

Approaching Literary and Cultural Theory – With a Special Session on Age and its Metaphors

Work in the fields of literary and cultural studies is guided by meanwhile well-known and oft-cited theoretical assumptions: Language is socially constructed, realities and subjectivities are constructed in and by language, subjects construct themselves and their worlds by their everyday use of language, and power relations are constructed and deconstructed through these processes that (young) academics are supposed to disentangle and interpret. Once these tenets are translated into concrete research practice beyond textbook complexity and into questions of research design and methodology, Kant's truism of what "may be right in theory, [...] won't work in practice" summarizes the challenges of fitting theory to practice and vice versa. Engaging with the theory-practice-complex, we are confronted with (1) the question of how theory and the everyday research and writing practice in the field of literary and cultural studies relate toward each other, and (2) what theories can be used – nowadays when 'everything is possible' and a seemingly uncountable number of theories is available.

In order to exemplify the complex of theory, methodology and its applications in research texts, the conference will, as a special focus, also be dedicated to age studies. The topic of age, like the aged themselves, is oftentimes invisible, or rather, pushed to the margin. Age is fought against, its implications are denied and euphemized, it is treated like an affliction that may be cured with cosmetic surgery, severe changes in lifestyle, and positive attitude. "You are only as old as you feel," "enjoy your golden years," and "retire," meaning, withdraw from being a productive member of a community that focuses on different groups of consumers. Of the various approaches to the topic of aging, geriatrics concentrates on the medical, gerontology on sociological aspects. A humanistic gerontology – or age studies – aims to question the validity and cultural power of cultural constructions of age, and interrogates cultural imaginings of age and aging in literature and culture. This involves conceptions of the life course, which may vary from culture to culture, and the very constitution of society as an intergenerational community.

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.

More information about this and previous conferences can be found here:

<http://www2.hu-berlin.de/amerika/asc/index.html>

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American Studies Program, HU Berlin
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Organizers

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Information

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All panels will take place in room 3119
Unter den Linden 6

All times s.t.

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For possible changes to the program, please consult the web site of the conference at <http://www2.hu-berlin.de/amerika/asc/theory2010/index.html>

Institut für Anglistik und
Amerikanistik
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

9th Annual Students and
Graduate Conference

Approaching Literary and Cultural Theory – With a Special Session on Age and its Metaphors

November 11 – 13, 2010

Unter den Linden 6, 10099 Berlin,
Room 3119

HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN



Thursday, 11 November 2010

until 15:00 Arrival; Registration

15:00 Welcome!

Thomas Wagenknecht, Alexandra Wagner, HU Berlin

15:30 – 17:00 Age I – “Crisis and Death”*

Maria Gliège, HU Berlin

“Being over the Hill” – The Concept of the Male Midlife Crisis and its Representation in American Movies

Stella Zion, HU Berlin

Crisis Point in Guest’s and Harris’ Work: Age Reactions to the Emotional Turmoil of Death in Family Settings in Literature

Melanie Grzywatz, HU Berlin

Ageing Trouble

Moderation: Amina Grunewald, HU Berlin

17:00 – 17:30 Coffee break

**17:30 – 19:30 Literary and Cultural Theory I
“Categories and Theories”**

Jade-Yasmin Tänzler, HU Berlin

Claiming Urban Spaces. Graffiti and Street Art as Territorial Markers of Youth

Toni Müller, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

Re-evaluating Physical and Mental Differences in Literary Texts – The Relevance of Disability Studies for Literary and Cultural Theory

Claudia Ulbrich, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg
Turning the Turns: Indigenous Approaches to Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theories

Katja Linke, HU Berlin

Category Trouble: Are Lesbians Really Women?

Moderation: Hannes Schaser, Freie Universität Berlin

20:00 Conference Dinner (Restaurant Nolle)

Friday, 12 November 2010

**09:00 – 10:30 Literary and Cultural Theory II
“Life Writing”**

Martin Kindermann, Universität Hamburg

Writing Lives: Age, Memory, and Text in Nicole Krauss’s The History of Love

Michael Duszat, HU Berlin

Bumper Sticker Autobiography: David Shields’ “Life Story” as a Lesson in Life Writing

Alexandra Wagner, HU Berlin

The Uses of Autobiographical Theory

Moderation: Karolina Golimowska, HU Berlin

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

**11:00 – 13:00 Literary and Cultural Theory III
“Aesthetics and Theory”**

Christoph Raetzsch, Freie Universität Berlin

Inventing the News: Journalistic Practices in Early American Penny Papers (1833-1846)

Stefan Schubert, Universität Leipzig

Haraway and the Terminator: Challenges and Benefits in Applying Donna Haraway’s Cyborg Manifesto to Science Fiction Films

Dennis Büscher-Ulbrich, Universität Hamburg

Rancière’s Critical Genealogy of Aesthetics and Politics: Implications for Avant-Garde Studies and Critical Aesthetics

Marius Henderson, Universität Hamburg

“A Dark Place, with Scratching Noises” – A Theoretical ‘Detour’ through Toni Morrison’s Beloved and the Space of Writing

Moderation: Alexandra Wagner, HU Berlin

13:00 – 15:00 Lunch Break (Mensa, HU Berlin)

15:00 – 16:30 Age II – “Youth”

Milena Roggenkamp, HU Berlin

Concepts of Time in Western and Indigenous Cultures – A Bifocal Perspective on Temporality

Fionn McGuire, HU Berlin

The Punk Movement and its Age Adaptability

Allison Davis-White Eyes, Oregon State University
Global Village Redux: Students of Color and the Politics of International Exchange Programs

Moderation: Thomas Wagenknecht, HU Berlin

16:30 – 17:00 Coffee break

17:00 – 18:30 Age III – “Young and Old”

Anika Rust, HU Berlin

The Depiction of Age and Wisdom in Mitch Albom’s

Novel Tuesdays with Morrie

Engin Çagatay, HU Berlin

Companionships between Elderly Women and Children in Truman Capote’s “A Christmas Memory” and Eudora Welty’s “A Worn Path”

Vu Hoai Thu Nguyen, HU Berlin

Voices of Age in the Narratives of Grief: J.S. Foer’s Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close

Moderation: Michael Duszat, HU Berlin

Evening Dinner/Get Together (Café/Bar “Aufsturz”)

Saturday, 13 November 2010

09:00 – 10:30 Age IV – “Perceptions of Age”

Edward Barry, HU Berlin

Medieval/Modern Mysticism: How Medievalist Perceptions of the Aged Persevere in a Modern Era

Djamila Sharipova, HU Berlin

Are Walt Disney’s Cartoons Ageist?

Antje Czudaj, HU Berlin

The Digital Child: Representations of Children and Sexuality in Miranda July’s Movie Me and You and Everyone We Know

Moderation: David Rose, HU Berlin

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

**11:00 – 12:30 Literary and Cultural Theory IV
“Spaces”**

Magda Albrecht, HU Berlin

New Space – Old Barriers? Feminists in the Web 2.0

Philipp Kneis, Universität Potsdam

Finding Atlantis instead of Utopia: From Plato to Starfleet and Stargate Command

Dustin Breitenwischer, Freie Universität Berlin

On the Aesthetics of Neoliberal Space in Literature. An Exemplary Reading of Don DeLillo’s Cosmopolis

Moderation: Antje Czudaj, HU Berlin

12:45 - 13:30 Conclusion and Goodbye!

* All panels will take place in room 3119, Unter den Linden 6

(all times s.t.)