

PD Dr. Stefan Brandt

Office Hours: Thursdays, 16-17, Room 323

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FROM POCAHONTAS TO MALCOLM X: ETHNIC AMERICAN IDENTITY AS FOLKLORE AND MAINSTREAM FICTION

Mon 14.00-16.00

Room 201

First session: Oct 18, 2004

Occasional extra-screenings: Mon, 12.00-14.00, Room 319

This course will trace the emergence and development of narratives about ethnic American minorities, focusing on six groups of tales:

1. Popular myths and legends such as the story of Pocahontas (in its accounts from the early 1600s as well as in its later reconstructions in histories, plays, poems, and films),
2. Captivity narratives, including both historical narratives such as John Tanner's *Narrative of His Captivity* (1830) and modern versions of the motif such as John Ford's movie *THE SEARCHERS* (1956)
3. Narratives of transformation/hybridization such as Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) and Kevin Costner's *DANCES WITH WOLVES* (1990)
4. Slave narratives and fugitive slave narratives (including textualized self-experiences from black writers such as Harriet Jacobs and Harriet E. Wilson as well as fictionalized accounts like Alex Haley's novel *Roots* from 1977),
5. Docu-dramas such as Spike Lee's *MALCOLM X* (1992)
6. Tales of ethnic self-empowerment, such as N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969) and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* (1989)

What function(s) do these narratives and retellings have in American cultural practice? To what extent do they echo, shape and inform mainstream ideology? And: In what way do they negotiate and illustrate the emergence of ethnic minority consciousness? While the main focus is on Native American history and culture, there will also be room for discussions on other narratives of ethnic minority identity (Black, Chicano, Asian-American). The course will end with a discussion of Paul Gilroy's concept of the «Black Atlantic» as an example of modern creations of the ethnic myth. The seminar will be held in English.

Credit requirements: Regular attendance and thoughtful participation in class, including short weekly assignments (40%), oral presentation as part of an expert group (20%), an annotated bibliography plus draft, from which a final paper will emerge (40%).

Required reading: A course reader is available in the copy-shop at Königin-Luise-Str.

Relevant texts and books for the seminar can be found in Handapparat 4 in our library.

Papers: The final paper will be 8 to 10 pages long. It will make an original argument about one of the texts we've been reading, present this argument coherently and logically, and use both close readings of the text and secondary sources to support it. **The paper is due February 28, 2005. There is no extension of this deadline. Late essays will not be accepted!**

SYLLABUS

- 18.10.04 **Introduction**
- 25.10.04 **Racial Stereotypes and Colonial Discourse**
Read and prepare for this session:
- Homi K. Bhabha, «The other question: the stereotype and colonial discourse» (1999)
- Please also watch for this session:
POCAHONTAS (Disney, 1995) (extra-screening right before this session, 25.10.04, 12.00-14:00, Room 319)
- 01.11.04 **The Pocahontas Myth**
Read and prepare for this session:
- Christian F. Feest, «Pride and Prejudice: The Pocahontas Myth and the Pamunkey» (1990)
- Robert S. Tilton, «John Gadsby Chapman's Baptism of Pocahontas» (1994)
- 08.11.04 **The Invented Indian: Tales of Captivity and Restoration**
Read and prepare for this session:
- John Tanner's «Narrative of His Captivity» (1830)
- David R. Sewell, «Language and Interpretation in Early American Captivity Narratives» (1993)
- Please also watch for this and the next session:
THE SEARCHERS (John Ford, 1956) (extra-screening right before this session, 08.11.04, 12.00-14.00, Room 319)
- 15.11.04 **The Searchers**
Read and prepare for this session:
- Brian Henderson, «The Searchers: An American Dilemma» (1980)
- 22.11.04 **The Noble Savage**
Read and prepare for this session:
- James Fenimore Cooper, from *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826)
- Randall C. Davis, «Fire-Water in the Frontier Romance: James Fenimore Cooper and «Indian Nature»» (1994)
- Ralph E. Morrow, «The Great Revival, the West...» (1931)
- 29.11.04 **Slave Narratives and Slave Consciousness**
Read and prepare for this session:
- Harriet Beecher Stowe, from: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)
- Harriet E. Wilson, from *Our Nig* (1859)

- Linda Brent [Harriet Jacobs], from: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)

06.12.04

Jewish Culture in the American 1920s

Read and prepare for this session:

- Alfred Hornung, «The Making of (Jewish) Americans» (1993)

Please also watch for this session

- ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA (S. Leone, 1984) (extra-screening of first 90 minutes before this session, 06.12.04, 12.00-14.00, Room 319)

13.12.04

The «New Negro» and the Harlem Renaissance

Read and prepare for this session:

- Alain Locke, «The New Negro» (1925)
- Langston Hughes, «I, Too, Sing America» (1926)
- Lawrence W. Levine, «The Concept of the New Negro and the Realities of Black Culture» (1993)

20.12.04-02.01.05

Christmas Break

03.01.05

The Living Spirit of the Indian

Read and prepare for this session:

- Luther Standing Bear, «Land of the Spotted Eagle» (1933)
- N. Scott Momaday, «The Way to Rainy Mountain» (1969)
- Bettye Givens, «Interview with N. Scott Momaday» (1985)

10.01.05

Going Back to the Roots: Tracing Black History in the 1970s

Read and prepare for this session:

- Alex Haley, from *Roots* (1977)
- David A. Hollinger, «Haley's Choice and the Ethno-racial Pentagon» (1995)

17.01.05

Searching for the Place: Chicano Writing in the 1970s and 80s

Read and prepare for this session:

- Ana Castillo, from: *The Mixquiahuala Letters* (1986)
- Rolando Hinojosa, from: *Klail City* (1976)

24.01.05

Tradition and Modernity: Chinese-American Writing

Read and prepare for this session:

- Maxine Hong Kingston, from: *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* (1977)
- Amy Tan, from: *The Joy Luck Club* (1989)

—Annotated bibliography (1-2 primary works, 5-7 secondary works) plus draft (short description of your planned paper, max. 1 page) due today at the start of the session —

! Note: I will not accept drafts handed in later than this date !

31.01.05

Going Indian: Hollywood's Romance with Native America

Read and prepare for this session:

- Angela Aleiss, «Le Bon Sauvage: *Dances with Wolves* and the Romantic Tradition» (1991)
- Robert Baird, «Going Indian: Discovery, Adoption and Renaming Toward a <True American>» (1996)

Please also watch and prepare for this session:

- DANCES WITH WOLVES (K. Costner, 1990)

07.02.05

Malcolm X and the Assertion of Black Ethnic Identity

Read and prepare for this session:

- Lawrence H. Fuchs, «They Never Did Really See Me: The Assertion of Black Ethnic Identity» (1990)

Please also watch and prepare for this session

- MALCOLM X (Spike Lee, 1992)

14.02.05

Against Race: The Black Atlantic as Counterculture

Read and prepare for this session:

Paul Gilroy, «The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity» (1993)

- The paper is due Monday, February 28, 2005 -

Note: There is no extension of this deadline. Late essays will not be accepted!