

## Imagining outer space, 1900-2000 (Bielefeld, 6-9-Feb 08)

Alexander CT Geppert

IMAGINING OUTER SPACE, 1900-2000

An International Conference

Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung (ZiF)  
with the support of Fritz Thyssen Stiftung  
Universität Bielefeld

February 6-9, 2008

Organization: Alexander C.T. Geppert

[www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/outerspace](http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/outerspace)

This conference on the cultural history of outer space, space travel and space exploration examines the manner in which Europeans imagined outer space over the course of the twentieth century. Unlike most of the existing historiography, it is less interested in the political, diplomatic and technological aspects of European space programs per se, than in the socio-cultural rationale behind the investment of enormous resources. How was outer space represented, communicated and perceived? In what way were changing conceptions affected by its continuous exploration? And how did the idea of spaceflight develop into such a central element of the project of Western modernity? Analyzing connections between science and fiction from a comparative European perspective, the conference will pay special attention to sites and situations where technologies and images have contributed to the omnipresence of fantasmatic thought.

Speakers include numerous distinguished experts such as Profs. Steven J. Dick (NASA), Debora Battaglia (Mount Holyoke College), Pierre Lagrange (CNRS), Roger D. Launius (National Air and Space Museum), Michael J. Neufeld (National Air and Space Museum), Claudia Schmölders (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), James Schwoch (Northwestern University), Helmuth Trischler (Deutsches Museum) and many others. The conference will also feature a special screening of rare historical films, several poster presentations and an interactive installation "SpacePlace. Art in the Age of Orbitization."

A complete program including abstracts and brief biographies of all participants can be found at [www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/outerspace](http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/outerspace). For information on the conference venue please visit [www.uni-bielefeld.de/\(en\)/ZIF/](http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/(en)/ZIF/)

The number of available places is limited, so pre-registration is mandatory. Please contact Alexander Geppert at [geppert@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:geppert@fas.harvard.edu) for further information.

## PROGRAM

Wednesday, February 6, 2008

15.00 Welcome Reception and Opening Remarks

Ipke Wachsmuth (ZiF) and Alexander C.T. Geppert (Harvard)

16.00 Introduction

Alexander C.T. Geppert: European Astrofuturism, Cosmic Provincialism.  
Historical Problems and Historiographical Perspectives

16.30 Keynote Lecture

Steven J. Dick (NASA): Space, Time and Aliens. The Role of Imagination in  
Outer Space

18.00 Feature Presentation I

Philip Pocock (ZKM): SpacePlace. Art in the Age of Orbitization

Thursday, February 7, 2008

09.00 Panel I: Theorizing Outer Space

Chair: Claudia Schmölders (HU Berlin)

Debbora Battaglia (Mount Holyoke College): On Galaxies of Discourse

Thomas Brandstetter (Universität Wien): Imagining Inorganic Life.

Crystalline Aliens in Science and Fiction

Benjamin Lazier (Reed College): Philosophers in Space. Towards a History of  
Earth and Artifact in Twentieth-Century Thought

11.15 Panel II: Personalizing Outer Space

Chair: Bernd Weisbrod (Universität Göttingen)

Rebekka Ladewig (HU Berlin): Cosmism in Early Twentieth-Century Russia.

Interrelating the Technical and Cultural Avantgardes

Christina Wessely (MPI für Wissenschaftsgeschichte): Cosmic Spectacular.

Rocketry, Weltanschauung and the Quest for Cosmic Ice in Weimar Germany

Thore Bjornvig (University of Copenhagen): Transcendence of Gravity. Arthur  
C. Clarke and the Apocalyptic of Weightlessness

14.00 Panel III: Localizing Outer Space

Chair: Roger D. Launius (National Air and Space Museum)

Kerrie Anne Dougherty (Powerhouse Museum Sydney): Spaceport Woomera  
Sven Mesinovic (European University Institute): Inner Space. Utopic Visions  
of Ocean Exploration

16.15 Panel IV: Screening Outer Space

Chair: Peter Becker (Universität Linz)

Burghard Ciesla (Universität Potsdam): Outer Space, Inner Fear. Cold War  
SF-Films in East and West

Henry Keazor (Universität Frankfurt am Main): A Stumble in the Dark. Gerry  
Anderson's "Space 1999"

Werner Suppanz (Universität Graz): Nazis in Space. Distant Worlds as  
Projection Screen of Cultural Memory

19.30 Feature Presentation II

Jürgen Ast (Berlin): Screening of Historical Films

Friday, February 8, 2008 --

09.00 Panel V: Fictionalizing Outer Space

Chair: Angela Schwarz (Universität Siegen)

Claudia Schmölders (HU Berlin): Unwriting Heaven. A Very Short History of  
an Idea

Steffen Krämer (LMU München): Ancient Heroes and Early Christian Ascetics.  
Archetypes of Modern Science Fiction

Patrick J. Gyger (Maison d'Ailleurs): Conjuring the Final Frontier. The  
Role of Science Fiction in Space Exploration

11.15 Panel VI: Visioning Outer Space

Chair: Alexander C.T. Geppert (Harvard)

Pierre Lagrange (CNRS): The Invention of Ghost Rockets and Flying Saucers  
in 1946/47

James I. Miller (Davidson College): Encountering Aliens in a Familiar  
World. Fabricating a New World in Quarouble, France, 1954

Guillaume de Syon (Albright College): Between the Bubble and the Moon.  
Visions of Space Travel in Francophone Comic Strips

14.00 Panel VII: Politicizing Outer Space

Chair: Kai-Uwe Schrogl (European Space Policy Institute)

Monica Rüthers (Universität Basel): Space, Children's Material Culture and  
Soviet Imagery after Sputnik

Michael J. Neufeld (National Air and Space Museum): "Smash the Myth of the  
Fascist Rocket Baron." The East German Campaign Against Wernher von Braun

in the 1960s

16.15 Panel VIII: Communicating Outer Space

Chair: Ralf Bülow (Berlin)

Roger D. Launius (National Air and Space Museum): Apollo Imagery and the Communication of American Culture

Bernd Mütter (Universität Bielefeld): Per Media Ad Astra? Outer Space in West Germany's Media 1957-1987

Saturday, February 9, 2008

09.00 Panel IX: Automatizing Outer Space

Chair: Paul Ceruzzi (National Air and Space Museum)

James Schwoch (Northwestern University): "Short, Nasty, and Brutish." The Curious Life of Telstar, 10 July 1962 - 21 February 1963

Gonzalo Munevar (Lawrence Technological University): Self-Reproducing Automata and the Impossibility of SETI

11.15 Panel X: Designing Outer Space

Chair: Peter Davidson (National Museums Scotland)

Eva Mayring (Deutsches Museum): Pictures from Outer Space. Industry and its Designers

William R. Macauley (University of Manchester): Inscribing Scientific Knowledge. Interstellar Communication, Universal Laws and Contact with Cultures of the Imagination

Tristan Weddigen (Universität Bern): Alien Spotting. Damien Hirst's Beagle 2 Mars Lander "Calibration Target" and the Exploitation of Outer Space

14.00 Conclusion

Chair: Steven J. Dick (NASA)

Helmuth Trischler (Deutsches Museum): General Comment

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Convener

Alexander C.T. Geppert

Freie Universität Berlin/Harvard University

geppert@fas.harvard.edu

Conference Venue

Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung (ZiF)

Universität Bielefeld

Wellenberg 1

D-33615 Bielefeld

trixi.valentin@uni-bielefeld.de

ArtHist.net

#### Conference Website

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#### Reference:

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