Call for Papers: University of Washington Germanics Graduate Student Conference 2012

Acceptance in German Literary and Visual Culture

May 11-12, 2012

Keynote: Volker Mergenthaler, Philipps-Universität Marburg

This conference will explore notions of acceptance in a broad sense, focusing on the mechanisms by which texts and images codify, accommodate, and instrumentalize difference. What does it mean to accept someone or something? Moreover, at what point can the act of acceptance become unacceptable? That is, when does acceptance serve more nefarious ends, eradicating and assimilating difference instead of preserving it?

As an act of inclusion and consent, acceptance always evokes the potential of rejection--be it on an individual or a collective level -- and by extension, certain power relations. We encourage papers that critically engage forms of acceptance not only as sites of social and cultural integration, but also as instantiations of redefinition and revision. Consider, for example, Angela Merkel’s often misappropriated statement that “Multikulti […] ist absolut gescheitert”: how does this perceived failure of multiculturalism, an inability or unwillingness to accept and integrate cultural difference, translate into literary and visual forms? Theoretical treatments of acceptance may draw upon as diverse texts as Giorgio Agamben’s Homo Sacer (1998) or Doris Lucke’s Akzeptanz: Legitimität in der Abstimmungsgesellschaft (1995). Literary investigations could approach the question of acceptance in Migrantenliteratur or in a post-colonial context, such as the one conjured in Ilija Trojanow’s Der Weltensammler (2006). Finally, filmic portrayals of acceptance might range from the pedagogical example of Richard Oswald’s Anders als die Anderen (1919), one of the first films in cinematic history to promote the acceptance of homosexuality, to issues of Transnationalism and identity in Thomas Arslan’s Dealer (1999) and Fatih Akin’s Auf der anderen Seite (2004).

We invite graduate students from all disciplines to submit papers broadening the notion of acceptance, welcoming contributions that investigate its practice and thematization throughout different historical periods in a variety of contexts -- cultural, political, psychological. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Accepting the Unacceptable: Personal and Collective Traumas
- Places of Acceptance and Parallelgesellschaften
- Literary Canon: Acceptance of Works and Authors
- “Self-Acceptance:” Psychology and Psychoanalysis
- Queer(ing) Acceptance
- Social Structures of Acceptance: Community, Class, Family
- Accepting Altered Corporeal Conditions: Disease and Disability
- Language of Acceptance: Naming and Re-Naming
- Exiles, Outcasts and Outsiders
- Religion and Ethnicity
- National and Transnational Identities

Please send all abstracts (250-300 words) along with a short biography (100 words) to uwgermangraduateconference@gmail.com by February 29, 2012. Papers may be presented in German or English. Let us know if you require assistance with accommodation.