



Research Seminar

“Ein Zeichen der sich vorbereitenden Umwälzung”

Religious and Sociopolitical Receptions of Antiquity in Early 20th-Century German Culture

Organized by the OIKOS research group ‘Classical Receptions and Traditions’

Thursday 22th January 2015 – 10h30-16h45

Location: Radboud University, E 2.05 (Erasmusbuilding)

http://www.ru.nl/algemeen/bereikbaarheid_0/bereikbaarheid/

In early twentieth-century German-language literature and art faced new challenges regarding the ‘modernity’ of classical antiquity. Artists experimented with what they saw as the at once functional and dysfunctional modernity of the classics, as they were looking for groundbreaking shifts in the sociopolitical and the religious sphere.

A case in point is the growing politicization and sacralization of art, in which classical antiquity was exploited as a playground for conservative as well as innovatory artistic practices. Greek tragedy’s inherent tension between the individual and the mass featured prominently in this experimental ‘play’. In the preface to his Drama *Die Troerinnen des Euripides*, for example, the Expressionist dramatist Franz Werfel deemed the conditions of his time to be similar to those of the 5th Century B.C., in which Greek tragedy flourished. Werfel declared that this ‘cyclical return’ was a sign of an impending revolution or *Umwälzung*. The religiously-inspired poet and translator Rudolf Borchardt adapted his reactionary-romanticist view on classical antiquity to fit his cultural-historical ideas on German identity, whereas Bertolt Brecht’s experimentation with the Aristotelian form of theater laid down the basis of postmodern theater and popular mass culture.

This seminar will consider how German art found innovatory and reformatory power in the classical tradition in order to (re-)form its view of modern (and future) society. Using different approaches from art, history, literary and theater studies we will search for new insights into the many ways in which the early 20th-century German artistic scene ‘anchored’ its view on (future-oriented) ‘modern’ society and religion within (its view on) tradition.

Please register before January 10 by sending an email to z.ghyselinck@let.ru.nl

Programme

- 10h30 – 11h00 Registration with coffee & tea
- 11h00 – 11h15 Welcome by Prof. dr. Marc **van der Poel** (Radboud University, Greek and Latin Language and Culture)
Opening by Dr. Zoë **Ghyselinck** (Radboud University, Cultural and Literary Studies)
- 11h15 – 12h00 Prof. dr. Antje **Wessels** (Leiden University, Classical Literature):
Antikerezeption bei Rudolf Borchardt + Discussion
- 12h00 – 13h15 Lunch (De Rafter)
- 13h15 – 14h00 Dr. Matthias **Dreyer** (Frankfurt University, Theater Studies): *Caesura of Tragedy – Thinking Critical Theatre with the Ancient Greek Tragedy between Brecht and Contemporary Performance* + Discussion
- 14h00 – 14h45 Dr. Julia **Bodenburg** (University of Münster, German Studies):
Kontrollierte Chöre. Zur Adaption antiker Chor-Elemente in Brechts Lehrstücken + Discussion
- 14h45 – 15h15 Coffee break
- 15h15 – 16h00 Dr. Zoë **Ghyselinck**: *Modern Sparagmos: Head- and Formlessness as Religious (Trans-) Formation in Kokoschka's Orpheus und Eurydike* + Discussion
- 16h00 – 16h45 Prof. dr. Eric **Moormann** (Radboud University, Classical Archaeology): *Ödön von Horváth's Literary Evocations of the Ancient City of Pompeii* + Discussion
- 16h45 Closing by Dr. Maarten **De Pourcq** (Radboud University, Greek and Latin Language and Culture/Cultural and Literary Studies) and Dr. Zoë **Ghyselinck**
- Drinks