

## › WWU Fellow Gastvortrag



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### **Prof. Dr. Sharon Bong**

(Monash University, Malaysia)

### **Gender, ecology and religions: A queer proposal for climate justice and gender justice**

**Dienstag, 16. Mai 2023, 19:00 – 20:30 Uhr** KTh I (Johannisstr. 8-10)

**Empfang 18:30 – 19:00 Uhr** KTh I (Johannisstr. 8-10)

To what extent are religions and spiritualities a source and resource in realising climate justice and gender justice? The Christian story of creation begins with fashioning order from chaos and positions the human at the centre of creation and superior to other creatures. Yet the church calls for an “integral ecology” that celebrates the profound relationality of Creator and all of creation. Within a Christian framework that is not only anthropocentric but also androcentric – privileging the domination of (hu)man over nature and man over women, respectively – might turning to other religions and spiritualities in Asia offer a way forward in realising the vision of an “integral ecology”?

An “integral ecology” is glimpsed when creation is valued as: 1) materiality with Muslim ecofeminists who navigate what it means to integrate a rights-based and faith-based activism, and 2) proliferation through the eco-theology of a Malaysian Jesuit priest-shaman. And in these other queer beginnings that go beyond the Christian narrative, in recuperating feminist-Christian stories of creation, lie radical hope.

**Sharon A. Bong** is Professor of Gender Studies at the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Monash University Malaysia. She has authored *Becoming queer and religious in Malaysia and Singapore* (2020), and co-edited *Gender and Sexuality Justice in Asia* (2020). She is former consultant to and coordinator of the *Ecclesia of Women in Asia*, an academic forum of feminist Catholic women theologians in Asia, a forum writer for the *Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church* (on ecological ethics, sexual ethics, postcolonial theories and LGBTQ theologies) and a member of the Board of Editors and Board of Directors for *Concilium*, the international journal for theology.

#### **Koordination**

FB02: Institut für Missionswissenschaft und außereuropäische Theologien

#### **Mit-Einladende**

FB02: Arbeitsstelle für Theologische Genderforschung

FB01: Seminar für Religionswissenschaft und Interkulturelle Theologie  
Institut für Ökumenische Theologie



**Institut für Missionswissenschaft und außereuropäische Theologien**  
**FB02, Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät**  
**Westfälische Wilhelms Universität Münster**

**Blockseminar / Hauptseminar 022428, Sommersemester 2023**

**Becoming queer and religious in Malaysia and Singapore**

**Prof. Sharon A. Bong / Prof. Norbert Hintersteiner**

Robert-Koch Str. 29, Raum 2

**MI 17.Mai 2023, 16-20 Uhr, und FR 19.Mai 2023, 10-16 Uhr**

ZOOM: ID 616 7165 0260; Code: MissWiss

What does it mean to become religiously queer or queerly religious in one's everyday practices? What narratives of becoming person emerge from these lived realities?

The seminar, based on Sharon Bong's book *Becoming queer and religious in Malaysia and Singapore* (2020) explores these questions from a feminist, queer and postcolonial lens. It examines the ways in which gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer and questioning persons negotiate the tensions between living out their sexuality and religiosity in same-sex partnerships in the context of Malaysia and Singapore.

The insistence of GLBTIQ persons – with religious affiliations as diverse as Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Universal Spiritualism – in identifying as both queer and religious is significant in challenging the conservative social-political milieu of these Southeast Asian states where gender diversity and inclusion are concerned. Their resistance and resilience engender diverse strategies. GLBTIQ persons compartmentalise and adopt celibacy in internalising the incompatibility of being queer and religious. They manage ambivalence in being more than conflicted and less than reconciled. And in reconciling becoming queer and religious, they embrace cultures and religions as sources that affirm rather than condemn gender and sexual diversity and inclusion.

The individual narratives of becoming person are counterpoints to the nationhood narratives of becoming Asian and postcolonial that are still mired in religious-sponsored and colonial-inherited sexual regulations. *Queer and Religious* thus potentially offers transformative ways of becoming and a re-visioning of sexuality in religion and religion in sexuality through the embodied narratives of suffering, resisting and healing.

**Session 1 - Wednesday 17 May 2023, 16:00-18:00**

Introduction: **Chapter 1 Introduction: The journey into the interior** begins with a mapping of how the everyday practices of GLBTIQ persons in same-sex partnerships are framed in Malaysia and Singapore, essentially how the citizen as a stable heterosexual subject is constructed in national and popular discourses. The section on 'Fieldwork' describes how research data was generated and analysed qualitatively.

Reading: Chapter 1 Introduction

**Session 2 - Wednesday 17 May 2023, 18:00-20:00**

Introduction: **Chapter 3 Adopting celibacy** challenges the assumption that doing celibacy either divests one of agency or invests one with agency. The narratives discussed in this section flesh out the ambivalence inherent in one's adoption of or attempt to adopt celibacy.

Reading: Chapter 3 Adopting Celibacy

**Seminare mit Prof. Sharon Bong – Mai 2023 in Münster**

Kontakt / Anmeldungen: [imw@uni-muenster.de](mailto:imw@uni-muenster.de)

**Readings im WWU Learnweb oder per email auf Anfrage für externe TeilnehmerInnen**

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**Westfälische Wilhelms Universität Münster**

**Session 3 - Friday 19 May, 10:00-12:00**

Introduction: **Chapter 7 Queering time** is an exposition on how processes of becoming, as an everyday lived reality of GLBTIQ persons, are not only framed within a linearity of time (then/now) but also one that is iterative and for some, cyclical. The complexity and circularity of this process inadvertently reconfigures the spatiality of the 'closet'.

Reading: Chapter 7 Queering Time

**Session 4 – Friday 19 May, 14:00-16:00**

Introduction: **Chapter 8 Managing compatibility and inclusivity** privileges the narratives of GLBTIQs who have in some way reconciled their sexuality and religiosity through various strategies which include: committing their relationships or sexuality to God or faith, realizing that sexuality and spirituality are mutually constitutive, and questioning and challenging religious interpretation that denounce non-heteronormative genders and sexualities.

Reading: Chapter 8: Managing compatibility and inclusivity

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**FB02, Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät**  
**Westfälische Wilhelms Universität Münster**

Hauptseminar / 4 Wochen Seminar: 3.Mai bis 25.Mai 2023

**Translating God(s) II: Christentum in Südostasien**

**Prof. Sharon Bong** / Prof. Norbert Hintersteiner

Robert-Koch Str. 29, Raum 2

Zoom: ID 616 7165 0260; Code: MissWiss

**(1) Wed 3 May, 18-20 – Introduction**

Ort: Roko 29, Raum 2

**Reading:** G.Evers, "On the Trail of Spices", Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia (OUP 2014), (OHCiA), 65-80

**(2) Thurs 4 May, 16-18 – Christianity in the Philippines**

Ort: Roko 29, Raum 2

**Reading:** D.Pilario, Revisiting Historiography, OHCiA 539-574;

**(3) Wed 10 May, 18-20 – Conflict and Conversion in Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia**

Ort: Roko 29, Raum 2

**Reading:** J.Bautista, Colonialisms and Conversion, OHCiA 215-230;

T.Alberts, *Conflict and Conversion: Catholicism in Southeast Asia, 1500-1700*, Oxford 2013

**(4) Thurs 11 May, 16-18 – Women's Protests and Religions in Southeast Asia**

Ort: Fürstenberghaus F 041

**Reading:** Sh.Bong, Gender, Sexuality, and Christian Feminist Movements, OHCiA, 182-194

**(5) Wed 24 May, 10-18 -- - Encounter w/ Religions in Southeast Asia**

Ort: Roko 29, Raum 2

**Reading:** A.Siddiqui, Muslim Perceptions of Asian Christianity, OHCiA 379-391

10-12 / Muslim-Christians / A. Siddiqui

14-16 / Buddhist-Muslims, Myanmar / M. Krueger

16-18 / Christian-Buddhist, Thailand / M. Hutter

**(6) Wed 24 May, 18-20 / Guest-Lecture: Prof. S. Mark Heim** (Yale Div. School), "What Are Religious Differences Good For? Theology and the Bio-Cultural Evolution of Religion" Ort: Hörsaal: JO 1 (Johannisstr. 1-4)

**(7) Thurs 25 May, 16-18 -- Multiple Religious Belonging in Indonesia**

Ort: Roko 29, Raum 2

**Readings:** A.B.Laksana, **Multiple Rel. Belonging**, OHCiA 493-509

**Seminare mit Prof. Sharon Bong – Mai 2023 in Münster**

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