



Call for Papers

Reading British Spaces

Annual Conference of the German Association for the Study of British Cultures

19 - 21 November 2009

At a time when the term 'spatial turn' has almost become a truism in Cultural Studies, the spatial grounding of identity constructions is a central topic of cultural analysis. Based on the approaches of New Cultural Geography, many researchers aim at 'reading' spaces in a semiotic way, i.e. at looking at the meanings that are subconsciously or deliberately associated with them. This is especially productive with regard to group identities. On the one hand, this includes those traditionally mediated in spatial terms like national or class identities. On the other hand, there are new, potentially contested constructions of social or cultural hierarchies (e.g. in the workplace) that can be naturalised by giving them a supposedly solid spatial basis.

The conference will address such questions with a specific focus on Britain. Comparative perspectives e.g. with regard to Germany or the US can however also be included in the discussion. Papers will deal both with actual spaces and with their representation in fictional, non-fictional and visual texts. A range of different approaches from more general analyses to very concrete historical and contemporary case studies is welcome.

More particularly, paper topics may include the following issues:

- the processes and problems of constructing national identity in Britain
- the British regions and the identity clashes between them
- the contrast between city and countryside and its development
- gendered spaces in Britain
- spatial manifestations of social class

- relationships between space and constructions of ethnicity in Britain
- the functioning of British cultural spaces
- the use of space in British literary and medial representations
- metaphorical, imaginary and 'lost' spaces in Britain

Please send prospective paper titles (for 20-minute slots) and abstracts (of about 300 words) to toennies@mail.upb.de by 5 June 2009.

The organising team looks forward to receiving your suggestions and to welcoming you to Paderborn!