



Call for Papers

Fachkonferenzen Hochschuldialog mit Südeuropa (DAAD)

Crisis, Risks, and New Regionalisms in Europe: Narrating Flight and Asylum

University of Milan – School of Language Mediation and Intercultural Communication
– Prof. Dr. Claudia Gualtieri and Dr. Roberto Pedretti
Chemnitz University of Technology – English Literatures –
Prof. Dr. Cecile Sandten

2 – 5 November 2020 – University of Milan

Both the alleged refugee crisis of 2015 and the events in Chemnitz at the end of August 2018 have shown that both politics and education are called upon to develop measures that promote democratic cooperation and tolerance – basic concepts that still characterise many societies. Apart from the attention that postcolonial, migration and cultural studies scholars, sociologists and political scientists have gained, authors who have written stories about asylum and the representation of its various forms in recent years deserve particular recognition. Often assuming the voice of fugitives in picture books (for children), graphic novels, short stories, novels, life writings, poems, plays, as well as documentaries and feature films, these authors write about the inhumane – or even human – aspects of flight and asylum. They give individual characters a voice and a face. As in the Refugee Tales project, authors go to prisons, detention centres, asylum centres or illegal camps (e.g. Calais until 2016) and talk to refugees, asylum seekers, prisoners and those tragically stranded in political and bureaucratic confusion. Other authors develop plays based on their own experiences of flight or on conversations with refugees, which are performed in the context of integration projects, schools, universities or professional theatres.

This conference seeks to bring together scholars, young academics and students within the framework of dialogue in order to tackle pressing questions and address theoretical, political, cultural and literary conceptualisations of refugeeism and asylum. In addition, authors' readings, city and museum tours to special locations as well as theatre performances or film screenings are planned as important programme modules to complement the theoretical and methodological questions posed by the scholars. The content of the programme will focus on the supposed refugee crisis of 2015 from a German and Italian perspective with a view to narratological and aesthetic strategies that make refugee and asylum stories important as literary and media texts. In a second step, possible applications of these narratives in kindergartens, schools and other educational institutions are to be explored in order to develop empathy and understanding for refugees, promote integration and consolidate democratic structures. A database with information on the texts as well as teaching materials will be created, which will be continuously expanded.

In light of these challenges, the conference provides a platform to reflect upon the themes that address, but are not restricted to, the following:

- General Theory: Refugeeism and Asylum Seeking
- Europe and Cultures of Risk, Migration and Globalization
- The Liberal Discourse of Human Rights and its Discontents
- Cultures of Fear: Right-wing Movements, Xenophobia and Racism
- The Cultural Validity of the Arts: Museums, Performance
- The Question of “Ethical Obligations and the Relations of Proximity” (Butler)
- Bio-politics and *Homo Sacer* (Foucault; Agamben)
- Asylum Accounts, Narrative, Story Telling and Narratology
- Raising Awareness: Pedagogy and Asylum Narratives in Kindergartens, Schools and other Educational Institutions
- Asylum Seeking and the Pandemic

The general structure of the conference will consist of workshops. For the ca. 30-40 participants (academics, experts in the field, artists, high-profile students, the public), we invite 20-minute talks followed by discussions in order to initiate a very discursive conference atmosphere. In case the conference cannot take place in Milan due to the corona virus, it will be scheduled as an online conference. If you are interested in attending, please send your abstracts (250 words) and a bio-note to the conference convenors:

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 The call for papers will close on 31 August 2020.