Princeton University
Department of German
Graduate Student Symposium
Friday, April 6, 2018
Rocky-Mathey Theater

1:30-2:00pm Coffee

2:00-2:45pm Andreas Strasser
“Heimat ist das Entronnensein”: Heimat in the Writings of Theodor W. Adorno

2:45-3:30pm Mary Grayson Brook
Mutterherz: Maternal Inheritance in Adalbert Stifter’s Brigitta and Theodor Storm’s Der Schimmelreiter

3:30-4:00pm Break with refreshments

4:00-4:45pm Alexander Draxl
Freud and Schicksal: Reality, Fantasy, and Tragedy

5:00-7:00pm Reception/Dinner
East Pyne Bridge, 2nd floor

Directions to Rocky-Mathey Theater:
Leave East Pyne heading towards Alexander Hall Parking Lot, bear right thru Holder Courtyard and then enter Rockefeller College Common Room (in archway). Take stairs on right to the Rocky-Mathey Theater.

http://german.princeton.edu
Alexander Draxl

Freud and Schicksal: Reality, Fantasy, and Tragedy

The German word Schicksal is a peculiar term: Immanuel Kant, for instance, declared the word Schicksal unfit for usage as its vagueness defies determination. By analyzing Sigmund Freud’s use of Schicksal this talk examines how a term as ambiguous as Schicksal demands consideration precisely because there seems to be so much at stake in the ambiguities of its figural and literal implications. Perhaps what has been referred to in terms of ambiguity and indeterminacy should be addressed as ambivalence – and more accurately, in psychoanalytic terms, ambivalence as indicative of conflict. Investigating invocations of Schicksal thus holds the promise of uncovering conflicts that are usually concealed by the seeming precision of the ideas from which that term is derived.

Andreas Strasser

“Heimat ist das Entronnensein”: Heimat in the Writings of Theodor W. Adorno

In light of the ongoing debates around the term Heimat, Theodor W. Adorno’s dispersed comments on Heimat can help us understand the presuppositions and contexts the term comes with. First, this talk looks at how the Dialectic of Enlightenment presents a general dialectical account of Heimat as standing opposed to myth. Then, I turn to Adorno’s comments on why he returned to Germany to specify this dialectic in relation to language and individual experience. Finally, a close reading of Adorno’s short text “Amorbach” presents a model of individualized historical experience of Heimat, which needs to be understood in its historical context.

Mary Grayson Brook

Mutterherz: Maternal Inheritance in Adalbert Stifter’s Brigitta and Theodor Storm’s Der Schimmelreiter

Adalbert Stifter wrote, “The mother’s heart is the most beautiful and most lasting place for the son, even when his hair has turned gray. And everyone has only one such heart in the whole universe.” Read closely, this tribute to motherhood disrupts traditional notions of father-son inheritance, while the positioning of the mother’s heart in spatial terms creates an image of motherhood as landscape. This talk will explore latent maternal affinities in two German realist novellas written four decades apart, following the calls of recent scholarship to explore otherness and eccentricity in the German realist canon. In each, an expansive model of motherhood emerges from the particularity of the landscapes Stifter and Storm describe. In addition to these charged landscapes, both authors use phonemically or anagrammatically similar character names to denote lines of kinship beyond the shared family name. These spatial and textual clues present a latent inheritance that transcends biology and conventional notions of family.

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