Taking out the Trash
Assessing and Re-assessing Value in German and Dutch Studies
October 17-18, 2014

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Heather L. Sullivan, Trinity University

Call for Papers

Trash has become the object of political and environmental concerns: How can we produce less waste? How can we recycle refuse? German and Dutch speaking countries are particularly mindful when dealing with trash. Each item requires brief analysis before it is sorted: should it be recycled, remolded, recirculated, or discarded?

That seemingly straightforward process of separating trash is entrenched in awareness and judgments regarding the intrinsic value of the items which are being sorted. More recent research on value constructs in relation to trash was influenced by Michael Thompson’s *Rubbish Theory* (1979): trash depicts what is being discarded, and at the same time something that may be reused, reinvested, revalued. Examining German and Dutch Studies through the lens of the trash analogy will allow us to further explore attitudes and opinions within these fields and understand how objects of inquiry such as tropes, linguistic features, etc. are circulated, thrown away, or reclaimed in the studies related to the German and Dutch speaking world.

Our conference aims to examine literal and metaphorical trash as it pertains to German and Dutch Studies. The questions that can serve as a starting point for a reflection on trash in German and Dutch Cultural Studies, Literature, Linguistics, and Second Language Acquisition include, but are not limited to:

**Literature**
- How can the concept of trash shed light on the circulation of tropes and topoi in the literary space? How can they be “recycled” in other media, such as movies, documentaries and radio plays? How are the concepts related to trash (e.g. dirt, contamination, or various German terms for trash – *Müll*, *Abfall*, etc.) represented in literature?

**Linguistics**
- Which linguistic features have been "thrown away" in the course of language change and which features have been reclaimed by other languages?

**Second Language Acquisition**
- Some research, upon first glance, may look like trash. What is the value of research which may not appear to be useful but later yields important insights to a study? What pedagogical ideas might be considered “trash?”

**Cultural Studies / Ecology**
- Germany has become a leading figure in Europe in developing and in using green energy. How has the green movement of this country influenced the world? How does this topic raise the problem of describing what is contagious, dangerous, and untouchable?

The primary language of this conference will be English, but submissions in German or Dutch are also welcome. Abstracts for single or multi-authored 20 minute presentations should be no more than 300 words and are due by **May 30, 2014**. Submissions should *not* include the presenter’s name. Please include the following as a separate attachment: name, title of paper, department and university affiliation, address, phone number, and e-mail address. Please submit your abstracts to Emily Heidrich at eheidrich@wisc.edu. Notifications of acceptance will be sent to participants in **June**. For further details on the conference, keynote speaker, and accommodations (including the option to stay with UW-Madison graduate students), please see our conference website: [http://gdgsaconference.german.wisc.edu](http://gdgsaconference.german.wisc.edu/) or scan the QR code for more information.