

## **Report on Workshop *Coloniality & Global Encounters in Romance Cultural History***

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Thanks to the generous support of the Exzellenzinitiative Platform 4, Radlwimmer and Masters co-organized the online *International Workshop: Coloniality & Global Encounters in Romance Cultural History*. It took place on October 21-22, 2021 during a relative lull in the Coronavirus pandemic. Due to safety concerns, unpredictable travel conditions, and the broad global audience, it was held online. Thematically the conference consisted of:

*"an interdisciplinary reflection on the epistemological grids which have for centuries structured information and knowledge on early globalization. Its focal point is the so-called 'First Globalization,' in which early-modern Romance-speaking European polities dominated many global economic, political, intellectual, literary and cultural networks. Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian, and other groups encountered local communities and understandings of the world in what we call today America, Asia, Africa and Oceania...The ensuing distant negotiations or in-person encounters, cultural and linguistic translations, exchanges, rememberings, and forgettings marked emerging world cultures, history, and forms of knowledge in ways scholars are only gradually uncovering."*

The presentations drew richly from many disciplines and from academics both in Tübingen and Austria, Brazil, Spain, and the United States. It brought together Tübingen professors Ewald Frie (Neuere Geschichte), Bernd Grewe (Geschichtsdidaktik und Public History), Fei Huang (Sinologie), Birgit Weyel (Theologie) and Hanno Ehrlicher (Romanistik). It also featured Tübingen researchers Laura Dierksmeier, Carsten Gräbel, Adrian Masters, Romana Radlwimmer, Roberto Robalinho, Simon Siemianowski, and Carina Stickel. To this interdisciplinary group of Tübingen scholars were joined guest speakers Allison Bigelow (Spanish, U. Virginia), Adma Fadul Muhana (Portuguese Literature, Univ. of São Paulo), Mark Thurner (Latin American Studies, U. London), and Roberto A. Valdeón (English, U. Oviedo). Lastly, the conference was joined by chairs Rômulo da Silva Ehalt (Frankfurt), Marlen Bidwell-Steiner (U. Vienna), Diana Roig Sanz (U. Barcelona).

Guest speakers presented their overall reflections on this gathering. Prof. Frie toasted the conference's broad interdisciplinary nature and reflected on the history of global encounters as a topic of growing importance in the field of the humanities. Prof. Thurner delivered a recorded reflection on how French monarchs drew from imaginations of Inca rulers – mediated through Spanish sources – to envision Enlightened despotism. Prof. Bigelow presented on a series of complex early modern translations into English, French, German, and Portuguese regarding mining and racial categories which emerged in the Spanish Empire. Prof. Valdeón presented on histories of English translations of Spanish sources regarding the conquest. Prof. Muhana demonstrated that rich material and intellectual circulation occurred between India and Brazil in the early modern era. Panelists presented on many and varied topics. These included Spanish medical cultures vis-à-vis indigenous botanical practices, knowledge transfers from China to Europe, post-colonial memories of French occupation in African literature, and reflections on the University of Tübingen's own centuries-old entanglements with European overseas conquests and expansions.

The conference went very well, despite the challenges of organizing during the pandemic. It was well-attended online by an international audience. These guests participated

via Zoom with a number of engaged questions, testifying to the robust interest which the interdisciplinary gathering's panelists inspired. Unfortunately, Prof. Thurner was unable to attend personally due to pandemic-related disruptions of his travel plans; two days in advance, he recorded a video of his presentation, which organizers also later uploaded to Youtube for broader dissemination upon his request.

Thanks to Exzellenzinitiative Platform 4 funds, Prof. Valdeón was able to visit Tübingen. Many participants, including Professors Grewe and Huang, joined researchers and doctoral students for a dinner at Ludwig's. Here, dinner-goers carried on their conversations and questions, and – crucially during a brief respite in the pandemic – met colleagues for the first time in a long while.

The proceedings of the workshop are published, thanks to the generous support of the Exzellenzinitiative Platform 4, in the anthology *Relating Continents. Coloniality and Global Encounters in Romance Literary and Cultural History*, ed Romana Radlwimmer, in the publishing house De Gruyter, series Latin American Literatures in the World. The proofs of the final manuscript are already there, and the prospective publication date is September 2023. The anthology project counts on participants of the workshop, such as Prof. Muhana, Prof. Bidwell-Steiner or Prof. Bigelow, but also established new connections to other international researchers (Prof. David Tavárez, Prof. Luis Fernando Restrepo, Prof. Rubén Sánchez Godoy). The anthology investigates how during early modern European expansion, America emerged as dynamic meeting ground, continuously forging multidirectional global encounters. *Relating Continents* dismisses the semantics of 'encounter' which, in the politics of naming, euphemistically substitutes invasive violence, but invests in the notion's dimension as an enactment of literary, cultural, and social relations, fusing people, goods, texts, artifacts, ideas, and senses of belonging. Understanding the practice of relating as both connecting and narrating, the anthology investigates the linking of continents in Romance literary and cultural history, as well as the tales of entanglement produced in the process. The contributors revisit the worldwide impact of distant or in-person negotiations between conquerors and local actors; they assess how colonial interventions shift hemispheric native networks, and they examine the ties between America, Africa, and Asia. By doing so, they prove the global constitution of early modern Spanish and Portuguese American literatures and their historical and cultural contexts, and their long-lasting legacies.

The dynamics of the Workshop and the Anthology have led to new research networks, for instance, Radlwimmer has obtained another VW-grant for her project "Archives of Colonial Dis/Possession: Centering Non-European Perspectives on Wealth (15th-18<sup>th</sup> Centuries)". Even though Masters and Radlwimmer both left the University of Tübingen for new positions at the Universities of Trier and Frankfurt, we very much hope to stay connected with the University of Tübingen's Exzellenzinitiative Platform 4 and its future endeavors.