

The conference will analyze the possibilities of overcoming the subaltern dilemma of restricted agency by interrogating issues of subalternity and cosmopolitanism.

Subalternity denotes a position of relative dependence towards another, hegemonic position, describing a difference in power, income, education and/or health. This can be found on the national and global level, as not just individuals but also whole countries can be seen as being in a subaltern position with respect to a hegemon. Formal independence and sovereignty do not guarantee equality in a global discourse.

New visions of community and identity compel us to question subalternity in the context of post-national and post-ethnic realities and the various regimes of structural violence that restrict, confine and define the transnational public sphere. These interactions with each other influence how we are able to perceive and alter the world -- and offer the challenge to interrogate and redefine the various categories and conditions that define the subaltern.

Frequently, the direct origin of the subaltern condition, if localizable at all as a solitary cause, has been alleviated. Slavery in the United States has been abolished, Native Americans have been granted citizenship and (limited) self-governance on Indian reservations, former colonies have become independent -- still, problems remain that can be attributed to structural violence and racism.

Gender oppression can be found in both hegemonic and subaltern cultures. Furthermore, issues relating to gender discrimination also affect transnational or cosmopolitan mobility.

Disability, similarly, immediately relegates the individual to subaltern status. This curtailment of agency raises issues of access for disabled individuals concerning employment, health care, productivity, economic mobility, and both perceived and imagined regimes of dependency within society and the State.

Subalternity is not just limiting in a financial or power-related sense. Freedom of expression and freedom of thought are as limited as more concrete freedoms of movement, work choice and political participation.

Yet the idea of cosmopolitan culture, of true world culture, may in itself be hegemonic. The hegemonic text sees the world as its playground -- and the subaltern text is apparently restricted to its modest local surroundings. Cosmopolitanism, being at home in the world, appears as something restricted to the elite.

These and other issues will be examined at the conference.

The Annual Students & Graduate Conferences Series

The conference series sets out to support and foster the students' interest in academic exchange and discussions. It provides students of all levels (undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate) with a space for the discussion of academic topics in the absence of the usual hierarchy often found in university seminars.

The topics are related to the curricula of the American Studies Program while also incorporating different ideas and approaches, topics which are less often discussed, and those which combine contemporary culture with academic interests. Thus the conferences both enrich the normal curriculum and offer a truly academic forum for exchanging ideas. (<http://www2.hu-berlin.de/amerika/asc>)

We thank our sponsors and supporters for their generous assistance of this conference:

The American Studies Program at Humboldt-Universität
Embassy of the United States of America
American Indian Initiatives, Oregon State University
Institute for English and American Studies, Universität Potsdam
International Office, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Fachschaft der Anglistik und Amerikanistik der HU

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For possible changes to the program, as well as for further information and background material, please consult the web site of the conference at

[www2.hu-berlin.de / amerika / asc / cosmopolitan](http://www2.hu-berlin.de/amerika/asc/cosmopolitan)

The Cosmopolitan Subaltern

Marginalized Literature and Culture in a Globalizing World. 8th Annual Students & Graduate Conference, June 4-7, 2008



American Studies



OSU

American Indian Initiatives



Embassy of the United States of America

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

Unter den Linden 6, Senatssaal

18:00 - 20:00: Keynote Lecture

Timothy A. Brennan, University of Minnesota

*The Nature of Empire, Its Subtlety, and Our Place Within It:
The Two Sides of Cosmopolitanism*

Thursday, June 5, 2008

Unter den Linden 6, R 2103

10:00-12:00: Session I

Philipp Kneis, Humboldt-Universität / Potsdam University
Introduction: Subaltern Studies

Allison Davis-White Eyes, Oregon State University
*A Critique of Pure Cosmopolitanism:
Subalternity and the Rise of the Rest*

Annie Cottier, Nora Escherle, Melanie Mettler, University of Bern
*The Poetics and Politics of Cosmopolitanism in English
Literatures of South Asian Background*

12:00-13:30: Lunch Break

13:30-15:30: Session II

Geneviève Susemihl, Universität Rostock
*Altering the Ways of Seeing? – Female Power and the Gaze in
Fashion Advertising*

Andrea Bähr, Universität Würzburg
*The time-traveling Mr. Pip. Trans-Cultural Modes of
Intertextuality in a New Postcolonial Literature*

Manuela Mangold, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Philipp Kneis, Humboldt-Universität / Potsdam University
*Color TV in Black and White: Depictions of Diversity
on The Wire and Homicide: Life on the Street*

15:30-16:00: Coffee Break

16:00-18:00: Session III

Sebastian Schöbel, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
*Give Me Bacon or Give Me Death: The Fight for Autonomy of
Trentino-South Tyrol in a Cosmopolitan Context*

Chance White Eyes, Oregon State University
Obama Redux: Cosmopolitanism and Race in America

Wrap-Up

Friday, June 6, 2008

Universität Potsdam, Campus Golm, Haus 14, Raum 5.22

Program of the Partner Conference: Cosmopolitanism and its Discontents

(Organizers: Prof. Rüdiger Kunow, Beate Eisner)

09:00-10:45

Timothy A. Brennan, University of Minnesota
*The Illusions of Virtual Space:
Why We Are Talking About Cosmopolitanism*

Rüdiger Kunow, Potsdam University
*Grey Cosmopolitanism?
Age & Civil Society in a Global Framework*

11:15-12:45

Heike Hartung, Potsdam University
*Portraits of Self and Other in the World: Reading Configurations
of Cosmopolitanism in Seventeenth-Century Poetry*

Alfred Hornung, Mainz University
Language and Migration: The Need for a Mother Tongue

12:45-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-15:30

Günther Lenz, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
*Toward a Politics of American Transcultural Studies –
Discourses of Diaspora and Cosmopolitanism*

Mita Banerjee, Siegen University
*The Burqa as Indo Chic?
The Limits of Cultural Mobility and Monica Ali's Brick Lane*

16:00-17:30

Beate Eisner, Potsdam University
*Fundamentally (Un)Cosmopolitan:
The Apocalyptic Imaginary in the Left Behind Series*

Roy Goldblatt, Joensuu University
Mobilitas Pecuniae Gratia

To go to Potsdam-Golm from Berlin: S7 or RE1 to Potsdam
Hbf, then RB 20 to Henningsdorf or RB 21 to Wustermark

Saturday, June 7, 2008

Unter den Linden 6, R 2103

10:00-12:00: Session IV

Daniela Simon, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
The Depiction of Minorities in Video Games

Timo Tonassi, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
*Framing the Subaltern:
How the American Media Depicts "Illegal Aliens"*

Idil Efe, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Subaltern Writing: Emine Sevgi Özdamara

12:00-13:30: Lunch Break

13:30-15:30: Session V

Karina Janowska, Tom Michelchen, Milosz Lietz,
Potsdam University
*Indigenous Cultures Today:
American Indians and Maori in White Culture*

Karin Ackermann, Madeleine Buchmann,
Mandy Daniel, Lena Thiel, Potsdam University
Confronting Stereotypes of Native American Women

Matthias Haber, René Stein, Potsdam University
Stereotypes of American Indians in the Media

15:30-16:00: Coffee Break

16:00-18:00: Session VI

Alexandra von Barsewisch, European University Viadrina
*Indigenous Environmental Knowledge: Subaltern's
Discarded Resource or Cosmopolitan Currency?*

Philipp Kneis, Humboldt-Universität / Potsdam University
*The French Lakota: James Welch's
The Heartsong of Charging Elk as a Cosmopolitan Text*

Concluding Discussion: Cosmopolitanism and Subalternity

Joint Dinner

* tentative title

(all times s.t.)