

Politics and Poetics of Friendship

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Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

May 31, 2016

Location:

Poland

Subject Fields:

Art, Art History & Visual Studies, Humanities, Literature, Philosophy

As Umberto Eco once famously noted, a man who loves a cultivated woman knows that “he cannot say to her ‘I love you madly’, because he knows that she knows (and that she knows that he knows) that these words have already been written by Barbara Cartland”. But what about **friendship**? Has it also become devalued since, for instance, on Facebook friends are a number and the meaning of the verb “to friend” as “to befriend” has become archaic? Or is friendship “a way of life”, as Michel Foucault would have it, an underestimated category whose radical potential grows with evolving social models? What are the characteristics and forms of friendship? What are its laws? Is it based on mutual nourishment or exploitation? Dedication or self-love? In what way does it differ from other types of bonding? Does friendship go beyond the “proximity of congeneric double, beyond kinship, [...] beyond the principle of fraternity” (Jacques Derrida)? Or is it governed by “fraternal tenderness”? Is a friend addressed or described as “an absent other”, a kind of adult cousin to the imaginary friends little children invent for themselves”, as Paul Auster recently said about his epistolary friend, J.M. Coetzee?

The goal of our conference, organised by the Institute of English Studies (Jagiellonian University in Krakow), is to explore **representations of friendship in literary fiction and non-fiction, film, and other visual narratives**. We are particularly looking forward to receiving proposals addressing the issue of friendship in life narratives (autobiographies, memoirs, autofiction, [auto]biographical graphic novels, biographies, biofiction, biopics, letters, diaries, journals, etc.), as well as those focusing on friendship between writers.

Suggested themes include but are not limited to:

- fe/male-fe/male friendship,
- friendship vs family,
- friendship vs love,
- erotic friendship / friends with benefits,
- intimate friendship / bromance,
- “friendship” as a euphemism,
- spiritual friendship,

- professional / artistic / literary friendship,
- false and/or forced friendship,
- from friends to foes,
- wo/man's best friend: friendship with animals,
- friendship in the digital world.

Proposals for 20-minute presentations should consist of a brief biographical note (including academic title and institutional affiliation) and a 150-word abstract. They should be sent to friendship.conference@gmail.com by **31 May 2016**. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by **15 June 2016**. The conference will be held at the Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland on **27-29 October 2016**.

Conference fee: 120 EURO (or 480 PLN).

Following the conference we plan to publish selected papers (between 4000-6000 words in length) in book form.

The conference will be held during **The Conrad Festival** (<http://en.conradfestival.pl/>) - **the largest international literary event in Poland and one of the largest in Europe**. On 26 October the conference participants will be invited to a meeting with **Colm Tóibín**.

Plenary speakers:

Prof. Teresa Bruś, Institute of English Studies, University of Wrocław

Prof. Deborah Cartmell, School of Humanities and Centre for Adaptation Studies, De Montfort University

Organisers:

Dr Ewa Kowal, Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University

Dr Robert Kusek, Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University

Visit the conference website at <https://friendshipconference.wordpress.com/>

Contact Info:

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