

## Transnational cooperation and the criticism of racism and structural discrimination

By Pasquale Virginie Rotter

International. I think about the fact that a large German donor organizes annual conferences for all university international offices in the FRG, where they then discuss what is burning under the nails. Once even, the focus is on racism. Ugh, the bad word. So the bad word is the main focus. Then the employees of the International Offices should be in a kind of campfire situation - We have to create some kind of picture that they feel like it! - talk about racism. Or rather, talk to foreign students about their problems. An Expert of Color who was involved in the conception suggests cautiously to break away from the original German image of the campfire ... The suggestion is ignored.

International. FIFA is international! Big gala dinner in Marrakech, FIFA officials "from all over the world". 50 young white German service staff, type fair hostess, and me flew in from Germany. We are supposed to lead the local service staff. Are there actually managers in Morocco? Hmmmm. Regardless, the champagne reception for the officials and their wives is international, 5 courses on round white tables, open air and in the middle of a former trotting track. When Youssou Ndour appears, everyone in my sector rushes forward and celebrates. The break is used to clear the tables. Vite, vite! When they come back, all cell phones and electronic devices are gone. On average 2 per person. The international thing is, the only black service staff flown in has to stand in front of their team of Moroccan service staff and tell them that they can simply put the devices back without

having to fear consequences. I look into petrified faces and can barely stop myself from laughing.

I spontaneously associate that with international issues. Exciting, isn't it? I'm sure you enjoyed listening to me. Because it's so far. I mean, what does FIFA have to do with them, they don't make art, they do sport. Make money without end and in general: Mafia. Universities, offices, studying abroad, completely different contexts. Well, first of all I leave the transfer service to you, I trust you to do it. Listening and breathing is a start. Thanks for listening. Because I could tell another story, and another, and another, make it even more graphic ... sometimes far more dramatic consequences of this international cooperation for certain participants.

But of course I wonder why some contexts in Germany believe that they are in a vacuum when it comes to racism. Because they make art, for example, or they are just nice people. Maybe they couldn't see anything racist in my stories either? This is the common thing about racism for people who are not affected by it: It comes in so many forms and expressions, so smooth and subtle that you might think: Hm, something is weird here. But it can't really be grasped.

I would like what I think is a very successful definition of racism from Dr. Prof. Maureen Maisha Auma share with you: "Racism is a teaching that makes a hierarchical distinction between people. This distinction is based on biological characteristics, which are thought to be an essential prerequisite for social and cultural performance and for social progress. With the help of this conceptual construction, separations can be arranged along an axis of

participation: On the one hand there are people, groups and societies that are considered to be 'superior' and consequently the ruling 'norm'; on the other hand there are people, groups and societies that are portrayed as 'inferior' and designed as deviations. An essential reason for creating such a hierarchy are economic, material, cultural, intellectual and social resources, the unequal distribution of which is justified, controlled and enforced at all levels of social life with racist arguments.

If we assume that doctrines such as racism, sexism, classism, ableism are structural features of our society. That they structure society and are inscribed on all levels of society and that they find their expression: institutions, practices and routines, rules, norms and laws, interactions, encounters and collaborations, feelings, bodies ...

When you imagine that our society, the world, is crossed by countless highways with discriminatory traffic, then I sometimes ask myself on which traffic island you actually picnic without hearing the noise or even noticing the slightest of accidents and deaths. The highways are intersectionality. The traffic islands are places of power and ignorance, of privilege. Actually the place of those experiences that are not made there. A place of ignorance.

If you suspect that racism is a doctrine that insists on nothing more than a bunch of lies, namely the division of people into groups according to completely absurd criteria such as phenotypic characteristics. Because the clearing up was emerging and everything could be measured, skulls above all.

If you allow the thought that racism is a deeply European project, an ideology of justification around enslavement and colonialism and the associated submission and economic exploitation of land and bodies, theft, robbery, Christian mission and genocide, to justify "civilization" of the inferior others.

If you understand that there is no European country that has this history of violence from anywhere near appropriate, illuminated and processed.

If you allow yourself to deal with the feminist-postcolonial criticism of human rights,

When they finally dare to dare to dive into the traces this history of violence has left in their language, their images, our thinking, acting and feeling and our bodies and being repeated and repeated and repeated every day, as nice as we are.

What then becomes possible? What work is to be done then? What work then has to be done at the German Center of the International Theater Institute? I'll leave the transfer to you. I trust them to do that.