The German Graphic Novel (San Diego, 29 Sep-2 Oct 16) EXTENDED DEADLINE

German Studies Association Conference, San Diego, California, Sep 29–Oct 2, 2016
Deadline: Feb 12, 2016

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German Studies Association Conference
Panel Series: The German Graphic Novel

EXTENDED DEADLINE: 12 February 2016

In the past decade there has been an explosion of comics production in German-speaking Europe. The impressive artistic quality and thematic breadth of comics coming out of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland today has attracted public and critical attention, both domestically and internationally. From historical comics that open new perspectives on the GDR and reunification to comics journalism on right-wing extremism; from biographies of Martin Luther, Fidel Castro, and Johnny Cash to adaptations of Goethe, Kafka, Schnitzler, Thomas Bernhard and beyond; from Berliner vampires to time traveling Junge Pioniere, the landscape of German comics is vibrant, diverse, and challenging. As comics are increasingly incorporated into university curricula, as well as into the fields of inquiry of Literary and Media Studies, German Studies is also beginning to recognize comics as a legitimate object of scholarly analysis. For the third consecutive year, we invite papers on German-language comics old and new, organized around three thematic constellations: Gender and Sexuality – Age – Nation and Identity. We include individual calls for papers for each panel, and submissions of approximately 250 words—as well as a short bio—should be directed to the appropriate organizer by February 5, 2016.

[I]
The German Graphic Novel (I): Gender and Sexuality
Organizer: Julia Ludewig (jludewi1@binghamton.edu)

Even though issues of gender and sexuality as well as comic studies have gained traction in German studies, the intersection of these two fields is still in its infancy. This panel invites scholars to present analyses of one or several comics or graphic novels from the German-speaking world that tackle themes of gender and sexuality. Prominent examples of such novels include Ulli Lust's "Heute ist der letzte Tag vom Rest deines Lebens", the erotica series Springpoem to which Lust contributed as well, Anke Feuchtenberger's "Die Hure H.", Manuel Fiore's "Fräulein Else", Jakob Hinrich's "Traumnovelle", the anthology "Bettgeschichten", Ralf König's "Der Bewegte Mann", Suskas Lötzerich's "Hexenblut", or even more or less reverent fairy tale adaptations. Possible lines of inquiry include, but are not limited to the following questions:

- gender identity and transgender
- heteronormativity and its alternatives
- artistic techniques: interpretative process, mis-en-page, realism vs. abstraction etc.
- area/culture-specific trends in gender/sexuality-themed comics
- theoretical concepts across the disciplines (e.g. gaze theory, plaisir and juissance)
- the boundary between pornography and art
- adaptions from or into other media (e.g. literature, film) of comics on gender and sexuality
- alternative comic formats (e.g. web comics)
- pedagogy for comics on gender and sexuality: challenges and chances

[II]
The German Graphic Novel (II): Age
Organizer: Brett Sterling (bsterli@uark.edu)

Since its beginnings, the graphic novel has been used frequently as a vehicle for “life writing,” that is, for personal stories, autobiographies, and memoirs. This is especially true in German-speaking Europe, where numerous artists have interpreted their own stories through comics (ex. Ulli Lust’s "Heute ist der letzte Tag vom Rest deines Lebens", Simon Schwarz’s "drüben!", Volker Reiche’s "Kiesgrubennacht", etc.). Each of these comics, as the story of a lived life, is inherently concerned with the passage of time, of aging. The theme of age opens up a range of fruitful topics which can be discussed in the context of comics: from “coming of age” stories (Mawil’s "Kinderland", Lukas Jüliger’s "Vakuum", etc.) to comics about dementia (Flix’s "Don Quixote"), the aging European population (Marijpol’s "Eremit"), mortality and the afterlife (Felix Pestemer’s "Staub der Ahnen"), to the evolution of life and the human species (Jens Harder’s "Alpha: Directions and Beta: Civilizations"). This panel invites papers on the theme of age in German comics, topics for which could include, but are not limited to:

- Reflection, recollection, remembering
- The fallibility of memory
- Life writing
- Generations, generational conflicts
- Age groups, cohorts
- Youth vs. maturity
- Stages of life and development
- Death and dying
- Vitality and the decline of the body
- Depictions of time
- Past – Present – Future
- (D)evolution
- How themes, styles, and works age

[III]
The German Graphic Novel (III): Nation and Identity
Organizer: Elizabeth (Biz) Nijdam (enijdam@umich.edu)

With its close relationship to caricature, the comics medium has been linked to concepts of nation and national identity since its inception. Furthermore, in light of the recent attack on the

Paris headquarters of satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo and subsequent "Je suis Charlie" campaign, it's clear that comics and cartoons still play an important role in matters of nation and national identity. In the German-speaking context, national history has become particularly significant in negotiating national identity in contemporary comics. Since the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, East German authors have engaged the medium to represent the East German past and complicate the portrayal of citizens of the German Democratic Republic as supporters of the regime (Simon Schwarz's "drüben!", Thomas Henseler and Susanne Buddenberg's "Grenzfall", Mawil's "Kinderland"). More recently, graphic novels have also begun to offer a space for the representation of marginalized members of the German public, and the fringes of German national identity are finding their voice within panels. Yi Luo's "Running Girl" recounts the author's immigration from Tianjin, China to Augsburg, while both Paula Bulling's "Im Land der Frühaufsteher" and the Comic Festival Munich's recent exhibition and anthology "Gestrandet and Verwurzelt" chronicle the lives of Germany's refugees. Moreover, the German government has turned to comics to educate the population. In the German Federal Agency for Civic Education's fictive world of Hanisauland, for example, children learn about governmental systems as hippos, hares and wild boar attempt to build a democracy. The Interior Ministry of Nordrhein-Westfalen, on the other hand, has published three issues of their comics series Andi instructing on Islamicism and right-wing and left-wing extremism.
This panel invites scholars to consider the role of nation and national identity in German comics today. Topics include but are not limited to the following:

- German national identity in contemporary German comics
- German stereotypes at home and internationally
- Comics and (im)migration
- Comics and diaspora
- Comics, politics and the state
- Caricature in the German context
- Comics and East German identity
- Comics and national history
- Comics and refugees
- Comics and marginalized voices
- The German comics scene as a national movement
- Comics educating German citizens
- Comics reportage

Reference:
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