

Con/Figurations of Female Adventure / SSHRC Connection Grant Project

Overview

The international conference “**Con/Figurations of Female Adventure: Dynamics, Spaces, and Alliances**” will be held in hybrid format at the UBC Vancouver campus, from 11-14 August 2022.

The event is dedicated to the question of ‘female adventure’ in German and other European literatures, from medieval to the early 20th century, critically re-examining and questioning the heteronormative views of the powerful literary concept of ‘adventure.’ While this received much attention starting in the 1870s, investigations were largely focused on a particular genre, the ‘adventure novel’, and typically working with binary patterns of analysis considering the male hero as the norm, and female protagonists in dependence of or relation to it. Our new approach will raise the question of “third” figures, their impact and significance for the protagonists’ experience and explorations, gaining new dynamics, spaces, and alliances. These could be objects, devices, talismans, books, but also living beings, plants, animals, humans; companion species (birds, horses, dogs).

With this conference project, the research team (Gaby Pailer, UBC; Jutta Eming, FU Berlin; Daniela Fuhrmann, University of Zurich) is taking their previous collaborations dedicated to related foci, to a new level of transatlantic exchange. The event will convene about 18 presenters from European and North American institutions, a balanced mix of advanced, early career and emerging scholars, including graduate student presenters, and offering a Graduate Poster Forum to enable additional graduate students to present their ongoing research to the community of scholars in attendance and a wider audience onsite/online.

While the core fields of research at stake here, German, English, and Comparative Literature, are rooted in long disciplinary research traditions, the event presenters solicited for this event are mutually committed to exploring new avenues with regards to gender, race, and diversity, not only at the level of the research topic but also in their respective academic contexts, between ‘old’ and ‘new’ worlds.

As to the research location, the team considers UBC Vancouver (seated on Musqueam Territory) as an ideal place to engender a lively thought exchange on the conference topic, interrelating our approach with a perspective of Canada as a shared space of immigrants and descendants of those first inhabiting it, tackling questions of how to best ‘de-colonize’ our own ways of thinking and research practices.

The international conference is made possible with the generous support of SSHRC, Freie Universität Berlin (Germany), and the Universität Zürich (Switzerland). In addition, we gratefully acknowledge funding from the UBC Faculty of Arts, the CENES Ziegler Fund, LMU München (Germany), Stanford University (USA), the University of Waterloo (Canada), and TU Darmstadt (Germany).

The co-organizers are grateful that this event will be held on the UBC Point Grey (Vancouver) campus, which sits on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nation.

Co-Organizers:

Gaby Pailer, principal investigator, is Professor of German and European Literature at the Department of Central, Eastern, and Northern European Studies.

Jutta Eming, collaborator, is Professor of Medieval Studies at the Institut für Deutsche und Niederländische Philologie, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.

Daniela Fuhrmann, collaborator, is Assistant Professor (equivalent) at the Deutsche Seminar, University of Zurich, Switzerland.

Graduate Research Assistants:

Ajibola Fabusuyi and Steve Commichau, PhD candidates at the Department of CENES at UBC Vancouver.