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Call for Papers

Cultural Studies and Its Discontents

In late October 2013, the Association for the Study of British Cultures will explore how far Cultural Studies (in Germany) have come and where they should be heading. The conference will focus on the state of Cultural Studies, on their success as well as on future directions which one might wish to explore. It will do so on two levels. On the one hand, theoretical approaches, methods, and questions of interdisciplinarity will be the focus of papers and discussions. On the other hand, Cultural Studies will be put to the test in presentations which analyze 21st-century developments in the UK from a Cultural Studies-perspective. Questions such as the following should be addressed by all contributors:

Have we achieved what we set out to do when the Association was founded? Have Cultural Studies as they then were become a part of the academic establishment, or have they changed beyond recognition? Are the label and actual Cultural Studies practice still compatible with one another?

How do other disciplines view Cultural Studies? Where are points of contact, and where do we diverge? What do other adherents of Cultural Studies beyond English Studies Departments suggest? Where is the political, historical, sociological focus which Cultural Studies used to have? Which agendas, topics, methods, questions should we be working with, addressing, and answering?

Although all contributors should keep this meta-level in mind, they are also encouraged to work on recent developments in the UK such as increasing poverty, the problems deriving from post-9/11 and 7/7 security and surveillance policies and anti-terrorism legislation, dismantling the remaining elements of the welfare state, cutting public sector spending and its effects on education, the arts, social welfare etc., the loss of trust

in parliamentary politics, the changing face of the media etc. How can Cultural Studies methods help to understand these measures and developments? How can they help to show up alternatives?

We invite contributions which focus on case studies addressing these issues on the meta-level. All disciplines are welcome. Papers should open the discussion and should invite debate. Papers which are not based on literary works and papers which discuss questions of social change in contemporary Britain are particularly welcome.

Please send your 400-word abstract to
Catherine Smith (Catherine.smith@staff.hu-berlin.de).

Deadline: 25 March 2013