

8th European Summer School Ravensbrück

» Remembrance and Media Biographies --- Generational and Gendered Perspectives«

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Organizers:

Ravensbrück Memorial | Brandenburg Memorials Foundation

in cooperation with:

the Institute for Art and Visual Cultures of the Carl von Ossietzky University in Oldenburg

the Institute for Art in Context at the Fine Arts College of the Berlin University of the Arts

the Université du Luxembourg | University of Luxembourg

the International Association of Friends of the Ravensbrück

»Remembrance and Media Biographies – Generational and Gendered Perspectives«

For the media representation of the history of National Socialism and of the Nazi crimes, two developments are particularly significant: the changing forms of representation in the media (film, radio, TV, computer, Internet) and the changes in large-scale political constellations and the wars and terror related to those political changes, both of which have marked the six decades since the end of the Nazi era. Taken together, these two dimensions form a “frame of reference” for public and private forms of remembrance.

Under the title “Memory-Media Biographies,” the European Summer School Ravensbrück 2012 will examine the extent to which remembrance of the Nazi crimes is shaped not only by the changing and growing forms of representing the Nazi crimes in the media but also by the media presentation of large-scale political events that leaves and has left traces in a generation’s perception. This perspective makes it possible to reappraise many unquestioned assumptions about a person’s generational belonging with respect to National Socialism and the Nazi crimes, to revise such assumptions in terms of their own historical and social contexts and to assess their analytical usefulness. In self-reflexive seminar sections, participants of the Summer School will have the opportunity to connect, in their own “witnessing,” their own experiences, identity constructions and research to the theoretical, analytical examination of the generational location of “memory-media biographies” with respect to National Socialism and the Nazi crimes. In this context, we believe that the heterogeneity of the group not only in terms of scholarly discipline and internationality but also in terms of age offers an excellent opportunity for a reflection on and a sharpening of these concepts.

The topic of the Summer School is located at the boundaries and in the intersections between interdisciplinary research (history, media and cultural studies, art), the teaching of history, and self-reflexive processes. The working modes of the conference shall be arranged accordingly: theoretical, scholarly and empirical perspectives as well as the concrete reconstruction of and reflection on one’s own “media biography” are to go hand in hand.

One of the central conceptual points of departure for the Summer School 2012 is the notion that, in the context of the wars and conflicts of the post-War period, the apperception of systematic violence conveyed through the media, the apperception of unbounded state and terrorist violence, influences the perspectives on and the questions posed to history and thus evokes as well re-significations and “*re-actualizations*” of historical events, even if the events in question are regarded as unique, as is the case for the Nazi crimes and the Holocaust.

We want to pursue the following questions:

- Are there clear-cut, specific forms of perception for the historic point of reference constituted by the “Holocaust”/the Nazi crimes?
- Is it possible to identify new and re-interpretations of this historic event in terms of how large-scale political events and their coverage in the media have marked specific generations in particular ways?
- Do mass media generate “*memory scripts*” that may be described as generationally specific, or do they evoke trans-/intergenerational “*memory scripts*,” which can be marked, described and interpreted as — conscious or unconscious — processes of negotiation and forms of establishing conventions?
- Do the changes in media technologies and capabilities produce changes in the media representation, perception and memory of the Nazi crimes?¹
- And what is the significance of all this for a responsible handling of images that are already stored in media’s memory or are superimposed on further images?

For heuristic reasons these questions will be focused around historic “*nodal points*”² in which changeovers in the history of the media intersect with large-scale political events (wars, systematic state violence and terror). In this context we will explore concretely the question about significant “*rearticulations*” of the Nazi crimes and the “Holocaust” in terms of politics of history and in terms of the cultures of memory.

“**Gender**” — the ways in which conceptions of gender are inscribed or re-inscribed in current and past representations are a further central dimension for sharpening analytic reflection of the terms “generationality” and “media biography” in their own historic and social framing³.

Thus, our examination of historical discourses and processes of remembrance will not focus primarily on turning points in the confrontation and representation of the history of the Nazi crimes and the “Holocaust” such as for instance the Auschwitz trials or the broadcasting of the TV-series “*Holocaust*” (though these may enter our exploration in the context of the events that will be our focus). Instead, we will direct our attention primarily to the post-1945 historic constellations around which the violence of war was communicated worldwide and in a *new* way through the media. This corresponds to the basic theoretical

1

As a medium of the early 21st century, *youtube* for example has rendered the distinction between producers and recipients of media representations more porous. With the assumption that younger students often have a more established, intimate mode of access to this medium than their educators, who are usually older, we find this a particular productive and exemplary field for intergenerational processes of negotiation.

2

Three exemplary, historically prominent “*nodal points*” in which the history of war and the history of the media become entangled are in our perspective the Vietnam War, as the first televised war in the context of the “*Cold War*,” the “*Second Gulf War*,” as the first war of the Internet era, and the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia as part of the establishment of a new “*world order*” after the collapse of “*actually existing socialism*” at the end of the “*Cold War*.” Thus, East-West comparisons are part and parcel of the Summer School’s topic.

3

For the exemplarily named “*nodal points*” for media and politics: Vietnam war, “*Second Gulf War*” and “*Yugoslav Wars*,” we may for example point to the fact that the Vietnam war was perceived as an orgy of masculine violence (Mi Lai Massacre) and as the origin of the traumatization of male perpetrators (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), while the “*Second Gulf War*” brought sexualized violence in a spectacular manner to the forefront (the Abu Ghraib case and Lynnie England), and in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia sexualized violence constituted a central element of “*ethnic cleansing*.”

insight of the reconstructivity of memory — in other words, the fact that every turn to the past takes place from a particular moment in the present and is formed by the present's questions, modes of interpretation and forms of cultural representation.

Conception of the Summer School 2012

Katja Anders · Katja Baumgärtner · Arnold Dreyblatt · Insa Eschebach · Andrea Genest · Juliane Heise · Christiane Hess · Matthias Heyl · Katja Jedermann · Sonja Kmec · Johanna Kootz · Claudia Lenz · Janna Lölke · Silke Wenk

Conference costs: 135 € [Mo.-Fr.] or 159,50 € [So.-Fr. for early arrivals], which cover room and board at the International Youth Meeting Center | Youth Hostel Ravensbrück. Accommodation is in shared rooms.

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Call for Papers and Creative Works

This is an opportunity for young scholars and artists to present their work on this topic at the research forum and to discuss their work with participants. Works in progress are welcome. There is also the chance to present films, websites or other media projects of your own creation during an evening event. We cannot offer an honorarium nor cover your travel costs; rather, we offer a constructive discussion in a comfortable setting. Please send us your proposal by July 15th, 2012!

Further Opportunities for Interaction

»critical friends«

Participants who volunteer as »critical friends« will comment the day's event at the end of the day. You are invited to indicate your willingness to participate as a »critical friend« during the conference.

»HistoryMediaJukeBox«

In our discussions in the preparatory seminars and in the organizing group we realized that participants connected their own perceptions of the topic to very different media experiences. For the »HistoryMediaJukeBox« on Wednesday morning we ask participants to bring short media sequences that represent the media experiences that have particularly influenced their perception of the Nazi crimes. We strongly encourage you to participate. Please bring media excerpts in a common format, if possible already prepared as digital sequence, and provide a brief introduction when you show it to the group. We are very interested in finding out whether or not we can draw conclusions about gender, generations and media from what participants show and from the discussion.