Anglistentag 2019, Leipzig

Call for Papers

Canonization in Times of Globalization and Digitization

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The panel addresses canonization as a historical practice changing in the wake of globalization and digitization. Central issues are the following:

1. National canons have been giving way to transnational canons for quite some time. At the same time, in the globalized book market the dominance of English is becoming increasingly evident. Literary prizes such as the Nobel Prize and Man Booker Prize follow the trend towards globalization of the book market and reinforce it, but also express specific political agendas (Engdahl 2008). For example, from the 1980s to the 2000s the Booker Prize arguably had a revisionist effect on canon formation. Which canons have emerged in the academy and beyond it? How do we interpret convergences and divergences between academic and non-academic canons? Can we identify tendencies of homogenization or pluralisation of canons in a global perspective?

2. The current debate about world literature can be interpreted as an attempt to rethink canonization (Damrosch 2003, Casanova 2004, Thomsen 2008, Emmerich 2015, Mufti 2016). Approaches informed by the sociology of literature define world literature via dissemination and translation of texts, text-immanent approaches define it via textual properties. With a view to canonization, it remains an open question whether both aspects can be dealt with in isolation. How can the interplay of immanent and social factors in the constitution of recent canons be conceptualized? Are there literary strategies and subjects that make texts canonical at certain times? Which historical discourses on literature refer to these characteristics?

3. The internet has helped to break the monopoly of professional book reviewing in the established media. In addition to a particularization of critical value judgments, this has led to a valorization of the quantitative side of critical value judgments. The online book trade already uses quantifications to make purchase proposals. On the consumer side, quantitative criteria arguably tend to become qualitative criteria of their own right. The question arises as to whether automated preselection counteracts or contributes to canonization. How much scope remains for canon criticism when quantity becomes a central criterion for canonicity?

4. Quantification also characterizes the methods of the digital humanities. On the one hand, distant reading enables a critique of the academic canon by tracing tendencies in literary production beyond the established corpora (Moretti 2013, Jockers 2013, Thomsen 2017). At the same time, the method has so far rather confirmed the special status of "great texts". Further, the digital humanities' markup techniques are particularly well-suited to the analysis of style, a category closely linked to the traditional values of literary criticism. How can the digital humanities contribute to academic canon formation?

We call for papers that engage with these or related questions. **Please send proposals (300-400 words) for a 30-minute paper and a short bio to** kai.wiegandt@uni-tuebingen.de and jelze@uni-goettingen.de by **15.1.2019**.

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