

WORKSHOP

Approaching Mobilities: Focus on Africa and the Caribbean

Wann:

Dienstag, 9. Oktober 2018

9:00 - 15:00

Wo:

Büro der Plattform in der Hofburg

PROGRAMM:

9:00 – 9:30: Begrüßung und Einführung

- **Alexandra Ganser** (Plattformleitung) und **Birgit Englert** (Vizeleitung)
- **Birgit Englert und Henning Melber:**

Kurzbericht über rezente Tagungen/Workshops :

- *Nordic Africa Days on „African Mobilities“*, Uppsala, 20.-21. September 2018¹
- *Inaugural Workshop des AMMODI-Netzwerks* (African Migration, Mobility, and Displacement) Uppsala, 22.-23. September 2018²

9:30 – 11:00: Sozialwissenschaftliche Perspektiven:

- **Henning Melber (Uppsala/ Pretoria / Bloemfontein / London):**
“African, Development und Mobility Studies –
Erkundungen von Raum, Zeit und Entkolonialisierung von Wissen“
- **Julia Schöneberg (Kassel):**
„Mobilität als Armutsfaktor in Haiti“

11:00 – 11:15: Kaffeepause

¹ <http://nai.uu.se/nad-2018/programme/NAD2018-PreliminaryConferenceProgramme.pdf>

² <https://ammodi.com/> und <https://ammodi.com/events/>

11:15 – 12:45: Historische Perspektiven:

- **Eric Burton (Exeter / Wien):**

„Journeys of education and struggle:

African mobility in times of decolonization and the Cold War“ –

Vorstellung des Themenhefts der *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien*³

- **Immanuel Harisch (Wien):**

"(Im)Mobile Lives narrated through Letters:

Life Trajectories of African Trade Unionists in the 1960s“

12:45 - 13:30: Mittagspause mit kleinem Buffet im Raum

13:30 – 15:00: Literatur- und kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven:

- **Sigrid Thomsen (Wien):**

Literary Depictions of Caribbean-American Mobilities in the Works of
Junot Díaz and Edwidge Danticat

- **Doris Posch (Wien):**

„Recalling the Past, Mobilizing the Present: Visual Narratives of Haiti“

15:00 – 15:30: Wrap-Up und Ausblick

Texte und Filme zur Vorbereitung:

- Filmausschnitte und Filmstills ausgewählt von Doris Posch – Links im Dokument im Anhang

³ <https://stichproben.univie.ac.at/alle-ausgaben/stichproben-nr-342018/>

ABSTRACTS

Henning Melber

African, Development und Mobility Studies

- Erkundungen von Raum, Zeit und Entkolonialisierung von Wissen

Wissenschaften – auch zu Afrika und Entwicklung – sind historisch in der Expansion Europas in die übrige Welt verankert und haben hegemoniale Perspektiven geschaffen und verfestigt, die bis heute in ihrer normativ-eurozentrischen Befangenheit wirksam bleiben. Dabei war die Ausbreitung Europas und die Globalisierung der damit einher gehenden Macht-, Herrschafts- und Denkstrukturen selbst ein Ausdruck von Mobilität, die stets integraler Bestandteil menschlicher Entwicklung und Reproduktion gewesen ist (es sei nur an den erfolgreichen Buchtitel "Adam kam aus Afrika" erinnert).

Dieser Input ist ein erster Denkversuch, die aktuellen Bemühungen um eine selbstkritischere Reflexion eurozentrisch sozialisierter und geprägter Wissenschaften zum Zwecke derer Dekolonisierung in Bezug mit African, Development und Mobilities Studies zu setzen. – Warnung: es handelt sich dabei um "work in progress"!

Julia Schöneberg

„Man kann Okra nicht mit einem Finger essen“- Mobilität als Armutsfaktor in Haiti

Oft werden Mobilitäten in Zusammenhang von Chancen und Möglichkeiten der Armutsbekämpfung diskutiert. Rücksendungen der haitianischen Diaspora, vor allem aus den USA, machen so fast 30 Prozent des haitianischen Bruttonationaleinkommens aus. Allerdings müssen neben der Migration ins Ausland auch nationale Mobilitäten in den Blick genommen werden. Mein Beitrag wirft einen Blick auf Mobilität innerhalb Haitis als Armutsfaktor und betrachtet dabei vor allem traditionelle Solidar- und Selbsthilfestrukturen, die durch Arbeitsmigration und Urbanisierung zunehmend geschwächt werden.

Eric Burton

Vorstellung des Themenhefts

„Journeys of education and struggle: African mobility in times of decolonization and the Cold War“, erschienen als Nummer 34 der *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien/ Vienna Journal of African Studies*: <https://stichproben.univie.ac.at/alle-ausgaben/stichproben-nr-342018/>

Immanuel Harisch

**"(Im)Mobile Lives narrated through Letters:
Life Trajectories of African Trade Unionists in the 1960s"**

Mobility as a concept metaphor often evokes the impression of constant flux, with not only humans, but also goods, objects, media, and ideas—just to name a few—on the move. However, the capabilities of different types of “border crossers” are crucially shaped by power relations and furthermore deeply rooted in the historical context.

Thus, after World War II, and coinciding with the struggles for decolonization and development, the expansion of the socialist world system opened up new channels of mobility between the „Second“ and „Third“ World. Global Cold War rivalries extended further to the field of trade unions, enabling African trade unionists to secure scholarships and travel between the Worlds.

This contribution examines life situations of (im)mobilities through personal letters written by African trade unionists who went to study at a trade union college in East Germany at different times in the 1960s. After finishing their education and returning to their respective home countries, a number of trade unionists maintained an exchange of letters with the faculty staff for several years. These archived letters provide us with exceptional insights into the personal motives, wishes, emotions, goals as well as difficulties and hardships of the trade unionists.

By focusing in individual life trajectories, I aim to uncover how specific regimes of (im)mobility were regulated through the governments’ and trade union’s machine of both the sending and receiving country. Moreover, I analyse the letters with regards to the question of how the trade union-students imagined and perceived their potential and real mobility, how they did conceive their capabilities to movement, and on what occasions was their movement denied by the governments or trade unions.

Lastly, the archived correspondence let us grasp how the trade unionists appropriated, adapted and transformed the acquired Marxist-Leninist knowledge to their home contexts and also gives us insights into whether their education abroad led to upward social mobility in the home country or not.

Sigrid Thomsen

**Literary Depictions of Caribbean-American Mobilities in the Works of
Junot Díaz and Edwidge Danticat**

For my PhD project, which looks at cultural and linguistic mobility in Caribbean-American literature, I trace mobilities and their effects on the levels of plot and language. In my presentation at the workshop, I will first look at the level of language in Junot Díaz’ 2012 short story collection *This Is How You Lose Her*. The characters in these stories, and particularly their narrator, Yuniors, switch between English and Spanish in a highly flexible, inventive fashion,

and use their ability to do so as a way to gauge the other's person *Dominicanidad* or perceived lack thereof. I will especially focus on the way these characters' code-switching between English and Spanish functions not just as a consequence of their geographical mobility – their move from the DR to New Jersey – but as a kind of linguistic mobility in and of itself. I will then go on to look at the depiction of mobility on the level of plot in Edwidge Danticat's 1995 short story collection *Krik? Krak!* Here, Danticat conveys mobility less through a mixing of languages (though Haitian Creole does occasionally appear) than by her characters reflecting on their own and their family's mobility. This ranges from unsuccessful and even deadly attempts at fleeing from Haiti to the U.S., to characters making the opposite journey to play an active role in Haitian politics and society. In looking at the work of these two writers, and using two different approaches to reading (about) mobility, I hope to show the variety of mobility in writing, of moving from one place to another in the space of a sentence, and of tracing those journeys.

Doris Posch

Recalling the Past, Mobilizing the Present: Visual Narratives of Haiti

This talk addresses the fundamental question of what it signifies “being Haitian” today in the works of two filmmakers: Gessica Geneus and Hermane Desorme, who both belong to an emerging generation of Haiti's filmmakers. In *Douvan Jou Ka Levé* (“The Sun Will Rise”) (2016), Geneus traces her mother's displacement from Port-au-Prince to Florida due to her mental illness. The filmmaker confronts Haiti's religious beliefs in relation to its colonial wounds and illustrates the fatal consequences, the syncretism of imposed Christianity and resisting Vodou brought about. *Gade!* (“Look!”) (2017) follows the implementation and opening of the photo exhibition STATE in two different locations – Port-au-Prince and Lausanne. Desorme thereby makes visible the complex spectrum of the audience's reactions and features a variety of gazes on Haiti.

In both documentaries, the “I” narrator not only has multiple positions and voices, but she/he also refers to several aspects of mobility: First, the production of the respective film work required mobility, which influenced the narratives of the documentary. Secondly, the conceptual debates on and the personal influence of mobility shape the filmmakers' personal perception of Haiti and ultimately, their artistic implementation of narratives of Haiti. This talk explores the contrasting and at times contradictory visions of Haiti from an inside and outside perspective driven by mobility. It demonstrates the mobility's vital necessity for both the process of filmmaking and the themes addressed in the films. Yet, it also reveals the downside of the access to mobility, since this is a crucial player when it comes to negotiating questions of artistic authority, cultural heritage, religious supremacy, and racial domination.