



Afrikanistisches Kolloquium

Freitag, 03.07.2026, 12-14 Uhr,
Campus Westend, Seminarhaus SH 3.108

Lee Pratchett (Frankfurt)

"Did you know there are men with the hearts of women?" On voices (un)heard and things (un)said: a critical reflection of lessons from the ꞤKx'ao||'ae.

"Did you know that there are men with the hearts of women?" In all likelihood, you do not and neither did I. And so, a ꞤKx'ao||'ae woman sat down with me in the shade of an acacia tree in the western Kalahari not far the Namibia-Botswana border and added *"there are also women with the hearts of men"*. The fact is, I could never have known. Although she belongs to one of the most well-described peoples in all cultural anthropology, the record is seemingly mute on what she had to say. From the famous Victorian era Bleek & Lloyd archives of the now extinct !Xam language, to my own documentation with the ꞤKx'ao||'ae, outsider researchers have inequitable privilege over the recorded cultural and linguistic legacy of the Kalahari peoples, shaping everything from content, collaboration, gaze, and 'knowledge'. That day, a ꞤKx'ao||'ae woman took control of the narrative and gave a voice to unheard/unseen realities and ideologies. But why? What led to this moment? What did it all mean, and what should come of it?

This talk seeks to responsibly interpret the messages, metaphors and function of the unique and much cherished lesson itself. Coupled with a reconstruction of the fieldwork context and a critical exploration of my own positionality, the talk aims to show that diversity begets diversity. Whilst evidently positive for our research outcomes, it is not, however, without ethical conundrums.

Dr. phil. Lee Pratchett is a linguist whose research focuses on the Kalahari Basin Area (KBA), sociolinguistics and queer or lavender linguistics. Since 2020, he has been a co-founder of the Kalahari Basin Area Network (KBAN), which promotes the exchange of information, materials and resources between researchers and community members working on the people, languages, cultures and histories of the Kalahari Basin Area. He is currently a research assistant at the Institute for Scandinavian Studies, Frisian Studies and General Linguistics (ISFAS) at Christian-Albrechts-University of Kiel. At the same time, he is currently holding the W2 professorship at the Institute for African Studies at Goethe University Frankfurt.

Fachbereich 09
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