

***Genealogical Practices:
Transdisciplinary Cartography of a ‘Style of Thinking’***

List of abstracts

Geoffrey C. Bowker (CSTS, Santa Clara University, California):
Memory and forgetting practices in social and natural science

How we organize our personal, social and scientific memories deeply inflects how we think the world. In this talk, I examine sets of memory practices which have developed over the past two hundred years since the days of the Encyclopedists. I argue that attention to the materiality of memory practices allows us to trace a largely unified history of styles of thinking – a history which is often obscure to practitioners in particular fields. I pay particular attention to modes of classification over the past two centuries. The talk draws on data from the geological sciences, biodiversity and social science.

Christina Brandt (MPIWG, Berlin):
Between “genealogy” and “identity”: Historical perspectives on the clone concept

In this paper, I will analyze scientific and cultural layers in the history of cloning in 20th century life science. Exploring the use of the clone concept in different bioscientific research fields, the paper addresses the shifting meanings of the clone concept that was introduced as a “purely genealogical term” (Shull 1912) at the beginning of the century. The emergence of different semantic fields (such as “serial replication”, “mass re-production”, “purity”, “identity” and the quest for “genealogical origins”) will be analyzed with respect to their impact on today’s discussion on cloning.

Jeanette Edwards (Social Anthropology, University of Manchester):
Of family history, ancestors and pedigrees: genealogical research in the north of England

The past decade has seen a massive increase in the popularity of family history research in the UK. Alongside ‘settler groups’ (Nash) in Commonwealth countries who are looking for their ancestors in the ‘homelands’ (Basu), the British have taken up genealogical research in droves and with a passion. The internet has clearly played a large part in this burgeoning interest, with ever-increasing amounts of information being made available – from census returns (1841-1901), civil registration records (births, marriages and deaths), the International Genealogical Index (I.G.I.) etc. to masses of information collected and uploaded by individual genealogists together with the narratives and family trees that many craft from the diverse information they collect. The internet also facilitates communication between new found kin, expanding kin networks virtually with the promise and possibility of face to face meetings. It would be wrong however to suggest that the contemporary interest in genealogy is technologically driven, even if information technology features large. It would also be wrong to suggest that the contemporary search for ‘roots’ is (only) a quest for stability (or an anchor) in a rapidly changing and speeded-up world. Neither IT nor the forces of globalisation fully explain its appeal or do justice to either the process of (doing) family history research or the wide range of social relationships forged in the process. This paper looks at the practice of ‘family treeing’ in the north of England: the process of making and tracing kinship links, pedigrees and ancestors; the drawing of genealogical diagrams; the collecting and collating of the materials that make family history; and the sociability and exchange value of doing genealogy.

Bernd Gausemeier (MPIWG, Berlin):

Don't miss the forest for the family trees: Genealogy as representative model and technical mode

Genealogy seems to have provided a key element in the emergence of modern biological science – the representative form of the family tree, which has been used as a means to visualize the theory of evolution, human ontogeny, and the inheritance of human traits. Its apparent relation to older forms of aristocratic genealogy and medieval ‘trees of knowledge’ may suggest – at least in the view of some cultural historians – that the family tree is an essential cultural pattern that has pervaded and shaped all modern knowledge about the living. Though this view opens up some fascinating perspectives, I want to point out that genealogy is not all about arboreal depictions. A closer look at the “biological” genealogical practices that came up by the late 19th century – namely medical family research – will show a wide range of techniques for displaying, filing, and combining data about families and their histories. I will deal with this material in order to stress that genealogy is not only a pictorial system dating back to antiquity, but also set a of practices that has undergone substantial changes during the last two centuries – changes closely related to the emergence of the modern notions of descent and heredity.

Stefan Hesper (Germanistik, Ruhr-Universität Bochum):

Karte oder Genealogie? – Anmerkungen zur Genealogie der Kartographie bei Deleuze und Guattari und Ausblicke

Die Rede von der Kartographie durchzieht das Werk von Deleuze und Guattari seit den 70er Jahren. Insbesondere der Psychiater und Theoretiker Félix Guattari hat dem Begriff und der Praxis der Kartographie in seinen systematischen Stellenwert zu geben versucht. In seinen umfassenden, allerdings zumeist kaum bis gar nicht gelesenen Schriften „L'inconscient machinique“ von 1979 sowie in seinem opus magnum „Cartographies schizoanalytiques“ von 1989 hat Guattari eine Wissenschaft der Kartographie zu begründen versucht. Seinen ebenso polemischen wie systematischen Stellenwert erhält der Begriff der Karte oder Kartographie dabei in Auseinandersetzung mit Begriffen wie Struktur, System, aber auch Kultur, Transzendenz oder Logos, Entwicklungsstadium, Universalie, Archetyp usw. Der Begriff der Karte von Guattari verdichtet gleichsam Merkmale verschiedener, aber konvergenter Strömungen: Guattari versteht die Karte nicht als Diagnose von Wirklichkeiten, sondern als Diagramm von Möglichkeiten, „une matière du possible“, „une matière à option machinique“. Es geht um eine pragmatische Analyse der Möglichkeiten von Prozessen, ihren Linien, Schichten, Löchern, Sackgassen usw., es geht nicht um ihre Logik, sondern um ihre Mikro-Politik und ihre Konsistenz. Ziel einer Darstellung zur Genealogie der Karte bei Guattari könnte also sein, die diskursiven und diagrammatischen Darstellungen von Guattari in groben Zügen in ihrem Verlauf vorzustellen und auch Hypothesen über ihr weiteres Werden zu wagen.

Eva Johach (Graduiertenkolleg Geschlecht als Wissenskategorie, HU Berlin):

Menschliche und tierische Staatenbildner. Historische Strukturen einer Wahlverwandtschaft zwischen Mensch und Insekt

Die sogenannten staatenbildenden Insekten üben auf ihre Beobachter seit der Antike eine starke Faszination aus. Aufgrund ihrer erstaunlichen Fähigkeit zur „Staatenbildung“ lassen

sich diese Tiere in ein Verhältnis von (*Wahl-*)*Verwandtschaft* zum Menschen setzen, deren verschiedene Deutungen das Thema dieses Vortrags sein soll. Insbesondere soll es dabei um die produktiven und irritierenden Momente gehen, die bei der Einbeziehung von Insektenstaaten in die genealogischen Erzählungen von der Entwicklungsgeschichte menschlicher Staatenbildung entstehen. Solche Annäherungen finden vor allem im Zuge der diskursiven Wechselwirkungen von Biologie und Soziologie im 19. Jahrhundert statt. Schwierigkeiten für eine vergleichende Evolutionsgeschichte ergeben sich nicht nur aus der „instinkthaften“ Basis dieser Staatswesen, sondern auch aus ihrer maternalen *Genealogie*: Die evolutionstheoretische Erklärung für die Entstehung dieser natürlichen Staatsgebilde stützt sich auf ein Gründungsnarrativ, in dessen Mittelpunkt eine „Stammutter“ steht. Neben der strukturellen Ähnlichkeit ihrer Sozialform mit hochentwickelten menschlichen Gesellschaften lassen Insektenstaaten also auch Abweichungen gewohnter genealogischer Narrative erkennen, zu denen das Überspringen der Etappe der Familie und die matriachale Organisation ihrer Gemeinwesen gehören.

Human and animal forms of nation building
Elective affinities between men and insects in the 19th century

Albeit in 19th century anthropomorphism became illegitimate, a relation between men and insects was established, which I want to call an elective affinity. The inclusion of insect societies into the evolutionary narrative of human societies allowed to reflect on certain basic principles of social organisation, but caused trouble as well: They differ from modern human societies not only by their “instinctive” social bond, but also by their maternal genealogy. How these problems were addressed and shaped the affinities will be the subject of this talk.

Ohad S. Parnes (ZFL, Berlin):
Epigenetic Genealogies

The epigenetic turn in molecular biology is challenging a series of epistemological suppositions upon which genetics has relied for many decades. Most notably, epigenetics maintains that hereditary information can be transmitted across generation in patterns that do not follow Mendelian regularities. In my paper I will discuss the underlying genealogical structures used in current epigenetic analysis. In particular, I will argue that epigenetic genealogies are historically and epistemologically related to methods of analysis employed in other fields of knowledge, notably in the social sciences.

Elizabeth A. Povinelli (Anthropology, Columbia University):
The Genealogies of Liberalism

This talk outlines what a genealogy of liberal figurations of genealogy might consist of and how such a metagenealogy might help us understand the conservation of liberal power in two seemingly contrastive forms of governmentality: the politics of recognition and the contemporary “War on Terror”.

Stefan Sperling (History of Sciences, Harvard University):
Genealogies of the Future: Law, Science, and the Making of Potential Persons

In 2002 Germany passed a controversial Stem Cell Law that prohibits the production of human embryonic stem cells in Germany, but approves the import of such cells for research

under ‘exceptional’ circumstances. A Central Ethics Commission was instituted to test for the presence of these circumstances, among which are the ‘high priority’ of, and the ‘absence of alternatives’ to the research proposed. This paper argues that scientific practices on, and legal conceptualizations of people who never will exist have collaborated in rewriting future genealogies, and thereby altered the meaning of genealogy, by bringing into existence human beings endowed with potentiality but lacking actuality. Based on ethnographic fieldwork and expert interviews in scientific and legal arenas, this paper will explore how the discourses of potential patienthood and potential personhood in Germany have intertwined to create new entities credited with partial human rights and dignity.

Elisabeth Timm (Europäische Ethnologie, Universität Wien):

Finds and fictions. The quest for ancestors in Austria between noble reign, bourgeois societies, fascist policy, and identity work

The starting point of my presentation is the Austrian “Heraldisch-Genealogische Gesellschaft ‘Adler’” [“Heraldic-Genealogical Society ‘Eagle’”], founded in 1870 in Vienna. In my research I combine the perspectives, tools, and methods of social history with those of cultural anthropology. The analysis of the social profile, the historical context, discursive possibilities, the interests and imaginations of those who have been doing genealogy in the past or who are doing genealogy today (in the above-mentioned society or in another Austrian field of genealogy) leads to the insight, that genealogical practices are indefinite (*unbestimmt*). They have been realized as dynastic law (e.g. by the House of Habsburg), as distinction in powerful social groups (e.g. by the ascending bourgeoisie in the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy), as self-empowerment of endangered groups (e.g. by some factions of the Viennese Jews), as anti-Semitic strategy in the context of rising national-socialist political groups (e.g. by the illegal members of the Nazi party in Austria, 1932-1938) or as racist policy like those of the Viennese branch of the Reich Kinship Office (1938-1943). Between 1870 and 1938 proponents of all (!) these positions met as members in the society “Adler”, and some of them continued their work in cooperation and on behalf of the Nazi authorities in Austria. Today the society “Adler” represents a much smaller section of the Austrian genealogical ‘scene’. Today’s genealogists prefer to exchange, search, and discuss genealogical data, other materials, information in mailing lists, and during their visits in archives. Their genealogical practices can not be reduced to a late popularized outcome of the foregoing scientific institutionalization of genealogy. It is rather a means of identity work in a specific biographical situation.

Thus, the deconstructivist thesis of genealogy as a form of biopolitics or as an ‘idea’ of modern science which became hegemonic and productive throughout the late 19th and the 20th century grasps only one aspect of this phenomenon. It is necessary to take into account the microlevel of (mostly) men and (rarely) women who practice/d genealogy. Only this empirical localization of genealogical activities allows one to apprehend the specificity of genealogy in each historical case. More generally, it also enables one to address genealogical social and cultural orders as strategies which always combine finds (*Vorgefundenes*) with fictions (*Erfundenes*).