and maybe even resources and infrastructures? What about the issues of reciprocity and responsibility? What, for instance, can German academy learn from Pacific exchange societies, their forms of reciprocity and their sensitivity to inequalities? In search of *postcolonial moments*, “transformative narratives” can “make the existing world (the status quo) oscillate” (Schramm, 2017:494; tr. GR).

Program and Time Table

Sunday, 30.06.2019

Individual arrival of guests

Informal afternoon meeting with Betty Lovai (UPNG) t.b.a.

Monday, 01.07.2019

09.30 –11.30

„**The colonial archival imaginary at home**“: Guided tour through the Oceania-Dept. Collections and the so called „Schaumagazin“ of the Überseemuseum / Overseas-Museum Bremen and discussion with Stephanie Walda-Mandel (prior appointment required. Please let us know if you want to participate in this with an email to griechter@uni-bremen.de)

13.00 Lunch (Mensa, University of Bremen)

14.00–15.30 (Akademie für Weiterbildung, near the Main Mensa, Room ZB B3100)

Creating a platform for exchange: Introduction to the workshop

Prof. Dr. Michi Knecht und Dr. Gabriele Richter (Bremen University)

Introduction of participants

Presentation by Helen Verran (Charles Darwin University, Northern Territories, Australia and Max Plank Institute for the History of Science, Berlin): **A postcolonial moment in higher education: difficulties and inspirations**

15.30–15.45

Coffee Break

15.45 –17.45

Presentation by Betty Lovai (Executive Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences SHSS, University of PNG at Port Moresby): „**Experiences with international cooperation in higher education and research**“

Discussion in small working groups/ plenary discussion

18.15 –19.45 (Rotunde at Cartesium, Bremen University Campus, Enrique-Schmidt-Strasse 5)

Round table discussion: “Creating postcolonial moments in higher education: What will be necessary?”

Helen Verran

(Charles Darwin University, Northern Territories, Australia / Max Plank Institute for the History of Science, Berlin)

Betty Lovai

(University of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby)

Sina Emde

(Dept. of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Heidelberg University)

Moderation: Gabriele Richter
(Dept. of Religious Studies, Bremen University)

20.15

Dinner (Restaurant Il Lago, Hochschulring 1)

Dienstag 2. Juli

9.00 –11.30 (Akademie für Weiterbildung, near the Main Mensa, Room ZB B3100)

Postcolonial moments in museums

Philipp Schorch (LMU München): **Refocusing ethnographic museums through Oceanic lenses**

Discussants: Gabriel Schimmeroth (MARKK Museum am Rothenbaum Hamburg) / Tobias Goebel (German Ship-Museum Bremerhaven and University of Bremen) / Emelhter Kihleng (Pohnpei/MARKK Museum am Rothenbaum Hamburg)

11.30–11.45

Coffee break

11.45 –13:45

Addressing global inequalities in institutional settings: infrastructures, sustainability and the reproduction of injustice

Ivo Syndicus (National University of Ireland, Maynooth)

Alan Robson (Political Sciences, UPNG/Port Moresby)

Almut Schneider (Social and Cultural Anthropology, Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe University Frankfurt/Main)

Discussant: Ohiniko Mawussé Toffa (Bremen University)

13:45–15:30

Lunch (Café Unique, Bremen University Campus, Enrique-Schmidt-Strasse 7)

15:30–17:00

Final discussion round: Openings, resources, relations: Planning different futures

Proposals and workshop results

Literature

Katharina Schramm (2017): "Postkoloniale STS: Einführung." In: Susanne Bauer, Torsten Heinemann, Thomas Lemke (Hg.): *Science and Technology Studies. Klassische Positionen und aktuelle Perspektiven*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, S. 471-494.

Helen Verran (2002): „A Postcolonial Moment in Science Studies. Alternative Firing Regimes of Environmental Scientists and Aboriginal Landowners.“ In: *SSS* 32/5, 729-762.

Concept & Contact

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Prof. Dr. Michi Knecht (knecht@uni-bremen.de) 0049-176 2400 8460

Bremen University will establish an exchange project with the University of Papua New Guinea and other institutions in the Pacific with the help of ERASMUS Plus. This workshop supports this exchange. For participation in the workshop, please register under: griechter@uni-bremen.de. The round table discussion is open to the public.