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

Welcome Address: Juljana Gjata
9:00  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-  Keynote Address: Prof. Michael
9:50  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

11:40-12:40 Guest Speaker: Prof. Gregory Maertz, Department of English, Saint John’s University, New York
    “The Wehrmacht and Official Modernism in the Third Reich: The German War Art Collection”

12:40-13:40 Lunch on location

13:40-15:10 Panel 2: Modern and Postmodern 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 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 Katrin Polak-Springer
Conference Steering Committee:

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

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The Department of German Literatures

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