



law's pluralities

cultures:narratives:images:genders

Pluralitäten des Rechts : Kulturen/Narrative/Bilder/Genders

6-8 May 2015 Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany

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Tagungsankündigung und Aufruf zu Tagungsbeiträgen
Conference Announcement and Call for Papers

Tagungssprachen: Deutsch & Englisch/ Conference languages: German & English

Plenary

— **Susanne Baer**, Richterin des Bundesverfassungsgerichts, Professur für Öffentliches Recht und Geschlechterstudien an der Juristischen Fakultät und dem Zentrum für transdisziplinäre Geschlechterstudien an der Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Mitträgerin des vom Berliner Forschungsverbund Recht im Kontext initiierten Projekts "Rechtskulturen: Konfrontationen jenseits des Vergleichs" am Forum Transregionale Studien / Justice of Germany's Federal Constitutional Court, Professor of Public Law and Gender Studies at Humboldt University, Berlin

Keynotes

— **Andreas von Arnould**, Professur für Öffentliches Recht, insbesondere Völker- und Europarecht, am Walther-Schücking-Institut für internationales Recht der Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel

— **Rosemary J. Coombe**, Tier One Canada Research Chair in Law, Communication and Culture at York University in Toronto, where she teaches in the Communications and Culture Joint PhD/MA Programme, and is cross-appointed to the Osgoode Hall Faculty of Law Graduate Programme, and the Graduate Programme in Social and Political Thought

— **Jeanne Gaakeer**, Professor of Legal Theory, Erasmus School of Law, University of Rotterdam, and Justice in the Criminal Law Section of the Appellate Court in The Hague, co-founder of the European Network for Law and Literature

— **Werner Gephart**, Künstler, Direktor des Käte Hamburger Kollegs „Recht als Kultur“, Professur für Rechtssoziologie an der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn

— **Peter Goodrich**, Professor of Law, Director of program in Law and Humanities, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, managing editor of *Law and Literature*

— **Anna-Bettina Kaiser**, Professur für Öffentliches Recht und Grundlagen des Rechts, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

— **Leslie J. Moran**, Professor of Law, Director LLM/MA in Criminal Law and Criminal Justice, School of Law, Birkbeck University of London with research emphases on Sexuality and the Law and Law and Visual Culture

— **Konstanze Plett**, Professur für Rechtswissenschaft im Nebenfach und Gender Law, Bremen Institute for Gender, Labour and Social Law



Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the culturally embedded quality of law has been accentuated by sociologists of law such as Eugen Ehrlich in his description of “living law.” Yet during the past few decades socio-legal studies have been joined by other culturist investigations of law such as law and the humanities, cultural studies of law, law and literature, law and semiotics, legal anthropology, law and visual culture, and law and film. These younger disciplines disavow law’s autonomy as a rational science and emphasize the imbrications of the legal with the visual, the narrative, the medial, and with aspects of the social including practices of domination. The conference investigates the ways in which these types of inquiries understand law as constituting a myriad of cultural practices. Further, “Law’s Pluralities” takes note of current alterations in European legal practices and attitudes towards law. Law’s increasing plurality, we hypothesize, is caused by the sometimes conflict-ridden integration of individual European legal systems and courts with EU legislation and the European Court of Justice and European Court of Human Rights as well as by the increasing heterogeneity of members of individual legal cultures. Recent disputes about refugee law, social security benefits for migrants, the possible recourse to Sharia councils in family law matters, and homosexual marriage all attest to this uneasy plurality.

The conference signals the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture’s focus on law as an emerging interdisciplinary topic and ties in with work being undertaken at the University of Giessen’s Rudolf-von-Jhering Institute, with its emphases on the philosophy as well as the sociology of law. A variety of disciplinary accounts of law is encouraged, as each field brings with it a new understanding of legal culture or law as culture. The conference examines law as a narrative and a discourse, one of the leading areas of cultural inquiries into the law (cf. Coombe 2001, Richland 2013, and Olson 2014). Legal storytelling is understood as a contest of narratives in the courtroom, as a means of normatively legitimating state and judicial authority, as a way of embedding legal practices within a society to create communities of meaning, and – through the introduction of excluded personal narratives – as a form of surmounting law’s structural lacunae.

The conference, moreover, references work by Leslie Moran, Peter Goodrich, Werner Gephart, Richard Sherwin, and Cornelia Vismann, amongst others, that suggests that understandings of law are transported by visual artifacts, popular media, and by the material elements of the legal process, such as files and film. Thus “narrative” is explored in an expanded sense. An artistic exhibition on “Law’s Pluralities,” featuring work by Manu Luksch and Raul Gschrey, signals the conference’s emphasis on visual and medial interventions in the legal. Providing a bridge between conference participants and a wider public, visual explorations of surveillance measures provide an alternative source of knowledge and experience and function as mediations of legal practices and more traditional forms of academic discourse.

The conference queries the degree to which, on the one hand, law constitutes a gendering practice and, on the other, is itself gendered. Feminist and queer legal scholarship documents the ways in which normative standards of gender and sexuality are policed by the law and are translated into prescriptive treatments of victims of sexual violence, gay and lesbian couples, and trans* and inter* persons. Culturalist approaches to law may also reify images of “the” law as masculinist, rational, and potentially violent, and culture as feminine and contingent. The conference questions such narratives. A performance of “B_Oops, we did it again: The Ultimate Activist Gender Experience” by Christoph Bovermann and Kathrin Ebmeier invites audience members to confront varied gender and sexual identities.



Aufruf zu Tagungsbeiträgen / Call for Papers

Papers from a variety of disciplinary perspectives are invited to address the plurality of law and to reflect on law's narrative qualities, its relationship to the visual and the medial, and on the interface of law with sexuality and gender. The conference will include sessions in German and English on Law's Pluralities, Law's Narratives, Law's Images, and Law's Sexualities/Genders. Contributions are invited which aim to elucidate the theoretical issues described above or which address specific socio-legal issues. Questions to be raised by conference papers might include the following:

- How does the increasing plurality of legal cultures interact with other normative frameworks such as those offered by religion and moral values?
- What new narratives of the legal are developing due to the increased hybridity of EU law and the greater heterogeneity of national populations?
- How are new understandings of the law transported in popular media forms, through visual texts, and materially? Particular case studies that point to larger theoretical issues are also invited.
- How are subjects framed by and through their legal frameworks, including their knowledge of legal norms; and how is this process facilitated by popular culture?
- How are normative expectations of gender and sexuality changing, and how are these changes reflected in – or absent from – legal discourse and legislation?
- How do such changes affect discourse, legal and otherwise, concerning kinship and family?

Kurzdarstellungen von Tagungsbeiträgen (300 Wörter in Deutsch oder Englisch) werden bis zum **30. November 2014** erbeten; sowohl die Kurzdarstellungen der Beiträge als auch weitere Nachfragen zur Tagung können an folgende E-Mail-Adresse gerichtet werden: lawspluralities@gcsc.uni-giessen.de

Proposals (300 words in German or English) for papers are invited until **30 November 2014**; proposals as well as all inquiries regarding the conference should be directed to: lawspluralities@gcsc.uni-giessen.de

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Conference Organizers

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