

Forms and Practices of Narrating

International Conference | John F. Kennedy Institute | June 5-7, 2014



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International Conference

John F. Kennedy Institute for
North American Studies

June 5-7, 2014

Program

John-F.-Kennedy-Institut für Nordamerikastudien
Freie Universität Berlin
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Forms and Practices of Narrating

Social scientists have recently ‘discovered’ narrativity claiming that life itself is storied, that narrative is not representative and thus secondary to life but a quintessential condition of it. These ideas give occasion to reassess the manifold forms and practices of narrating, not least since their ontological reconception has hardly been received in literary and cultural studies so far—possibly because of concerns with their own conceptual bearings. From about 1980 onward, literary studies were largely redefined as cultural studies. This led to an expansion of conventional notions of narrative and brought about a range of developments, including the emerging rivalry between media-specific forms and practices of narrating on the one hand and lasting aspirations to formulate a general theory of narrativity on the other, the migration of narrative concepts across disciplinary borders, and the questioning of plot-centered notions of narrativity through the study of affect.

The conference sets out to assess the ramifications of these recent reconceptions for the study of narrative forms and practices. What are the institutional effects of the transdisciplinary success of narrating for the practice of literary and cultural studies, now that they can no longer claim exclusivity for one of their core competencies? How do the recent reconceptions challenge key concepts of our work such as ‘identity,’ ‘interpellation,’ ‘representation’ and ‘liminality’? How do they alter our understanding of the history and historicity of narrative forms and practices, particularly when approached from the perspective of struggling with and against the limits of what is ‘narratable’ within particular conventions? And finally, how do these reconceptions challenge our understanding of social formation and social action?

Hosted by the departments of Literature and Culture at the John F. Kennedy Institute, Freie Universität Berlin, and organized by Prof. Dr. Laura Bieger (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg) and Prof. Dr. Florian Sedlmeier (Freie Universität Berlin).

Funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, the John F. Kennedy Institute Alumni Association, the Graduate School of North American Studies, and the Center for International Cooperation of Freie Universität Berlin.

Thursday, June 5

18:00 - 20:00

Opening Lecture

ADRIANA CAVARERO (Università di Verona)
“Narration versus Destruction”

Afterwards: Reception

Friday, June 6

10:00 - 12:30

Workshop 1: Premises of Narrating

WINFRIED FLUCK (Freie Universität Berlin)
“Anthropological Narratives”

ALBRECHT KOSCHORKE (Universität Konstanz)
“Stories and Decisions”

Chair: Laura Bieger

12:30 - 13:30

Lunch Break

13:30 - 16:00

Workshop 2: Functions of Narrating

PETER BROOKS (Princeton University)
“The Constitutive Nature of Narrative in the Law”

ANSGAR NÜNNING (Universität Gießen)
“Forms and Functions of Narrative Worldmaking as a
Paradigm for an Inter- and Transdisciplinary Approach
to the Study of Culture”

Chair: Alexander Starre

16:00 - 16:30

Coffee Break

16:30 - 19:00

Workshop 3: Needs and Limits of Narrative

LAURA BIEGER (Universität Freiburg)
“No Place Like Home – Belonging and Narrative”

ANDREAS MAHLER (Freie Universität Berlin)
“Tellabilities – Diatopic/Diachronic”

Chair: James Dorson

Saturday, June 7

10:00 - 12:30

Workshop 4: Narrative Rituals and Ruptures

ULLA HASELSTEIN (Freie Universität Berlin)
“Narratives of Habit”

GABRIELE M. SCHWAB (UC Irvine)
“The Paradox of Absence: Narratives of the Disappeared”

Chair: Florian Sedlmeier

12:30 - 13:30

Lunch Break

13:30 - 16:00

Workshop 5: The Conditions of Narrating Lives

NICOLA KING (Independent Scholar, formerly UWE Bristol)
“Constructing Identity: Narrative Strategies in Recent British Autobiography”

FLORIAN SEDLMEIER (Freie Universität Berlin)
“Paratexts and the Contingencies of Narrating”

Chair: Kate Fama

16:00 - 16:30

Coffee Break

16:30 - 19:00

Workshop 6: Narrative Unbound

HILLARY CHUTE (University of Chicago)
“What is Graphic Narrative?”

FRANK KELLETER (Freie Universität Berlin)
“Dis/Appointment Television: Commercial Storytelling and the Problem of Serial Closure”

Chair: Dustin Breitenwischer

19:00 - 19:15

Closing Remarks

LAURA BIEGER is Professor of American Studies at Universität Freiburg. She has held teaching and research positions at Freie Universität Berlin, UC Berkeley, and Universität Wien. She is the author of *Ästhetik der Immersion* (2007), which looks at urban spaces that architecturally stage the perceptual conjunction of world and image with an interest in the epistemological function of aesthetic experience. Her current book, *No Place Like Home* (forthcoming 2015), develops a narrative theory based on the human need to belong and applies it to American novels from the late 18th to the 21st century. She is the co-editor of four volumes: a collection of essays by Winfried Fluck entitled *Romance with America?* (2009), *Mode: ein kulturwissenschaftlicher Grundriss* (2012), *Revisiting the Sixties* (2013), and *The Imaginary and Its Worlds* (2013).

PETER BROOKS is Sterling Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at Yale University, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Scholar in the University Center for Human Values and the Department of Comparative Literature at Princeton University, and was the founding director of the Whitney Humanities Center at Yale University. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard University and the University of Texas, Austin, among others, and a visiting lecturer at Yale Law School. His essays and reviews have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Republic*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Nation*, *Critical Inquiry*, *New Literary History*, *Yale Law Journal*, *Boston University Law Review*, and elsewhere. He has published extensively and authoritatively on narrative and narrative theory and the 19th and 20th century novel. His books include *Reading for the Plot* (1984), *Troubling Confessions: Speaking Guilt in Law and Literature* (2000), and *Enigmas of Identity* (2011).

ADRIANA CAVARERO is Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Verona. She has been a visiting professor at Harvard University, UC Berkeley, and New York University. Her field of research includes classical, modern and contemporary thought, with a special focus on the political significance of philosophy. In two of her most influential publications, *Relating Narratives* (2000) and *For More Than One Voice* (2005), she inquires into narratability as a fundamental condition for human life, as well as a basic foundation for ethical conduct. Her other books include *In Spite of Plato: Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy* (1995), *Stately Bodies: Literature, Philosophy, and the Question of Gender* (2002), and most recently *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence* (2009).

HILLARY CHUTE is Neubauer Family Assistant Professor at the Department of English Language and Literature, as well as a Faculty Fellow at the Center for the

Study of Gender and Sexuality, and Director of the Artists' Salon project at the University of Chicago. Her teaching and research interests lie in contemporary American literature, specifically in how public and private histories take shape in the form of innovative narrative work. She is particularly interested in the relationships between word and image, fiction and nonfiction that we see in contemporary comics. Her publications include *Graphic Women: Life Narrative and Contemporary Comics* (2010) and *Outside the Box: Interviews with Contemporary Cartoonists* (2014), as well as the entry on "Graphic Narrative" for the *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature* (2012).

WINFRIED FLUCK is Professor Emeritus of American Culture at the John F. Kennedy Institute of Freie Universität Berlin, a Founding Member of the Graduate School for North American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin, and Co-Director of the Futures of American Studies Institute at Dartmouth College. He has held teaching and research positions at Princeton University, the IFK in Vienna, the National Humanities Center in Chapel Hill, NC, and the Advanced Research Center of the Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio, among others. He has published extensively and authoritatively on the changing functions of fiction in American literary and cultural history, the role of the aesthetic in constructing individual and national identities, and the state of American studies. His essays have appeared in *New Literary History*, *American Literary History*, *American Quarterly*, *The Cambridge History of the American Novel*, *Art History*, and elsewhere. His book publications include *Inszenierte Wirklichkeit: Der amerikanische Realismus 1865-1900* (1992), *Das kulturelle Imaginäre: Funktionsgeschichte des amerikanischen Romans, 1790-1900* (1997), and *Romance with America? Essays on Culture, Literature, and American Studies* (2009).

ULLA HASELSTEIN is Professor of North American Literature at the John F. Kennedy Institute and Director of the Graduate School for North American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. She has been a research associate in the History of Consciousness Program at UC Santa Cruz and a guest professor at UC Irvine. In 2011 she received the Dahlem Research School Prize for excellent doctoral supervision. Her publications include *Entziffernde Hermeneutik: Studien zum Begriff der Lektüre in der psychoanalytischen Theorie des Unbewußten* (1991), *Die Gabe der Zivilisation: Interkultureller Austausch und literarische Textpraxis in Amerika, 1661-1861* (2000), and many co-edited volumes such as *The Pathos of Authenticity: American Literary Imaginations of the Real* (2010) and *The Cultural Career of Coolness* (2013). Her current book project traces the poetics of seriality and transmediality in Gertrude Stein's writings and positions Stein as a central figure in American modernity.

FRANK KELLETER is Einstein Professor for American Culture at the John F. Kennedy Institute at Freie Universität Berlin and speaker of the DFG-Forschergruppe “Popular Seriality – Aesthetics and Practice.” His main fields of interest include the American colonial and Enlightenment periods, theories of American modernity, and American media and popular culture since the 19th century. While publishing for various academic journals, he also contributes to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. His book publications include *Die Moderne und der Tod: Das Todesmotiv in moderner Literatur, untersucht am Beispiel Edgar Allan Poes, T.S. Eliots und Samuel Becketts* (1997), *Amerikanische Aufklärung: Sprachen der Rationalität im Zeitalter der Revolution* (2002), and *Serial Agencies* (forthcoming), as well as several co-edited volumes, most notably, *Populäre Serialität: Narration-Evolution-Distinktion* (2012).

NICOLA KING is Senior Lecturer Emerita for English Literature at the University of the West of England in Bristol. She has been a visiting lecturer at Universität Greifswald, at the University of Olomouc (Czech Republic), and at WSJOE College of Higher Education, Czestochowa (Poland). Her most prominent publication is *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self* (2000).

ALBRECHT KOSCHORKE is Professor of Modern German Literature and Comparative Literature, as well as the speaker of the DFG- Graduiertenkolleg “Das Reale in der Kultur der Moderne” and a member of the Network for Transatlantic Cooperation at Universität Konstanz. His research interests lie in cultural theory, cultural semiotics, narrative theory, and German literature from the 17th to the 20th century, interests he also shares with a larger reading public in his frequent contributions to newspapers. In recognition of his work he received the Prize of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities in 2002 and the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize in 2003. His book publications include *The Holy Family and Its Legacy* (2003), *Der fiktive Staat: Konstruktionen des politischen Körpers in der Geschichte Europas* (2007), and most recently, *Wahrheit und Erfindung: Grundzüge einer Allgemeinen Erzähltheorie* (2012).

ANDREAS MAHLER is Professor of English Literature and Literary Systematics at Freie Universität Berlin. Before that he was Professor of Intermediality Studies at Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, Austria. His publications include a book on Early Modern English satire, an edition of texts on Shakespearean subcultures as well as volumes on the city in literature. His main research interest lies in the comic and the carnivalesque, literary theory, and currently, the mirroring of early and later modernity.

ANSGAR NÜNNING is Professor of English and American Literature and Cultural Studies at Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen. He is also the founding Director of the Gießen Graduate School for the Humanities and of the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture. In 2007, he was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Prize of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and the Arts of the state of Hessen and the Hertie Foundation. He has published widely on English and American literature, cultures of memory and recognition, narratology, and literary and cultural theory. His publications include *Grundzüge eines kommunikationstheoretischen Modells der erzählerischen Vermittlung: Die Funktionen der Erzählinstanz in den Romanen George Eliots* (1989), *Von historischer Fiktion zu historiographischer Metafiktion* (1995), and *Cultural Ways of Worldmaking: Media and Narratives* (with Vera Nünning and Birgit Neumann, 2010).

GABRIELE M. SCHWAB is Chancellor's Professor of Comparative Literature in the School of Humanities, and Faculty Associate in the Department of Anthropology, as well as a member and former Director of the Critical Theory Institute at UC Irvine. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Heisenberg Fellowship, and in 2000 she was honored with the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award. Her research focuses on modernist and contemporary comparative literary studies and on critical and cultural theory, frequently engaging psychoanalytic concepts. Her books *Subjects Without Selves* (1994) and *The Mirror and the Killer-Queen* (1996) explore the cultural effects of reading practices and the construction of literary subjectivities. Further publications include the edited volume *Derrida, Deleuze, Psychoanalysis* (2008) and her two recent monographs: *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma* (2010) and *Imaginary Ethnographies: Literature, Culture, Subjectivity* (2012).

FLORIAN SEDLMEIER is Junior Professor of North American Literature at the John F. Kennedy Institute of Freie Universität Berlin. Previously, he has been a Postdoc at Universität Salzburg, a research associate at UC Irvine, and a fellow at the DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Die Figur des Dritten" at Universität Konstanz, funded by the DFG. In 2010 he received the Fulbright Prize for the best dissertation in American Studies in Austria. His monograph, *Rereading Form: Paratexts, Transpositions, and the Postethnic Literary* (forthcoming 2014), explores the discursive and theoretical conditions for conceptualizing the notion of the postethnic literary. He is the co-editor of three volumes: *Hard Bodies* (2011), *Rereading The Machine in the Garden* (forthcoming 2014), and *Kriminalliteratur und Wissensgeschichte* (forthcoming 2015).

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Lunch Suggestions

Full Meals:

1. **Luise**
Restaurant and Beer Garden
Königin-Luise-Straße 40-42
2. **Ristorante Piaggio**
Italian Restaurant
Königin-Luise-Straße 44
3. **Barracuda**
Sushi & Seafood
Königin-Luise-Straße 44
4. **Eßkultur** (Cafeteria of the Ethnological Museum Dahlem)
International Cuisine with Vegetarian Options
Lansstraße 8
5. **Papillon** (Seminaris Campus Hotel Restaurant)
Business Lunches
Takustraße 39

Coffee & Snacks:

6. **Baci's**
Coffee, Bagels, Soups, and Snacks
Königin-Luise-Straße 26
7. **Café & Bäckerei Kornfeld**
Coffee, Bakery, and Snacks
Königin-Luise-Straße 38

The numbers are indicated on the map on the back.

Freie Universität

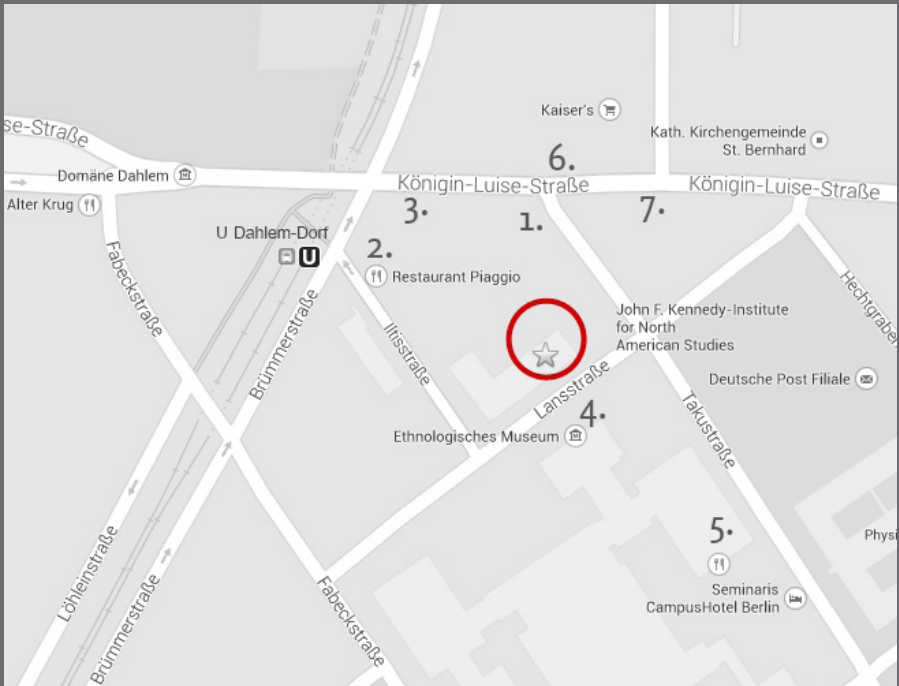


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GRADUATE SCHOOL
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