

# Within or Without: Space in German Literature and Culture

Graduate Student Conference in German Studies

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Cornell University

Ithaca, NY

Keynote Speaker: John K. Noyes, University of Toronto

Space is a conceptual category that enlivens cross-disciplinary inquiry and facilitates the exploration of new analytical frontiers. Yet as trailblazing as the field is today, the discourse of space also has a long historical trajectory. Language and rhetoric have been conceived spatially within traditions of mnemonic techniques or *topoi*. Literary scholars have articulated in great detail the idyllic space of the village, the claustrophobic spaces of Kafka, the urban spaces of Modernism, and instances of the *locus amoenus* and *locus horribilis*. Elsewhere, space is produced by media-specific practices of seeing and reading, arranged and constructed to convey meaning in the context of architecture, photography, and painting. Notions of national, ethnic, or linguistic spaces supply a *raison d'être* for academic departments and disciplines, and they live on even in our efforts to overcome such distinctions. And at the geopolitical level, borders drawn across maps demarcate spaces for specific populations, serving both to affirm social imaginaries and to construct an often undesired other.

This conference aims to examine the workings of space in German literature and culture. What sorts of spaces do we encounter, and what function do they serve? In what ways does space serve us, either as a means of better understanding an object of analysis or as an object of analysis itself? How is space produced or defined in literature and in other media? Are there media or genre-specific concepts of space? How is space used in relation to different kinds of representations (literary, historical, and artistic)? How are space and spatial practices used as an analytic tool in and across disciplines? How can we conceive of the history of spatial discourses and how does this tradition inform our treatment of space today? Is space so foundational to discourse that we cannot do without it?

These are just a few of the questions we hope to address. Possible topics include but are not limited to:

The history and tradition of spatial discourse	Projected space (utopia, dystopia, paradise, limbo, hell)
Constructed spaces in literature and other media	Sound and space
Pre-Modern configurations of space	Spaces of Exception (Schmitt, Arendt, Agamben)
Space as Nature or Culture	Romantic Landscape
Urban spaces and Cityscapes	Philosophical space, a philosophic metaphoric of space
Social spaces and spaces of everyday life	Heimat/Gemütlichkeit
Spaces of production/interpretation	Spaces of war and occupation
Gendered spaces	Public and Private spheres
Erotic discourse and space	Topography (topos+grapho)
Flaneurism	Liminality
Chronotopes	The new non-spaces of supermodernity
Space and Characterization	The cyberworld and its mimetic space
Nation and the Transnational	Colonial cultures and Postcolonial Theory
Local space, global space	Palimpsests
Borderlands	Maps and Mapping
Space and Genre	Deconstructed spaces
Cultural Geography: Space/Place	
Globalization	

Please send an abstract of approximately 250 words no later than January 4, 2010 to conference organizers Miyako Hayakawa, Andreea Mascan, Alexander Phillips, and Nadia Rodriguez at [cornellspace2010@gmail.com](mailto:cornellspace2010@gmail.com). Abstracts must include a cover letter with the author's name, paper title, affiliation, telephone number, and e-mail address, and be in the form of .doc files. Presentations are to last 20 minutes and must be in English. Submissions are accepted from graduate students only.