



Fantastic Reversals of Time Representing Age in the Fantastic Mode

Dienstag, 6. Mai 2014 | 15.15 – 16.45 Uhr
Merangasse 18/KG, SR 35.K2/K3, 8010 Graz



Dr. Heike Hartung

In contrast to realist fiction, in which the experience of aging is explored in narratives of coming-of-age, the mode of the fantastic opens up alternative visions of life in time. Age fantasies may serve different cultural functions, both by reinforcing contemporary age stereotypes and by envisioning counter-narratives of age.

In her talk, Heike Hartung will present two different literary case studies of female old age in the fantastic mode, George McDonald's fairy tale "Little Daylight" (1864) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's vampire story "Good Lady Ducayne" (1896). The strategies of age narrative developed in these nineteenth-century tales of the fantastic will be compared, in the discussion, with F. Scott Fitzgerald's satiric tale of a fantastic age reversal, "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" (1921), in order to explore the meanings of age in the genre of the fantastic.



Heike Hartung has worked as a university lecturer and research fellow at the Freie Universität Berlin, the University of Greifswald and the University of Potsdam. She has earned her PhD in English Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin and her PhD habil. in English Literature and Cultural Studies at

the University of Potsdam. In her publications she applies the methods of literary theory and cultural studies to the interdisciplinary fields of disability, age and gender studies. Her research interests further include the relation between medicine and literature, narrative theory and the history of the novel.

She has published several edited volumes on Aging Studies. Together with Roberta Maierhofer she has co-edited the first volume in the Aging Studies in Europe book series, Narratives of Life: Mediating Age (2009). Recently, she has co-edited with Rüdiger Kunow the special issue "Age Studies" of the journal American Studies (2011). She is a founding member of the European Network in Aging Studies.



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