

**OBERSEMINAR - VORTRAGSREIHE DES INSTITUTS FÜR ETHNOLOGIE
WINTERSEMESTER 2023/24****LEITUNG: PROF. DR. MARTIN SÖKEFELD**

Institut für Ethnologie
Montag, 18-20 Uhr
Raum L-155
Oettingenstraße 67, 80538 München

15. 1. 2024 Dr. Anna Ramella (Universität zu Köln)

Anthropology and/of the Unknown: from Unearthing to Off-
the-Earth

Abstract

This talk is situated between recent calls for 'unknowing' – that is, recognizing and deconstructing the assumptions upon which our discipline is based – and Anthropology's relationship with the Unknown, the Yet-to-be-Known, or the concept of 'knowing' altogether.

A growing body of decolonial scholarship is currently combing through the history of the discipline in a renewed attempt at unearthing how traces of colonial violence perpetuate our practice. Simultaneously, another group of scholars, rather concerned with the future off Earth as they observe the ongoing 'space race', is similarly confronted with anachronistic forms of imperial and colonial ideologies.

I aim to examine this odd pairing of research fields through the lens of a shared characteristic: Anthropology's relationship to the Unknown.

Revisiting this relationship requires looking at how Anthropology's primary method of fieldwork has evolved. While a century ago, Malinowski questionably reinforced the centrality of difference to knowledge production by merging formerly separate roles of 'theorist' and 'fieldworker', recent attempts to diversify and dehierarchize knowledge production through collaborative practices have inspired a reconsideration of the roles of researcher/participant or user/producer, as advocated by design anthropologists.

Developing methods that employ various forms of intervention to both create contextual knowledge and devise specific solutions in active encounters has not only been at the heart of research projects on futures, but is also central to decolonial endeavours.

In this talk, I will reflect on these methodological approaches to the Unknown by drawing connections between the pasts, present and potential futures of anthropological research – both on and off the Earth.

Der Vortrag ist öffentlich – Interessierte sind herzlich willkommen!