

CONFERENCE**Liberty and Death.****Pirates and Zombies in Atlantic Modernity**

January 18-19, 2018

Abstracts**Richard Frohock****From Hawkins to Jenkins: Interpreting Violence in English Piracy Narratives**

In 1723, the Boston News-Letter reported a savage piratical attack on a whaling vessel off the coast of Rhode Island. Notorious pirate Edward Low and his men purportedly “killed the Masters very Barbarously, viz. By ripping the one alive and taking out his heart and roasting it and then made his Mate eat it, the other by slashing and mauling him, and then cutting off his Ears, they roasted them and made him eat them, who afterwards dyed of his Wounds” (148). While this example is exceptional for its brutality, reports of extreme violence are a defining feature of English piracy narratives. The tradition of narrating piratical violence offers readers the allure of the macabre. Beyond mere sensationalism, however, tales of piratical violence offers writers and readers rich opportunities for cultural analysis; piracy narratives necessarily frame and interpret episodes of violence in recounting them. Violent episodes illustrate human behavior moving beyond the boundaries of civil norms and as such allow for fundamental interrogation of those boundaries. The transgressive violence of pirate figures makes them ideally suited to exploring major political and philosophical topics of the period; the story of piratical violence allows for dialogic formulations--claims and counterclaims--about national character, human nature, civil society, and the workings of empire itself. While some English pirate narratives recount violence in order to assert nationalist, even jingoistic perspectives, others explore piratical violence as a way for satirizing an English character and culture that they view as, at its core, as predatory as piracy on the high seas.

Alexandra Ganser and Gudrun Rath**Figures of Liberty and Death. Pirates and Zombies**

Since early modern times, both zombies and pirates have shared a history of diverging appropriations and attributions. The Caribbean marks a crossroad in the circulation and transformation of these figures in the context of an “Atlantic modernity” (Stephan Palmié). The participants discuss this entangled cultural history from a trans-disciplinary perspective.

Questioning the opposition of freedom and slavery, life and death, zombies and pirates have negotiated (post)colonial relations for centuries. Zombies, in the cultural imaginaries of the Caribbean understood as bodies or spirits doomed to serve a master beyond the moment of death, thematize histories of enslavement and rebellion, while pirates were used to articulate colonial adventure and exploitation on the one hand and the idea of a resistant collective beyond established power relations on the other.

Both have been cast as figures of exception (Giorgio Agamben) who are discursively located beyond law and state while simultaneously playing a constitutive role for both; both are marked by ambivalent characterizations—hero and criminal, rebel and slave, perpetrator and victim.

Doris Garraway

**Raising the Living Dead in Postrevolutionary Haiti:
The Case of the Monarchy of Henry Christophe**

Laënnec Hurbon

La figure du zombi et la mémoire de l'esclavage outre-Atlantique

La figure du zombi implique un rapport particulier entre l'imaginaire et le réel, ou l'imaginaire fait partie du réel lui-même, c'est ce que donne à penser l'émergence de la figure du zombi en Haïti, où nous voyons qu'on parvient à déclarer zombi certains individus qui finissent par se reconnaître tels. Ce passage, ou plus exactement cette courbure de la fiction vers le réel est avant l'image suivante (*Nachleben*, au sens de Didi-Huberman) des réseaux symboliques de l'institution esclavagiste établie outre-Atlantique pendant quatre siècles, pendant que la mémoire de l'esclavage se fait défaillante.

En effet, comme idéal du maître, l'esclave est toujours supposé tel, c'est-à-dire un être qui est attendu tel dans la réalité, donc un être vidé de toute substance humaine, de tout ce qui fait de lui un sujet, un être de désir. Or tout se passe comme si cet esclave attendu comme parfaitement esclave tarde sans cesse à apparaître et se dérobe au pouvoir du maître, seule la figure du zombi le réalise en dernière instance et, partant, en constitue son fantasme. On tâchera de porter l'interrogation sur la puissance de l'imaginaire de zombi dans la civilisation moderne, en pleine fantasmatisation de sa propre puissance, comme extrême pointe de l'évolution de l'humanité dans sa passion d'une maîtrise du monde exprimée dans le processus de colonisation esclavagiste. On essaiera chemin faisant de comprendre le sens de l'association de la figure du zombi avec celle du pirate des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles de la Caraïbe. Quels sont les ressorts cachés de l'apparition et de l'attraction de ces figures dans les arts, la littérature et le cinéma? Que nous apprennent-elles sur l'évolution du monde contemporain?

Florian Krautkrämer

Cosmopolitan Figures

In movies, pirates and zombies are not only a threat for economy and humans but also for borders. Since the sixties, zombie hordes are a danger not only for the protagonists of the film but for mankind in general, because they will spread among the world in a very short time, and closing borders never stopped them. On the other hand, pirates are more successful outside the screen, acting as film and video pirates. In the threat scenarios of the industry, it is others countries lax handling of copyright protection that enables them to steal their products.

In both cases, zombies and pirates are not only a global phenomenon but also a global threat. But there is also a change of perspective that could be described as „cosmopolitanism from below“ (Arjun Appadurai). Zombies are then not only seen as a danger, but also as a metaphor for an exploited, empowering or ideational community. And newer research studies emphasized the benefit, film piracy brought to local film industries of the global south.

Florian Krautkrämers talk will address both figures with a „cosmopolitan vision“ (Ulrich Beck) and focus on new trends as well as responses, that try to preserve national borders.

Kieran Murphy**Tragedies of the Caribbean
Zombies, Pirates, and the Tragic Mode of History**

C.L.R. James's portrayal of Toussaint Louverture as a tragic character in *The Black Jacobins* (1963) has spurred an influential interpretation of Haitian history based on the category of tragedy. Historians, theorists, and literary critics have mobilized this tragic mode of history to great effect in their explorations of the social, political, and global significance of the Haitian Revolution. Yet, their works tend to omit what the men and women who revolted against slavery and the colonial system actually thought about the nature of "tragedy." In this paper, Kieran Murphy shows how the popular Caribbean figures of the zombie and pirate offer homegrown historical and fictional narratives associated with the tragic that shed light on the cultural and philosophical implications of tragedy in the years leading up to the Haitian Revolution. By doing so, he brings attention to a lesser known creolized conception of tragedy from which, he argues, we can rethink the tragic mode of history through a more inclusive, transatlantic perspective.

Sibylle Peters**Explorations in Paralogistics – from Somalian Piracy to the African Terminal**

In 2010 somalian pirates captured the MS Taipan sailing under German flag. Dutch Marines freed the ship and brought the pirates to Hamburg for trial. The first piracy trial since more than 400 years – and children were wondering: Why does nobody like the pirates anymore, now that they are real? the artist collective *geheimagentur* and the FUNDUS THEATER collected questions children would like to ask real pirates on video. And after a long odyssey they managed to find somalian pirates ready to answer the children's questions in Eastleigh, the somalian part of Nairobi. A dialogue between somalian pirates and children of Hamburg about the history and the presence of piracy was initiated. It marked the beginning of a long term research process that dealt with questions like, how to create hydrarchical networks today and how to intervene into logistical systems with paralogistical practices: Two more social sculptures / projects are presented – *Hamburg Port Hydrarchy* and *The African Terminal*.

Eugen Pfister**Don't eat me! I'm a mighty pirate! – Cultural Imaginations of Piracy in Video Games**

Pirates! They are the scourge of the seven seas, the nightmare of every law abiding merchant, dashing adventurers, brutal murderers, fearless explorers, romantic womanizers; they were criminals but also romantic idols. They ooze a sort of anarchic machismo and glamour. We read about them in adventure novels, we saw them in the cinema and on TV, we dressed up as pirates and now – with the advent of video games – we are able to virtually immerse ourselves into the myth, playing games like *Assasin's Creed IV: Black Flag* (Ubisoft Montreal 2013) or *Sid Meiers Pirates!* (Microprose 1987). The idea of the swashbuckling pirate, especially in conjunction with imaginations of tropical Caribbean islands is still successfully tapping some of our more subconscious longings. It's a promise of exoticism and adventure, of freedom and sex. The phenomenon is not particularly new, and by no means an invention of video games. In his talk Eugen Pfister will analyse "modern" iterations of these ahistorical imaginations in video games and examine if and how the cultural image of "piracy" has changed through the media of video games. After an overview of the development of the cultural imaginations of pirates in history he will therefore search for one or more consistent pirate meta-narratives in video games and compare them. Thus he intends to distil a cultural meaning of those pop-culture pirates.

Antonia Prochaska

THE MONSTER INSIDE ME

II dialogues about drastic aesthetics, the fictional monster and boredom in the midst of the apocalypse

The work explores the human demand for fictional monsters and the narrative of zombie apocalypses. When and why do monsters appear and what happens after they take over? Which psychological, social and cultural needs do these scenarios satisfy? To answer these questions, Antonia Prochaska follows a communicative approach, using conversations as an artistic and knowledge producing practice. Bringing together her dialogue partners' understandings of the monstrous, she paints a picture of the monster within. The laboratory situation of a zombie apocalypse gives an idea on where the human appears in the monstrous and the monstrous in the human.

Sonja Schillings

Traitors and Aliens: The Invention of Race in British Pirate Law

Maritime law and the history of the concept of race are far more intimately intertwined than is often understood. Early modern British pirate law is one of the first Western laws whose provisions (and especially, practices) satisfy our contemporary definitions of racism. This contribution traces how legal constructions of Mediterranean and Atlantic piracy helped formulate essentialist dichotomies between "races" in the first place.

Pirate law was a major factor in creating and systematizing distinctions on the basis of race for expanding European empires. A historically and spatially specific situation of maritime violence in the Mediterranean was translated into a universally applicable, abstract model of what piracy was: namely, a collaboration of white "renegades" and "traitors" with non-white "alien invaders" to assault a just European empire devoted to defending peace everywhere (and especially those waters and territories "infested" with such hostile presences).

In the Mediterranean region, actual collaboration between European and non-European privateers on behalf of non-European sovereigns had been a familiar phenomenon for centuries. In British courtrooms dealing with such cases, a fundamentally different legal treatment of "native" African and "renegade" European Barbary corsairs had become standard practice. As the British Empire expanded into the Atlantic region, such implicit distinctions of status and allegiance soon became a central resource for establishing a notion of essentialist difference between Europeans on the one hand, and all non-Europeans on the other. These dividing lines became, indeed, a central model for later understandings of the concept of race.

In the context of presenting this research on race and pirate law, the talk will also point out some of the implications for our contemporary cultural concepts of treason and invasion.

Curricula Vitae and publications

Jean Comaroff is the Alfred North Whitehead Professor of African and African American Studies and Anthropology, and Honorary Professor at the University of Cape Town. She was educated at the University of Cape Town and the London School of Economics. Until 2012, she was the Bernard E. and Ellen C. Sunny Distinguished Service Professor of Anthropology, and Director of the Chicago Center for Contemporary Theory. Her research, primarily conducted in southern Africa, has focused on the interplay of capitalism, modernity, and colonialism, the politics of knowledge and the nature of sovereignty, and theorizing the contemporary world from beyond its centers. Her writing has covered a range of more specific topics: religion and ritual, medicine and magic, law, and crime, democracy and difference.

Her publications include *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: the Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago 1985), "Beyond the Politics of Bare Life: AIDS and the Global Order", in: *Public Culture* (2007) 19 (1): pp. 197-219; and, with John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution* (Chicago, vols. I [1991] and II [1997]); *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder 1992); (Eds.), *Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism* (2000), (Eds.), *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony* (Chicago 2006), *Ethnicity, Inc.* (Chicago 2009), *Theory from the South, or How Euro-America is Evolving Toward Africa* (Boulder 2011), *The Truth About Crime: Sovereignty, Knowledge, Social Order* (Chicago 2016) and *The Politics of Custom: Chiefship, Capital, and the State in Contemporary Africa* (forthcoming).

Alexandra Ganser is professor for American literary and cultural studies and Executive Director of the Centre for Canadian Studies (ZKS) at the University of Vienna. She studied in Vienna, Trieste (Italy), and the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany, where she received her PhD (published as *Roads of Her Own: Gendered Space and Mobility in American Women's Road Narratives, 1970-2000*, Rodopi, 2009). She was Christoph-Daniel-Ebeling Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society and is a Fulbright Alumna. Her research interests include mobility studies (as Key Researcher of the interdisciplinary platform *Mobile Cultures and Societies*, U of Vienna), popular culture, gender studies, transatlantic American studies, and ecocriticism. Her current book project, sponsored by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), examines transatlantic representations of piracy before the Civil War and is titled *Crisis and Discourses of (Il)Legitimacy in Transatlantic Narratives of Piracy, 1678-1865* (forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan). Other book publications include: *Pirates, Drifters, Fugitives: Figures of Mobility in American Culture and Beyond* (ed. with Heike Paul & Katharina Gerund, 2012) and *Transgressive Television: Politics, Crime, and Citizenship in 21st-Century American TV Series* (ed. with Birgit Daewes and Nicole Poppenhagen, Winter 2015).

Richard Frohock is a Professor of English Literature and the Associate Dean of the Honors College at Oklahoma State University. He researches and teaches early American and Caribbean literature. His publications include *Buccaneers and Privateers: The Story of the English Sea Rover, 1675-1725* (University of Delaware Press 2012); *Heroes of Empire: The British Imperial Protagonist in America, 1596-1764* (University of Delaware Press, 2004); and numerous articles on Anglophone Caribbeana. He is currently writing a book that examines how late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century British piracy narratives engage philosophical questions concerning human nature, the state of nature, and the reconstitution of civil government outside the boundaries of conventional law and society.

Doris Garraway is Associate Professor of French at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. She holds a PhD from Duke University. Her research and teaching interests include Francophone Caribbean literature and historiography from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, the Haitian Revolution, early modern French

cultures, gender and slavery, postcolonial studies, law, and performance. She is the author of *The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean* (Duke University Press 2005; reprint 2008), and editor of *Tree of Liberty: Cultural Legacies of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (University of Virginia Press, 2008).

She has published articles on a range of authors including Marie Chauvet, Aimé Césaire, Patrick Chamoiseau, Denis Diderot, Baron La Hontan, Moreau de Saint-Méry, and various early colonial ethnographers and Haitian revolutionaries, and in the edited volume *The Postcolonial Enlightenment* (Oxford UP, 2009). Her most recent articles draw on her ongoing research on early postrevolutionary Haiti.

Doris Garraway has been awarded fellowships from Princeton University's Davis Center for Historical Studies, the National Humanities Center, the John Carter Brown Library, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, and has given lectures at numerous universities in the U.S. and abroad.

Karin Harrasser is professor of Cultural Studies at the University of Art and Design Linz. She studied German philology and history at the University of Vienna and obtained a postdoctoral qualification at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. She taught at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, the Academy of Media Arts Cologne, the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Bogotá, the Braunschweig University of Art and at the Pontifical Xavierian University in Bogotá. Her publications include (ed.), *Auf Tuchfühlung. Eine Wissensgeschichte des Tastsinns*, München 2017; *Prothesen. Figuren einer lädierten Moderne*, Berlin 2016; with Susanne Roeßiger (ed.), *Parahuman. Neue Perspektiven auf das Leben mit Technik*, Köln/Weimar/Wien 2016; *Körper 2.0. Über die technische Erweiterbarkeit des Menschen*, Bielefeld 2013; with Doris Harrasser, Stephanie Kiessling, Sabine Sölkner, Veronika Wöhrer: *Wissen Spielen. Untersuchungen zur Wissensaneignungen von Kindern im Museum*, Bielefeld 2011.

Alexandra Hauke is currently a lecturer in American Studies at the University of Passau, Germany, and is working towards a PhD with a thesis on the aesthetics and politics of Native American detective fiction. She studied English and American Studies as well as Hispanic Studies at the University of Vienna and at the University of Maryland at College Park. She was Visiting Research Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley in 2015 and is co-editor of *Native American Survivance, Memory, and Futurity: The Gerald Vizenor Continuum* (Routledge, 2017). She is also co-editor of a special issue of *Vienna Working Papers in Canadian Studies*, titled *Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers: Canada in the 21st Century* (forthcoming, spring 2018), the proceedings of a conference hosted at the University of Vienna, where she was a lecturer and research associate from 2014-2017. Her research interests include Native American and First Nations' studies, contemporary American TV and film, Gothic & Horror in American Literatures and Cultures, and American popular culture.

Laënnec Hurbon docteur en sociologie (Sorbonne), Directeur de recherche honoraire au CNRS. A publié sur le thème des rapports entre religions, culture et politique en Haïti et dans la Caraïbe. Parmi ses récents ouvrages: *Les mystères du vaudou* (Paris, Gallimard, et Abrams edit. New York, 1995), *Le barbare imaginaire* (Paris, éditions du Cerf, 1988, reedition 2008), *La démocratie introuvable* (Karthala, Paris 2001); *Religions et lien social* (Editions du Cerf, Paris 2004); *Genèse de l'Etat haïtien 1804-1859* (codirigé avec Michel Hector, Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2009); sous sa direction: *Catastrophe et environnement: Haïti, séisme du 12 janvier 2010*, Editions de l'EHESS, Paris, 2014.

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Florian Krautkrämer is visiting Professor at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, where he teaches film studies. Besides zombie films and film piracy his research interests are experimental, documentary and amateur film. He holds a PhD from the University of Fine Arts in Braunschweig and wrote his doctoral thesis on “Schrift im Film. Text. Ornament. SchriftBild”. He is also filmmaker.

Kieran Murphy is Assistant Professor of French and Comparative Literature at the University of Colorado-Boulder. He is the 2012 awardee of the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Schachterle Essay Prize. He is particularly interested in tracing changes that occurred to scientific thinking during the long nineteenth-century within a transatlantic context that includes the legacy of the African diaspora. He recently published “Haiti and the Black Box of Romanticism” in: *Studies in Romanticism* (2017) and “The Occult Atlantic: Franklin, Mesmer, and the Haitian Roots of Modernity” in *The Haitian Revolution and the Early United States: Histories, Textualities, Geographies* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

Sibylle Peters is a researcher and performance artist. She studied literature, cultural studies and philosophy, and worked at the universities of Hamburg, Munich, Berlin (FU), Bale, Wales, Gießen. She is currently head of the PhD Program *Performing Citizenship* in Hamburg and Guestprofessor at the Folkwang University Essen. As a freelancing performance artist she realized lecture performances and performance projects focussing on participation and collective research (often in cooperation with *geheimagentur* performance collective). Peters is cofounder and director of the FUNDUS THEATER / *Theatre of Research* Hamburg, a theatre, where children, artists and scientists meet.

Eugen Pfister is lecturer at the University of Vienna and since 2018 head of the research project: „Horror–Game–Politics“ at the Bern University of Arts. Studies in History and Political Sciences at the University of Vienna and the Université Paris IV – Sorbonne. From 2016 to 2017 he was researcher at the Institute of Culture Studies and Theatre History (Austrian Academy of Science). From 2008 to 2013 he held a fellowship at the international graduate school „The History of Political Communication from the Antiquities to the 20th century.“ PhD in co-tutelle at the Università degli studi di Trento and at the Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main.

Doris Posch is a film and media scholar and lecturer at the University of Vienna and a fellow of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. In 2015-2016, she was a Visiting Scholar at New York University and at Concordia University, Montreal. Her current research focuses on transnational and postcolonial cinemas, in particular in African and Caribbean spaces. In addition to conducting academic research, she has also curated at film festivals in Brazil, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Tanzania, etc.

Publications on this and other fields of research include articles in *Critical Interventions* (2017), *International Journal of Cultural Studies* (2017), *Kyamyra / Culture* (2015) and in the edited collections *Performing Translation* (forthcoming 2018), *Cultural Dynamics in the African Cinemas of the 21st century: Actors, formats, networks* (forthcoming 2018), *Performing Translation* (2014).

Antonia Prochaska is an artist living and working in Vienna. Having a background in natural sciences, she developed her artistic practice around a concept of experimentation. Her work is based on artistic research and realized in various media, ranging from performative installation to experimental video and drawing. She studied Fine Arts at the University of Art and Design Linz and Visual Communication Design at Bilgi University in Istanbul.

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THE MONSTER INSIDE ME was her diploma project in Fine Arts (spring 2015). Since 2014 she has been working as a project manager for the Academy of Austrian Films.

Gudrun Rath is Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Cultural Studies at the University of Art and Design Linz, Austria. She is also a member of the ‚Young Academy‘ (Austrian Academy of Sciences, ÖAW) and has previously taught at the University of Constance, the University of Heidelberg and the University of Vienna. She was a fellow at the graduate school “The figure of the Third” at the University of Constance and holds a Ph.D from the University of Vienna. She is the author of *Zwischenzonen. Theorien und Fiktionen des Übersetzens* (“Interstices of Translation”, Vienna, Berlin: Turia + Kant 2013) and, as a member of the editorial board of the *Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* (Journal for Cultural Studies), has edited a special-issue on her current research: *Zombies* (Bielefeld: Transcript 2014). At present she is working on her second monograph on narratives of zombification from a historical and transatlantic perspective.

Sonja Schillings is a postdoctoral research fellow affiliated with the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture at Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen, Germany. She received her PhD in American Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin, and has conducted research stays at the University of Illinois at Chicago and Harvard University. Her monograph *Enemies of All: Fictions of Legitimate Violence* was published with the University Press of New England in 2017. She has published on piracy as a concept, literature and philosophy, and American popular fiction. She currently works on the innocent individual in late modernist fiction.