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In this Issue:

CONFERENCES:

The Legacy of Kant II:
The Fate of Kant in an
Age of Crisis, 1918-1945

Intermedial Literature:
Concerning Image,
Sound and Writing in
Contemporary Literature

DAAD WEEKEND:
Got Art? Intersections of
Art and Politics in
German Culture

COLLOQUIUM SERIES:
Building the Modern City:
Gender and Alternative
Architectural Visions

Herz und Verstand:
Anmerkungen zur
westdeutschen
Gefühlskultur nach 1945

Constituency
Communication at the
WWW: Changes in
democracy or changes
in media?

Gaps of Knowledge,
Suspensions of Pity:
The Ethics of Empathy

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THE LEGACY OF KANT II:

THE FATE OF KANT IN AN AGE OF CRISIS, 1918-1945



Halloween weekend saw the continuation of last year's Kant Conference. The two-day conference, "The Legacy of Kant II: the Fate of Kant in an Age of Crisis, 1918 – 1945", brought speakers from American and European universities together to consider how various 20th century thinkers responded to, departed from, appropriated, and redeployed the Kantian legacy.

THE CRISIS OF NEO-KANTIANISM AND THE REASSESSMENT OF KANT AFTER WORLD WAR I

In his paper, "The Crisis of Neo-Kantianism and the Reassessment of Kant after World War I," Peter Uwe Hohendahl (Cornell University) introduced the

conference's field of inquiry, to which subsequent papers would provide further elaboration. Hohendahl's talk considered the radical transformation that occurred in the first half of the 20th century with regard to the interpretation of Kant as well as with respect to a shift in attitudes towards critical philosophy in general. The introduction focused on two central concerns: firstly, what is at issue, and of value, in a re-examination of this transformation, and secondly, what the break with the Kantian orthodoxy of the prewar era entails, as illustrated by way of four challenges to this orthodoxy: Georg Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness*, Rudolf Carnap's *The Logical Structure of the World*, Martin Heidegger's *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, and Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's *Dialectic of*

Enlightenment. Hohendahl's brief discussion of these four texts drew prefatory connections between the ideas of these thinkers, creating a provisional sketch mapping the turn in German philosophy with which the conference was concerned.

Hohendahl suggested that critical or negative stances played a much more important role in the 1920s' discussion of Kant and stated that "what appears to be a strong interest in Kant (with either a positive or a negative emphasis) also discloses something fundamental about the role of philosophy in the first half of the twentieth century. It can be called the political unconscious of philosophy that hides in seemingly technical disputes, which the general public ignores. It is mostly in the 1920s that the non-academic meaning

Newsletter summaries of Institute-sponsored events are generously provided by graduate students in various stages of doctoral study in the interdisciplinary field of German Studies at Cornell University. These summaries are customarily written by students with a general audience in mind and highlight selected aspects of complex presentations by specialists.

and function of philosophy becomes more apparent and in the early 1930s that its potential political use becomes recognizable.”

Hohendahl called attention to the potential relevance of further examination of the “apparent violation of academic rules and conventions that normally determine philosophical discourse” as well as the importance of approaching the Kantian legacy not by focusing exclusively on the use of his philosophy within the parameters of Kantian language (as the neo-Kantians did), but rather by situating his legacy outside of the borders traditionally drawn around it, as something legitimately located outside the field of philosophy, taking into consideration interventions received from other arenas and their subfields that the “historical Kant might not have recognized as proper responses.”

(Grace-Yvette Gemmell)

THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF VALUES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSEQUENCES: MAX WEBER, KANT AND THE NEO-KANTIAN

In his talk “The Incompatibility of Values and the Importance of Consequences: Max Weber, Kant and the neo-Kantians,” **Hans Hen-**

rik Bruun (University of Copenhagen) offered a concise reassessment of Max Weber’s relationship to neo-Kantianism via a discussion of the fundamental differences between Weber’s ethics and those of Kant. Bruun proposed that although Weber saw



Franz Peter Hugdahl (Cornell)

himself within the general Kantian trend of his time, the most distinct aspects of his thought are in fact in opposition to the Kantian legacy, specifically Weber’s thesis of the incompatibility of values and his emphasis on consequences over intention. Bruun elaborated these aspects of Weber’s thought through a discussion of three crises of the early 20th century – a methodological, an ethical, and a political crisis. In response to the first crisis, Weber separated empirical knowledge from practical values, insisting that science cannot prove any value right or wrong. Moreover, since there are separate and often

conflicting value spheres rather than a set of absolute values, the Kantian categorical imperative disappears, since an imperative is binding only once an individual has chosen to act within a given value sphere. A mature ethical actor is marked, then, not by hav-

ing pure intentions but by being able to live with the incompatibility of ethics and the consequences of one’s actions.

This ethics of consequences is starkly opposed to a Kantian ethics of conviction, where the spirit in which the political end is pursued is paramount. Weber’s ethics of consequences are, for

Bruun, particularly appropriate in an age of crisis.

Susan Buck-Morss

(Cornell University) responded by bringing history to bear on the philosophical debates. First, Buck-Morss emphasized that Kant and neo-Kantianism stemmed from two very different historical moments. Whereas Kant’s optimism can be linked to the optimism of the beginning of the bourgeois era, Weber stands at that era’s end. Second, in his 1919 speech “Politics as a Vocation” Weber elaborates on Trotsky to claim that the state is a monopoly of the use of violence. Buck-Morss underscored that this essay was written

at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. And lastly, she indicated the importance in Kant’s thought of the two events that bracket his philosophic production – the 1755 Lisbon earthquake and the French Revolution. Both were violent cataclysms, but whereas the former provided no lessons for Kant other than the need to build better houses, Kant saw hope in the violence of the latter. (Carl Gelderloos)

ROSENZWEIG AND KANT

Whereas scholars have generally traced the thought of Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig back to the Hegelian tradition of dialectical thinking, **Richard Cohen** (SUNY Buffalo) argued in his three-part talk that an overlooked intellectual affinity actually links Rosenzweig and Kant. In the first part of his talk, titled “Rosenzweig and Kant,” Cohen argued for a reading of Rosenzweig’s magnum opus, *The Star of Redemption*, that identifies its tripartite structure – God, Man, and World – as complementary to Kant’s three unsatisfied demands of reason: the theological, the psychological, and the cosmological idea, respectively. In effect, Rosenzweig’s thought begins on the *other* side of Kant; what are regulative ideas in Kant become positive ideas in Rosenzweig. In part two, Cohen suggested that

Rosenzweig actually moves beyond both Cartesian and Kantian dualism by beginning with the “flesh of the world” (to quote Merleau-Ponty) as the only actual given. While Kant argues that morality is a given and seeks to determine its rational conditions, Rosenzweig’s conceit is that reason will ultimately fail. And in the third and final part of his talk, Cohen called the weakest part of the *Star* its foundation of the “loving God” in Rosenzweig’s “aesthetic” preference for the Judeo-Christian tradition. Re-inscribing Rosenzweig back into the Jacobi-Mendelssohn debate over pantheism, Cohen suggested in a Kantian vein that Rosenzweig’s blind faith amounts to nothing more than dogmatism and can lead to the path of *Schwärmerei*, which Kant warned against. This is where their similarities end.

Cohen ended his talk by suggesting that Rosenzweig himself was aware of the flaw of his major work, calling it at one point “merely a system of philosophy.” This is precisely where **Peter Gilgen** (Cornell University) took his point of departure in his rejoinder. Gilgen agreed that Rosenzweig contributes to a philosophical tradition that tries to move beyond reason, but doubts whether Rosenzweig can truly be placed outside Kant, and whether he even had the credentials to engage in such a monumental

project. Gilgen concluded that *The Star* cannot be considered both a Jewish book and a work of philosophy—in any case, it does not formulate a novel relationship between religion and philosophy. During the question and answer section, Peter Hohendahl asked Cohen whether *The Star* could be considered a religious treatise, to which Cohen replied that it could not, as Rosenzweig was but a novice in the ways of Judaism. (Ari Linden)

FATE-BASED LEARNING: HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE AND MORAL PROGNOSIS IN KANT AND BENJAMIN

Max Pensky (Philosophy, Binghamton University) explored notions of historical progress in the writings of Kant and Benjamin through an analysis of the role of affect in the writings of each. His paper, entitled “Fate-Based Learning: Historical Knowledge and Moral Prognosis in Kant and Benjamin,” addressed Benjamin’s seemingly contradictory rejection of moral progress over time in his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*. Benjamin’s famous allegory of the angel of history in this work complicates his rejection of Kant by performing the notion of history he purports to reject. By privileging the historical sublime, an understanding of history as a series of dialectical sublimations, over notions of

moral progress, he implies the benefit of moving past previous models of history.

Noting that Benjamin never criticizes *progress* itself, but rather *the concept* of progress or *the idea* of progress, Pensky argued that, for Benjamin, the structure of history is to be found in the experience of the participant. For Kant, the mode of thinking of the spectator is the ideal affective relation of the subject to history. This mode of thinking is universal, yet disinterested; a wishful participation that indicates the moral predisposition. Here the moral duty seems directed against the immanent experience that Benjamin cites as a necessary relation. Benjamin, Pensky argued, although situating himself against the Kantian idea of moral progress over time, cites the historian as the purveyor of progress such that his writings maintain a heuristic model of historical progress.

As respondent to Pensky’s paper, **Dominick LaCapra** (History, Cornell University) identified several themes that suggested areas of productive interrogation. He raised the issue of the historical sublime with respect to affect, suggesting that it should be prefaced with Enlightenment approaches to inducing melancholia. He urged further consideration of the assumed status of man as moral being and the sacrificial alignment of fall and redemption. Kant

targets the duty of optimism to break the infinite cycle of obduracy. So too, in Benjamin’s writings, Messianism is articulated as an interruption, not as a deferral, as Derrida and others treat it. In concluding his remarks, LaCapra brought up the question of the role of immanent critique from the perspective of affect and suggested the late Romanticists as a potential source from which to begin thinking this relation. (Katrina Nousek)

THE FOE. THE RADICAL EVIL: POLITICAL THEOLOGY IN IMMANUEL KANT AND CARL SCHMITT

Prof. **Wolfram Malte Fues** (University of Basel) began the conference’s second day with his talk “The Foe. The Radical Evil: Political Theology in Immanuel Kant and Carl Schmitt.” Fues began by posing the following questions in the light of Kant’s thought: how does evil insinuate itself into reason? How does reason become evil? How or as what are we to consider freedom? For Kant, held Fues, freedom was the faculty of issuing one’s own laws, and its most prominent manifestation in Kantian thought is the categorical

imperative, through which every subject has a claim to reason, subsuming his wishes to a will that issues his own



Wolfram Malte Fues
(University of Basel)

laws. Reason without moral law can be termed a kind of evil reason. Borrowing from Freudian terminology, Fues then discussed the question of moral and political laws and the ways in which both an individual and a polity can be directed to ethical ends. Despite a natural tendency towards self-interest, the ego's self-love necessarily recalls a love of the species as a collectivity of egos. Fues then asked whether human beings can place themselves under coercive laws and allow freedom to come into itself. Can a law become moral and exceed the state without contravening it?

Carl Schmitt provided one answer to this question. For Schmitt, war and the concept of the foe protect the ethical health of the people. A territorial state for Schmitt is defined by the distinction between friend and foe, where all contradictions to the nature of the state are trans-

ferred to the foe. Thus, the ego and its alter (in this case, the foe) can insist on their respective identities and existence. The ego may never destroy its alter, or the state its foe. The foe is a self-questioning taking shape in an other, which keeps alive all indeterminacies that the state excludes from itself. For this reason, Schmitt held that societies without enemies or foes would decay in peace, while foes and wars would allow the self-renewal of humanity, in that they would prevent civil war through international war. Schmitt held that man was death to man, while for Kant, man is hope to man. Fues concluded by asking, "what do we say?" (Gizem Arslan)

A MATERIAL APRIORI? ON MAX SCHELER'S CRITIQUE OF KANT'S FORMAL ETHICS

Rodolphe Gasché (University at Buffalo, SUNY), in his examination of Immanuel Kant's legacy in the twentieth century, "A Material A Priori? On Max Scheler's Critique of Kant's Formal Ethics," aimed to defend Kant's moral philosophy from the charge that, by virtue of its formalist or even rigorist character, it can provide only an abstract and empty foundation for ethics. This is a venerable objection, but for Gasché,

Scheler's phenomenological version of it has a special significance. Scheler comprehends that, in Gasché's words, "Kant has refuted all non-formal ethics hitherto." Consequently, a return to a pre-critical material ethics that construes goods and purposes alone as objects for the will is no longer possible. Scheler's case for a non-formal but a priori (i.e., universal and necessary) ethics therefore hinges on the idea that "matter...is not exhausted by goods and purposes," that immediately intuitable values constitute the determining ground of the will. What is important for Gasché about Scheler's critique of Kant's alleged formalism is the reformulation of the form/matter distinction that it provides. In fact, Gasché thinks that "Kant could be said to transgress his own formalism" in the second *Critique*, by returning to the notion of a sovereign Good that determines the will even after having rejected the possibility that a free will can be determined by its objects (and not by the moral law). This serves to indicate how Kant's interpreters have misconstrued the form/matter distinction in his moral philosophy, but moreover how Scheler's attempt to develop a non-formal but a priori ethics fails to correct Kant simply because in some of its "elemental characteristics" it is already, "paradoxically, part and parcel of Kant's

so-called formal ethics." That Scheler's own supposedly material ethics should suffer from an "unacknowledged formalism" of its own should therefore come as no surprise. More important than that conclusion, though, are the compelling questions for future research into the meaning of Kant's formalism raised by Gasché's heterodox reading, especially regarding the insufficiency of the traditional form/matter distinction for understanding Kant's ethics and the requirement of undecidability that the latter appears to necessitate in order to be truly binding. (Aaron F. Hodges)

HEIDEGGER'S ANTI-NEO-KANTIANISM

The final presenter of the conference was **Taylor Carman** (Barnard College) with a talk on "Heidegger's Anti-Neo-Kantianism." Carman approached the topic by focusing on two points: Heidegger's interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in his book *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* and his "Davos disputation" with Ernst Cassirer. He began by discussing Heidegger's reading of Kant, centered on the restoration of the Kantian concept of "imagination" as it appears in the A manuscript of the first *Critique*. Carman assesses Heidegger's hermeneutic strategy in reading the

first *Critique* as an attempt to “save Kant from Neo-Kantianism” and to appropriate him in terms of his phenomenology. He notes that foregrounding imagination as the “deep root of all cognition” does not radically challenge Cassirer’s project to widen Kant’s epistemological critique of reason to a critique of culture and therefore cannot provide Heidegger with the argument he needs in his dispute with Cassirer. In the second part of the talk, Carman juxtaposed Heidegger’s phenomenology with Cassirer’s *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* and argued that the essential difference between the existential analytic of *Dasein* and Cassirer’s neo-Kantian critique of culture lies not in a debate over the status of imagination but in the concept of *Thrownness* which is the cornerstone for the Heideggerian project. In her response to Carman’s argument, **Anette Schwarz** (Cornell University) asserted that Heidegger’s position in the Davos debate was neither an attempt “to rescue Kant from Neo-Kantianism,” nor an effort to appropriate Kant in terms of his fundamental ontology and *Daseinsanalytik*. In her

view, the stakes for Heidegger in this debate were much higher, and are to be sought in the very meaning of the Heideggerian project, which was founded on the idea of a destruction/deconstruction of the received philosophical tradition and on a reconsideration of the task of philosophy – in her words, “what needed to be rescued from Neo-Kantianism was not Kant but philosophy itself.” (Andreea Mascan)

DISCUSSION SESSION

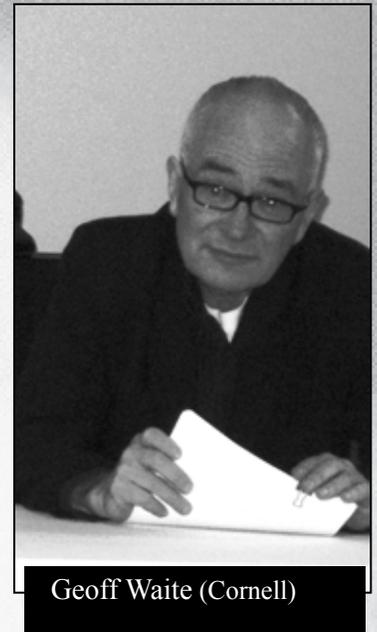
Tatiana Patrone (Ithaca College) and **Thomas Teufel** (Baruch College, CUNY) concluded the conference with a discussion session which focused on a few key questions and themes of particular importance to Kant’s legacy, Neo-Kantianism, and the “age of crisis.”

In his reflections, Thomas Teufel explored some implicit and explicit references to Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* made during the course of the conference, and considered the possibility that this last *Critique* holds “vistas of experience and even [advances] types of argument that go well beyond the narrower and perhaps safer

purview of the *Critique of Pure Reason*” for those who were disenchanted with Neo-Kantianism’s emphasis on the more scientific and perhaps narrower purview of the first *Critique*. He thus sought to elaborate and enrich some ideas presented by the participants.

Teufel expanded upon Hans Henrik Bruun’s presentation on Max Weber, who, unlike Kant, believed that there could be no connection between the world of values and the world of facts. Teufel suggested that the third *Critique* yielded several readings of Kant’s teleological commitments which complicate Weber’s fact/value dichotomy. Commenting also on Max Pensky’s reference to “reflective teleological historical judgment” in Kant, Teufel pointed out that Kant viewed this judgment as a necessity, and drew attention to the aesthetic overtones in history’s demands from subjects.

Tatiana Patrone focused on the questions, “Why cannot Kantian philosophy ‘handle’ the crisis? What is the reason for the profound dissatisfaction



Geoff Waite (Cornell)

with classical academic thought and with Kantian thought in particular?” Patrone suggested that Kantian thought could in fact be very useful in a crisis that is interpreted correctly. Focusing on Kant’s moral philosophy, Patrone argued for the importance of judging the relevance and importance of empirical facts and their relationship to moral values. She also reminded the attendees that Kant’s critical philosophy does not by itself offer a complete moral philosophy or ethics, but that *The Metaphysics of Morals* as well as Kant’s numerous lectures, when taken together, do in fact offer “a more viable ethics.”

(Gizem Arslan)

Gizem Arslan, Carl Gelderloos, Grace-Yvette Gemmell, Ari Linden, Andreea Mascan and Katrina Nousek are graduate students in the Department of German Studies. Aaron F. Hodges is a graduate student in the Department of Comparative Literature.



Intermedial Literature: Concerning Image, Sound and Writing in Contemporary Literature

An international conference entitled “Intermedial Literature: Concerning Image, Sound and Writing in Contemporary Literature” convened at Cornell’s A. D. White house from September 25th through 27th. Organized by David Bathrick, Professor Emeritus in the departments of German Studies and Theatre, Film and Dance, and his colleague Rainer Stollmann, a professor at the University of Bremen (Germany), the conference brought together an international and interdisciplinary group of scholars to examine new constellations in literary and media arts. In his opening comments, Bathrick described how the idea for this conference grew out of his collaboration with Stollmann on the Müller-Kluge digitization project. The aim of the conference was to investigate the role of (digital) media in shaping and transcending the literary word and the concept of authorship in the 21st century. Besides being a perfect occasion for Bathrick to introduce his new German colleagues from Bremen to his long-time colleagues from Cornell, he also wanted to facilitate a dialogue between literary and media specialists to open up discussions on the topic across disciplines and across the Atlantic. (Josh Dittrich)

“Medial Transgressions in the Literary Field”

The first paper, entitled “Medial Transgressions in the Literary Field,” was given by **Heinz-Peter Preußner**, a professor of German Studies at Bremen. Serving as a theoretical overview of the concerns of the conference,

Preußner’s paper investigated literature not as an autonomous art form, but rather as part of an intermedial communication system, and as such, always already predetermined by audio-visual paratexts. He also suggested the application of Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic capital to the literary field, stressing how the institutions and systems of intermedial arts complicate that concept. The paper also questioned the validity of concepts such as the public sphere (Habermas) and the avant-garde (Peter Bürger) in the contemporary, intermedial age. (Josh Dittrich)

“Urban Imaginaries: Feuilleton and Miniature”

The second paper of the conference was given by **Andreas Huyssen** the Villard Professor of German and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. Entitled, “Urban Imaginaries: Feuilleton and Miniature,” Huyssen’s paper investigated a genre of German short prose in the early 20th century that he calls the urban miniature. Mixing the genre of the feuilleton with experimentation in the literary rendering of new modes of perception demanded by urban life, the urban miniature (as *Wortbild*, *Denkbild*, *Schriftbild*, *Raubild*, etc.) reconfigures the relation of image to text in German modernism. Huyssen spoke at length on Benjamin’s *One Way Street*, integrating the author’s earlier work on baroque emblems into an analysis of the constitutive “visual absence” of this experimental literary text. (Josh Dittrich)

“Concerning the Dissolution of Intermedial Differences in Virtual Space”

Peter Gendolla (University of Siegen) opened Friday’s first panel with his paper “Concerning the Dissolution of Intermedial Differences in Virtual Space.” If literature is tentatively understood as a paradoxical art, at once highly abstract and concrete to the precise second, then that means we understand literature as always already discretely encoding *aisthesis*, in contrast



Peter Hohendahl (Cornell University) & Andreas Huyssen (Columbia University)

to those arts (such as visual arts, music, tattoo, perfumery, cooking) that directly, analogously activate the individual senses (eyes, ears, skin, nose, tongue). Literature in general then can be understood as a form of perception that is artistically designed, one that reflects the socio-cultural differentiation, the functionalization, and the separation of synaesthetic perception through technical media as a successive reduction of its means of representation: from song, dance, and theater to the mere *ars combinatoria* of barely 30 letters on paper. Yet at the same time the transformations of synaesthetic perception are concentrated on this surface, they are sublimated, or better: they are poetically condensed.

These poetic condensations can then provoke mental episodes and cascades of mental images, but it is the intensity and complexity of these releases that allow us to measure the quality of the particular poetic, narrative, or dramatic creation.

Computer technologies and their effects of digitization produce two things that invert this development, so to speak. The universal medium creates an eye of the needle through which letters must pass in order to enter the world, to become material. This means that the letters do not merely remain on paper, but are rather shifted to another level that has become more and more powerful, not only technologically but above all socio-culturally: the level of the program. Scripture becomes script, source code, ASCII, and to this extent it is correct to argue that in a computer everything is literature. But only just correct, since it is only one new source of literature. For something to become of it, sources must generate something that can be perceived by the senses. Here intermediality of a third kind introduces a new melody: after the first one between text and music in song and opera, and the second between text/image/sound etc. in analog visual media, we now have a third one between soft- and wetware in the interfaces between processualizing algorithms in computers and neuronal processes in the human body. They meet in sensitive technical surfaces: monitors, touch screens, or HmDs in tighter and tighter couplings of brain and machine through sensors and chips connected to nerves. (Based on summary provided by the author)

“Trans-Medial Strategies in Aesthetics”

“Trans-Medial Strategies in Aesthetics,” presented by **Dieter Mersch** (University of Potsdam), dealt with the escape of literature through performative and interactive strategies of writing within the realm of new media over the last three decades. Literature cannot be reduced to traditional categories and topics of

style or purely innertextual operations after the expansions and distortions of the avant-garde. However, the strategies of the avant-garde remain within the text and its medium; they at once recenter the textuality of the text by displacing it and confirm its validity by means of its own destruction. Avant-garde artists such as Lautréamont, Joyce, Beckett, Cortázar, or Burroughs can be characterized as writers who are paradoxically directed *against* writing by resisting the text through the celebration of new and surprising possibilities. Mersch contrasted these well-known practices with trans-medial strategies of literature that reveal writing or textuality as consisting of a multiplicity of media, emphasizing sound and the iconicity of writing and merging and mixing different media, as in Rolf-Dieter Brinkmann's collages of text fragments, newspaper clippings, and pictures, the cross-cultural techniques of Yoko Tawada, and the use of the Internet or readings as a public exhibition of the injured subject, as exemplified by the famous performance of Rainald Goetz at the Ingeborg-Bachmann prize competition in Klagenfurt.

Mersch claimed that such strategies are not only comprehensible as an inner radicalization of avant-garde practices, but rather as a new leap in literature because they thematize the influence of different popular media on it while employing them and changing the meaning of literature. Mersch argued that although trans-medial strategies still operate in the realm of the avant-garde, they also displace the conception of the avant-garde from inner-textual reflections to medial self-referentiality. They can be called trans-medial because they destabilize the medial *within the medial itself*. Moreover, due to the fact that the medial is not something you can simply point at, such self-references can only reveal aspects, or splinters of mediality, because the medium hides itself *in* what is mediatized and therefore remains chronically withdrawn. It exposes itself only where it, in turn, is deflected or impeded by different contradictory constellations of media. Hence, confronting the literary with the interconnection of other media offers new paths of self-revelation and reflexivity, and it is precisely this step that makes

the difference between classical avant-garde strategies and the literary practice of the last two or three decades.

To illustrate this Mersch concluded by referring to the recent attack of gaming on literature, for instance, in interactive video games as new modes of immersion and narration that seem to devalue literature. However, they not only intoxicate myriads of users with trivial stories, they also displace the sense of the literary in the digital age and raise new questions of the cultural role of the game and its relationship to literature. If Schiller discussed play as the essence of humanity and Hans-Georg Gadamer reconsidered play in his philosophy of art under the paradigm of *ludi naturae*, the new medium of video games by contrast narrows its meaning to decision-logic and a set of possibilities through which the player navigates his avatar. Literature on the other hand allows one to scrutinize the limits of binary codes by confronting the player with perspectives of undecidability and the unfathomable uniqueness of event that cannot be reconstructed within the frame of technical games – rather its singularity requires the literary realm in order to be posed at all. (Based on summary provided by the author)

“Literature in the Age of the Media System”

In his paper, “Literature in the Age of the Media System,” **Peter Gilgen** (Cornell University) revisited the difficulty of accounting for art, and especially literature, within Niklas Luhmann's systems theory. Gilgen showed that by complicating Luhmann's account of art as a system, specifically by considering the relationship between form and medium, the way art produces meaning at the intersection of the semiotic and semantic levels, and a notion of play, one can conceive of literature as a specifically self-referential system distinct from the more general media system.

After outlining Luhmann's account of the rise and inner differentiation of the media system, Gilgen pointed to a problem inherent in this description,

namely that it appears to efface significant differences between the media and art systems while being unable to conclusively identify them as belonging to the same system, thus preventing an adequate theoretical description of the art system on its own terms. While the media system is defined by the code distinguishing information from non-information, Luhmann's reliance on the code differentiating the ugly from the beautiful in order to define the art system is clearly problematic in light of 20th century artistic practice and theory.



Gilgen emphasized that a rigorous systems theoretical analysis of literature necessitates an inquiry into the intermediality of literature.

Drawing on the short story by Borges in which a fictional author rewrites, word for word, Cervantes' *Quixote* several centuries after the original, Gilgen examined the relationships between form and medium, and form and context, showing how those relationships necessarily change over time. For art, what is important is not merely a consideration of the ontologically prior primary medium (i.e. the aural, visual, or linguistic medium a work of art necessarily works within), but rather the self-reflexivity inherent in a second-order medium that is itself created through the artistic form. Furthermore, as is shown by the introduction and evolution of new technological media such as photography and film, each new medium eventually becomes a for-

mal element among others of the artistic medium; in Luhmann's words, "form is unspoken self-reference."

Gilgen then turned to David Wellbery's suggestion that literary criticism and systems theory be mediated through semiotics. Drawing on Wellbery's discussion of the difference between semiotics and semantics, and on Gregory Bateson's theory of play as a citational activity, Gilgen argued that "art communicates by using perceptions contrary to their primary purpose and through this novelty interrupts the perceptual routine of its audience." He concluded by looking at Oswald Egger's *Prosa Proserpina Prosa*, a text read during the 2003 Ingeborg Bachmann Prize competition. The text, by foregrounding the poetic function of language, encourages a multi-directional mode of reading that enables relations between the various linguistic elements that transcend a strictly referential function, and thus shows a way to the specificity of literature considered as a system. (Carl Gelderloos)

"Alexander Kluge: Kantianist of Intermediality"

Rainer Stollmann of the University of Bremen opened Saturday's second panel with his paper "Alexander Kluge: Kantianist of Intermediality." Kluge has published works of fiction, sociology, film theory; he is an internationally known director whose works include *Abschied von Gestern* (1966), the first postwar German film to premier at the Venice Film Festival, and has produced about 1500 hours of television broadcasts to date; it is thus worthwhile, according to Stollmann, to consult Kluge on intermediality. This concept has, however, a twist in Kluge's thought, where the word 'media' is distrusted as being too general, since it could equate the various media as interchangeable. Leaning on Adorno's theorization of the culture industry, Kluge is concerned not with media in the conventional sense

Got Art?

INTERSECTIONS OF ART & POLITICS IN GERMAN CULTURE

September 13-14 saw the annual DAAD weekend hosted by the Department of German Studies and organized by Professor **Patrizia McBride** (Cornell University). The title of this year's event was "Got Art? Intersections of Art and Politics in German Culture" and featured talks by scholars from Cornell and further afield on a variety of topics dealing with the relationship between art and politics in German culture from the Middle Ages to the present. In her introduction, McBride explored this relationship by indicating the degree to which, at least since the Enlightenment, ideas of art and political power have been entwined in the German context. She traced this entwinement from Kant, for whom the faculty of judgment is closely connected to the capacity to experience the beautiful, to the early Romantic Friedrich Schlegel, who saw the French Revolution and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* as the "defining tendencies" of his age, to the radical

avant-garde movements that followed in the wake of the First World War, particularly Berlin dada, which sought to overturn the bourgeois institutional separation between art and politics. Placing the conference in the context of the final months of a long election campaign, McBride emphasized that a reexamination of the relationship between art and politics in German culture, while seemingly distant from current concerns, is relevant to the present inasmuch as, by raising the question of the contextual specificity of such everyday words as art, culture, and politics, it can cause us to reflect consciously on the shifting significance of these words, and on the meanings assumed and produced by our own use of them. (Carl Gelderloos)

In the first presentation, "Kunstreligion and German Identity 1848-1945," **Stephen Meyer** (Fine Arts, Syracuse University) traced manifestations of *Kunstreligion* as transcendence in three

works from the period named in the title of his presentation, during which, he argued, it is possible to trace the decline and fall of the concept.

First, he described traditionally recognized understandings of *Kunstreligion* in the 18th and 19th centuries,



Patrizia McBride (Cornell)

particularly three conceptual fields proposed by Elizabeth Kramer, which include the view of art as an expression of religion, the symbiotic relationship between art and religion, and art supplanting religion. To this framework, he added his own categori-

zations, including ideas about artistic creativity as divine inspiration, attitudes towards the sacred art of the past, the historical period of the idea of *Kunstreligion*, and *Kunstreligion* as a transcendental experience, an experience of the musical sublime.

Meyer then proposed a paradigm of audience participation and transcendence for the first two examples, the operas *Parsifal*, by Richard Wagner, completed in 1882, and *Moses und Aron* by Arnold Schoenberg, which premiered in 1954. Analyzing the Ritual of the Grail from the closing scene of Wagner's opera, and the scene at the end of Act II, following "The Golden Calf at the Altar," from Schoenberg's work, Meyer

juxtaposed the outcome of collective healing in the former work with the great uncertainty with which the latter closes. Act II of Schoenberg's opera ends in a long, empty tone, the non-referential tone taking over where language has become meaning-

less. The third example was drawn from Thomas Mann's novel, *Doktor Faustus*, in which an orchestral work is described, composed by the fictional character Leverkühn, and roughly based on Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Yet, rather than ending, like Beethoven's piece, in tumultuous instrumental glory, the fictional symphony closes with a single, lingering note. Similar to the passage from Schoenberg's opera, the possibility of a transcendent experience of *Kunstreligion* is thrown into question. (Miyako Hayakawa)

Arthur Groos (Cornell University) offered a presentation titled "Singing Germany (ca. 1200)," in which he provided readings and analysis of poems by the medieval poet Walther von der Vogelweide, including historical information on the political influences on the poet and observations on their manifestation in Walther's poems.

Groos first described the political climate of the German empire un-

der the Hohenstaufen rule ca. 1200. Beginning in 1190, a series of complications in the imperial dynastic succession resulted in competing coronations between the Staufen and the Welf clans. This resulted in simultaneous coronations conducted by the two families and a resulting feud over the symbolic legitimacy of the respective emperors.

Walther von der Vogelweide was employed at the Staufen court, and endorsed in his poems the Staufens' legitimacy as the rulers of the empire, above all Phillip of Swabia's legitimacy as emperor. In his famous *Reichston* (1198-99), Walther describes the natural order of creation, positing that even the lowest of animals respect hierarchical soci-



Art Groos (Cornell)

etal organization. Walther recognizes Phillip as emperor by referenc-

ing the "orphan" crown, the unique crown of the Holy Roman Emperor, which was in the possession of the Staufens. In this manner, Walther portrays his lord as the ruler appointed by God, in possession of the appropriate symbols of power, and therefore capable of restoring natural order to the chaos of the day.

Another poem by Walther, his *Preislied* (1200-1210) praises the German people, and was written after Walther was sent into exile in Austria. Groos juxtaposed Walther's plea for repatriation with Hoffmann von Fallersleben's *Lied der Deutschen*, from 1841, which effectively imitates Walther's poem, describing a Germany of exaggerated size and praising the German people. Von Fallersleben's song was later appropriated by the Nazi party, which sought to formulate continuity with history and emphasize its claim as the Third Reich of Germany.

In this manner, Groos depicted both the manifestations of medieval politics in Walther's poems, as well as the effects that his poems had in their reception during later critical junctures in the development of Ger-

man national identity. (Miyako Hayakawa)

Grit Matthias, lecturer in German at Cornell University, in her talk entitled "Political Subcultures: Short Films from East Germany and West Berlin, 1978-1981," discussed the popularity of the Super 8 camera among artists in both East and West Berlin in the 1970's and 1980's. The Super 8 video camera was developed for use as a home camcorder, but gained popularity in the communities of underground artists on both sides of the wall. Super 8 technology had particular significance in the East German underground arts scene, as it allowed artists to create and show their works to small groups, thus circumventing state censorship. As Super 8 does not involve the use of negatives, these films had been extremely rare, although many have recently been digitized and are appearing in DVD format under the title *Alle Macht der Super 8* (*All Power to Super 8*). Challenging the audience to try and guess on which side of the Berlin Wall the films had been made, Matthias screened three films from the East and three from the West (a conspicu-

ous lack of Trabis in certain street scenes, alas, gave away several of the West Berlin films). After showing the films, Matthias posited that all of the films from both sides were of a political nature. On the one hand, East German artists in the underground had to be careful, even when sharing their works in smaller circles, given the level of Stasi infiltration of the underground art scene. On the other, West Berlin artists often manifested explicit political positions in their works. For both groups, this new medium thus became a form of resistance, in which politics could be confronted without running afoul of any systems of censorship. Matthias concluded her presentation by showing interviews with artists from the new DVD *Alle Macht der Super 8*. (Alex Phillips)

Could one conceive of Hitler as an admirer—even a tracer—of early Disney cartoons? PhD candidate **Paul Flaig** (Cornell University) began his engaging talk, entitled “Mass Culture Between Utopia and Catastrophe: Revisiting the Adorno/Benjamin Divide,” with evidence of this at hand. Soon af-

ter making this rather unsettling claim, Flaig presented the audience with two images commonly associated with our Frankfurt School friends: a photograph of the stern and solemn Theodor Adorno, and a fuzzy sock puppet caricature of the ever-optimistic Walter Benjamin. It is from such *misconceptions* that Flaig took his point of departure, arguing that the Adorno/Benjamin divide vis-à-vis their respective views on mass culture is not as vast as some have imagined it. This can be shown when one turns to the realm of comedy, which is exactly what Flaig did in the course of his presentation.

Benjamin too was a fan of Mickey Mouse. Informed heavily by his Marx-filtered reading of the nineteenth century utopian socialist thinker Charles Fourier, Benjamin defended the revolutionary potential of the iconic cartoon, in which he saw the “moral mobilization of nature.” To demonstrate this idea, Flaig showed the audience a clip from one of the early Mickey cartoons—the

only ones Benjamin ever saw—which presents an idyllic picture of life on the farm, in which work is stripped of its instrumental value, and in which the animals seem to be harmonized with nature, not despite, but rather because of technological advancements. This, Flaig argued, is what inspired Benjamin to see in Mickey Mouse a “wish image” that was capable of producing in its audience an eruption of cathartic laughter. It is this laughter that reveals, even if on the unconscious level, the gap between alienated existence under the conditions of late capitalism (or fascism) and the utopia that lies ahead.

So what would Adorno say? Flaig continued by arguing that the same Adorno who once claimed that laughter was a sign of

“bourgeois sadism,” and whose invectives against mass culture are scattered throughout his oeuvre had, like Benjamin, his own Mickey Mouse. His name, it turns out, was Groucho Marx. By first showing a clip of a Marx brothers’ comedy, in which an opera is rudely interrupted by a pickup game of baseball within the theater itself, Flaig turned his attention to the moment in Adorno’s writing when he lauds the radical nature of this scene. For Adorno, the type of laughter produced here reveals the consciousness of alienation, in that, by means of its raised self-awareness, the scene points to both the decay of bourgeois ideology, as well as to the absurdity of mass culture itself. Nothing is spared; everything is laughable. Thus in one of Adorno’s rare redemptive moments, Flaig was able to show yet another affinity these two celebrated thinkers. (Ari Linden)

Elizabeth Otto (SUNY Buffalo), an international expert in art history, media & gender studies, focused her presentation, titled “New Women, Vision, and Modernity: Film and Photomontage, Weimar and Now,” on



Elizabeth Otto (SUNY Buffalo)

modalities chosen by Weimar women artists to render vivid the emergent figure of the New Woman, a symbol of liberated but also controversial female identity. Otto chose to focus in particular on the photomontages of Marianne Brandt, prominent member of the Bauhaus and collaborator of artists Moholy-Nagy and Walter Gropius, and Germaine Krull, member of the "Neues Sehen" photography scene, while providing a broad historical frame of reference for the artistic productions of the New Woman. Through the analysis of works by Marianne Brandt, especially her *Ashtray*, *Parisian Impressions* or *With all Ten Fingers*, Otto demonstrated how

the New Woman identity, grown out of the impulses of mass culture, bears a certain melancholic trace, a mixture of action and inaction, of abandonment and vigorous manifesto articulated in the midst of the allegorical city of modernity. (Arina Rotaru)

Jennifer Creech (University of Rochester) concluded the conference with a talk entitled "The Most Important Art? Lenin and Post-Wende German Film." The talk addressed the broader issue of *Ostalgie* by focusing on what she calls "the specter of Lenin haunting Post-Wende German

Cinema." Creech began her discussion of this phenomenon by drawing the audience's attention to Slavoj Žižek's restoration of Lenin in his book *Repeating Lenin*. The figure foregrounded in Žižek's approach is a "Lenin-in-becoming," associated with the socialist ideal of utopian desire, not the latter "Lenin the Soviet Union." Creech traced a similar understanding of Lenin in post-Wende cinema as an iconic symbol by exploring two films: Wolfgang Becker's *Good Bye, Lenin!* and Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's *Das Leben der An-*



Miyako Hayakawa & Carl Gelderloos (Cornell)

deren. Good Bye, Lenin! would be, in Creech's view, a reconstruction of the GDR as an alternative public sphere inside post-Wende Germany. This reconstruction would highlight a dichotomy inherent to the very structure of the GDR project, a dichotomy between ideology at the service of the state and utopian desire, the latter represented by the Lenin-ef-

figy. Creech interpreted von Donnersmarck's *Das Leben der Anderen* by dwelling on one of the central scenes containing a reference to a remark of Lenin's in the context of the "Sonate vom Guten Menschen." In this context, she brought attention to Lenin's criticism of art as being anti-revolutionary and bourgeois. (Andreea Mascan)

Carl Gelderloos, Miyako Hayakawa, Ari Linden, Andreea Mascan, Alex Phillips & Arina Rotaru are graduate students in the Department of German Studies.



Carl Gelderloos, Paul Flaig & Megan Eaton (Cornell)

The Technology of Memories: Collective Traumatic Remembrance in Modern Germany

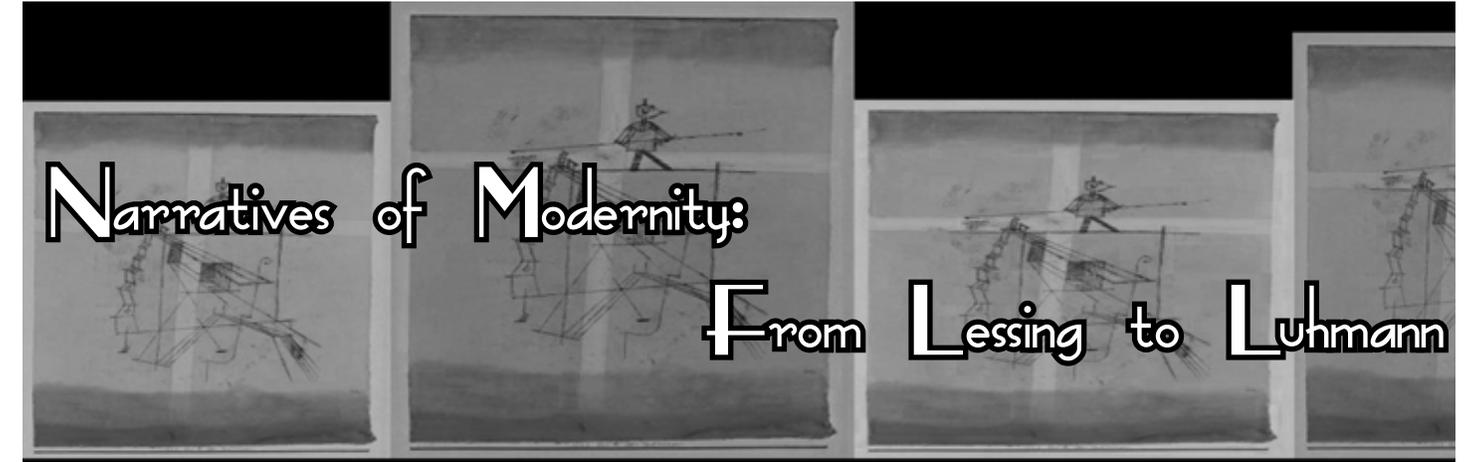
DAAD Summer Seminar 2008

The DAAD Summer Seminar in German Studies was once again held at Cornell University (June 16-July 27, 2008), this time under the direction of **David Bathrick**, Jacob Gould Schurman Professor of Theatre, Film & Dance and German Studies. "The Technology of Memories" focused for the most part on the collective memory of two specific catastrophic events occurring within 20th Century Germany: a) the period encompassing the Nazi rule of Germany, the Second World War and the Holocaust (1933-1945); b) the period encompassing the emergence of the student movement and the subsequent RAF terrorism (1967-1989). While there were considerable differences in the projects undertaken by the twelve members of this interdisciplinary seminar, what tied the seminar together was a second focus on **how** the collective memory of these "events" was constructed, preserved, supported and/or redirected, manipulated, circulated (Kittler) and even fabricated via specific medial technologies. These included in our case film, photography, radio, television, and various forms of print media (books, newspapers, archives, etc.). In tracing memory work of that earlier time from its occurrence down to the present, we also included consideration of how changing media shape changes in collective memory itself; consideration as well of contemporary challenges to established media provided by digitization, the internet, and the blogosphere, etc. Here questions arose as to what it means that specific historical traumas are *re-remembered* collectively through the structural changes occurring constantly within the "discourse networks" in which we communicate. We also became particularly sensitive to the differences between the roles of private memory (that developed by individuals or within the domain of single family life) and public memory.

What emerged out of this interface and interplay of catastrophic events and the media in which

they are remembered additional questions about what sorts of political, cultural, bureaucratic, linguistic or even "imagined communities" (great and small, conformist and disruptive, etc.) are created or enabled via the circulation of various memories and memory technologies; how mediated or vicarious can memory be and still have a meaningful claim to being "memory"? Finally, what does it mean that medial memories of German suffering during World War II (Allied bombing raids, Stalingrad, flight from the East, etc.) seem recently more likely to coexist rather than merely conflict with representations of the Holocaust as was previously the case? Certainly these kinds of questions forced us to think beyond the trauma theory paradigm that has dominated some areas of memorial scholarship in the recent past.

David Bathrick, the Jacob Gould Schurman Professor Emeritus of Theatre, Film & Dance and Professor of German Studies was a Professor of German at the University of Wisconsin from 1970 to 1987, when he joined the German Studies, Theatre, Film & Dance departments, and the Jewish Studies Program at Cornell. He has also been a visiting professor at universities in Germany and the United States. He was chair of the German Studies Department at Cornell from 1991 to 1994 and 2006 to 2008 and the Theatre, Film & Dance Department from 1995 to 2002. His publications include *The Dialectic and the Early Brecht* (1976); *Modernity and the Text* (1989, co-edited with Andreas Huyssen); *The Powers of Speech: The Politics of Culture in the GDR* (1995), for which he was awarded the DAAD/GSA Book of the Year Prize; *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory* (2008) and 75 articles on the theory and history of 20th century literature and cultural studies. He is a co-founder and an Executive Editor of *New German Critique*. Bathrick is currently completing a book on the Holocaust and film and makes his home in Bremen, Germany.



Narratives of Modernity:

From Lessing to Luhmann

This seminar will explore the narrative construction of modernity from the Enlightenment to the recent present. Discussions will be located at a discursive juncture where methodological reflections on an expanded narratology intersect with theories and philosophies of history. Analytical issues that come to the fore at this juncture have ramifications throughout the Humanities and Social Sciences. Narrative is a highly plastic form that establishes patterns of continuity and discontinuity while holding options open and tolerating ambiguities. Its power as an instrument for the rendering of socio-cultural worlds resides in its flexibility: its temporal openness, its plurality of perspectives, and its transformability. The capacity of narrative to provide frameworks of self-understanding is especially salient in the case of large-scale collective processes that, although unavailable to perceptual inspection, nevertheless must be observed if society is to achieve an account of itself. Since the last third of the eighteenth century, the concept of history has formed such an instrument of self-interpretation and one of the most contested areas within this interpretation has been the construal of modernity. This is the zone of inquiry the 2009 Interdisciplinary Summer Seminar in German Studies will endeavor to chart. Discussions will be centered on exemplary texts from the eighteenth century to the present as well as on participants' research.

DAAD Summer Seminar

University of Chicago June 15-July 24, 2009

Seminar Director:

David E. Wellbery

LeRoy T. and Margaret Deffenbaugh Carlson University Professor,
University of Chicago

Application Deadline:

March 1, 2009

Program:

The seminar will be administered by the Department of Germanic Studies and will combine seminar meetings, discussions, and guest lectures. Seminar meetings will be conducted in English and all readings will be available in English translation. The seminar will be held at the University of Chicago.

Stipends & Fees:

Participants are eligible for a DAAD travel/housing stipend.
A non-refundable \$50 administrative fee is required of all participants.

Eligibility:

Participation is open to faculty members in the Humanities and Social Sciences at colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada. Applicants who have received their Ph.D. within the past two years but do not yet hold faculty appointments are encouraged to apply. Graduate students and Ph.D. candidates are not eligible. Participants are expected to have an active interest in German intellectual and cultural history and must be citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. or Canada.

Contact: Prof. David Wellbery (wellbery@uchicago.edu)

Department of Germanic Studies/ University of Chicago/ Chicago, IL 60637

(Cont'd from page 9)

but as singular resources the human mind must deal with, which are measured by the internal Kantian criteria of intuition and the concept.

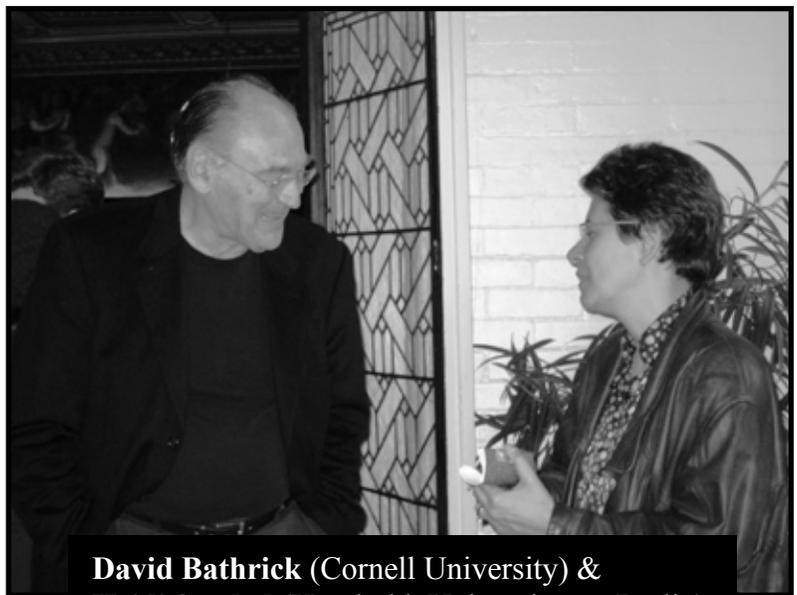
With examples from Kluge's *Geschichtliche Organisation der Arbeitsvermögen*, Stollmann illustrated how images and captions are paired in unexpected ways to create a tension that deconstructs, or relocates, the traditional or expected relationship between them. The captions "Steel" and "Worker" are respectively given a photograph of the production process of steel and a close-up profile of a man's face; the classic portrait of a hirsute Karl Marx is supplied with the caption "Mole," setting up an unexpected contrast between concept and intuition. Further examples were drawn from Kluge's films. Scenes of women burning or flushing banknotes bring the play of intuition, in the familiar forms of fire and toilets, to bear on the ideological linkage of money and happiness, while shots of modern battleships anchored amidst plying gondolas and a familiar skyline confuse a standard notion of Venice. Finally, a talk show spoof obsessively followed a logic of periodization ad absurdum, showing how intuition can be used to break down periodization for the audience which, ultimately, is the most important medium. (Carl Gelderloos)

"The E in the E-Book: Medium and Message in the 22 Müller-Kluge TV-Conversations"

David Bathrick of Cornell University presented the next paper, "The E in the E-Book: Medium and Message in the 22 Müller-Kluge TV-Conversations." These conversations, which can be found at (<http://muller-kluge.library.cornell.edu/en/videos.php>), are a series of interviews between West German author, filmmaker, critic and theorist Alexander Kluge and East German playwright Heiner Müller, aired on German television

between June 1988 and November 1995.

What sets the interviews apart is not the content so much as the style and the intermedial manner in which such material is presented. For Bathrick, Kluge creates a different dynamic than in the normal talk show, playing the offscreen antiomniscient narrator who gently interrupts, offers often inadequate summations, etc., in order to create an atmosphere where both interlocutors join in free-association exercises. According to Bathrick, Kluge's interview style represents a "detonation of the well-made talking heads interview," permitting the participants to pick their way through the rubble and produce new meaning by associative montage. The



**David Bathrick (Cornell University) &
Heidi Strobel (Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)**

style of thought all this allows is what Brecht termed "*angreifendes Denken*." Tracing Müller's development as an interviewee, Bathrick argued that his move towards performativity in the late 1980's created the possibility to bring forth something new through conversation rather than simply representing the already known. This, along with Müller's and Kluge's shared political, philosophical, and aesthetic obsessions, allowed for the interviews' unique dynamic.

Important themes in the interviews are the two world wars, intellectuals and power, 1989, the history of the Soviet Union and Communism, and Müller and Kluge on art and aesthetics, among others. This thematic focus created what Bathrick called a "network of epistemological accretion" where topics could be revis-

ited in different ways. Combined with the associative logic of the interviews and with the intermediality of their production, this allowed the material of the interviews to be concretized and historicized. Furthermore, the visual aspect of the interviews allows facial, gestural, and corporal elements to inflect, or sometimes contradict, the verbal utterances, creating a second level of meaning. What Müller said of collaboration with Robert Wilson – that meaning is created by each step, and not by an overarching idea – could, Bathrick concluded, apply to the Müller-Kluge conversations. (Carl Gelderloos)

“Eating Text: The Life of Words as Image, Sound and Action”

In his presentation, entitled “Eating Text: the Life of Words as Image, Sound and Action,” **Roberto Simanowski** (Brown University) explored the phenomenon of “remediation,” a term coined by Robert Grusin and Jay David Bolter in the 1990s to describe the representation of one medium in another, particularly in visual multimedia. Simanowski provided examples in which text serves as the raw material for visual art and multimedia, examining the manner in which text is obscured or served in the process of remediation. In conclusion, he pointed to questions and discussions that have been prevalent in recent years, surrounding the nature of reading and the status of text in a digital age.

Eugen Gomringer’s 1954 poem, *Schweigen*, and Guillaume Apollinaire’s *Il pleut* provided examples of the exploitation of the materiality of text for poetry in the pre-digital age. This was followed by the example of the 1999 project, *Text Rain*, by Camille Utterback, which involves the audience or reader in the manipulation of material text falling on a screen. Paul de Marinis’ work, “The Messenger” (1998/2005) isolates letters from email messages and reproduces them in three systems of output devices. The result is a loss of linguistic meaning for the letters. Another project, by Caleb Larsen, “Complete Works of W.S.” (2008) employs the technique of text pointillism, rendering the digital text of the works of William Shakespeare



Jack Stetter & Jens Schellhammer
(Cornell University)

into colored dots. Julius Popp’s “bit.fall” produces text in falling drops of water.

In some of the examples, the mediating text “eats” the text it remediates, in that the original text loses its status as text. The semantic meaning of text is foregrounded by the materiality of text. Relevant to this process are considerations of the status of reading text, as opposed to playing with it, and the function of text as conveying semantic content and text as ornament. (Miyako Hayakawa)

“We’ll Slide Down the Surface of Things: On Pop’s Attempt to Write the Curve of the Needle”

Jens Schellhammer (Cornell University), whose presentation was titled “We’ll Slide Down the Surface of Things: On Pop’s Attempt to Write the Curve of the Needle,” explored the difficulties of situating pop culture and pop cultural objects within traditional frames of aesthetic discourse, demonstrating that an innovative approach is needed to analyze pop, particularly in order to perceive the political potential of pop. The question was also raised whether one writes about pop or writes pop.

Schellhammer observed the instability of representation and reference in artifacts of

pop culture, providing a cosmology in which God is a DJ as an approach to the complex and destabilizing effects of pop. Pop constantly reassigns meaning, operating by means of repetition with variation, and maintaining a level of abstract representation by means of constantly replacing signifiers. Thus, pop operates much like a DJ, consistently changing discs in order to control a dancing mass.

Among the examples from pop culture and critical work on pop culture, Schellhammer cited the novel *Great Jones Street* by Don

DeLillo, focusing on the *Mountain Tapes* section, the transcript of tapes recorded by Bucky Wunderlich, the narrator and protagonist based on the historical figure of Bob Dylan. The tapes are described as being recorded in a state of mindlessness, in an isolated chamber. For all intents and purposes, the text is a string of nonsense phrases, and yet in their reception, both fictionally, by Bucky's manager and the public, and as the text written by DeLillo and published and distributed, they are received as cultural objects. This brings into question the production, distribution, and reception of pop possible to discuss pop. Further examples were explored from Jeff Koons, Frédéric Beigbeder, Rainald Goetz, and Andreas Neumeister. (Miyako Hayakawa)



Anne Thurmann-Jajes
(Weserburg-Museum für moderne Kunst, Bremen)

1950s to the 1970s. Thurmann-Jajes identified concrete poetry, which developed first in Sweden, Brazil, Vienna, and Switzerland, with the Fluxus group. One key member of Fluxus, Dick Higgins, defined his group in 1966 with the words "Fluxus is intermedia." Thurmann-Jajes quoted him as saying in that same year that "much of the best work being introduced today seems to be [...] between media." Concrete poetry, Thurmann-Jajes expanded, is intermedial in and of itself, existing

as its own creation somewhere between the seven arts. Its key characteristics

include an engagement with individual words and letters, reduced so that they no longer bear a message. Concrete poetry returned to the particles of basic media and defined the letter as an object, embodying intermediality in its very conception. Thurmann-Jajes also spoke of a paradigm shift in concrete poetry around the time of the Bielefeld Colloquium, in which artists became focused on a freedom of choice within traditional forms of expression rather than a fusion of artistic disciplines. Only after this shift, Thurmann-Jajes said, could one really speak of intermediality in concrete poetry in a true sense, as the new forms produced related not to reality, but to one another. (Megan Eaton)

"Mediality and Intermediality in Concrete Poetry: From the Vienna Group to the Bielefeld Colloquium"

In a talk entitled "Mediality and Intermediality in Concrete Poetry: From the Vienna Group to the Bielefeld Colloquium," **Anne Thurmann-Jajes** (Weserburg-Museum für moderne Kunst, Bremen) traced the development of mediality in concrete poetry from the

"Tropes of Home: Globalization and the Visual Turn in Chinese Urban Culture"

Haiping Yan (Cornell University) presented her paper, "Tropes of Home: Globalization and the Visual Turn in Chinese Urban Culture," in which she spoke about the increase in images of home as a material place in Chinese visual culture. She gave as her first example a talk show, a relatively new genre in China. The episode Yan discussed featured five professionals, three men and two women, who shared their experiences of home. The discussants' stories re-



Haiping Yan (Cornell University)

vealed an investment in the idea of home and specifically the notion of owning. Two of the men gave their wives credit for making sacrifices to protect and keep up their homes in the wake of a crisis, but the women were mostly silent. Women, Yan argued, are co-authors of the home in Chinese urban cultures, but are also in some ways not present. Yan then spoke about *The Feminine World* (1991), a documentary film made by and for a generation of women born as the People's Republic was founded. Three of the women followed in the film were professional and all three of them, according to Yan, were "excessive in the social present," working too much, maintaining homes, and coming face to face with "excessive sociality." In relation to these examples, Yan asked what home means in a changing country. And what does this mean for Chinese women, who are becoming characterized as an absent presence? Yan also discussed home as an organizing trope that can help register the experience of a differentiated citizenry, as each group will have conflicting feelings about which issues are closest to home. (Megan Eaton)

"Popular Urban Intermediality"

Sabine Haenni (Cornell University) focused her paper, entitled "Popular Urban Intermediality," on the emerging entertainment spaces in three areas of New York City at the turn of the twentieth century: the Lower

East Side, Chinatown, and Broadway. Noting the co-existence of various media in urban entertainment areas, she explored the manifestations of intermediality in performance spaces such as Hammerstein's Olympia Theater and Times Square. The cultural environment at the time was one of production and these spaces offered a source of global tourism in the city. Theater goers' consumption of and within the theater prompted the development of new multi-media contexts, such as roof gardens, as well as a new experience of theater that considered the full body immersion in the intermedial spaces. Press columns described film as a three-dimensional experience not limited only to the image on the screen, but including the theater space and its atmosphere as well. So too the development of virtual environments of immigration paralleled the emerging immigrant groups in the city. The Italian and eastern European Jewish populations of the Lower East Side gave rise to Yiddish music halls, movies and vaudeville specifically directed towards this consumer base. Though market concerns were crucial to the growth of these urban environments as well, the demand was for informal over mainstream modes of intermediality. In these intermedial spaces outside the mainstream, shifting cultural hierarchies become evident in the performative regulation of the work of social interaction. Haenni concluded by suggesting the potentially productive analytic trajectories that notions of affective or hunger-driven intermediality could offer. (Katrina Nousek)

"Reflected Mediality: Michael Haneke's Film Adaptation of *The Piano Teacher* by Elfriede Jelinek"

In "Reflected Mediality: Michael Haneke's Film Adaptation of *The Piano Teacher* by Elfriede Jelinek," **Manuel Köppen** (Humboldt University, Berlin) interrogated intermediality through an exploration of notions of authorship in Michael Haneke's film and television adaptations of literary works. Crucial to Köppen's paper was Haneke's hierarchical conception of television and movies as art forms. Whereas he considered television to be a respectable way

to satisfy the middle-class market demand for narrative entertainment, he held the motion picture to be a true art form in which the director's authorship could reestablish media boundaries. Haneke's sentiments are evident in his different methods for treating the television adaptation of Kafka's *The Castle* and Jelinek's *The Piano Teacher*. When making *The Castle* for TV, he reported feeling personally constrained beyond the dictates of public TV requirements. He omitted the scenes that he felt required interpretation and saw his achievement in the possibility of encouraging viewers to read the book. When filming *The Piano Teacher*, however, he considered himself as important an author of the movie as Jelinek was of the novel. Unlike Jelinek's novel, the film situates the romantic relationship of Erika Kohut and Walther Klemmer at the center and does not employ the irony that the novel does. Its self-referential nature deconstructs the genres of the love story and the melodrama through the inability of characters to form emotions. Furthermore, the *mise-en-scène* substitutes for the internal monologue of the narrative, and the film controls the gaze in order to manipulate voyeuristic desires of the audience in a manner different than novelistic discourses could. Köppen concluded that Haneke's stylistic treatment of filmic elements foregrounds his authorship of the film as a work of art independent of its conceptual debt to Jelinek's novel. (Katrina Nousek)

"Literary Prizes and Medial Paratexts"

The final panel, moderated by Werner Goehner (Cornell University), began with a talk co-presented by **Wolfgang Emmerich** and **Matthias Wilde** of the University of Bremen. Emmerich and Wilde examined the relationship between literary prizes and the German literary landscape after 1945 in their paper "Literary Prizes and Medial Paratexts," focusing specifically on the Büchner Prize, the Bremen Literature Prize, and the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize. Borrowing on a reading of Bourdieu's theories of symbolic capital, Emmerich and Wilde examined how the symbolic act of consecration that is the award ceremony can increase an author's symbolic capital. Emmerich and Wilde examined the

histories of each of these prizes as they evolved to honor successive generations of authors and eventually began to recognize the literary output of the German Democratic Republic. Emmerich and Wilde concluded their presentation by turning to the Bachmann Prize, which stands out for the fact that the readings of the authors and the reactions are broadcast on TV, encouraging some writers to attempt to increase their own symbolic capital by attempting to add a bit more spectacle to their presentations, as when Rainald Goetz famously cut his forehead during a reading, allowing the blood to dribble down his face and onto his script. (Alex Phillips)

"Asia Acoustic"

Wolfgang Emmerich and Matthias Wilde were followed by **Tim Murray** (Cornell University). Murray presented a paper entitled "Asia Acoustic," using a multimedia Japanese art installation as a point of departure to examine ways in which several contemporary Japanese artists have experimented with both film and sound in their art installations, shifting between various media in their works. Murray shared with the audience examples of installations involving images and texts projected into thin water tanks, which the viewer regards while lying on his or her back, as well as noise experiments in which the artist works with the high and low extremes of the range audible to the human ear. (Alex Phillips)



*Josh Dittrich, Megan Eaton, Carl Gelderloos,
Miyako Hayakawa, Katrina Nousek &
Alex Phillips are graduate students in the
Department of German Studies.*



The Devil's Handwriting:

PRECOLONIALITY *and the*
GERMAN COLONIAL STATE
in QINGDAO, SAMOA, and SOUTHWEST AFRICA



Professor of Sociology and German Studies at the University of Michigan, George Steinmetz is currently Visiting Professor of Sociology at the New School for Social Research. In 2006 he was awarded the American Sociological Association's Lewis A. Coser Award for Theoretical Agenda Setting in Sociology. His most recent book, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (2007), analyzes relationships between cultural formations and state formations in ways that pose new challenges to histories, sociologies, and cultural studies of colonialism, and to some widely held premises in postcolonial theory. For this work Steinmetz has been awarded two book prizes by the American Sociological Association, one for Comparative and Historical Sociology and one for Cultural Sociology. Author of *Regulating the Social* (1993) and editor of *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences* (2005), Steinmetz has also authored numerous articles on the multifaceted relationship between sociology, history, culture, and colonialism.

LECTURE BY

George Steinmetz

PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY & GERMAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

2 APRIL 2009 / 4:30 P.M. / A.D. WHITE HOUSE

Sponsored by the Institute for German Cultural Studies, Department of Anthropology, Africana Studies & Research Center, Institute for Comparative Modernities, Institute for European Studies, Department of Development Sociology, Society for the Humanities, Department of Sociology, Department of German Studies, Department of Asian Studies, Cornell-China Institute for the Arts & Humanities, and The European Club

For more information please contact Lisa Bonnes Johnson: lb433@cornell.edu

Colloquium Series

Fall 2008

Building the Modern City: Gender and Alternative Architectural Visions

August 29, 2008

The Fall 2008 colloquium series began with a presentation entitled “Building the Modern City in Berlin: Gender and Alternative Architectural Visions” by **Despina Stratigakos**, a professor of architecture at the University at Buffalo, SUNY. Stratigakos’ presentation drew on material from her then forthcoming book on the impact of women on



Despina Stratigakos (University of Buffalo, SUNY)

the modern city and vice versa. She seeks to document the reconceptualization of urban space according to the female subject, both in terms of the imaginary experience of

the metropolis from a female perspective, and also in terms of the concrete effects of and for women on design, style, urban planning,

housing and the architectural profession itself. The archival center-

piece of the chapter that Stratigakos used for her colloquium presentation was “Die Frau im Haus und Beruf,” a massive 1912 exhibition of female labor power at the Berlin Zoological Garden. For Stratigakos, the exhibition was an index of the spatial emancipation of the German women’s movement as it navigated between the extremes of the meetings halls of the Communist left and the flowery parlors and drawing rooms of the bourgeoisie. (Josh Dittrich)



HERZ UND VERSTAND:

ANMERKUNGEN ZUR WESTDEUTSCHEN GEFÜHLSKULTUR NACH 1945

September 19, 2008

Were the emotions of a generation growing up in National Socialist Germany entangled in a characteristic way? And how did the emotional culture of this period develop after 1945? In her colloquium paper, titled “Herz und Verstand: Anmerkungen zur westdeutschen Gefühlskultur nach 1945,” IGCS visiting scholar **Dr. Heidi Strobel** (Institut für deutsche Literatur, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) made a preliminary attempt to answer these questions by analyzing Nazi functionary and doctor Johanna Haarer’s guidebooks on parenting and their reception in scholarship. Strobel claimed that fear, loneliness, and lack of compassion characterized the emotional culture of the National Socialist period. She argued that these emotions can be clearly detected in Haarer’s advice on infant care as it reflects an emotionally cold disposition befitting this ideology.

Strobel continued her analysis of the emotional aftermath of the Third Reich, paying particular attention to the lives of children in postwar Germany. She focused on *Ich zog mit Hannibal*, a 1960 children’s book by Hans Baumann. Arguing that Baumann had been brought up in the emotional culture of National Socialism and that he was an active member of the cultural scene of the Third Reich, Strobel analyzed the text as a reflection of a lingering postwar implication in National Socialist models of emotion.

The discussion of Strobel’s paper, which the author indicated marks the starting point of research towards her German *Habilitation*, probed the scholarly domain of the paper, which Strobel characterized as a literary-historical and gender-specific approach to emotional culture. Furthermore, the speaker and her audience discussed the project’s connection to pedagogy and the status of scholarship related to children’s literature in German and American German Studies. (Claudia Schmidt)



CONSTITUENCY COMMUNICATION AT THE WWW: CHANGES IN DEMOCRACY OR CHANGES IN MEDIA?

October 17, 2008

With less than three weeks to go until Election Day, **Thomas Zittel**, Chair of Comparative Political Sciences at the Geschwister-Scholl Institut für Politikwissenschaft at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich and presently DAAD Professor in the Cornell Department of Government, presented research on the use of electronic communication between politicians and voters in his paper “Constituency Communication at the WWW: Changes in Democracy or Changes in Media?” Zittel compared the use of the Internet and e-mail among politicians in the United States to communicate with and reach out to voters with the comparatively



Thomas Zittel (DAAD Professor, Government, Cornell)

slower adoption of these means of communication among German and Swedish politicians. Zittel based his research on interviews with Swedish, American, and German politicians and their staffers, content analysis of politicians' websites, and ease of access to politicians through electronic communication, which he placed within the context of the political developments in those three countries over the past fifteen years. (Alexander Phillips)



Gaps of Knowledge, Suspensions of Pity: The Ethics of Empathy

December 5, 2008

In his paper "Gaps of Knowledge, Suspensions of Pity: The Ethics of Empathy" **Johannes Türk** (Indiana University) laid out a heuristic typology of conceptual constellations that might prove relevant to thinking an "ethics of empathy."

In Thucydides' account of the epidemic that struck Athens in 430 B.C. Türk identified a prototypical example of empathy as an affect, which, rather than grounding the relation to the Other, must be controlled and even suspended to sustain the social order. Türk then traced this paradox of the ethical through the writings of Aristotle, where theater is given the function of removing excess affect, becoming an instrument to control the affective economy of the polis.

In Rousseau Türk saw a reversal of Aristotle's mistrust of instinctive affective reaction. Pity, as a natural emotion, is a source of the good, and thus the foundation of the social. However, Türk pointed to a paradox in Rousseau's conception of pity, which collapses difference, enabling identification with the other while radically effacing the Other as Other. A partial solution is the supplementation of pity by imagination. Pity thus takes on a double nature; it is that which generates immediate identification while establishing a radical distance. Türk then discussed this double structure in Lessing's meditations on theater. In Lessing, one finds the paradox that pity can only arise at the actual sight of evil, while the conditions for identification with the Other in drama have to transcend actual sight. Finally, Türk discussed Proust's anti-empathy, which stems from the paradoxical endeavor to show how true empathy can only arise from a space beyond

empathy. The surgeon becomes the truly ethical figure, representing an empathy which is not governed by identification.

Türk finished on the preliminary note that while empathy cannot be the foundation of ethics and even requires an ethic that would at times suspend it, it is equally impossible to conceive of an ethics devoid of any empathy. (Jens Schellhammer)



Johannes Türk (Germanic Studies,
Indiana University, Bloomington)

*Josh Dittrich, Claudia Schmidt,
Alexander Phillips, and Jens Schellhammer
are graduate students in the Department
of German Studies.*



Institute for GERMAN Cultural Studies

Spring 2009 Colloquium Series

Fridays at 3:00pm
181 Goldwin Smith

January 23

LAWRENCE Shapiro

History of Architecture and Urban Design
Cornell University

“Wim Wenders and Topographies
of German Identity”

February 6

FRANCESCA CERNIA SLOVIN

Independent Scholar, New York City

“Gradiva, the Woman Who Walks:
Reincarnated in Literature,
Psychoanalysis, and Art History”

Discussant: Geoffrey C. Waite, German Studies, Cornell University

March 6

HELMUT MÜLLER-SIEVERS

German, Classics, and Comparative Literary Studies
Northwestern University

“Forced Motion: Kinematics and
Narrative in the 19th Century”

**Advance copies of each paper are available from
the Dept. of German Studies-183 Goldwin Smith**

March 27

JOHN NAMJUN KIM

Comparative Literature & German
University of California at Riverside

“Notes from the Tenure Track”

*N.B. Professional Development
Presentation--No Advance Paper*

April 17

ALBRECHT KOSCHORKE

German Literature, University of Konstanz
Co-Editor, *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für
Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*

“Unvermeidlich und nicht zu fassen.
Das Reale als Problem in der mod-
ernen Epistemologie und Literatur”

May 1

MELANIE STEINER

German Studies, Cornell University

“*Ressentiment* as Corrective: Jean
Améry and the Duty of Unforgiving”



YOKO TAWADA

Institute for German Cultural Studies: Writer in Residence

March 22-April 12, 2009

Schedule of Events

TRILINGUAL LITERARY READING

March 24 @ 4:30pm

A.D. White House

in German, Japanese & English

free and open to the public

THE LETTER AS LITERATURE'S POLITICAL AND POETIC BODY

Corneller Vorlesung zur Ästhetik der Gegenwart

April 3, 4:30pm

A.D. White House

free and open to the public

DER PERFORMATIVE KÖRPER DER POETISCHEN SPRACHE

Compact Seminar for Graduate Students

March 25, April 1, April 8 / 5:00pm-7:00pm

177 Goldwin Smith

Pre-registration requested: lb433@cornell.edu

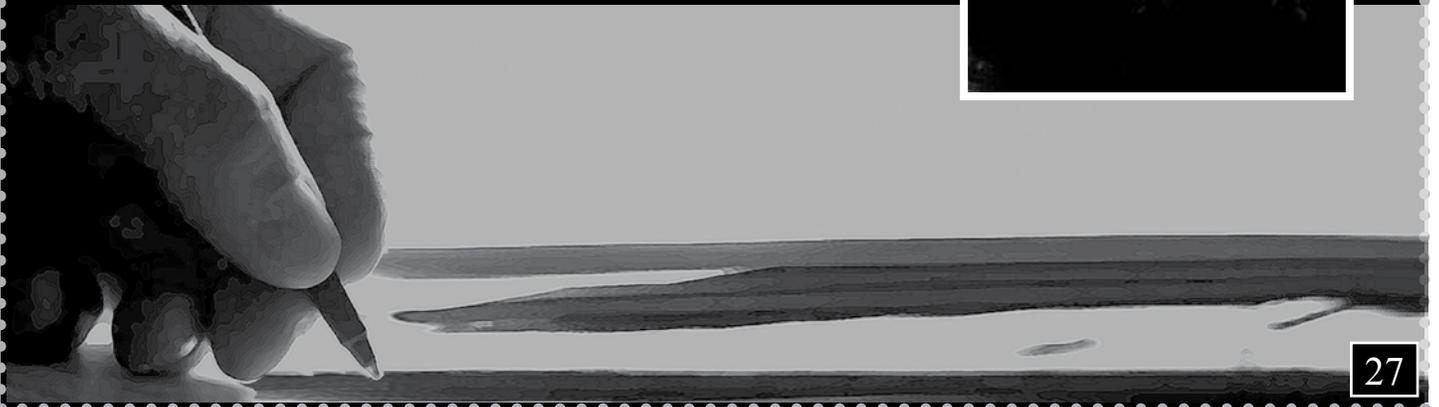
HIRAGANA NAGARA II KANJI. GENDAISHI TO MOJI

Compact Seminar for Graduate Students in Japanese Studies

April 9 / 4:30pm-7:00pm

177 Goldwin Smith

Pre-registration required: lb433@cornell.edu



Spring 2009

Calendar of Events

- FEB. 17 ***"Memory and Memorial"*** lecture by Peter Eisenman
4:30pm SAGE CHAPEL
- FEB. 20-21 ***"Imag(in)ing Asia and the Pacific"***
(Dept. of the History of Art and Visual Studies Graduate Conference)
A.D. WHITE HOUSE
- FEB. 27-28 ***"Nothing Beside Remains":
Glimpses of Ruins in German Thought, Literature, and Art"***
(German Studies Graduate Conference) A.D. WHITE HOUSE
- MAR. 10 ***"Der Streit um das Prinzip Menschenwürde"***
Lecture by Alexander Dietz (Department of Theology and Ethics, Univ. Heidelberg)
4:30pm A.D. White House
- MAR. 24 ***Trilingual Literary Reading*** by Yoko Tawada
4:30pm A.D. WHITE HOUSE
- APR. 3 ***Yoko Tawada, "The Letter as Literature's Political and Poetic Body"***
Corneller Vorlesung zur Ästhetik der Gegenwart
4:30pm A.D. WHITE HOUSE
- APR. 2 ***"The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State
in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa"***
Lecture by George Steinmetz (Sociology & German Studies, University of Michigan)
4:30pm A.D. WHITE HOUSE
- APR. 3-4 ***Cornell-Gießen Workshop: Transnational Approaches to the Study of Culture***
A.D. WHITE HOUSE, program TBA
- APR. 24-25 ***Psychoanalysis and the Written*** (Psychoanalysis Reading Group conference)
A.D. WHITE HOUSE

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Additional information about all events listed is available on our website: www.arts.cornell.edu/igcs. Event listings will be updated throughout the semester. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact Lisa Bonnes Johnson (lb433@cornell.edu).

Archived copies of past newsletters are available electronically at ...
<http://ecommons.library.cornell.edu/handle/1813/10777>

Contributions to *German Culture News* are welcome. If you would like an event listed or have a brief review or article to submit, please contact Lisa Bonnes Johnson (lb433@cornell.edu).