

CFP: Graduate Student Conference “Dust and Distraction // Staub und Zerstreuung” in German Studies, Baltimore, MD (31.12.2020)

Discussion published by Almut Slizyk on Friday, December 4, 2020

Graduate Student Conference “Dust and Distraction // Staub und Zerstreuung” in German Studies, Johns Hopkins University

February 12th & 13th, 2021 10am - 4pm ET

Abstract deadline: December 31st, 2020

**DUST DISTRACTION \\\ ZERSTREUUNG STAUB
ZERSTREUUNG STAUB \\\ DUST DISTRACTION**

Das Publikum ist ein Examinator, doch ein zerstreuter

The public is an examiner, but a distracted one.

Walter Benjamin

Dust and literature have always gone hand in hand.

Roberto Bolaño

What do dust and distraction have in common within the context of literature? The etymology of distraction suggests concentration torn asunder, and dust—deriving from German *Dunst* (vapor)—diffused, blurred, or disintegrated perception. The German word for distraction (*Zerstreuung*) contains within it the sign for dispersal and diffusion (*Streuung*) associated with, among other things, dust and diaspora. Our current global moment draws attention to a number of dissonances, cognitive, emotional, and narrative. Many of these spring from the management of distraction(s) in economies of attention, or, conversely, management of attention(s) in economies of distraction. The redistribution of demands on attention exposes problems both hypermodern and ancient. Can we notice the novel ways paying attention constitutes and colors narrative acts and flows? Does distraction disrupt attention or does it, like silence in music, (re)structure it? Is the edifice of attention always already a narrative of distraction? How does literature collect, transform, or become dust? What happens when we recalibrate our attention to focus on dust? And can we focus on distraction?

The themes of dust and distraction appear at the intersections of disciplines and can be found to figure in the works of, for example, Adorno, Agamben, Arendt, Benjamin, Derrida, DuBois, Foucault, Franck, Kracauer, Kristeva, Sontag, Wittgenstein, among many others.

We invite investigations into the intersections of theory and literature across disciplines. This graduate student conference encourages participants to explore and perhaps enact its

Citation: Almut Slizyk. CFP: Graduate Student Conference “Dust and Distraction // Staub und Zerstreuung” in German Studies, Baltimore, MD (31.12.2020). H-Germanistik. 12-04-2020.

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/79435/discussions/6913132/cfp-graduate-student-conference-%E2%80%9Cdust-and-distraction-staub-und>

Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.

own theme. We welcome contributions in two formats: a writing workshop with pre-circulated papers and short 9 x 9 presentations that juxtapose image and speech (9 images, one minute per image) followed by discussion. Participants are also invited to attend mini seminars conducted by keynote speakers with pre-circulated readings.

We welcome work that takes up themes including but not limited to:

- **Creative, ludic, emancipatory potential of distraction/dust:** camp, entropy
- **Marxist and Frankfurt School approaches** to culture industry and the creation of the distracted subject
- **Gendering and queering of distraction:** sexed or gendered physique as 'distracting,' hysteria, lunacy
- **Social dialectics and dispersions:** particles and particularities, diasporas, racialized narratives of dust/ distraction
- **Literary concentration and distraction/dilution:** reading as distraction from reality and vice versa
- **Representation and symbols of distraction:** blurred vision, lack of focus
- **Experiences of distraction/dust:** aesthetics, poetics, rituals, phenomenologies, visualities
- **Economies of distraction/dust:** mechanics, genealogy, conceptual histories
- **Mechanisms and organisms of distraction/dust:** urbanization and pollution (noise, light, dirt) vs stillness and abandonment
- **Digital distraction/dust:** compression, lossiness, virtual realities, and metaphors
- **Production and labor:** dusting, dust as (by)product of excavation, (re)construction, dilapidation, and/or demolition, *Trümmerliteratur*
- **Commodification of attention and distraction:** wellness as distraction, asymptotic teleologies of impossible productivity, fungibility of attention, overstimulation, monotony, idleness, restlessness, exhaustion
- **Ideology and distraction:** strategies and narratives of legitimation, surveillance and distraction
- **Ageing and time:** status quo, rupture/revolution, affliction as distraction, distraction from death

The conference is organized by Antonia Grousdanidou, Almut Slizyk, and Josh Todarello, MLL, Johns Hopkins University. Please submit abstracts of max 250 words followed by a short bio by December 31st, 2020 to dustdistraction@gmail.com. The event will take place virtually on February 12th & 13th, 2021.

Redaktion: Constanze Baum - Lukas Büsse - Mark-Georg Dehrmann - Nils Gelker - Markus Malo -

Citation: Almut Slizyk. CFP: Graduate Student Conference "Dust and Distraction // Staub und Zerstreung" in German Studies, Baltimore, MD (31.12.2020). H-Germanistik. 12-04-2020.

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/79435/discussions/6913132/cfp-graduate-student-conference-%E2%80%9Cdust-and-distraction-staub-und>

Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.

Alexander Nebrig - Johannes Schmidt

Diese Ankündigung wurde von H-GERMANISTIK [Nils Gelker] betreut - editorial-germanistik@mail.h-net.msu.edu