Collaborative Research Center 948
| Conference

Tracing the Heroic Through Gender

Conference organizers:
Carolin Bahr
Dr. Monika Mommertz
Andreas Schlüter
Prof. Dr. Thomas Seedorf

Giuditta Pasta in the title role of the opera Tancredi by Gioachino Rossini, lithography by Jean-François Villain (ca. 1822)

In most societies the heroic is in many ways gendered. When considering the heroic, attributes of masculinity might first come to mind. Yet, from a historical perspective it becomes apparent that heroizations also often have feminine connotations. The social and cultural production of the heroic cannot be analyzed exclusively in terms of masculinity, nor can we regard women or femininity merely as exceptions in this field. Rather, we need to reconsider the relational character of the category gender.

We propose to use gender as an analytical tool in a new way. Metaphorically speaking, gender as a ›tracer‹ can help us uncover new aspects of heroic ideas and concepts. In natural science experiments, a ›tracer‹ passes through different environments and reacts to each of them in a different way. Hence, the tracer is not the object of study, but is used to examine a third element: our conference shall try to use gender systematically to ›trace‹ various historical ›environments‹ of the heroic.

By using gender as a tracer, the conference will explore forms, mediums and processes of heroization as well as discourses of heroic transgression, exceptionality or veneration. The conference will focus on three points in time (1650, 1750, 1850) and the continuities and transformations that may become apparent from interrelating the tracing results in a diachronic perspective.

Conference venues
(1) Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), Großer Seminarraum, Albertstr. 19, 79104 Freiburg
(2) Haus »Zur lieben Hand«, Großer Saal, Löwenstr. 16, 79098 Freiburg

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Thursday, 26 February 2015
FRIAS, Großer Seminarraum, Albertstr. 19
14:00 – 14:30
Introduction
Panel 1: 1650
14:30 – 15:15
Women in writings on the heroic in 17th century academic instruction
Joseph S. Freedman (Montgomery, AL, USA)
15:15 – 16:00
Anti-heroes. Masculinity and civic ethics in literary academies of 17th century Florence
Eva Struhal (Québec, CA)
16:00 – 16:30
Break
16:30 – 17:15
Gendering fear. Transformations of courage and masculinity in heroic drama
Christiane Hansen (Freiburg, DE)
17:15 – 18:00
Testing times for anxious he-roes. Tracing the end of a heroic figuration in England and France, ca. 1650
Andreas Schüeler (Freiburg, DE)
18:00 – 18:30
Break
Evening lecture
18:30 – 19:30
From viragos to valkyries. Transformations of the heroic woman from the 17th to the 19th century
Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly (Oxford, UK)
Friday, 27 February 2015
FRIAS, Großer Seminarraum, Albertstr. 19
Panel 2: 1750
14:00 – 14:45
Heroism of a melancholy look from blue eyes
Petra Pollakova (Prague, CZ)
14:45 – 15:30
What is the Polish peasant hero’s gender? Representations of peasant citizenship in Polish culture, ca. 1850
Alícia Kusiak-Brownstein (Ann Arbor, MI, USA)
15:30 – 16:15
Untangling the heroic from the sacrifice. Malwida von Meyesenburg’s attempt to appropriate a common female topos in and for her political novel Phädra (1885)
Birgit Mikuš (Oxford, UK)
16:15 – 16:45
Break
16:45 – 17:15
Creating and subverting German models of Galanterie? Heroes and heroines in texts
by Christian Friedrich Hunold and Maria Aurora von Königsmarck
Madeleine Brock (Oxford, UK)
17:15 – 18:00
A reigning woman as a heroic monarch? Maria Theresa and the roles of emperor, wife and mother
Anne-Marie Wurster (Freiburg, DE)
18:00 – 18:30
Break
18:30 – 19:30
When heroes sigh… Sentimental heroism in 18th century opera
Melanie Unseld (Oldenburg, DE)
19:30 – 20:00
A reigning woman as a heroic monarch? Maria Theresa and the roles of emperor, wife and mother
Anne-Marie Wurster (Freiburg, DE)
20:00 – 21:00
En travesti – the female as male in early 19th century operas
Thomas Steedorf (Karlsruhe/Freiburg, DE)
Panel 3: 1850
14:00 – 14:45
Haus xZur lieben Hande, Großer Saal, Löwenstr. 16
14:45 – 15:30
Untangling the heroic from the sacrifice. Malwida von Meyesenburg’s attempt to appropriate a common female topos in and for her political novel Phädra (1885)
Birgit Mikuš (Oxford, UK)
16:15 – 16:45
Lecture and round-table discussion
16:45 – 18:45
Rethinking the heroic. Difference as a tracer?
Monika Momertz (Freiburg, DE)
Saturday, 28 February 2015
FRIAS, Großer Seminarraum, Albertstr. 19
Panel 4: Connections
09:30 – 10:15
Gendering the operatic sound of the heroic. 1647 – 1749 – 1843
Anke Charton (Leipzig, DE)
10:15 – 11:00
Victorian male heroes and romance in Elizabeth Bowen’s short fiction
Laura Lojo-Rodríguez (Santiago de Compostela, ES)
11:00 – 11:15
Break
11:15 – 12:00
The tragic hero and the gendered imaginary in early modern German drama
Barbara Becker-Cantarino (Columbus, OH, USA)
12:00 – 12:15
Break
12:15 – 13:00
Closing session