

MONDAY LECTURES | WISE 2026/27

IN RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

RESEARCH BUILDING "WELTBEZIEHUNGEN" | C19.00.03 | 16:15 - 17:45

19.10.2026 | CLAUDIA JAHNEL

"THE MOON SAYS IT IS IN BONN." EPISTEMOLOGICAL VIOLENCE AND CONFLICTS IN DEALING WITH ARTIFACTS OF COLONIAL MISSION

The lecture explores the profound conflicts surrounding the interpretation, restitution, and cultural significance of artifacts taken during colonial times. Different interpretations of reality and truth cause disputes over meaning and authority. These conflicts reveal the dangers of epistemic violence, such as silencing and paternalism and their impact on intercultural understanding.

The lecture uses a historical example from an arts and crafts exhibition at the Bethel Mission Vuga in Tanzania's Usambara Mountains in 1908 and reflects it in the light of current debates on restitution. The presentation considers the legacy of colonial collections for Europe and Africa. It questions how colonial histories are remembered or erased through artifacts. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of engaging multiple perspectives. This promotes intercultural cooperation without harmonizing the character of cultural memory as a form of "dangerous memory" (Johann Baptist Metz).



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