

CFP

Alternative Geographies – New Perspectives on Art and Literature in a Global Age

Ph.D. conference, Aarhus University, October 7-9, 2019,

Arr. in collaboration between Aarhus University and Nanjing University

Where is the center of the world within our present world order? What do geography and geographical location mean for our understanding of world literature and art? How do new transcultural relations, planetary outlook, new forms of cosmopolitanism and ecocriticism change our understanding of the role of literature and art in a global world? And how do art and literature depict and reflect on the meaning of old and new geographies?

In recent years, the geographical orientation of literary and art studies has changed. The old East-West, and North-South divides have been questioned and new regional areas have become foci of interest. To a certain extent we have moved beyond the old colonial and post-colonial world order. The global south is now a strong cultural epicenter that questions not only an old imperial order but also create new south-south relations for instance across the south Atlantic (Bystrom and Slaughter, 2018). Asia has a new and stronger cultural influence across the globe and there is an increased focus on inter-Asian relations. (Saussy). The old west is in the midst of a geopolitical re-orientation where decolonization (Mignolo) goes hand in hand with a new planetary outlook (Moraru). The relation between the local and the global is changed in light of new forms of cosmopolitanisms (Domínguez, Robbins).

Social inequality and exploitation have not disappeared but geopolitical questions are being renegotiated. At the same time, there is a new understanding of the biological conditions of geographical and political order. Global warming and climate crisis have increased the interest in the planet as a place of cohabitation for all human beings. Oceanic studies have suggested that we should study the sea that was formerly seen primarily as a place of imperialist traversal and routes of trade between states, as a site of its own interest that unites a historical and cultural interest with biological interest in climate change (Cohen).

Nomadic and migratory movements across the globe question or redefine the significance of geographical location for cultural identity. New super cities grow at a fast pace, the internet seems to make geographical location irrelevant and it has been suggested that the aesthetics of art is global from the outset (Papastergiadis). Yet there is a growing interest for the topography of local cultures, landscapes etc. And there is a growing interest in ‘minor’ regions, like the Arctic region that covers areas from Canada, across the Nordic countries in Europe to Russia, or islands

that were formerly studied as part of mainland nations. They are now studied as an interesting geographical and cultural world in their own right (Grydehøj)

The question is how this changed geographical orientation changes the production and reception of both contemporary and past literature and art? Many of the above-mentioned fields of research are highly interdisciplinary. Does our method of inquiry and research of art and literature change when we move outside of the geographical zone of the nation state or former empires? How did geographical orientation guide former literary and art studies? How does it do it today and how do literature and art reflect on the topic of geography?

In this graduate seminar we would like to explore a whole range of possibilities and problems related to geographical location and orientation for the study of art and literature. The aim is to tease out and discuss the problems of geography as they appear in art works and literature, to invite a comparative view on this and a methodological discussion on the importance and meaning of geography. We understand 'art' in a broad sense to include art, music, film, drama, visual imagery etc.

We thus invite contributions that deal with art and literature in relation to a range of general topics, including (but not limited to):

- Geopolitical problems of literary and art studies
- The aesthetic depiction of geography in art, literature, film, drama, music etc.
- World literature and world art
- Regional and areal perspectives on the study of art and culture
- Relation between topography, landscape and geography as it is reflected in art and literature
- The concept of scale in literary and art studies
- The spatial experience and practice in art and literature
- Cosmopolitanism in art and literature
- Transnational art or literary studies
- Ecocriticism

Confirmed keynote

Chengzhou He, Changjiang Distinguished Professor (Yangtze River Scholar) of English and Drama at Nanjing University.

Venue

School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University, Langelandsgade 139, 8000 Aarhus C, Denmark

Participation fee: 100 Euro. The fee includes academic program, lunches and one dinner.

Paper proposals

Abstracts (200-300 words) should be sent before June 25, 2019 to Karen-Margrethe Simonsen (litkms@cc.au.dk), He Chengzhou (chengzhou@nju.edu.cn) and Mads Anders Baggesgaard: litmab@cc.au.dk)