

## Contextual Identity – the Case of Anton Amo Afer

**Vortrag von Prof. Abraham Olivier, Professor und  
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What does it take for a person to persist through the various changes that he or she undergoes in the course of a lifetime? Consider the case of Anton Wilhelm Amo. Assumed to be born in Ghana in the first half of the eighteenth century, Amo was brought to Germany at the age of three or four, where he was reared by a German Duke. He obtained degrees in the natural sciences as well as philosophy, and became the first black philosophy professor in Germany. Wiredu argues that Amo was an African and a philosopher, therefore, he was an African philosopher. Amo returned to, what Wiredu calls, “home”, “to his motherland”, after more than forty years. Could he have felt “at home” in Ghana? Was this really to be his “motherland”? Was Amo actually German or rather deep down Ghanaian? Who was Amo really? Amo’s is no rare case in our time of globalisation. This is reflected by a large number of discussions on migration, immigration, interculturalism and multiculturalism across the globe. Philosophically these questions are typically treated as questions of personal identity. The case of Amo seems to pose above all one particular and persistent traditional philosophical question: What fact about a person such as Amo makes that person the same person through the various changes that he or she undergoes in the course of a lifetime? I consider possible responses to this question by comparing concepts of narrative, experiential, communal, cultural and placial identity, and I offer an alternative, contextual identity.

**Abraham Olivier** is Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Fort Hare. He is Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Centre for Phenomenology in South Africa and former Editor of the South African Journal of Philosophy. Olivier obtained his PhD from the University of Tübingen and has held lecturing and research posts at the Universities of Tübingen, Stellenbosch, Hamburg and Padua. He is the author of *Being in Pain* (2007) as well as numerous international peer-reviewed articles on topics within areas of phenomenology, philosophy of mind, pain studies, ethics and African philosophy.

**Wann: Dienstag, 23. Juni 2015 um 18:00 Uhr**

**Wo: Institut für Sozialwissenschaften der HU  
Universitätsstraße 3b, Raum 004**

Bereits um **16:00 Uhr** findet — ebenfalls in Raum 004 — ein **Workshop** mit Abraham Olivier statt. Bei Interesse können Sie die zugrundeliegenden Texte bei Frau Regine Mellin ([regine.mellin@rz.hu-berlin.de](mailto:regine.mellin@rz.hu-berlin.de)) anfordern.