

From Page to Stage: Perspectives on Theatricality in Historical, Philosophical, and Literary Discourses

March 15-16, 2013

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee

Hosted by the German Graduate Student Association in collaboration with the Departments of Philosophy, English, and Spanish & Portuguese

Keynote Speaker: Prof. Dr. Ulrike Haß (Department of Theatre Studies at Ruhr University Bochum, Germany)

The genre of drama stands at the intersection between literature and theory, text and performance, page and stage. Due to the complex constellation in which the genre is involved, this interdisciplinary, intercultural conference seeks to explore multiple perspectives on dramatic works.

What happens when a work is spoken and performed that does not when it is only read, and what does the process of bringing a work to the stage entail? Questions of historical context and interpretation play a crucial role in leading up to the performance of a drama. This process can and does lead to diverse adaptations of the same work, and becomes itself a distinct means of challenging modes of representation. How did Georg Büchner's fragment "Woyzeck," for instance, become a theatrical piece – and one that is so often staged musically? What played a role in Alban Berg's choice of atonal music?

Beyond the dramaturgical path of work to stage, the genre of drama, its purpose, and its performance have been informed by theory and philosophy at different times. Theatre, in turn, has a history of influencing aesthetics. Some plays perform and incorporate philosophical concepts, whereas others postulate concepts of their own by calling for a specific performance practice. Historicity is not the only factor involved in such exchanges; (un)timeliness plays a large role for works which could only have been written in their time, but were created in an era that was not ready to receive them. Why have some works been staged and acclaimed only in a later era? Why and how are some works so relevant as to continue to be performed today?

We would like to invite presentations in English of 20 minutes. Topics may include (but are not limited to):

- Adaptations of a work to the stage
- Works or passages that present staging challenges
- Changes in interpretation or reception over time
- Historic works in the present (incl. modern variations)
- Written word vs. spoken word; e.g. subtext, importance of what is not said, intonation
- The physical stage, its multiple forms, and its effects on what can be staged and how
- The relationship between audience and stage
- Cultural transfer and translations of a play
- Politics, historical events, and theatre
- Philosophy as informing theatre; e.g. Schiller's reaction to Kant through the concept of the Pathetic and the drama
- Theatre's influence on aesthetics
- Questions of representation; e.g. authority of staging, gender-theoretical issues, morality/ethics
- Social function of drama and theatre
- Theatrical concepts such as Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* (distancing effect) or Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty*
- The play as a concept; e.g. Beckett's absurd theatre
- Performing philosophy; e.g. the play and its staging as a dialectical form

We welcome submissions from all disciplines and language backgrounds. Please submit a 250-300 word abstract to vu.ggsa.grad.conference@gmail.com by Monday, January 7, 2013, along with the title of the paper, the presenter's name and contact information, institutional and departmental affiliation, and any technological requests.