

ASSOCIATION FOR GERMAN STUDIES IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

CALL FOR PAPERS

AGS Conference at SWANSEA UNIVERSITY, 1-3 September 2021

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: 18 April 2021

The next conference of the Association for German Studies in Great Britain and Ireland will take place at Swansea University, from 1-3 September 2021. The lead panel for the conference will be *German Futures, Future German/ies*, with a number of regular as well as one-off panels.

If you are interested in contributing a paper to any of the **panels** below, please send your proposal directly to the email address of the convenors listed below. Proposals for papers should be 150-200 words and should reach the relevant convenors by **18 April 2021**.

Although we hope to be able to run an in-person conference at Swansea University in 2021, we may need to move the programme online or move to a hybrid format, depending on the circumstances nearer the time. Please indicate in your proposal if you would be happy to present your paper online (either live or in a pre-recorded format).

<http://www.ags.ac.uk>

Lead Panel

German Futures, Future German/ies

Convenor: Anja Gerigk (München/Swansea); anja.gerigk@germanistik.uni-muenchen.de

Throughout German cultural and literary history, writers have thought beyond the present. Three periods seem especially rich in future-focussed creativity. Poetic fulfilment by endless progression and universal expansion lay at the heart of Romantic theory, while philosophical speculation around 1800 envisioned a course of times to come governed by teleology: history with a purpose moving towards a second Golden Age. Our panel asks whether there are traces of those aesthetics or that utopian mind-set in our own post-ideological, post-idealist era. The surge in contributions to the futuristic imaginary in the early twentieth century belonged to prophetic or critical modernism. Between the apocalyptic ethos of *Menschheitsdämmerung* (1919), Döblin's singular epos *Berge Meere und Giganten* (1924) and Fritz Lang's avant-garde film *Metropolis* (1927) with its blend of Christian eschatology and Marxist futurology, the prospects of civilisation took a dark turn.

However, as elsewhere in Europe, there is a more playful version of life reshaped by technical revolutions in works of popular science fiction. Paul Scheerbart's *Glasarchitektur* (1914) also paints a bright picture of the time ahead. Our panel asks which features derive specifically from German contexts and traditions. Arno Schmidt's *Gelehrtenrepublik* (1957) depicts a satirical version of a post-nuclear Cold War scenario, as found in other contemporary western cultures, while engaging ironically with authors such as Klopstock and Jean Paul. Since the millennium, there has been a revival of dystopian novels and tongue-in-cheek sci-fi, characterised by social scepticism (Juli Zeh), post-humanism (Dietmar Dath), and fear of global catastrophes. The writer and intellectual Kathrin Röggla has recently reclaimed "Zukunft" as a cultural resource in the risk-ridden age of turbo-capitalism, correcting the gender bias in much futuristic thinking.

The panel welcomes papers on all periods and all aspects of designing, managing, and projecting futures. It encourages comparative approaches: across media and genres, epistemic and poetic forms of knowledge, corresponding with the current transdisciplinary research interest in “Futurologien”.

Medieval and Early Modern Studies

Convenor: Mary Boyle (Oxford); mary.boyle@mod-langs.ox.ac.uk

This panel invites papers on all aspects of medieval and early modern culture: its literature, material culture, history and thought. The panel warmly welcomes comparative perspectives and work connecting this period to others.

New developments and trends in *Deutsch als Fremdsprache (DaF)*, and the position of *DaF* within German Studies

Convenor: Mandy Poetzsch (Bristol); mandy.poetzsch@bristol.ac.uk

German language teaching plays a huge part in German studies; yet, is very rarely explicitly addressed at major German studies conferences.

This panel aims to highlight recent developments and trends in teaching German as a foreign language in Higher Education, as well as its position within German Studies in the UK.

***Müllliteratur* - An Interdisciplinary Panel on Waste in German-Language Literature**

Convenors: Katharina Forster (UCL) & Daniela Dora (Cambridge); k.forster@ucl.ac.uk & dd509@cam.ac.uk

The proposed panel focusses on waste as a multi-faceted and surprisingly ubiquitous theme in German-language literature. Implicated in a range of overlapping and interconnected discourses, like inequality, capitalism and ecology, waste (as litter, trash or refuse) has been examined from multiple theoretical angles and genre traditions. It bemuses, disgusts and overwhelms travellers in tourist writing – like Günter Grass’ *Zunge Zeigen* (1987; an early example of slum tourism) or more recently Josef Winkler’s *Julius Meinl oder Leichenschleifen in Benares* (2003) – and is an integral part of human devastation of nature in ecocritical and posthuman literature, e.g. Roman Ehrlich’s *Malé* (2020). The panel aims to be interdisciplinary in focus, acknowledging the complexity of waste as a literary theme. We welcome papers on German-language literature as well as comparative contributions.

Critical Whiteness Perspectives on German Studies

Convenors: Expanding German Studies; tas3@st-andrews.ac.uk

2020 marked 15 years since Maisha-Maureen Auma, Grada Kilomba, Peggy Piesche and Susan Arndt published their ground-breaking *Mythen, Masken, Subjekte: Kritische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland*. Yet ideologies of whiteness continue to structure German-speaking culture, from lasting links with white supremacy to forms of denial and ‘white innocence’ (Wekker 2016). Scholars have also explored how German Studies as a discipline is structured by whiteness (Weber 2016; Merritt 2020) and traced histories of whiteness in ideas of Germanness (El-Tayeb 2005).

We propose to bring together critical research perspectives on whiteness in German-speaking culture with analyses and reflections on whiteness in the discipline in the UK and Ireland. We invite proposals for papers or alternative presentations, as well as expressions of interest in the roles of moderator or commentator. This panel will especially foreground work by Scholars of Colour, and we welcome applications from colleagues at all career stages (including postgraduate, early-career and independent scholars) as well as colleagues outside the UK

Welsh-German Cultural Exchange

Convenor: Steffan Davies (Bristol); Steffan.Davies@bristol.ac.uk

‘Would you let me quote Thomas Mann...?’ wrote Saunders Lewis, Wales’s foremost dramatist, in a letter to the Observer in 1959 defending why he only wrote creatively in Welsh. Lewis’s short letter speaks to fervent international and nationalist visions in almost a single breath, and encapsulates the productive tensions found so widely in transnational exchange. This panel seeks that exchange between the cultures of Wales and Germany, which have continuously made contact, and cross-fertilised, since the Middle Ages. Travellers, migrants, readers and translators have seen in the one a refuge from the other, or a model for it. Building on the work of the session on ‘Reading and Writing Wales’ at the Bangor AGS (2018), this panel invites contributions on all aspects of Welsh-German cultural interaction, and seeks in particular to foster dialogue between researchers in German and in Welsh.