

Critical Time in Modern German Literature and Culture
Symposium at the University of Nottingham, 11-12 July 2014

Centre for Advanced Studies, Highfield House A10

Conference Programme

Friday, 11 July 2014

From 1 pm: reception, registration, refreshments

14:00 Welcome and introduction (Dirk Göttsche)

The Temporality of Art

14:15 Jonathan Tallant (Nottingham): "Time in Renaissance Art"

15:00 Karen Lang (Warwick): "The Problem of Historical Time (Simmel, Benjamin, Panofsky)"

15:45 coffee break

The Aesthetics of Slowness

16:15 Jerome Carroll (Nottingham): "'Acceleration' and 'Retardation': Temporality, Modernist Poetics and Modernity in Hans Blumenberg and Viktor Shklovsky"

16:45 Lutz Koepnick (Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee): "Slowness as a Strategy of the Contemporary"

17:30 coffee break

The Intellectual History of Time

17:45-19:15 Maïke Oergel (Nottingham): "'The Grand Poem of our Time': Carlyle, Zeitgeist and his History of the French Revolution"

Catherine Moir (Cambridge): "Untimely Histories: Ernst Bloch, Utopia and the Politics of Progress"

Brian Elliott (Portland State University, Oregon): "Benjamin and Sloterdijk on Time, Revolt and Redemption"

20:00 Dinner (location tbc)

Saturday, 12 July 2014

The Temporality of Literary Genres

9:00 Dirk Oschmann (Leipzig): "Zur Konstitutionsphase des modernen Formbewußtseins als eines Zeitbewußtseins"

9:45-10:40 Eva Axer (Frankfurt/Main): "The 'inexorable law of perpetual mutation': Theories on Generic Development and Tradition (Motherwell/Goethe)"

Dirk Göttsche (Nottingham): "Zeitpoetik in Kleiner Prosa der Gegenwart"

10:40 coffee break

Chronotopes: Time and Space

11:10 Ralf Simon (Basel): "Die Zeiten des Gastes"

11:50 Simon Ward (Durham): "Time and the Postmodern City: Berlin after 1975"

12:20 buffet lunch

Time and the Politics of Memory

- 13:30 Iulia-Karin Patrut (Paderborn): "Zeitlichkeit und zeitgeschichtliche Zäsur in der Literatur nach 1989"
- 14:15 Ulrich E. Bach (Texas State University): "Memories of Lost Possibilities: Christoph Ransmayr's and Thomas von Steinaecker's Postmodern Colonialism"
- 14:50 coffee break

The Poetics of Time in Contemporary Literature

- 15:20-16:50 Sabine Zubarik (Erfurt): "The Ethics of Time: Stasis and Dilation in Thomas Lehr's *42* and Svend Age Madsen's *Days with Diam*"
- Tomislav Zelic (Zadar): "Snapshots, Ekphrasis and Palimpsest: The Discourse of Crisis in W. G. Sebald's Travelogue *Ringe des Saturn*"
- Sascha Seiler (Mainz): "The End of All Time: The Disappearance of the World in Recent Literary Texts"
- 17:00 final discussion and end of symposium

To register as a guest delegate please go to

http://store.nottingham.ac.uk/browse/extra_info.asp?compid=1&modid=2&catid=34&prodid=392

Outline of theme:

The emergence of the modern sense of critical time that Reinhart Koselleck defined as the „Verzeitlichung“ (temporalization) of all areas of human knowledge around 1800, of subjectivity, history and nature in the modern experience and mind, has long been seen as a defining feature of modernity and modernism. Hartmut Rosa, arguably the most prominent German critic of temporality in our digital age, believes that acceleration defines the temporality of modernity as well as modern society; echoing cultural criticism around 1900 he views the renewed acceleration of life in late modernity today as a threat to civilization. Literary and cultural engagement with modern critical time, however, goes well beyond the theme of acceleration: there is, to give just a few examples, the contrapuntal fascination with deceleration and ecstatic moments (epiphanies), the dialectic of speed and deliberate slowness, the notion polyphonous time and simultaneity („Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen“), the distention of time between the past, the present and the future in the human mind (Saint Augustine), the intrinsic link between temporalization and a revalidation of memory (both individual and collective), or the idea that complex aesthetic temporalities („ästhetische Eigenzeiten“) break with the modern time-regime – a now prominent research focus which raises questions as to the role of literature and the arts in the reflection, production, staging and critique of modern time-regimes and the very conceptualisation of time and temporality.

While the modern sense of critical time first emerged in political, historical and anthropological discourse, it also transformed the long-standing discourse about social time (Norbert Elias) and the ethics of time (Emmanuel Lévinas). In literature it has produced its own genres – such as the „Zeitromane“ and „Zeitgedichte“ of the long nineteenth century – and helped to redefine the epistemology of writing and literary poetics more widely. It is not coincidental that a recent collection of „Die allerschnellsten Geschichten der Welt“ (the very fastest stories of the world) is entitled „Moment!“, hence highlighting the moment that oscillates precariously between the fleeting moment of transience, the living moment of multiple embeddedness, and the critical imperative to recalibrate our attention. It is equally intrinsic to modern critical temporalities that the rethinking of time goes along with the rethinking of space; the nineteenth-century spatio-temporal revolution embodied by the railways is only the most obvious instance of

this dialectic, which recurs prominently in contemporary discourse about the digital revolution and the paradoxically spatial temporality of the internet.

This symposium will combine theoretical and critical approaches to the changing face of time and temporality since c. 1800 with case studies on the engagement with the modern sense of critical time in German literature and culture from 1800 to the present. Comparative and interdisciplinary papers are complemented by those focusing on German sources to explore the politics of time, the ethics of time, the epistemology of time, the poetics of time, and related themes.

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