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Illumination

Faculty of Humanities

Every year, the Faculty of Humanities selects one of its many research topics to present in the UDE Research Report. It started this practice in 2014 in order to reflect the full spectrum of its research over time. The present report focuses on projects which approach their subjects from a cultural-studies perspective. While the Faculty maintains a selection of key topics, its scholarly activities also reflect the sheer variety of research interests and approaches with which the humanities seek to understand culture(s). Research in the humanities covers the entire bandwidth of cultural practices, phenomena and artifacts that teach us about history, define the present and shape the future. It ranges from the establishment of broad theoretical foundations to the focused study of highly specialised topics.

Professor Rolf Parr (German Studies/Literary Studies), Professor Peer Trilcke (University of Potsdam), Dr Gabriele Radecke (Literature Archives, Akademie der Künste, Berlin) and PD Dr Julia Bertschik (FU Berlin) are working together to fill a gap in scholarship on Theodor Fontane. There is currently no comprehensive publication dedicated to the full breadth of research into Fontane's multifaceted oeuvre, including texts from his literary estate. The planned compendium will incorporate all of his literary works and texts and the most important pieces of correspondence, discussed in dedicated groups of articles which take into account and depict the cultural contexts, environments and social relations that shaped Fontane's life and work. His artistic output and endeavours will be examined from the perspective of the culture, mentality, collective imagination and intellectual history of the nineteenth century and placed in the context of its cultural traditions. By applying concepts from cultural studies, the publication project 'Theodor Fontane. Ein Handbuch' effectively overcomes the usual problems inherent to compendiums on individual authors. (Funding: Fritz Thyssen Foundation, 2018–2022)

Professor Dietmar Osthus's (Romance Philology/Linguistics) project on Gilles Ménage, the first major French etymologist in the budding Age of Rationalism, is also funded by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation. It is a comprehensive study into the metalinguistic concepts, methods and research interests of this pioneer of French etymology. For a long time, Romance philologists rejected all approaches that predate the comparative method in historical linguistics as academically immature. That view, however, distorts our understanding of historical linguistic scholarship. The project addresses a key issue in the history of etymological research in the francophone world and beyond.

Motif studies

When Foucault points out that to recognize things is to unveil a system of similarities which binds them to each other, he refers to a deeply human activity that also informs literature and literary scholarship. In concrete terms, this is reflected in the recurring theme (in the sense

of Christine Lubkoll's 'inhaltliches Muster') of separation from one's parents, a frequent topic in children's and young-adult media that connects Oliver Twist, Harry Potter and countless other characters across genres, styles and types of media. Foucault calls these relationships "knots in a net". The knots correspond to the literary motif, which constitutes a net of narrative media while simultaneously being constituted by them. Professor Tobias Kurwinkel's (German Studies/Literary Studies) project 'Transmediale Motivik' set out to establish a highly selective, operationalisable definition of the concept of 'motif' alongside a model for analysing and typologising motifs in children's and young-adult media. That model, a crucial foundation for all further research in the project, was first presented in a 2019 publication. It also gave rise to a symposium at the University of Duisburg-Essen. The project results are currently being prepared for publication (with funding from the University of Bremen as a focus project).

Cultural heritage

Dr Liane Schüller's (German Studies/Literary Studies) and PD Dr Simone Loleit's (German Studies/Mediaeval Studies) project 'Grimmwelten' examines the Brothers Grimm's 'Children's and Household Tales' from a range of perspectives. Based on an analysis of sources from the Middle Ages and the early modern period which the Brothers Grimm consulted and evaluated while working on their 'Children's and Household Tales', the project involves a series of events during which students engage with medial adaptations of the fairy tales. They study medial transformations of literary texts to understand the difference between written and visual narratives and the significance of various medial codes. There will be a student conference on the 'Grimmwelten' project, and a dedicated Moodle course room will be made available permanently to all students of German Studies.

At the Department of German as Second and/or Foreign Language, Dr Anastasia Moraitis examines the concept of cultural heritage, whose study is an integral part of all research into the past. It is imperative to instil children with an awareness of material and immaterial heritage



and their inevitable relevance to social policy. Within the scope of the occupational internship for teachers in training, her project has primary school pupils stage theatre plays about eras, events and historical figures (e.g., the Germanic peoples in Xanten, Christopher Columbus). The students and pupils work together on the play and its production. (A publication is in preparation.)

Local and regional research

In 2018, the University of Duisburg-Essen (Professor Ralf-Peter Fuchs, Department of History/InKuR Institut für niederrheinische Kultur und Regionalgeschichte) and Horst Palace in Gelsenkirchen entered into a collaborative partnership involving a range of projects, such as joint lectures and a course at the professorship of local history. The latter examined the history of Haus Horst during the early modern period; at the end of the course, the students got to evaluate the results together with the experts on site. In 2021, the lectures and additional texts will be published in a series on the history and art history of Horst ('Horster Beiträge zur Geschichte und Kunstgeschichte', in print). The InKuR also maintains ongoing partnerships with the towns of Xanten, Emmerich, Wesel, Neukirchen-Vluyn and Geldern.

It has a one-year partnership with the Graf-schafter Museum at Moers Castle in Moers (2019–2020*21), which is a continuation of an existing collaboration between the Department of German Studies (Professor Gaby Herchert, Mediaeval Studies; InKuR) and the museum. The lecture 'Die Spanier in Moers (1586–1597)' ('the Spanish in Moers'), which marked the signing of the collaboration agreement, will be published soon.

The RING project, a collaboration between Professor Herchert, the Schlosstheater Moers, the Graf-schafter Museum and the Nibelungen-museum Xanten, concluded in 2019. It involved a RING lecture, public readings of the Nibelungenlied in Moers and Xanten, and school projects on the Nibelungenlied and the era in which it is set (publication in print). Following a series of projects on the Black Death in the Middle Ages, a further literary project is planned for 2021. Titled

'Eine Stadt erinnert sich' ('a city remembers'), it explores the topic of migration in collaboration with the author Feridun Zaimoğlu.

In June 2019, nine historians organised a conference on the Allied occupation of the Rhine-land after the First World War ('Besatzungsherrschaft und Alltag im Rheinland. Die belgische, britische und amerikanische Besatzung nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg'; Professor Fuchs/Benedikt Neuwöhner; a partnership between the UDE's Professorship of the Local History of the Rhein-Maas Region, InKuR, Niederrhein-Akademie NAAN e.V. and the LVR-Institut für Landeskunde und Regionalgeschichte). The event, hosted in Cologne, focused on the British, Belgian and American occupation, which has received considerably less scholarly attention than the much more widely studied French zone. The attendants discussed the latest insights into the occupiers' ruling strategies, the complex relationships between the occupiers and the occupied, and the everyday realities of the occupation. They also scrutinised the narrative of the occupation as an extension of the war. By working through previously untouched archive materials, the conference revitalised this field of research, establishing a large body of new questions relating to the lived experience of the occupation and the cultural, political, diplomatic and regional history involved. (The conference transcript has been published in the NAAN series of publications).

The year 2018 saw the 200th anniversary of the dissolution of the old University of Duisburg. To mark the occasion, Dr Hendrick Friggemann (University Archives) and Professor Fuchs organised a conference followed by a series of lectures on the history of higher education in Duisburg and Essen in the 2018/19 winter semester. Hosted by the Kultur- und Stadthistorisches Museum Duisburg, it focused on institutional tipping points in the nineteenth and twentieth century and their impact. How did the structures and tasks of regional (higher-)education institutions change? What was the significance of those changes? An anthology will be published in 2021.

Across the border

Many projects at the Professorship of the Local History of the Rhein-Maas Region, The InKuR,

and the Institute of Netherlandic Studies reflect the location of Duisburg and Essen in a region that transcends the historical and cultural boundary between Germany and the Netherlands. In partnership with Radboud University Nijmegen (Professor Wim van Moers), the Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences (Professor Alexander Brand) and the HAN University of Applied Sciences in Arnhem, the UDE's Junior Professor Ute K. Boonen (Netherlandic Studies) and Professor Fuchs organised the summer school 'Werkstatt an der Grenze' ('a workshop on the border'; 2018–2021; funded by the Dutch Language Union, the Province of Gelderland and others). It is designed as an annual week of projects involving lectures, exercises, excursions and guided tours of the host city, which changes every year (2018: Kleve, 2019: Nijmegen.) The 2020 instalment of the event was going to take place in Essen but had to be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Every year, small groups of researchers develop new insights into a range of regionally relevant topics (e.g., cross-border emergency services, Euregio, European energy policy) and presented them to a broad audience. The results are then published in a concluding report (werkstattan-dergrenze.ruhosting.nl).

Despite the close geographical proximity between Germany and the Netherlands, both sides still subscribe to stereotypes about themselves and the other. Germans are precise and punctual; the Dutch are relaxed and pragmatic. Such clichés can have cognitive advantages, but they also cause communication problems and misunderstandings. Professor Boonen's project 'Unser Bild vom Nachbarn' ('our image of the neighbour') seeks to answer several questions: which stereotypes shape the view of 'the Germans' in the Netherlands and of 'the Dutch' in Germany? How did each image emerge, and how do literature, language classes and other factors shape it? What experiences do pupils and students make in real-life encounters that confront them with (positive and negative) prejudice? To what extent can intercultural communication and intercultural learning help them identify differences without judgement, teach them to appreciate those differences, and qualify stereotypes?

Our Faculty also studies the border itself – as a complex subject area and a spatial, political,



Dean: Professor Dr Dirk Hartmann

geographical, social and cultural boundary. Border research is a dynamic field informed by several disciplines. Albeit occasionally interdisciplinary in nature, the individual studies it produces tend to be received primarily within the individual disciplines that constitute each author's own academic background. Professor Hannes Krämer's and Dominik Gerst's M.A. (Department of Communication Studies) project 'Konturen kulturwissenschaftlicher Grenzfor-schung' ('outlines of border research in cultural studies') addresses this intriguing relationship and investigates ways of describing borders beyond the boundaries of specific disciplines. It is based at the Viadrina Center B/ORDERS IN MOTION (Frankfurt/Oder), where Professor Krämer is an external associate.

To study borders, scholars need a concept of 'borders' that is rooted in cultural studies and



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 Professor Dr Gaby Herchert
 Professor Dr Werner Jung
 Professor Dr Tobias Kurwinkel
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 Professor Dr Judith Purkarthofer
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incorporates a variety of perspectives into its analyses. The field of cultural studies, which unites approaches from the social sciences and humanities with a foundation of cultural theory, provides the vocabulary for that concept. Borders are to be understood as a specific and arbitrary setting of differences. They must be studied as complex relationships with an empirical and theoretical focus on their symbolism, cultural

codes, constitutive practices, material presences and technological infrastructures. The project seeks to determine how to plan and execute such a research endeavour.

In this context, Dominik Gerst has dedicated his dissertation project to the understanding of borders in the field of German-Polish security ('Grenzwissen im deutsch-polnischen Sicherheitsfeld', supervisor: Professor Krämer). What

linguistic methods are used to discuss the security field of 'the' border? At the centre of this question lies the categorial order of the border, which indicates a historically grown, locally differentiated understanding of borders. Unlike scholars engaging in interdisciplinary border research and border sociology, those with a background in ethnomethodology do not focus on the effects and impact of borders but on the border itself and its various interpretations.

The appeal of the faraway

In 1582, Adam von Schlieben, Counsellor at the Brandenburg Court of Justice, presented a 'letter of recommendation' from the Moroccan Sultan Ahmed Al-Mansur to his employer, the Elector Johann Georg von Brandenburg. The letter was written in artful calligraphy and sprinkled with gold dust. Schlieben had brought it back to Germany from his travels through Europe, the Ottoman Empire and Morocco. But the Arabic text tells us that the letter was not, in fact, intended for Johann Georg. It was addressed to Philip II of Spain. Nobody could read the original text, so Schlieben was able to reinterpret it to his own benefit. Over the course of the following 15 years, his travel experiences earned him multiple missions to the Margraviate of Brandenburg as well as an appointment to the electoral council and, later, the privy council. Ato Quirin Schweizer's (Department of History/Early Modern History) dissertation project examines how Schlieben and other well-travelled contemporaries obtained high ranks and honours by presenting their travel experiences through the prism of material items from faraway lands, effectively using them as cultural capital to fuel their social ascent. (Dissertation title: 'Der Reiz der Ferne. Die Funktionalisierung und Vermittlung von Reiseerfahrung im Fürstendienst in der Frühen Neuzeit'; supervisor: Professor Stefan Brakensiek)

Afrikaans

Within the scope of the global partnership of institutes of German studies (GIP) between the UDE's Department of German Studies and the University of Namibia in Windhoek, Professor Boonen, Dr Bernhard Fisseni (Leibniz Institute

for the German Language) and Professor Herman Beyer (UNAM) collaborated on a variety of projects related to the Afrikaans language. Their work produced multiple joint lectures presented at the GIP conference in July 2019 and a variety of publications. All results will be presented successively at www.uni-due.de/germanistik/afrikaans/start. The research partnership will continue beyond the end of the GIP in 2019.

Like composition and derivation, conversion is considered a productive word formation process. It occurs in German, Dutch and Afrikaans. But there are striking differences between the three West Germanic languages: Dutch employs forms such as *zij pint, ik hockey or jij volleybalt*, which must be expressed through paraphrasing in German and Afrikaans: *sie zahlt mit Karte, ich spiele Hockey, du spielst Volleyball and hy betaal met 'n bankkaart, ek speel hokkie, jy speel vlugbal*. The loss of inflections in Dutch may play a role in the productivity of the process, but it fails to explain why Afrikaans, another language with little inflection, does not use conversion. Another set of conversion-like expressions, such as the Dt. *klappertanden*, Afr. *klappertand*; Dt. *knipogen*, Afr. *knipoog* (literally: to chatter-tooth, i.e., 'have chattering teeth' and to wink-eye, i.e., 'wink at'), occurs in Dutch and Afrikaans but not German. These expressions are left-hand headed and, as such, violate the generally accepted right-hand head rule, by which the right-hand word constitutes the head of a compound. Professor Boonen's project 'Konversion kontrastiv' is a detailed comparative study of the status of this word formation process in the Germanic languages.

Urban research

A large body of texts shaped the townscapes of the Holy Roman Empire and other European regions. Besides impermanent writings, it also included engravings on various solid materials, which inscribed condensed knowledge directly into the urban space. The project 'The Written Town. The Knowledge of Urban Inscriptions in Early Modern Times' focuses on the function of such engravings as well as the historicity of their content. How does the store of knowledge that is bound to objects constitute truth; how does it generate meaning? The background of



Reflection

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internal and external reference system of urban inscriptions – their time-bound, urban code. To do so, the project combines multiple approaches from the field of cultural studies. In applying ideas of urban semiotics to a historical research object and combining it with practice theory, the project enters uncharted waters.

Nina Szidat's (Department of History/Social and Economic History) dissertation project, 'An „active promotion of the European ideal“? References to Europe in British-German town twinning' (supervised by Professor Ute Schneider) examines the significance of such relationships in the dynamic space where political, economical and diplomatic interests overlap, using selected partnerships between West German and British towns as case studies. Most scholarship in contemporary history focuses on Europe as a network of institutions. Nina Szidat's project departs from that narrative to study Europe as it is experienced by those who live in it. Since 1955, the Council of Europe has awarded the Europe Prize to towns and cities that have demonstrated exceptional commitment to the European ideal. The establishment and maintenance of town partnerships has always been an important aspect of that ideal. Town partnerships shine a light on the interrelations between European institutions and municipal interests. To incorporate the potential foreign-policy dimension of town partnerships into the project, Szidat also provides a comparative study of cases in which East German towns are twinned with British ones. Based on the observation that the selection of twin towns and the format of the resulting partnerships tends to unveil a certain inherent logic of the places involved, the project explores the negotiation processes taking place between the local, regional, national and international level.

Theological research

Professor Hubertus Lutterbach's (Department of Catholic Theology/Historical Theology) project 'Archaische Religiosität in der Gegenwart' ('archaic religiosity in the contemporary world') applies the theory of the axial age to a selection of primitive religious phenomena that are currently being covered in the German-language

and global media. The author first compares them to parallel phenomena which occurred in our cultural sphere during the Early Middle Ages. Second, he explores the equivalence of related phenomena in high forms of religion, such as material offerings vs. offerings to the Immaculate Heart; dynastic sanctity and sanctity of kinship vs the unity of the universal human family etc.) His comparisons show that phenomena of primitive and higher religiousness still coexist in our own modern culture. This surprising expansion of our perspective, which is highly relevant from the perspective of religious history, makes a crucial contribution to our mutual understanding in a world that is shaped by religions and religious conflicts in many ways. It is indispensable for human-rights activists, people working in interfaith contexts, peace activists and those with an interest in ecumenism. The planned publication aims to contribute to interfaith and intercultural dialogue from the perspective of cultural studies.

To what extent do schools in socially precarious environments recognise the connection between religion, poverty/social deprivation and religious and cultural diversity brought about by migration? How do they react to it? Professor Thorsten Knauth's and Silke Reindl's (Protestant Theology/Religious Pedagogy) project 'Religion, Armut und Migration in Schulen. Grundlagen einer armutssensiblen Religionspädagogik der Vielfalt' seeks to answer this question. It is based at the research training group 'Querschnittliche Fragen der Lehrerbildung sowie Schul- und Unterrichtsentwicklung' ('a cross-section of issues in teacher training, school development and lesson planning'). Using qualitative and empirical studies, the researchers reconstruct possibilities and limits inherent to ways in which (religious) pedagogy can overcome 'difficult diversity'. The project also aims to develop a model of diversity-focused religious pedagogy that takes the realities of schools and poverty into account.

Museum-based learning

Cultural and aesthetic education in teaching and learning contexts is an important research cluster at the Department of German as Second and/or Foreign Language. Faculty member

Selected Publications

Borghardt, D., S. Maaß, A. Pontzen (ed.) (2020): *Literaturpreise. Geschichte, Theorie und Praxis.* Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.

De Boer, J.-H. (ed.) (2019): *Praxisformen. Zur kulturellen Logik von Zukunftshandeln* (Kontingenzgeschichten 6), Frankfurt a.M.: Campus.

Gerst, D., H. Krämer, R. Salomon (2019): *Harold Garfinkel's „Studies in Ethnomethodology“.* An Interview Issue. In: *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 20 (2), www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/issue/view/64

Gerst, D., M. Klessmann, H. Krämer (2020): *Grenzforschung: Handbuch für Wissenschaft und Studium.* (Baden-Baden: Nomos. Border Studies. Culture, Spaces, Orders. 3.)

Graf, D., Y. Fadeeva, K. Falkenstein-Feldhoff (ed.) (2020): *Bücher im Open Access. Ein Zukunftsmodell für die Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften?* Opladen: Barbara Budrich. OA-Ausgabe unter https://duepublico2.uni-due.de/receive/duepublico_mods_00071113.

Gryl, I., C. Scharf (2019): *Fostering Valuable Participation in Shaping Spaces and Societies: Towards Creating an Ethical Meta Level in the Model Design for Innovativeness.* In: *GI_Forum* 2, 180–193.

Gryl, I., M. Lehner (2019): „Neoliberalismus“. *Diskussion eines Grundbegriffs zur Analyse sozioökonomischer Gegenwart und zur Reflexion von Bildungsinhalten.* In: *GW-Unterricht* 155 (3), 5–16.

Gür-Şeker, D. (Hg.) (2020): *Wörter, Wörterbücher, Wortschätze.* (Korpus-) Linguistische Perspektiven. Duisburg: Universitätsverlag Rhein-Ruhr.

Knauth, Th., W. Weißer (ed.) (2020): *Ansätze, Kontexte und Impulse zu dialogischem Religionsunterricht.* Münster/New York: Waxmann.

Kurilla, R. (2020): *Everyday Life Theories of Emotions in Conflicts from Bali, the Spanish Basque Country, and the German Ruhr Area.* In: *Frontiers in Psychology*, www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01339/full

Kurwinkel, T., P. Schmerheim (ed.) (2020): *Handbuch der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur.* Unter Mitarbeit von S. Jakobi. Stuttgart: Metzler.

Marx, C. (2020): *Trennung und Angst. Hendrik Verwoerd und die Gedankenwelt der Apartheid,* Berlin: De Gruyter.

Michaelis, A. (2019): *Die Zukunft der Juden. Strategien zur Absicherung jüdischer Existenz in Deutschland (1890–1917).* (Kontingenzgeschichten 7), Frankfurt a.M.: Campus.

Pitsch, K., P. Bachmann, M. Dudda (2020): „Triage“ in Mass Casualty as Situated Interaction. *Algorithm and Participation.* ECSCW, Siegen, [10.18420/ecscw2020_p05](https://doi.org/10.18420/ecscw2020_p05).

the projects is the idea of towns and cities as text and of urban inscriptions as a form of cultural meaningfulness. Dr Teresa Schröder-Stapper's (Department of History) project, which is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), focuses on the regulatory function of inscriptions located in time and space in a seemingly confusing town. It seeks to decipher the



FOR 2600
UND **AMBIGUITÄT**
UNTERSCHIEDUNG

DFG research unit 2600, 'Ambiguity and Distinction. Historical and Cultural Dynamics'

What happens when phenomena are ambiguous? How do individuals, groups and societies handle situations in which the distinctions with which they normally navigate life meet ambiguous phenomena? Why do attempts to establish order with seemingly clear distinctions frequently produce the very ambiguities they were meant to overcome? Established in early 2019, the DFG-funded research unit 2600, 'Ambiguität und Unterscheidung. Historisch-kulturelle Dynamiken' (spokesperson: Professor Benjamin Scheller), explores those and related questions.

Sub-projects:

1: Gender Ambiguity in Media Coverage in the Federal Republic of Germany from the 1970s to the Turn of the Millennium

Professor Frank Becker (project leader)/Max Keilhau/Torben Trellkamp

2: 'Neophytes', 'Renegados', 'Creoles': Dynamics of (Dis)ambiguation in Early American Discussions of the Transition from Colonialism to Nationhood

Professor Barbara Buchenau (project leader)/Dr Elena Furlanetto/Phillip Grider

3: Contemporary Art in Istanbul: Ambiguity in Spatial and Pictorial Politics Between Religion and the State

Professor Gabriele Genge (project leader)/Eva Liedtjens

4: Religious Ambiguity in Turkey's Literatures from 1923 to the Present: A Yardstick for an Open Society?

Professor Kader Konuk (project leader)/Dr Gulbin Ergunes/Dr Zeynep Tüfekçioglu/Davut Yeşilmen

5: Between Black and White: South Africa's Coloureds and Apartheid

Professor Christoph Marx (project leader)/Amad Hamid

6: Unveiling Orientalism: Ambiguity in British Travel Discourse of the Long Eighteenth Century

Professor Patricia Plummer (project leader)/Cinja Bösel/Syed Kazim Ali Kazmi

7: The Sea of the New Christians: Mobility and Ambiguity of Converted Jews and their Descendants in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Adriatic

Professor Benjamin Scheller (project leader)/Marcel Müllerburg/Dr Nicolò Villanti

8: Undetermined Baroque Poetry. Poetic and Confessional Ambiguity in Silesia as Cultural Dynamic Factors of a New German Poetry (1620–1742)

Professor Jörg Wesche (project leader)/Julius Thelen

Dorota Okonska is working on a dissertation on art as a source of inspiration in learning German as a second language ('Kreative Impulse zum Lernen des Deutschen als Zweitsprache. Eine empirische Untersuchung zu sprachfördernden Ansätze des Projekts Sprache durch Kunst', supervised by Professor Rupprecht S. Baur). Encounters with art, the project assumes, enable pupils to express themselves as individuals: they find their way to language and back from language to art. The dissertation examines the interrelation between the museum as a place of learning outside of school and language pedagogy as it is applied in school contexts. Based on linguistic data, the researcher analyses under which conditions migrant children can be motivated to learn and make progress at school through new methodological approaches.

Dr Andrea Schäfer-Jung has also dedicated her research to museums as a site of learning outside of (pre-)school, focusing on aesthetic sources of learning. Her target group are pre-school children in nursery settings who are being prepared for entering primary school. Through encounters with works of art in and around the museum, the children foster their sense of aesthetics and are encouraged to engage with different materials and creative forms of expression. Targeted artistic practice linked closely to the integrated development of children's lexicon and grammar holistically promotes the acquisition of spoken language.

Kitsch

When art and so-called emotional kitsch are contraposed, reflexivity is usually attributed to just one side: art. The contrast is seemingly clear. But this alleged clarity neglects the multitude of intermediate stages of reflexivity. If we focus on those subtle differences instead, we can see how kitsch employs various forms of reflexivity to evoke emotional experiences in a large audience. Dr Thomas Küpper's (German Studies/Literature and Media Practice) post-doctoral Habilitation thesis 'Bewusst im Paradies. Zur Reflexivität von Kitsch' ('awareness of Paradise. On the reflexivity of kitsch') uses examples from literature, visual art, film, television, music and tourism to examine this reflexivity. His objective is not to reevaluate

kitsch by ascribing to it a form of reflexivity that meets the criteria of high culture. Rather, he explores the programmatic standards that kitsch sets for itself. It is those very standards that are visible in its reflexivity, its self-description (2017–2020).

Culture of work

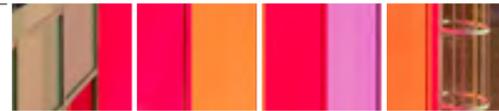
The changing world of work has plunged the traditional definition of the concept of work into crisis. We can observe the corresponding transformation processes particularly well in the cultural and creative industries, which tend to undergo developments in the labour market before all other sectors, making them early indicators of work-related trends. While this significance of the cultural and creative industries has been observed on various occasions, there are no well-developed, systematic analyses of this field of work to date. Professor Hannes Krämer is the



DFG research training group 1919: 'Precaution, Prevision, Prediction: Managing Contingency'

How can actions overcome contingency, and how do humans perceive the relationship between their present thinking and acting and their uncertain (or perceived-as-certain) future? Since 2013, these highly topical questions have been the research domain of the historians in the DFG research training group 'Precaution, Prevision, Prediction: Managing Contingency' (spokesperson: Professor Stefan Brakensiek/Professor Benjamin Scheller). The third cohort began their work on 1 November 2019.

More information: www.uni-due.de/graduiertenkolleg_1919/grako1919-start.php



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Advance

project manager of the DFG network 'Artistic and Creative Labour. Network for the Study of Practices of Work and Organisation within the Cultural and Creative Industries'. It is an association of academics researching the relationship between culture and work in contemporary capitalism. Taking a comparative approach, the project systematically puts its members' empirical studies into context in order to categorise specifics of the practice and structure of cultural creative work, thereby advancing the concept of 'work'. The

project also includes activities aimed at defining the international position of specifically German discourses and, subsequently, the incorporation of that position into the international discussion about cultural and creative work (2017–2021, publication in preparation).

Reason and law

In his dissertation project on the intellectual history of contractualism ('Der Vernunftbegriff des Rechts. Die systematische Problemgeschichte des Kontraktualismus', supervisor: Professor Dirk Hartmann), Sven Ender M.A. (Department of Philosophy) provides proof that the reciprocity of the legal relation cannot arise from contractualism. Instead, it is a prerequisite for the contractual basis of the law. Fichte justifies the condition of reciprocity independently of the conclusion of any contract. He subsequently demonstrates, using a fictional contract as an example, what legal obligations are meaningful in realising the condition of reciprocity. The best contractualist, then, is simultaneously the best critic of contractualism. The work addresses objections to modern contractualism by highlighting that a universalist, normative philosophy of law is feasible and can help us avoid cultural relativism.

Conspiracy – surveillance

Professor Boonen, Dr Derya Gür-Şeker (Department of German Studies/Linguistics) and Michael Wentker M.A. (Department of Anglophone Studies/Linguistics) are jointly working on an article about memes and their form and function in the discourse of conspiracy theories. It will be published in the compendium 'Conspiracy Discourse' (ed.: Ruth Breeze, Massimiliano Demata et al.). A funding application for further research into conspiracy discourse has been submitted.

How has the media shift over the past decades transformed surveillance? How has it been internalised in terms of self-surveillance, self-control and self-optimisation? These are the questions addressed by the project 'Literatur und Überwachung' (Dr Liane Schüller/Professor Werner Jung), which incorporates approaches from literary studies, cultural studies and media studies. It explores whether and how we can trace

a shift in the media of surveillance. Of course, the media that are used to exert control provoke different narratives and depictions at different points of history. The researchers set out to investigate whether the media shift in the surveillance technologies, then, gives rise to a media shift or a shift in the utilisation of media in the arts.

Artificial intelligence

The social consequences of artificial intelligence (AI) is widely discussed not just in the spheres of science and business but also in the media. Dr Gür-Şeker's project 'Künstliche Intelligenz und die Zukunft der Arbeit. Wie KI in den Online-Medien und Social Media dargestellt und wahrgenommen wird' focuses on the way in which AI and the future of work are covered in German online media, online newspapers and social media. The study also analyses the issue from the perspective of media users, including current and future employees who discuss AI online. Dr Gür-Şeker aims to analyse linguistic factors, sentiment and attitudes across the relevant media by examining the used words and contexts (e.g., negative or positive language), thought patterns (e.g., arguments employed) and images (e.g., visualisation of robots etc) systematically (funding: Otto Brenner Stiftung, 2020–2021).

What is hidden behind the term 'artificial intelligence'? How does our own university conduct its research into AI? An interfaculty lecture series on artificial intelligence ('Künstliche Intelligenz zwischen Algorithmen und sozialen Praktiken. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven') organised by Dr. Gür-Şeker in the summer of 2020 provided an overview of the perspectives, methods and approaches to KI that are being researched, developed and/or applied at UDE. In 13 online lectures, listeners gained insight into current projects from eight faculties and got to know the interdisciplinary research area of AI.

Innovativeness

Professor Inga Gryl's (Institute of Geography/Institute of General Studies) research group focuses on the study of innovativeness. In societies that are constantly changing at an ever-accelerating pace, the popular term of 'innovation' simultaneously describes present conditions and future

goals. Not only is it extremely multi-layered and complex, it is also highly charged from a cultural and normative point of view. The ongoing project on the social implications of innovativeness ('Innovativität vor dem Hintergrund der gesellschaftlichen Implikationen von Innovation') aims to shine a light on the term (with reference to concepts such as network theory, action theory and the ethics of responsibility), evaluate it in light of current issues (e.g., sustainability) and, by doing so, make innovativeness – the ability to make qualified contributions to social innovation processes – available to educational processes in consideration of the social conditionality of education.

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