

DIE AMERIKAS: FORSCHUNGSKOLLOQUIUM ZU DEN AMERIKAS AUS KULTURWISSENSCHAFTLICHER SICHT

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Raum L 155

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German Indianthusiasm in Transatlantic Context: Reactions and Interactions

Harmut Lutz coined the term Indianthusiasm (Indianertümelei) in 1985 to describe a “yearning for all things Indian, a fascination with American Indians [and] a romanticizing about a supposed Indian essence”; he asserted that these characteristics produce a specific “cultural ethnic identity that ossifies into stereotype” and which “tends to historicize Indians as figures of the past” (2002: 168-9). This phenomenon and its many different expressions in Germany are the foundation of my doctoral research.

In this presentation, I provide you with an overview of my dissertation and the complexities of Indianthusiasm more generally as I experienced it through my field research. I then focus on recently coded empirical data, which I am in the process of organizing and evaluating, relating to reactions to and interactions with Indianthusiasm from Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors. This research draws on over five years of ethnographic research in Germany and Canada between 2015 and 2022.

Michelle Thompson is a doctoral candidate in Social and Cultural Anthropology (Ethnologie) in the graduate school “Factual and Fictional Narration” at the University of Freiburg. Her current research focuses on conceptualizations, representations, and imaginings of Indianer in Germany.