Leibniz Universität Hannover

Romanisches Seminar

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Call for Papers:

Networks/Worknets: Transarea perspectives on relational aesthetics, actors and media (1910-1989)

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Philipp Felsch's acclaimed book *Der lange Sommer der Theorie* (2015) is correct in identifying the museum and fine-arts bookstores as the final resting places of the once scandalous provocations of theory. It seems that the once heated competition between philology, postmodern *terreur de la théorie* and postcolonial cultural studies has made way for a frictionless division of labor between different disciplines. However, one will have to note that – though not as loudly and polemically as in the past – this solidified triad has begun to shift. Franco Moretti's much-debated *Distant Reading* (2013) is a case in point. It transversally cuts across pre-established borderlines. *Distant Reading* stands for a still somewhat undefined paradigm of literary and cultural studies, as they are searching for conceptually and methodologically innovative paths. This concerns, for instance, the visualization of spatial, social or even material and conceptual relations. New disciplinary contexts provide equally new concepts and methods (e.g. process-produced data and its sources, quantitative and qualitative methods, relational aesthetics, the archive), which are now spilling over into literary and cultural studies. Their traditional objects of inquiry now appear in a new light. Neighboring approaches such as relational sociology, Actor-Network-Theory, but also cultural translation and entangled histories have important roles to play in this process. Thus, this potentially new array of methods not only displays inter-, but in fact transdisciplinary characteristics.

The international conference *Networks/Worknets: Transarea perspectives on relational aesthetics, actors and media (1910-1989)* at the Romance Languages Department of Leibniz Universität Hannover aims to address this paradigm of relational thinking, writing and research. There will be two days of interdisciplinary keynotes and lectures (we welcome 'work in progress'). On a third day, the programmers of the web-based data analysis and visualization environment *Nodegoat* (Pim van Bree, Geert Kessels) will provide an introductory seminar.

With the above-mentioned tendencies in mind, we are interested in the 'short' 20th century between the Mexican Revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall (1910-1989). Speaking from the standpoint of theory, we are feeling the last tremors of an epoch once shook by powerful ideological upheavals. It was also an epoch of great technological achievements, new networks of communication, transatlantic entanglements, migration and flight. However, while concepts such as exile or *homo sacer* imply an irredeemable loss, diaspora, the complex imaginary of a lost homeland, networks point to connections, clusters or patterns of order and circulation. The network-paradigm oftentimes highlights transgressive, consistent as much as contingent entanglements between actors. To our minds, worknets allude to the concomitant material support and representations.

We will not focus on *homo sacer*, homelessness and discourses of commemoration or diaspora as independent, stable motifs. Instead, we are interested in contributions connecting

these transarea-phenomena to aesthetically innovative relations and readable, material traces.

Contributors may think along the following lines:

- How do artists, writers, philologists and theoreticians form networks in exile and diaspora? Are there correlating imaginary spaces in their works?

- How do these networks affect aesthetic and social orders (e.g. schools). What is their relation to (power)structures in the respective homelands?

- Is it possible to interrelate networks of artists and creative procedures?

- Which theories and methods, which concepts do literary and cultural studies have at their disposal when it comes to network-analyses?

- Which are the unanswered questions and challenges for Romance literary and cultural studies? How may digital visualization environments and web-based tools become part of academic teaching?

We kindly ask interested contributors to provide us with an abstract (a page at most) and a brief bio-bibliographical info until 1 October 2018. Please e-mail the material to: Minnes@romanistik.phil.uni-hannover.de. The conference will be held in German and the Romance languages. The *Nodegoat* workshop will take place in English.