



International Conference

Strata of Kinship and Collective Action in Literature and Culture

8 – 9 November 2018

Center for Gender and Diversity Research (ZGD)

Department of English

Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

Organised by Dr. Gero Bauer, Dr. Nicole Hirschfelder and Katharina Luther

Call for Papers

“Make kin, not babies!”, Donna Haraway provocatively demands in her most recent book (2016), in an attempt to offer new and creative ways of thinking what kinship might mean in an age of ecological devastation. At the same time, the emergence of a seemingly new culture of public protest and political opinion have provoked scholars such as Judith Butler (2015) to address the contexts and dynamics of public collective action. In this conference, we would like to explore the dynamic relationship between structures of kinship and the (material) conditions under which collective action emerges. Since this both occurs in and is relevant for many different fields and areas, we are interested in examples of this relationship from a literary and cultural studies perspective. How are kinship and collective action negotiated in literature, the arts, or in specific historical moments, and how does this change the role of representation? How have conceptualisations of both concepts developed over time, and what can we infer from this for questions of kinship and collective action today?

We understand kinship, in this context, not as a biological – and hence seemingly ‘fixed’ – category, but as an affective practice of belonging. As such, we theorise both kinship and (material) structures of collective action as non-hierarchical, dynamic and constantly emerging (re-)configurations. Both also depend, we assume, on an ‘outside’, an ‘against’ or ‘with’ on which they are contingent, and which influence who makes kin with whom to what end. Kinship thus becomes a truly diverse practice that can bring about ‘queer’ allegiances of many kinds, and, at the same time, intersects with ‘established’ cultural practices of in- and exclusion along the lines of gender, class, race, sexuality etc.

In line with recent practices of collective action and kinship culture, we want to approach these various identity categories from a perspective that allows for their new and different (re-)configuration. For our title, we borrow Deleuze and Guattari's notion of *strata*, as it proposes a framework through which political content reaches expression and matter attains an organized form within an assemblage. *Strata* as a basic concept in/on/through which political action and kinship emerges allows for specific forms of agency to unfold in both natural and cultural realms.

In this conference, we hope to discuss the following two related central questions: What are the material conditions under which collective action emerges; and what is the role of kinship in collective action?

Papers could address, but are not restricted to, the following questions:

- What structures of conflict and/or protest *create* or *break* kinship?
- What is the role of affect in both the creation of kinship and structures of collective action?
- How can materiality and affect play together to allow for relations to emerge?
- How (techniques, methodology, poetics,...) do (visual) texts elicit (un-)belonging?
- What can queer kinship look like, especially in the context of collective action?
- How does kinship work in the context of (natural and political) disaster?
- What is the role of kinship in the context of race and the particular dynamics and histories of the Civil Rights Movement?
- How does feminist theory and criticism conceptualise women as kin?
- How does thinking kinship across species in a trans-humanist sense influence eco-criticism and 'green' movements?
- How can we use the inclusion of 'things' in clusters of belonging to rethink practices of (literary) representation and genre?
- How can stories of kinship and protest inform practices of making worlds?

We invite scholars from literary and cultural studies, media studies, history, philosophy, theology, and all those working with 'texts' in a wider sense to submit an abstract.

Please send an abstract of no more than 250 words and a short bio to:

skca.tuebingen@gmail.com.

Deadline for abstracts: 1 April 2018.

There is no registration fee for the conference.