Discursive Crossings: Subversion and Affirmation of Power Relations
Workshop
October 19-20, 2012
Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz

Power relations are never stable but are subject to ongoing negotiation, constantly being confirmed or put into question. In discursive processes of affirmation and subversion, cultural references and symbolic meanings intersect, social identities merge or interfere with each other and new knowledge is constructed. In this continual process, multiple and blurry borders are drawn between various linguistic, ethnic, cultural and social affiliations, often organized in problematic oppositional structures such as inside and outside, top and bottom, foreign and familiar. Examining such ongoing negotiations, we take up the term "discursive crossings" in order to designate the citing of linguistic, social, and cultural markers by members of one group that are commonly attributed to another group, arguing that these groups are also constituted through such "discursive crossings," i.e., citing the other's markers is not necessarily subversive per se but might in fact be affirmative with regard to the power relations between the various groups.

Taking up the term "crossing" from socio-linguistics, where it means speakers using languages or linguistic varieties they do not "own" (Ben Rampton), we propose to understand "discursive crossings" in three ways: as an intersection of various discourses, as a transgression of boundaries within discourses, and as the idea of exceeding the discursive itself. While similar issues have been addressed, for instance, in postcolonial and gender studies (Homi Bhabha, Judith Butler), we emphasize the constitutive character of "discursive crossings" which in our view not only destabilize but also produce the borders and entities that are presumably "crossed." The aim of the conference is to look at "discursive crossings" as a problem for the interdisciplinary investigation of the discursive dynamics through which cultural and social order is negotiated. We are looking for approaches to "crossing" that deal with heterogeneous discourses, cultures, and identity politics. Possible contributions would approach the issue of "crossing" from a decisively interdisciplinary perspective, dealing with various aspects of "crossing" in its communicative, social, cultural, and historical dimensions. Papers may either present conceptualizations of "crossing" or case studies that can fruitfully be described as "crossings;" ideally, the papers would combine theoretical reflection and case studies.

Papers may address topics such as the following:
- Crossing as an override of identities
- Crossing of self and other in media
- Crossing between the local and the global
- Crossing and translation
- Crossing and migration
- Crossing, (post)colonialism, and imperialism
- Crossing in relation to polyphony and intertextuality
- Crossing in relation to hybridity and transculturation
- Crossing as a methodological tool

Please send abstracts for 20-minute papers by 28 May 2012 to crossing@uni-mainz.de.

Abstracts will be made available on our webpage in order to facilitate discussion andexchange. About one third of the slots will be filled through an open call.Travel expenditures can be reimbursed.
If you have any questions, please contact the organizers via crossing@uni-mainz.de

Network: Social and Cultural Studies Mainz (SOCUM), group 4 "Diskurs Macht Wissen"/"Discourse Power Knowledge":

Organizing Committee: Johannes Angermüller (Sociology), Michael Bachmann (Theatre Studies), Filippo Carlá (Ancient History), Antje Dresen (Sociology of Sports), Silke Jansen (Romance Linguistics), Asta Vonderau (Cultural Anthropology).
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