

INTERVIEWS WITH GERMAN ANTHROPOLOGISTS

Mrs Fiedermutz, could you initially please describe where you are from and in which social milieu you grew up?

In 1939, I was born in Mainz, my father's hometown, where I went to grammar school. Even today, I still feel connected to this city because there are not just the great monuments expressing the moving history of this town, as well as there the relatively open-minded behaviour of the people towards strangers. I grew up safely in my parental house; my father was an architect. My mother came from Kirn on the Nahe River and she did the household. The social milieu of my parents and their families was rather middle-class with various social tendencies. My family had been hit hard by the war. At the end of the war and also after the war, I spent my childhood with my grandmother in Ginsheim, a suburb of Mainz, which really shaped my personality. In this former fishing village – where some related farmers were settled as well – I familiarized myself with certain behaviour patterns which would later give me access to the people of African villages. I love to remember those warm days of my childhood, where I took it for granted to enjoy the riverside area of the Rhine. I loved to listen to my father telling me about his father. He was the mayor of communities of Ginsheim und Gustavsburg once and, as an engineer, he had constructed bridges in China, just like one over the Huang Ho, as well as the dome of the *Messe Frankfurt*. Through his own interest in geography, music and history, he already very early gave me access to many fields of our own culture, including architecture. I was just a child and he took me with him to his building sites; I spent a lot of time in his office as well where I was allowed to use drawings and drawing instruments in a very playful-experimental way.

In which ways did this experience change your view on the world?

It changed my view many ways, as I got in touch with youth and travel literature, as well as with many journeys. Besides the museums and cultural monuments in Europe, I met Lehmabau for the first time in Morocco. The girls grammar school my parents sent me to was focused on history, languages and music. My relationship to the foreign was mainly influenced by my father being a freemason; an international organization whose membership is not kept as secretly anymore as it was at that time. My parent's political resistance during the time of the Nazis, which was a topic quite often when I was younger, emphasized the respect for other people of other religions and cultures. Far later, I would like to mention that at this point, due to the marriage with my husband, I got in touch with the Eastern European culture as well. My husband is from the Banat, whereas his mother was from Hungary and his father was German; Together with other children of various ethnicities, he firstly attended a Hungarian, and later a Serbian school. My husband is a doctor, just like my son as well; even beyond the field of Medical *Ethnologie*, his scientist perspective is quite fruitful for me.

Can you remember the first time you heard about *Ethnologie*?

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In school I really enjoyed doing Geography and History; I was also interested in Religion, as well as in German, French and Latin. My wish to study *Ethnologie* was basically the consequence of exactly these subjects. As *Ethnologie* was offered at the University of Mainz, I decided to do it as my major in the winter semester 1958, after I had completed my *Abitur*.¹ After the death of Adolf Friedrich, the institute was not exactly deserted, but its structure was very different from the way it was structured later. Ernst Wilhelm Müller, who took over the direction of the institute in 1969, did his doctorate with Friedrich. Since 1957, Wilhelm Emil Mühlmann was Professor of *Ethnologie* and Sociology in Mainz. Initially, I recognized him as sociologist and only later I started to work on the field of Ethno Sociology. Horst Nachtigall, private lecturer at that time, was supervising the students of *Ethnologie*.

Who were your fellow students back then?

We were just a small number of students. I can remember Gerhard Bosinski who was, besides *Ethnologie*, mainly studying Pre History; he stayed in the field of Pre History and began to teach in Cologne later. Alfons Dauer became an ethnomusicologist; he was interested in jazz and African American Studies; He was appointed to a position in Graz. Wolfgang Lindig did his doctorate in 1958; both his habilitation and other works were focused on Indian ethnicity. His assistant was Lorenz Löffler who was later appointed to Zurich. Moreover, I met Helga Uplegger; she did some research in Morocco. Erika Sulzmann was working there as well. Together with her, E. W. Müller did his field research about the Ekonda of the Congo from 1951-1954. When I began to study, the institute was trying to re-archive the ethnographical collection, which was supervised by Sulzmann. In this context, there were some index cards down in the cellar whose signatures needed to be erased. At that time, they would never just buy new cards. We were sitting in this cellar for hours doing nothing but erasing.

What did Nachtigall teach and what was he like as a person?

As many teachers that I knew, Nachtigall was mainly shaped by his high enthusiasm for the field as well; this included both research and teaching, as well as terms of organisation. He introduced the students into ethnological societies and he organized trips to both other institutions and film courses at the Institute for Scientific Film in Göttingen. As we got involved with people on various levels, I got to know some ethnologists already very early with whom I stayed in contact later as well. IN terms of region, Nachtigall was specialised on Ancient America, but beyond this, he was attached to every sort of supra-regional thinking, which was basically a part of German *Ethnologie* up to the second half of the 20th century. His education was contextually very broad and had a worldwide orientation. '*Die Behausungsformen der Wildbeuter der Erde*' (meaning 'The housing of the hunters of the world') was the title of my mock exams, which I had to write even before I began my studies. Nachtigall appreciated the fact I had questioned the general comparability of different phenomena – even more than my almost 60 pages of source critique and drawings. Both this paper and other papers were given to Mühlmann as well, who made positive comments about my work, but he

¹ Qualification for university entrance.

noted as well – as an ethno sociologist – that I had to pay more attention to the ‘function’.

This topic again emphasises your interest into architecture. Why did you finally decide in favour of *Ethnologie*?

I already developed my tendency to Cultural Studies very early. Even at school, I decided to write my homework for Geography about the cultural history of China. In the context of my ethnological mock paper about the housing of the so called hunters, I suddenly realized how important the cultural context actually is in order to understand the phenomenon as such. The actual design of a respective region could also depend on history or economy, as well as on social or even religious phenomena. This became particularly clear with the ethnic groups of Tierra del Fuego and with the Inuit, as they had summer and winter houses, as well as different types of tents and igloos for hunting. As I had to face too many questions, I found it quite practical we had to participate into the so called *Studium Generale*² during our first semesters. During my later studies I always took other minor subjects besides *Ethnologie* with the aim to widen my major subject – Anthropology, Economic Geography, Sociology, African languages, Arabian and Art History. In the field of Art History, I was really fascinated by both architectural monuments and Iconography, but unfortunately the subject was geographically limited to Europe, whereas I was rather looking for the comparison with cultures outside of Europe.

Do you remember your first impression of the Frobenius Institute? Compared to this, the institute in Mainz was much smaller.

For me, these institutes were completely different institutions. Initially, I learned about *Ethnologie* and the broad range of its minor subjects at the University of Mainz; I deepened my knowledge though at the Frobenius Institute. This institute really fascinated me with its extensive library, its literature about Africa and the great collection of petroglyphs. Moreover, several very committed scientists were researching there, just like Helmut Straube, Eike Haberland and Meinhard Schuster.

Over there, did you meet Adolf Jensen at that time as well?

From Mainz, I studied a semester in Frankfurt as well in order to hear Adolf E. Jensen’s lecture about Cultural Morphology. At that time, it was highly recommended to switch between universities in order to get to know the different fields of research. I attended lectures held by Adorno as well. Later, during the 1970s, I got in touch with the Frobenius Institute again regarding lectures and guest lectures at West African universities. Since 1980, I am deepening our contact with both the investigations about the loam architecture and the participation into the ceramics program.

² Contextual studies containing non-obligatory classes at the university.

With Mühlmann, Jensen and Baumann you met the three most famous post-war ethnologists. How would you contrast them against each other?

The presumption that these ethnologists were competitors might be true on the theoretical level, and they also had – at least in case of Baumann and Jensen – a different cultural-historical approach. It was not the case though on the personal level. I can remember the conference of the ‘*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Völkerkunde*’ (DGV) [German Anthropological Association (GAA)] in Freiburg in 1961. Back then, Baumann and Mühlmann represented their very different concepts in their talks so that these ideas became the subject of a controversial debate and in exactly this way, they were published as well. During the breaks though, they were talking consensually and without any tension. Mühlmann appeared to be rather restrained, distanced and intellectual. Jensen, who I only knew in advanced age, seemed to be an introverted person. Baumann was more open than Mühlmann. I experienced him as being always open-minded for new topics when it came to conversations about contextual questions, and he was ready to help with the literature research as well.

Would you agree that Baumann – similar to Mühlmann – was linking cultural-historical and philosophical literature with ethnological and sociological facts?

Baumann’s seminars and lectures were totally focused on *Ethnologie*. From my point of view though, regarding his accomplishments people tended to neglect the fact that he was very close to the field of Pre History as well. Thus, his concept about the Cultural Provinces of Africa was mainly shaped by the Pre Historic research. In the absence of an absolute chronology, Bauman was rather working in a cultural-historical way including diverse cultural histories and themes. I was really surprised about his statement he would actually be more than interested in ‘*Ethnopsychologie*’ (ethno psychology), but the cultural historical work needed to be completed before. Baumann’s way of working was quite characteristic: He decided for a topic and then, he worked through this topic with the highest degree of differentiation, since he called on various primary sources. I had the impression he knew about every single essay that was ever written about Africa, and he could always help out with bibliographical references, even for the lesser known sources. As a teacher, Baumann had, in my experience, no direct influence on his student’s work. He rather communicated the great complexity and intensity of the subject. He deepened his lectures in his seminar, just like the history of *Ethnologie*. This topic was the basis for my doctoral thesis about Adolf Bastian, as well as Klaus E. Müller’s habilitation about antique Ethnography. After I did my doctorate with Bauman, he suggested continuing with the question of Bastian’s ‘elementary ideas’ and he recommended habilitating on the topic of the universals. Due to his death in 1972, this project could not be realized. However, K. E. Müller gave me the opportunity to familiarize myself with Baumann’s bequest. In this way, I found extensive scripts of two-semester lectures which I attended, and they were dealing with the history of *Völkerkunde* and the cultural change. These texts gave proof that Baumann had worked through an immense number of original works of various ethnologists. The topic of his second lecture, the cultural change, is generally not linked to his cultural-historical orientation, especially as these scripts were not revised and published.

Is it true that Jensen actually wanted to have Baumann as his successor at the Frobenius-Institute?

I do not know that. However, I could not remember that even the extensive controversy between Baumann and Jensen, regarding Altpflanzer and the diffusion of the High culture, had ever resulted in personal attacks.

Which year did you come to Munich and why did you decide to go to Munich at all?

Firstly, I came to Munich in 1960 to find orientation, and then, after I had to return to Mainz because of family issues, I came back to Munich a second time in 1961 in order to study with Baumann until my doctorate. After that, I began to be more interested in Africa. At the Institute of Ethnology and African Studies, just a few people were studying *Ethnologie* as their major; amongst them were E. K. Müller, Beatrix Hintze and Klaus Born. Students from other universities though came to Munich for several semesters as well just like Renate Lukas, Reimar Schefold and Eberhard Fischer. In Munich, I really appreciated this university where I could hear the lectures of well-known personalities from other fields just like the art historian Hans Sedlmayr or the philosopher of religion Romano Guardini. In Munich I started to be interested in Sociology, more than I did in Mainz with Mühlmann, whereby I was afterwards attracted by his work about chiasm and nativism from 1961. Up to my doctorate, I was permanently studying as a minor subject both Sociology, with a focus on migration lectures with Emerich Francis, and Economy and Anthropogeography lectures with Gustav Fochler-Hauke. This broad variety was quite unknown so that some colleagues later classified me as a supporter of 'Cultural history' or even of the '*Kulturkreislehre*'³.

In your opinion, the fact that people see you as a supporter of Cultural history is the result what?

People associate me with Cultural history, even if I regard myself as a representative of the historic direction, because I studied with Bauman, a quite prominent representative of Cultural history, and I even did my doctorate with him as well. Above all, it is due to the title of my dissertation '*Der kulturhistorische Gedanke bei Adolf Bastian*'⁴ (meaning 'The cultural-historical idea of Adolf Bastian'). Based on his orientation of research, Baumann was interested in this topic, but he especially tried to limit my work about Bastian with the help of this title. Since nobody had worked on the complex work of Bastian so far, Bauman told me that working through 'the whole Bastian would be impossible'. However, exactly this turned out to be necessary in order to answer further questions. For this reason, my investigation initially systematized Bastian's accomplishments, and then classified his work in the context of both the intellectual history of his time and the history of *Ethnologie*. In this way, my work became the first – and up to now the only – illustration of Bastian's complete works. When Baumann finally noted in appreciation that this work could simply have the title 'Adolf Bastian', it had already gone into press; it was too late for a change. I really regret this because my speculation was retrospectively confirmed and this overview and its findings from 1970 became the fundamental basis for all the following Bastian researches.

³ 'Culture circle' or 'cultural field' means the central concept of an early 20th-century German school of anthropology, *Kulturkreislehre*, which was closely related to the Diffusionist approach of British and American Anthropology.

⁴ Annemarie Fiedermutz-Laun, *Der kulturhistorische Gedanke bei Adolf Bastian. Systematisierung und Darstellung der Theorie und Methode mit dem Versuch einer Bewertung des kulturhistorischen Gedankens auf dieser Grundlage*. Diss., Wiesbaden: Reimer-Verlag, 1970.

Was the GAA conference of 1971 your first one?

In the following years I attended several of the GAA's conferences; I was a member of this society's board of management for a couple of years, but this particular conference in 1961 remained in special memory. I did not expect the professors sitting together with us students in the evenings. These evenings partly conveyed very personal experiences between each other, for example when they were speaking about their respective field researches. There is nearly no other subject that requires such a high degree of personal effort as well as such an immense health risk like *Ethnologie*, at least in the case of the participant observation method. I was really impressed by this incredible degree of enthusiasm and dedication.

Accordingly, such experiences were mainly communicated in a private space – did they have an impact on the training as well, for example in the context of field research methods?

Regarding the transfer of knowledge in terms of field research, one must be aware that the method of the 1960s and 1970s was totally different from the recent one. This was a consequence of the small number of students. It was quite common that the experienced lecturer brought his students with him to the field and familiarized them with the method of research. I have to think about Kunz Dittmer, who took Jürgen Zwernemann on his expedition to the Upper Volta Region in 1954. Today, there are indeed seminars about field research and Hans Fischer, for example, published his work about methods. The personality of the prospective ethnologist, which is more than important, is no longer selected or supervised.

Did one of the lecturers in Munich or Mainz ever take you on a research trip?

I did not accompany western lecturers, but African colleagues who helped me to get in touch with their own cultures. During the time I was giving guest lectures in Ouagadougou in the 1970s, I met colleagues who would later introduce me to their families living in the village on the countryside. All in all, I spent more than two and half years, from 1980 until 1987, over there, and I later returned for my re-studies to Upper Volta as well, today's Burkina Faso. Although I got to know the area during the course of the year as well, I spent most of my time over there during the building and ceramic period taking place between December and the end of April. In this ethnical heterogeneous area, I was working with several ethnic groups, whereby I just returned to particular villages, especially in the context of my re-studies. Besides the collection of material basing on archival work, observation and interviews, as well as a collection of oral tradition, film and photography documentations and other sources, I did also an architectural documentation. Sometimes this was not that easy, as I just had one single trained German employee during the first two weeks of research, 1981 and 1982. I prepared them before, back in Germany, for this quite unexpected assignment and I determined the exact way of the final graphical elaboration. For my further stays, I had to ask the locals for help with the measurement, so that I was working with different, alternating persons or I had to document the architecture on my own. It took a long time to work on this data at home together with my drawer, a ship designer.

Were these your first journeys to Africa?

In 1973, I went to Abidjan in Africa, in the south of the Sahara, for the first time in order to give a presentation on behalf of Eike Haberland. It was the presentation of a Frobenius collection, which was shown in several African states. I associate contradictory events with this journey though. The moment I arrived, I was shocked that all the Africans initially appeared to me only as black people. Originally, I came there with something like a sense of mission to present to the Africans their own culture and history – as well in case of this particular exhibition. When the exhibition was opened, it became possible to communicate my actual intention. I called the minister's attention – who were attending – the presentation, to the process of Initiation in the East African Rift System with the help of a map. This was not very well known at that time and thus, people were listening with the greatest interest. As a result, school classes from Abidjan the area around were sent to the exhibition for the following weeks.

Why did you choose the Upper Volta Region as research area?

Due to my lecture tours for the Goethe Institute and the guest professorships, which I was doing for the German Academic Exchange Service at the University of Ouagadougou, I got in touch with the people and their architecture over there in the 1970s. I was already concerned with the West African loam constructions since 1964, as well as with the publication of the Vienna art historian Hertha Haselberger⁵. With the help of a cross section of urban loam architecture, she worked on completely different questions than I did later. This whole topic of 'loam architecture' became an important part of the Volkswagen foundation's big project dealing with the documentation of threatened monuments. This is why Eike Haberland supported Dorothee Grunder's application, who was concerned with certain loam mosques along the Niger, as well as she supported my application for the investigation of the rural loam constructions in the Upper Volta Region. The research program 'West African loam architecture' was had the official title '*Expedition Alpha 43*' which was a quite common description at the Frobenius Institute at that time. For me, it was the most important aim to equally incorporate the African way of building into the history of architecture. Thus, I wanted to implement my concept, going back to the very beginning of my studies in 1980, giving a detailed architectural documentation and a systematic illustration of the ground plan and the outline, just like it is demanded in Western architecture. In 1992, it became possible – due to my way of proceeding – that African architecture was included into the '*Lexikon der Weltarchitektur*'⁶ ('Lexicon of World Architecture') for the first time.

What did you find more exciting about this research – the religious or the ornamental aspects?

The building research contains more complex questions. These can be evaluated differently, as they are dependent on both the historical episode of the respective village and on the accessibility of specific sources, which could surprisingly

⁵ Herta Haselberger, *Bautraditionen der westafrikanischen Negerkulturen. Eine völkerkundliche Kunststudie.* Wien: Herder, 1964.

⁶ Annemarie Fiedermutz-Laun, *Afrika. Traditionelle Architektur.* In: N. Pevsner, H. Honour und J. Fleming (Hrsg.), *Lexikon der Weltarchitektur,* München: Prestel-Verlag, 1992, S. 707–711.

turn the whole research into another direction. Thus, in the context of my architectural documentation, I got in contact with the tensions between the indigenous population and the group of conquerors for example, as well as with the question of the sacred kingship of the Mossi. If I had to choose my prior research question though, I do not see the controversy within both perspectives you were asking for. No matter if it is about Architectural Anthropology or about Medical Anthropology, I always take the scientific fundament as a basis in order to ask for the proceeding or the making afterwards. Accordingly, the building material and technology – as well as the construction deriving from them – are preconditions for my further investigation – questions about the monument's history, its social function, its cultural context and its religious symbolism. I have great interest in the process of building and changing, which is happening in the course of historic processes. I added an exhibition dealing with tendencies of the change of architecture to the GAA conference of those days, which I organized in Munich on the behalf of Mathias Laubscher together with Johannes Raum in 1991. My habilitation, which still needs to be published, bases on these investigations of loam architecture including around 500 elaborated drawings and an accompanying photo documentation.

Did you yourself participate into the building of loam housings?

This is a question aiming at the sort of research. I helped the women of the Kassena people, for example, to protect their attics from water. In the context of this annual renovation they are spreading a mix of loam and cow dung on their outside walls. I would have never pushed my way into the area where men and children are building, as I was always trying to pay attention to the local social order. Thus, I followed the fundamental rule to regard the inhabitants – men as well as women – as actual specialists of their own way of construction and I tried to ask them about their technique as well. In order to do this, I first of all had to create this basis of trust and I had to justify it – just like it is necessary for every sort of ethnological work. The investigation of monuments – as social, religious and economic expression of their inhabitants – is basically the core of people's ethnicity and it was not always easy to not cross the line between closeness and distance during my observation. I had the chance to experience several ritual and sacral places, which are generally not available for the public, as well as many ritual objects, so that I had to differentially deal with the question in how far I am allowed to publish this knowledge. Especially the re-studies made it clear in how far people took the partly socialisation into an extended family seriously and if they took the expected joint responsibility, for example in case of poor health care or bad crops. These experiences needed to become a part of the training.

How did you manage to bring these experiences home to your students in Münster?

Whereas the method of participant observation is used for the collection of material, it is the strength of our subject to create the direct contact to people to bear it as well. For this reason, I tried to put aside the exotic or adventurous aspects in my seminars about field research. Thus, I did seminars about 'migration and feasting culture' for example. Under my supervision, the students had to get in touch with some migrant families and go to these families' houses in order to do interviews with them. They were supposed to speak about the way how these migrants with various ethnical origins are realizing certain celebrations back in their home country, which phenomena remained constant and which were changing in the context of their migration. In the course of these conversations, some students got very close with the people.

Let us come back to your career –

I did my doctorate with Baumann in 1970. After his death, I was mainly working on his bequest, as I have already mentioned. This was followed by the lecture tours and the guest professorships in the 1970s. Finally I had the position as research assistant at the Frobenius Institute from 1980 to 1987 including my investigation of loam architecture in the Upper Volta Region. During this time, it was my responsibility to prepare the CRC of the West African savannah because I already had contacts to colleagues and authorities in Upper Volta. After Helmut Straube's death in 1984 and his position remained available for some time, Raum finally appointed me to Munich as lecturer for the history of *Ethnologie*, where I did seminars as well. At this time, I got to know László Vajda much better than I did earlier during my studies, which were basically just focused on Baumann's courses. Vajda was a very critical, inspiring and helpful person to talk to, who was sharing his extended knowledge with a great number of students. From today's perspective, I agree with him on several methodical questions and I appreciate his consistent attitude regarding the demand of a clear method orientated in history. Likewise, I appreciate his differentiation of results instead of generalizations, which were usually made far too early, as well as his critical view on those perspectives only driven by the spirit of the age. As a result of me showing him my concept about the West African loam construction, he encouraged me to habilitate. Besides my teaching, the next years were basically determined by further field researches, lecture tours, exhibitions and excursions with the students, as well as by the preparation of the CRC in Frankfurt. In 1990, I habilitated at the Ludwig Maximilian University Munich as the second woman in the whole history of the department of Cultural Studies.

As far as I knew, you happened to meet Helmut Straube in person. Apart from the regional focus, was there any other continuity between Straube and Helmut?

I am just partly familiar with Straube's works so that I can barely compare his complete work to the one of Baumann. Although Straube constantly stuck to his regional focus Africa, one of his chapters dealt with South Ethiopia, a region Baumann was not concerned with in more detail. Baumann and Straube had this supra-regional orientation of topics in common – including Straube's work '*Die Tierverkleidungen afrikanischer Naturvölker*' (meaning 'The animal covering of African indigenous people') from 1955. However, they were both following a method which was quite common in the first half of the 20th century, for example amongst the Africanist just like Sture Lagercrantz. Straube's research '*Regenmacher*' ('Rainmaker') was realized in the exact same tradition, which added another perspective to the discussions about the 'ritual regicide'. As I was away quite often due to my research in Upper Volta and as I was closer with the Frobenius Institute anyway, I did not really experience Straube as a teacher so that it is hard to say what he was like with his students. Personally, Straube was always listening to my questions and concerns when I came to Institute of Munich.

In 1992, you were appointed to Münster?

After Horst Köhler gave up this position in order to run the Institute of Freiburg, I applied for the C3 position over there. Gordon Whittaker initially accepted this position as well, but he finally decided to go to Göttingen. After the re-

advertisement for this job, I was finally appointed to the position in 1992 in order to strengthen the institute's main focus, West Africa. Rüdiger Schott retired shortly afterwards and in 1993, Josephus Platenkamp took over his C4 position with a regional focus on South Africa.

Besides this regional focus, were there any specific contextual fields you had to cover in the context of this job?

Firstly, the history of research was highly demanded, as well as my research focus Bastian and his explanation for the foundation of *Ethnologie* in the 19th century. During these years, people in Germany began to develop a great interest in the history of *Ethnologie*. My plans working as medical ethnologist were fitting into a specific complex of topic as well, which became increasingly popular. In 1986, I already gave a talk about Bastian as medical men and founder of German *Ethnologie* in Münster on the occasion of a conference about the field of Medical History. I continued to talk about medical ethnological topics in my seminars, together with the Institute of Anatomy. Moreover, my investigations about hand craft as well as the Art *Ethnologie* of ceramics and loam constructions in West Africa were the basis to communicate these fields on a supra-regional level. Likewise, it was a broad geographical and historical education so that I could offer worldwide orientated seminars about topics like 'Religion *Ethnologie*' and 'Trading routes', as well as 'Journeys and discoveries' or 'Biographies of great ethnologists'. I could continue with most excursions I did with my students, both inside and outside of Germany, in Münster as well.

Now we are coming back to Bastian whose bequest you know very well. IN retrospect, what do you think was so fascinating and relevant about his work?

Regarding the complex questions deriving from Bastian's work, it is very hard to give a short answer. Especially his bequest, which I have been working on since 1998, opens new aspects every day particularly concerning his personality. For me, Bastian's restlessness is very fascinating, as this was functioning as the motor for most of his publications, as well as he travelled around the world more than once in the context of his journeys; motivated by his search for self-knowledge according to the concept of the 'harmonic cosmos' of his greatest example Alexander von Humboldt. Apart from methodological deficits, the partly evolutionary ideas and some unclear formulations, Bastian's work is – the more access I get – essential for the history of *Ethnologie*. In terms of the fundamental questions, Bastian was one amongst just a few people who resisted the spirit of the age shaping the second half of the 19th century. He rejected craniology and the assumption of an interaction between race and psyche. He was heavily fighting against the spread of the Darwinian Theory through the supporter Ernst Haeckel and his monism, as well as against the uncritical transfer of the biological evolution on the Humanities. In the context of his re-invented *Ethnologie*, Bastian demanded an inductive way of working with the help of an empiric method and thus, he went against the speculative interpretations. Bastian compared cultural phenomena equally to each other on a supra-regional level and he tried to geographically and historically widen – even if there was an evolutionary tendency – the idea of mental unity on 'all peoples of the world'. As a tirelessly initiator of the subject, Bastian was founder and co-founder of ethnological societies, the '*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*' (*ZfE*) ['Journal for Social and Cultural Anthropology' (JSCA)] and the museum of Berlin, which even enriched with his own collection. Both the training of many generations of ethnologists and the extended exchange with European intellectuals is Bastian's great accomplishment. Moreover, in the course of his journeys, Bastian provided a

lot of primary sources, for example about the history of Indonesia. Most of his collections of material, which were published unsorted, still need to be decoded. It becomes clearer how some of them could be evaluated.

When you came to Münster in 1992, how did you imagine your work over there? What exactly did you want to pass on to the students?

It was my aim to offer, within the limit of the ethnological field, various and complex topics for the seminars and, at the same time, I wanted to work interdisciplinary. Within the field of *Ethnologie*, there suddenly was this wide range of topics for almost 60 examinations. Since there were students of Pre History, History and Art History, as well as Anthropology, Sociology and Geography in my seminars, I knew a lot of colleagues from other field due to the oral examinations. It was productive doing a seminar together, just like I did with the Pre historian Albrecht Jockenhövel. Eleven subjects of the Muster University and leading medical historians of other universities were attending the medical ethnological symposium '*Zur Akzeptanz von Magie, Religion und Wissenschaft*'⁷ ('About the acceptance of magic, religion and science') which I organized together with Franz Pera, head of department of Anatomy, in 1999.

As Rüdiger Schott retired in 1993, you were probably just working with him for a short period.

After his retirement, Rüdiger Schott withdrew himself from the institute, which maybe was a consequence of him being very close to the institute: He was in charge of the institute from its founding in 1965 until his retirement, which was naturally linked to a great personal commitment. This commitment included the institutional work, his broadly orientated education and his field researches about the Lela and Balsa he was doing with his doctoral candidates. Schott organized conferences, established ethnological publications and dedicated himself to the field of juristic and Economic *Ethnologie*, which is generally just rarely included, as well as he kept in touch with colleagues abroad and he built up a narrative research project. Schott was far beyond his time, as he was concerned with topics like Russian Ethnography or especially his research of women's issues. Schott's actual field of work was immense during the time he alone was in charge of the institute as the C3 position remained vacant and this became clear when Josephus Platenkamp and I suddenly had to supervise around 150 major students and 400 minor students after Schott retired.

In your opinion, is there anything particular distinguishing German *Ethnologie* from the subject traditions of other countries – just like the British Social Anthropology?

In the context of this question we have to take a look at all the things that finally shaped German *Ethnologie* until the end of the 20th century despite of any aberrations – the struggle about the historic orientation. This shaped the '*Kulturkreislehre*', the '*Kulturhistorie*' ('Cultural History'), the '*Ethnohistorie*' ('Ethno History') and partly the ethno sociologist Richard Thurnwald as well. Adam Kuper of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) pointed out as well that, despite of the temporary quite controvert discussions, the different views of social sciences and history can indeed enrich each other. I always had a much closer contact with French ethnologists than I had with English speaking colleagues, as well in the course of the guest lectures in Ouagadougou and of colloquia in Paris,

⁷ A. Fiedermutz-Laun, F. Pera, E. T. Peucker und F. Diederich (Hrsg.), *Zur Akzeptanz von Magie, Religion und Wissenschaft: Ein medizinethnologisches Symposium der Institute für Ethnologie und Anatomie, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster. Worte – Werke – Utopien. Thesen und Texte Münsterscher Gelehrter* Bd. 17, Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2002.

Montpellier and Amiens. I made the experience that German *Ethnologie* had a good reputation in the francophone countries; people are referring to the 'Kultrkreislehre' as old-fashioned, but they really appreciate Baumann's accomplishments in the Africa research. The field of German museums has a special position in foreign countries, maybe because German museums are specialised on *Ethnologie*, whereas in Paris the fields of Pre History, Anthropology and *Ethnologie* are combined to a single field. In terms of organisation, the working conditions of German *Ethnologie* are simply very different from those of the French and English institutions, as the latter ones are rather working in sort of colonial archives instead of central archives. Bastian's bequest, for example, is spread on many States of Germany, and the archive of the GAA was passed on several times as well until a constant establishment was finally found. The one thing I really regret about the international comparison is the lack of investigations about the history of *Ethnologie* regarding the transnational contacts between German and French *Ethnologie*. These were, in fact, much more intense than people actually know.⁸ This is why the investigation needs to go beyond the comparison with British Social Anthropology, and it should be extended to the French-German relations, maybe even with the help of a conference.

One could dare to make the statement that those ethnologists organized in the GAA are not interested in such an archive. The history of German *Ethnologie*, in my opinion, can be read as history of high demands and deflagrated appeals as well and this is exactly why this subject had this moderate success in Germany.

The subject has no clear limitations and the research is basically dependent on personalities, which is indeed a strong point of this subject. The GAA could create an even better image for itself when they would establish a permanent committee representing the concerns and views of the subject in public. They should also give their opinion – rather clarifying than popularizing – about certain discussions or terminology which should not remain uncontroversial. I am thinking about these re-defined terms in the media like 'Mietnomadismus'⁹. In France, the relationship between *Ethnologie* and the public is quite different. There is a film about Lévi-Strauss, for example, showing him sitting in a street café chatting about scientific topics. In Germany, we are opposing such a concept. There is a quite reasonable concern explaining this attitude, as the relatively complex reality, that we as ethnologists are trying to catch might probably be simplified to a high degree using the media. In addition, most ethnologists are simply well-developed individualists; perhaps, this leads to a very limited willingness to organize.

Mrs Fiedermutz, one final question: most colleagues of your generation regard it rather sceptical to include Europe as an equal region of research. They are often claiming that there are enough other scientific fields dealing with these issues. What do you think?

From my perspective, I highly recommend – in the context of ethnological studies and research – to compare Europe

⁸ siehe auch Annemarie Fiedermutz-Laun, George Alexis Montandon (1879-1944) – Grundlagen in Leben und Werk für den nationalsozialistischen Rassismus unter dem Regime von Vichy. In: Helga Jeanblanc (éd.), Sciences du vivant et représentations en Europe (XVIIIe-XXe siècles). Transferts culturels, ordonnancements des savoirs et visions des mondes. Montpellier: Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2011, p. 233-253.

⁹ 'Nomad tenants' meaning people renting a house without paying the respective rent.

and non-European cultures with each other in order to prevent people from making up this idea of exotic distant places. Both subjects are dealing with human ways of communication; and if both subjects, as comparative studies, are concerned with the different cultural characteristics, no culture will be privileged. The supervising of two dissertations emphasized the possible effect what a cooperation of *Ethnologie* and Anthropology could be like – a work about neighbourhood in Burundi by Domitien Ndiokubwayo, 2009, and a work about the feasting culture of the Akan by Lena Mengers, which will be out soon. Basing on the anthropological, and partly sociological, thesis, the topics ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘feasting culture’ could even become independent ethnological fields of research with a historic perspective.

Does your wish to compare contain, besides the ethnological interest, an anthropological interest as well? You have mentioned Christoph Antweiler who was asking for the corresponding aspects as well, not just for the differences.

The issues of universals, namely Bastian’s fundamental ideas, were supposed to be investigated on the behalf of Baumann together with the behavioural research. From today’s perspective, this complex topic demands for an interdisciplinary cooperation of various subjects under the direction of *Ethnologie* and Ethology focusing on questions about convergence and historic processes. Worldwide orientated statements must base on detailed individual researches.