



Universiteit  
Leiden

## ***Othering* Non-White People(s) in German Literary and Visual Culture (1850-1920)**

### **Origins and Long-term Effects**

#### **Applicants**

*Eligible proposals must have at least two applicants from Humanities, preferably with an interdisciplinary approach.*

<b>Supervisor Name</b>	<b>Discipline</b>
Dr Diana M. Natermann	Global & Visual History, LU
Dr Johannes Müller	German Language and Culture, LUCAS

#### **Project description**

*Provide a brief description of the project (max. 300 words)*

The awareness of the German colonial past has only recently entered national debates within the Berlin Republic on a wider scale. The increasing awareness of racist terminologies, stereotypical depictions of *non-white* people, or the removal of statues and street names that glorify former colonisers provided ample material for public discussions. This research project aims to approach the forceful return of these issues into German national consciousness as the result of the long oblivion of the country's colonial past.

We aim to investigate the origins, expansion, and stereotypical endurance of racialised depictions of *non-whites* as "Others" by returning to colonial travel literature and photography. The juxtaposition of *white* and *non-white* informs the reader/viewer of a specific sender-receiver-dichotomy that is based on the assumption that people create their identities in line with and in contrast to others. The increased popularity of mass travel literature since the 1850s and the invention of photography as a modern medium both shaped an image of peoples around the world. As such, German colonial ego-documents have contributed to the formation and distribution of prejudicial views of other people(s) whilst at the same time confirming one's own identity. This project examines German colonial entanglements to other continents, with a focus on the former colonies in Tsingtao/China and Windhoek/Namibia. The selection of an Asian and an African case study allows for engagements with (dis)similarities in German narratives of *Othering*.

For this purpose, we study ego-documents, travel literature, and photographs in particular, as they give access to less polished insights into socio-cultural developments of modern eras as witnessed from below, thereby allowing a micro-historical approach. Ego-documents are used to

offer windows to past discourses and ideas: They allow the historian to tell a version that differs from official history as told by national governments, schools of thought, or collective memories.

### **Research Trainee Profile**

*Each proposal requests two Research Trainees. Describe the general tasks of the research trainees, how these tasks are academically challenging to the research trainees, whether they need any preliminary knowledge (regarding the topic and/or research methods) and which skills the research trainees should have. Also specify which type of students are eligible to apply (3<sup>rd</sup> year Ba, Ma, ResMa).*

The trainees will work closely with the applicants to collect and analyse primary sources – written and visual ego-documents – from German-speaking travelers and colonial agents in the period from ca. 1850 to ca. 1920 and identify

- a) ways in which the *non-white* Other was referred to in the primary sources and what can be learned from the rhetoric used
- b) visual traditions as they were established within the new genre of colonial photography (eg. anthropometric photography, snap shots vs festive pictures, landscape imaging)

The documents to be analysed include published as well as unpublished travel diaries, travel reports, travel memoirs, and colonial photographs. The trainees will be guided through a review of background literature on the historical emergence of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century travel literature and the language or rhetoric used typical for the travel book genre as well as the so-called *colonial eye* which is found within colonial photography of both *white* and *non-white* persons. Furthermore, the trainees will receive hands-on training on data collection, analysis, and research design.

After the first stage of document collection and mapping, the trainees will be asked to identify a smaller case study and prepare either a paper or an individual research proposal based on their preliminary findings. They will also contribute to an opinion piece or blog entry linking the research to current discussions on the description of *non-white* Others within German-language research. Finally, they will help with the preparation of a short lecture series to be organised by the applicants in the academic year 2021/2022.

The trainees will thus have a chance to experience various aspects of the research process, from the preparatory stages to the implementation, outreach, management, and dissemination of research, as well as developing key transferable skills that will be of use in any professional environment. The Research Trainees should have an interest in and a basic familiarity with either German colonial history in Asia or Africa, theories of postcolonialism and discourse analysis, and should be able to demonstrate excellent writing skills. Both advanced 3<sup>rd</sup>-year BA and MA students are eligible to apply.

### **Collaboration**

*If applicable: Describe how your research improves collaboration and cross-pollination between the disciplines involved (max. 300 words)*

Both applicants have ample experience of teaching and working in interdisciplinary contexts (MAIR – Global Order in Historical Perspective track, Global History, Literary Studies, Visual Culture). They aim to build on these experiences in this project where their respective expertise is highly complementary.

Diana M. Natermann is a historian whose research combines an interest in European colonial and global history in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and the long-term influences of colonial visual

imageries on the twenty-first century. Her past research projects and publications – amongst others the monograph *Pursuing Whiteness in the Colonies. Private Memories from the Congo Free State and German East Africa (1884-1914)* – deal with Belgian, German, and Swedish ego-documents and the therein represented perspectives on the relationship between Africa and Europe during the colonial period.

Johannes Müller is a lecturer in German and Literary studies at the Leiden Centre for the Arts in Society. His research focuses on migration, news and global connections in the early modern world until the nineteenth century.

Combining post-colonial visual history and discourse analysis within literary studies will enrich the understanding of the development of *Othering* narratives and their long-term effects within the German language and cultural spheres. This allows for a closer analysis of specific racist and exclusionary narratives within (pre)colonial settings and enables the establishment of connections between the written word and the constructed image.

This collaboration will also feed into the applicants' joint interdisciplinary teaching (see below).

### **Deliverables**

*Enumerate intended project results: papers, research proposals or otherwise. (max 200 words)*

Each of the research trainees will produce one individual paper or a research proposal, depending on their own preferences and needs. They will contribute to a short opinion piece/blog entry for a general audience that can either be published on the LU website or in another online platform.

The applicants will deliver one co-authored paper, which will be the basis for a peer-reviewed publication. Pending the findings, a lecture series is envisaged with the support of the trainees for the academic year 2021/2022. Topics to be included would be on the use of historical ego-documents, global and colonial history, and the development as well as changes of German-speaking narratives within travel literature to former German colonial territories. The lecture series will bring together global and colonial historians, literary studies, visual history, and post-colonial theories. The lecture series is aimed at LU students and staff, with the extra option open to making it available online as well.

Finally, the results of the project will contribute to a teaching collaboration within four existing and one new courses within the humanities department at LU:

- *Collective Memory and Transitional Justice* (existing)
- *Das Eigene und das Andere. Kulturen, Medien und Identität* (existing)
- *Geschichte und Erinnerung in Deutschland* (existing)
- *Fremde Welten. Deutsche Reiseliteratur von 1500-1900* (existing)

and:

- *Constructions of (Non-)whiteness in the German-speaking World* (new)

### **Planning**

*Provide a breakdown of the project into phases with tentative timing (max 150 words)*

February - March 2021	Reading and analysis of background literature on German-language travel publications, colonial visual history, and the use of ego-documents, collection of documents, and creation of a database with the support of the Leiden data management team. This is followed
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by archival research where necessary and more research into (post-colonial) discourse analyses

April 2021-May 2021 Document analysis and preparation of research notes, preliminary activities concerning lecture series organisation, contacting possible speakers or alternatively a Call for Papers

June-July 2021 Organising the findings, writing up the final outputs, designing programme for lecture series or including findings by updating already existing teaching syllabi

The timeline includes monthly meetings to discuss progress.

### **Student Application**

*Provide information on how to apply e.g. required documents for application (resume, motivation letter etc.) and an email address where student applications should be sent to.*

Interested students should send their applications to both [j.m.muller@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:j.m.muller@hum.leidenuniv.nl) and [d.m.s.m.natermann@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:d.m.s.m.natermann@hum.leidenuniv.nl).

The application should include a CV with a transcript of grades and a short letter of motivation outlining their reasons for applying to the research traineeship and prior experience with research and writing. Familiarity with the history of German literature, German colonial history, use of ego-documents, post-colonial theories, or discourse analysis are an asset.