

Call for Papers
“Memory and Media: The Making of Postcolonial Histories”
5th Postgraduate Forum ‘Postcolonial Narrations’
October 5-7, 2017, University of Erfurt

The fifth edition of the interdisciplinary graduate forum “Postcolonial Narrations” seeks to explore the relationship of postcolonial memorial practices and media. The forum theme proposes to investigate engagements with colonial pasts via a range of media and to ask how they participate in the productions of new or different renditions of the past. We welcome contributions by PhD students and postdocs who work in the fields of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures, Comparative Literatures and Theories of World Literatures, Postcolonial Studies, Cultural Studies, History, Media Studies, or Linguistics, who are interested in engaging the topic of “Memory and Media.” The postgraduate forum aspires to provide a platform for interdisciplinary discourse, exchange, and collaboration among junior scholars. Participants will be given the opportunity to present their projects to an audience of early-career researchers. The conference will take place at the University of Erfurt, Internationales Begegnungszentrum, in the heart of the historic city center of Erfurt, October 5-7, 2017.

The conference topic “Memory and Media: The Making of Postcolonial Histories” assumes that issues of memory are among the core concerns of postcolonial studies. Furthermore, we surmise that media play a crucial role when it comes to remembering pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial histories as well as their interplay. The colonial project acted and acts as a destructive force not only on bodies and soil, but also on intangible memory, as Frantz Fanon points out: “Colonialism is not satisfied with snaring the people in its net or of draining the colonized brain of any form or substance. With a kind of perverted logic, it turns its attention to the past of the colonized people and distorts it, disfigures it, and destroys it” (*The Wretched of the Earth* 2004 [1961], 149). Similarly, Aimé Césaire describes colonialism as entailing a “forgetting machine” (*Discourse on Colonialism* 2000 [1955], 52). In light of memory’s precariousness, for instance Édouard Glissant calls on writers “to explore the obsession” of the past “to show its relevance [...] to the immediate present” (*Caribbean Discourse* 1999 [1989], 63-64). Taking our cue from Glissant, the conference is interested in exploring how contemporary cultural production may access alternative archives and enact counter-memories to canonical histories. In this, the conference aims at taking a closer look at *how* this past is materially remembered, i.e., at the concrete role that various material media perform in the making of postcolonial histories. Drawing upon the interdisciplinary orientations of both Memory and Media Studies, the conference seeks to address questions such as ‘How is memory mediatized, or rather, how are various media utilized to engage both personal and collective memories, i.e., what do media *do* when it comes to narrating, defining, or visualizing postcolonial histories?’ Ultimately, this complex of questions brings us back to an inquiry into the ‘post-’ in ‘postcolonial’ and to ask about the effects of colonial pasts on contemporary lives.

We encourage papers which may address but are not limited to the following issues:

- relationships between memory(making) and media (e.g., literature, photography, film, mass media, social media, architecture, fashion, music, etc.)
- relationships of past and present in postcolonial cultural production
- tensions between coexisting versions (e.g., canonical vs. non-canonical histories, collective/cultural vs. individual memory, written vs. oral tradition)
- (re)mediation of traumatic histories
- (im)mediacy of memories
- ways of accessing the archive in contemporary engagements with the past
- media’s unveiling of hidden histories and production of new histories
- media’s (dis)organization of memories
- postcolonial memory and postmodernism

If you are interested in contributing, please send an abstract (300 words) for a 20-minute presentation including a short biographical note and the topic of your current project to Antonia Purk and Kerstin Howaldt at postcolonial.narrations@gmail.com no later than **June 30, 2017**. The conference language is English.