CONCEPT

The sea has seen a recent resurgence in scholarly interest across history and literary studies, in part spurred by a desire to understand the processes and effects of globalisation in its historical and contemporary contexts. But the sea is no longer just seen as a distance to be bridged or a highway to be crossed in the global flow of people, goods and ideas. Increasingly, new maritime histories focus on the sea, and on ships, as sites of historical interaction and lived experience. Journeys at sea often represent periods of being in transit: literally transiting through space, and metaphorically and imaginatively transiting to new worlds. Reading and writing are key cultural practices that facilitate and negotiate such emotional, imaginary and mental transitions.

This workshop seeks to bring together this interest in maritime history with the history of print culture and literary studies, focussing on cultures and practices of literary production, circulation and reception at sea across a broad chronology. Setting a new “agenda for an intellectual history of maritime worlds”, Kären Wigen has called on historians and literary scholars “to consider the sea as a site of intellection” and to understand oceans “as spaces of imaginative projection” as well as “sites were knowledge is produced and circulated”. This workshop heeds this call and also adds a new understanding of oceans as sites of literary cultures, not just as sites of knowledge transfer.

CONTACT

International Workshop

Maritime Literary Cultures: Reading and Writing at Sea

Susann Liebich
Karl Jaspers Centre
Voßstraße 2, Building 4400
69115 Heidelberg
Phone: +49 (0) 6221 54 4095
susann.liebich@asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de

www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de

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PROGRAMME

Friday, October 28th

12.45 – 1.30pm ARRIVAL & LUNCH

1.30 – 2pm Welcome and introductory remarks by Susann Liebich (Heidelberg University)

2 – 3.30pm PANEL I

religious reading, community & authority

Christian Algar (British Library, London): ‘Books with providence’

Stephen Berry (Simmons College, Boston): ‘The sailing ship as a school of virtue’

Tamsin Badcoe (University of Bristol): ‘All were in the same boat’: Sister Mary Paul Mulquin and Brunel’s ‘Greyhound of the Seas’

3.30 – 4 pm AFTERNOON TEA

4 – 5.30 pm PANEL II

whalers, logbooks and literature

Jimmy Packham (University of Birmingham/University of Bristol): ‘Boggy, soggy, squitchy pictures’: marginalia in American whaler logbooks

Felix Lüttge (Humboldt University Berlin): ‘Depositories of evidence: towards a history of the logbook’

Felix Schürmann (University of Kassel): ‘The impacts of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s “Paul et Virginie” on American whalemens’ perceptions of Mauritius, c. 1838-1878’

followed by EVENING DINNER

Saturday, October 29th

9 – 9.30 am PANEL III

recording and narrating life at sea

Lena Moser (University of Tübingen): ‘Masters of the sea of words: eighteenth-century British navigators as literary authors’

Mark Hengerer (München University): ‘Careers and authors: on a missing link in texts on the sea - the example of Rörd Knuten’s expeditions (1744-1779)’

Daniela Egger (Heidelberg University): ‘Nineteenth-century surgeons reports, mental illness and emotional distress on emigrant and convict ships’

10.30 – 11am MORNING TEA

11am – 12pm PANEL IV

shipboard publications

Mary Isbell (University of New Haven): ‘Editing The Young Idea: a nineteenth-century handwritten shipboard newspaper’

Susann Liebich (Heidelberg University): ‘Transit experiences in troopship magazines of the First World War’

12 – 1pm LUNCH

1 – 2.30pm PANEL V

books on board and in ports

Helen Chambers (Open University, Milton Keys): ‘In “a great Eastern port”: reconstructing Joseph Conrad’s maritime reading in his ports of call’

Bill Bell (Cardiff University/Göttingen University): ‘Bound for Antarctica: reading and writing on The Discovery, 1901-1904’

Ron Brand (Maritime Museum, Rotterdam): ‘Books on board; luxury and reading on board Dutch passenger ships’

2.30 – 3pm AFTERNOON TEA

3 – 4pm PANEL VI

writing on board, navigating oceanic experiences

Laurence Publicover (University of Bristol): ‘Are we there yet? Passengers as navigators in voyages of migration’

David Punter (University of Bristol): ‘Down to the Sea in Ships’

4 – 5pm Concluding discussion, future plans