

**The Graduate Students of the Department of Germanic Literatures at Rutgers University
present:**

**Violence: A Necessary Evil?
Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Means and Ends of Violence in German Film,
Literature, and Fine Arts**

Friday, February 23, 2007

9:00-17:00

Teleconference Room, Alexander Library, College Avenue, New Brunswick

Introduction

With the world at odds over recent and current wars, the question of “necessary violence” has become increasingly important. The naturalization of violence and the process of blurring the borders between victims and perpetrators are already familiar to scholars discussing the topic of German guilt and engaging in post-war Holocaust discourse. In fact, problems which derive from the ambivalent character of the concept of violence have universal implications. In different times and places in the world, the term has had varying and even contradicting meanings.

Where does violence begin and what values are associated with it? What are its faces? How is the dialectic of violence represented in the course of history? How are practices, policies and discourses produced to sustain or create political, economic, social or cultural inequalities in social units? Can collective and abstract forms of suppression be identified as “violence?” Where does violence, this condition of humanity, lead? How can we avoid violence when it is a part of us?



Conference Program

8:30 Breakfast on location

9:00 **Welcome Address:** Juljana Gjata
and Katrin Polak- Springer,
Conference Coordinators

Opening Remarks: Prof. Martha
Helfer, Department Chair of
Germanic, Russian, and East
European Languages and Literatures,
Rutgers University

9:10-9:50 **Keynote Address:** Prof. Michael
Levine, German Department, Rutgers
University, "Trauma and Ecstasy"

10:00-Panel 1: Looking Back and

**11:30 Tracing Violence Throughout
History in German Literature**

- **Commentator: Prof.
Nicholas Rennie, German,
Rutgers University**

Steve Howe, University of Exeter,
UK “Liberation or Vengeance?
Kleist, Rousseau and the Validity of
Violent Revolution in *Die Verlobung
in St. Domingo*”

Paul A. Hoegger, University of
Cambridge, UK “Schlegel’s *Canut*”

Anna E. Baker, University of
Virginia “Traumatic Representation
in Günter Grass: The Dangerous
Intersection of Trauma, History, and
Violence”

**11:30-
11:40 Coffee Break**

**Guest Speaker: Prof. Gregory
Maertz, Department of English,**

11:40-Saint John’s University, New York

12:40 “The Wehrmacht and Official
Modernism in the Third Reich: The
German War Art Collection”

**12:40-
13:40 Lunch on location**

**Panel 2: Modern and Postmodern
13:40-
15:10 Cinematic Representations of
Violence**

- **Commentator: Prof. Fatima
Naqvi, Rutgers University**

Evan Torner, University of
Massachusetts “The Cinematic
Defeat of Brecht by Artaud in Peter
Brook’s *Marat/Sade*”

Wilson Kaiser, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill "Terror and Horror in *The Tenderness of the Wolves*"

Gabriele Wurmitzer, Duke University "Let me Entertain You With Funny Games: The Entertainment Value of Violence in Michael Haneke's *Funny Games*"

**15:10-
15:20 Coffee Break**

**15:20-Panel 3: Psychological Nuances of
16:50 Violence Against Woman**

- **Commentator: Prof. Eric Downing, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill**

Julia Feldhaus, Rutgers University, "Psychological Power Games in Arthur Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else*"

Katrin Polak- Springer, Rutgers University, "Violent Manipulation of the Female Subject in Storm's *Doppelgänger*"

Simona Sivkoff, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, "Cartoon World: Complicity, Violence and Kitsch in the Works of Elfriede Jelinek"

**16:50-
17:00 Closing Remarks and Reception**



Topics Addressed

The conference will focus on representations of violence in German film, literature, and the fine arts, as well as comparative approaches and interdisciplinary contributions addressing the following topics:

- Violence between subjects, between subject and community, between communities
- Violence against the self, against the other
- Violence as social code or exception to social norms of society
- Sacrificial victims
- Physical versus spiritual violence
- Positive versus negative violence
- Peaceful conflict resolution, alternatives to violence
- Violence in times and spaces of instability
- Aesthetics of violence

Conference Committee

Conference Coordinators: [Juljana Gjata](#) and [Katrín Polak-Springer](#)

**Conference Steering
Committee:**

Kai Artur Diers
Julia Feldhaus
Federica Franzè
Rebecca Steele
Shambavi Prakash
Christophe Kone
Mareen Fuchs

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