

## Clark Conferences on Space and Self in Early Modern Europe

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A Series of Clark Conferences on -Space and „Self“ in Early Modern Culture- 2007-2008

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Subjectivity is embedded in space, which serves to define, shape, and represent it. Every culture has its own articulation between natural and social places or between material and representational ones. In Europe in the early modern period, places as diverse as the court, the cabinet of curiosities, or the prayer room were crucial for forming and representing individual identities. A year-long series of conferences will be dedicated to five key places in Western Europe and the Mediterranean between the late sixteenth and the late eighteenth century. We invite scholars in literature, philosophy, history (including art, music and intellectual history) and other disciplines who will reflect on the cultural differences and historical evolution of space, both as material foundation and as representation of human exchanges, relationships, hierarchies, values, and subjectivities.

### 1. CIRCLES OF SOCIABILITY (October 26-27, 2007):

study of the material place of sociability in court treatises, novels, theater, or salon discussions of appropriate behavior. Relationship between the practices that sociability fosters (reciprocity, exchange, hierarchy, circulation, répartie, wit, flattery, or aggression) and individual identity. Symbolic underpinnings of the -circle- figure in ritualized societies such as the Freemasons, or in emerging notions of the -public sphere,- or the-social contract- etc.

### 2. SITES OF EXTERIORITY (November 30 - December 1, 2007) :

connection between the development of travel and maps, the birth of landscape in early modern art, and a new way of situating oneself in the world. Relations of baroque, classical, or English gardens to the spatial organization of the self or to notions such as the sublime or the infinite, personal perspective, point of view, etc. Gardens and landscape

as remodeled imaginary or exotic lands, cosmological representations, or places of self exploration and self discipline, or, conversely, of an encounter with the Other.

3. THE -INNER SELF- (February 22-23, 2008) :

interiority in representations of the self and its relationship to otherness. Spatial metaphors for discussing the mind, the soul, or rhetorical memory, images of interiority or, conversely, of physical nature contrasted to an inner abode, in fiction, medical or religious writings, and philosophy. Connections between space and meditation, or between concealment, truth or lying, crucial for conceptualizing subjectivity.

4. SPACES OF SACRALITY (March 14-15, 2008):

interrelatedness between the spatial configurations of religious sites and conceptions of authority, sacrality and the individual. Places of cult, religious retreats, convents, pilgrimage routes and sites, sacralization of Absolutist or Republican political space, battles over the private confessional, combining sociability and religious retreat, reconfigurations of church interiors. Mystical experience and withdrawal to spaces for meditation, practices of self construction in which older ways of marking the sacred are adapted to mark off the emerging -secular-cultural forms.

5. FAMILY AND WORK SPACE: (April 25-25, 2008)

influence of new gender relations, or family and kinship structures, on the configuration the house. Spatial configurations of places for meditation or reading, or of a laboratory, a cabinet of curiosities, a university hall. Drawing or blurring of boundaries between masters and servants, men and women, adults and children, neighbors and family, nature and culture. Understanding the self in relation to material objects of culture, the temporal ordering of the day, the shared or gendered use of spaces in the workshop, the hayfield, the counting house, or the parlor. Role of space in enabling or inhibiting interaction among family members, friends, or professional associates.

Scholars interested in presenting a paper should send an abstract to David Sabeian: [dsabeian@history.ucla.edu](mailto:dsabeian@history.ucla.edu).

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