

Japanologie Frankfurt am Main

Jahrestagung BAJIS - Panel 11: Literature and Art after Fukushima

Timeslot 5, Organizer and Chair: Lisette Gebhardt (Goethe University, Frankfurt)

Yûki Masami (Kanazawa University): "Post-Fukushima Literary Discourses on Food and Eating"

There has been a strong fear of radiation-contaminated food after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, and individual and societal attitudes towards food safety have increasingly been keen. However, there is a curious phenomenon that some literary works, such as those written by Taguchi Randy, show a certain resistance to a popular discourse of food safety and question modern perception of food and eating as well as the underlying relationships between humans and the environment. Analyzing post-Fukushima discourses of food safety and literary resistance to them, I intend to discuss how language affects public interest in, and perception of, food and eating.

Lisa Mundt (Goethe-University): "Staging Dystopia? Theatrical and Artistic Responses to 'Fukushima'"

Since the triple disaster hit Japan in March 2011, a number of playwrights and artists have felt the desire to find challenging and creative ways to respond to "Fukushima" and to the preceding subtle "disempowerment of the public" (Mishima Ken'ichi) in Japan. All these artists have expressed their desire to contribute to a change in Japanese society. I therefore consider it essential that discussing "Fukushima" in an artistic context also means rethinking the political potential of theatre and the performing arts today. This question will be discussed by taking a closer look at two works created in response to "Fukushima" in 2011: *Real Times*, a video which shows members of the performing art collective ChimPom setting up a flag on top of an overlook near the Fukushima Power Plant, and the *Referendum Project*, an interactive performance created by the leader of the renowned theatre troupe Port B, Takayama Akira.

Ina Hein (University of Vienna): "Narratives of trauma and healing in the aftermath of Japan's triple catastrophe: Yoshimoto Banana's *Sweet hereafter*"

Yoshimoto Banana's newest novel *Sweet hereafter*, published in November 2011, refers to Russell Banks' 1991 text of the same title. The latter deals with the question how parents in a small American town cope with the loss of their children who had been killed in a bus accident. Yoshimoto's narrative takes up the traffic accident theme: Her female protagonist survives a car crash, heavily injured, while her partner dies. The story does not address the events of March 11 directly, but Yoshimoto links them together by dedicating the novel to all the people who have experienced the triple catastrophe. The paper aims to analyze how Yoshimoto redirects the device of *iyashi* (healing), which has been one of the main characteristics of her oeuvre so far, in order to connect her novel to the wider context of Japan's traumatic experiences of the catastrophe.

Masami Yûki (Kanazawa) is professor at Kanazawa University where she teaches environmental literature and English as a Foreign Language. She received her doctoral degree in English with an emphasis of literature and environment from University of Nevada, Reno, in 2000. She has been publishing books and articles on American and Japanese environmental literature with special focuses on topics such as literary soundscapes, urban nature, and discourses on food and toxicity. She is also a translator and has worked on Japanese translations of American literature and scholarly articles as well as English translations of Japanese literature. Her most recent book, *Mizu no oto no kioku* [Remembering the Sound of Water: Essays in Ecocriticism] (2010), examines relationships between language, imagination, and the environment in works of contemporary writers including Ishimure Michiko, Morisaki Kazue, and Terry Tempest Williams. Recently she has been researching environmental imagination in discourses of food and eating, a topic which includes literary response to the Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters which have continued to unsettle local and global attitudes on food.

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Ina Hein (Vienna) has studied at Trier University (Germany) and Ôbirin University (Tôkyô). In her doctoral thesis she analyzed constructions of gender relationships in the works of contemporary Japanese women writers. She was member of the DFG-funded project „Turning (back) to Asia in Japanese literature, media and popular culture“ (Trier University) in 2003 and researcher/lecturer at the Institute for Modern Japan, Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf (Germany) until May 2010. Since June 2010, she is professor for cultural studies at the Department for Japanese Studies, University of Vienna (Austria). Her research focuses on: contemporary Japanese literature, gender relations in Japan, constructions of Asia in Japanese literature and media, the discourse on cultural differences in contemporary Japan, Okinawa in Japanese literature, film and television.

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Lisa Mundt (Frankfurt) majored in Japanese Studies and Theatre, Film & Media Studies at Goethe University, Frankfurt, from 2002 to 2009. Since 2009, she has been a doctoral candidate at the department of Japanese Studies at Goethe University. In 2010, she was granted a PhD fellowship at the German Institute of Japanese Studies (DIJ), Tokyo. Her research focus is on contemporary Japanese theatre and performing arts, especially on artistic discourses on social and political issues. Lisa Mundt is currently a lecturer at the department of Japanese Studies in Frankfurt and has worked as an organizer and interpreter for guest performances by Japanese theatre troupes at several venues in Germany.

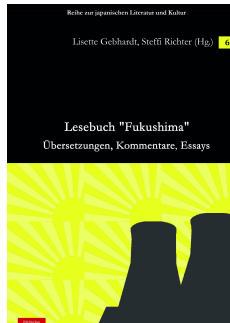
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Lisette Gebhardt (Frankfurt) is professor of Japanese Literature and Culture at Goethe-University, Frankfurt/Germany. She has research experience in Japan (DIJ Tôkyô, 1994-1998) and writes on Japanese literature, intellectual discourses and contemporary culture. She also translates Japanese literature into German language (Uchida Hyakken, Gen'yû Sôkyû). She publishes on Japanese literature, literature and religion as well as on identity discourses and globalization in modern Japan. In spring 2012, she edited a handbook on contemporary Japanese authors and literary trends in Japan. Recently she turned her interest to media reactions on Fukushima and commented on the Japanese 'earthquake literature' (*shinsai bungaku*) as well as on the reactions of Japanese authors and intellectuals towards the threefold catastrophe in North Japan. As a result of her research on post-Fukushima-literature, she published an article titled "Ein Jahr nach Fukushima: Reaktionen der japanischen Literaturszene auf die Dreifachkatastrophe" (One year after Fukushima: Literary reactions to the threefold catastrophe) (<http://www.textinitiative-fukushima.de/pages/projekte/abgeschlossene-projekte/japanologie-frankfurt/ein-jahr-nach-fukushima-reaktionen-der-japanischen-literaturszene-auf-die-dreifachkatastrophe.php>) in February 2012.

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