

The concept of empowerment as the capacity to achieve autonomy and lead a self-determined life has not only found its way into company culture, education and positive psychology, but also enriches literary and gender studies. Here it is particularly relevant to feminist, queer and postcolonial discourses, ecocriticism and material culture. It is closely linked to notions of power, authority and independence, and attracts attention from a variety of critical perspectives.

This conference investigates the relationship between empowerment and contemporary fiction. We want to discuss both how fiction in its many shapes matters today and how contemporary narratives can be agents of empowerment on different levels, such as characters, themes, structure, text, authors and readers. Join us!

Conference Venue

University of Trier
Campus II, Room K 101
Behringstraße 1
54296 Trier
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Contact

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Wednesday 21 June

2 pm Registration

3 pm Welcome & Introduction
(Eva-Maria Schmitz and Ralf Hertel)

Panel 1: Dystopias and Science Fictions (Chair: Markus M. Müller)

3.30 pm Hilary Duffield: Empowering the Other: Variations of the Invasion Narrative from the 1950s to the Noughties

4.30 pm Ute Berns: Narrating Post/Human Dis/Empowerment: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*

Reading

6 pm Xiaolu Guo reads from her work
(Introduction: Christian Soffel and Ralf Hertel)

Thursday 22 June

Panel 2: Dystopias and Science Fictions II (Chair: Julia Wurr)

9 am Paul Hamann: 'Tell me. Explain.': The Neglected Didactics of Contemporary Novels About Genetic Engineering

10 am Sarah Dillon: Empowerment Under Threat: Contemporary Feminist Dystopias

- *Coffee Break* -

Panel 3: Histories

(Chairs: Heiko Zimmermann, Gerd Hurm)

11.30 am Eva-Maria Schmitz: A Matryoshka Doll of Memory Boxes: Empowering David Mitchell's Macro-Novel

- *Lunch Break* -

2 pm David Malcolm: The Empowering Allohistorical? Some Questions on a Stochastic Borderline

3 pm Peter Childs: Telling Tales and Retelling the Contemporary Past

4 pm *Coffee and Poster Presentations by Students*

5 pm Mike Witcombe: Hostile Takeover: Tova Reich's *My Holocaust* and Rhetorics of Power in Jewish-American Holocaust Fiction

Friday 23 June

Panel 4: Media

(Chairs: Henning Rossa, Karoline Wirbatz)

9.30 am Britta Colligs: Empowering the Viewer and the Reader: Strategies of Empowerment in HBO's *A Game of Thrones* and Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*

10.30 am Heiko Zimmermann: Literary Studies, Creative Writing and Digital Pedagogy – How Do Students Benefit from Creative Encounters with Electronic Literature?

- *Coffee Break* -

12 pm Guided Tour of 'generator' Art Installation

- *Lunch Break* -

Panel 5: Transcultural Perspectives (Chair: Andreas Regelsberger)

2.30 pm Ralf Hertel: Xiaolu Guo's Fictions of Empowerment

3.30 pm Mojca Kregel: Taking the I out of Be: Zen-Buddhism and Empowerment in Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being*

- *Coffee Break* -

5 pm Wrap-Up & Discussion