

Advance call for papers

Revisiting the Beach

Postgraduate Conference

Venue: Newcastle University, UK

Date: 3rd July 2009

Website: <http://conferences.ncl.ac.uk/beachconference>

E-mail: Beach.Conference@ncl.ac.uk

Call for papers

Revisiting the Beach

The beach is often seen as a place of transformation where the land becomes sea and the sea land. Characterized by hybridism, liminality, exchange, the beach functions as an emblem of our (post-) modern ideology of the possible, where everything and everybody can, in principle, become anything else or anybody else. Limits and categories melt: be it the national borders in the global market, the difference between sexes in trans-gendering or the distinction of art and entertainment. Seen from this perspective, the beach suggests an endless, iterative process of transition resulting in neutral indifference. This is replaced by that, repeatedly, both equal in their lack of value. The ideology of the possible becomes the iterative vacuity of Baudrillard's world of images.

But the beach is also something else: it is also a place of opposition and clash where waves break on the shore and the land crumbles into the sea. It is the emblem of a tension between opposite forces: rigidity versus fluidity, order versus chaos, fragmentation versus unity or modernity versus tradition; a place of contradiction, subversive in its questioning of both the hierarchies of traditional values and the ideology of the possible of our contemporary world. The beach, in its suggestion of a need of resolution of such a contradiction, and its simultaneous deferment of any possible resolution, is properly speaking utopian; a juxtaposition of incommensurate elements.

Possible topics:

- The beach as a post-colonial topos: as a place of tension between developed and developing countries; the beach as a holiday ghetto or where refugees land.
- The beach in literature, film, art as the emblem of a tension between opposite forces.
- This tension itself in literary criticism, philosophy, politics and in theory in general as a critical approach.
- A "geography" of places of tension.
- Exoticism: The beach as place of the exotic suggesting the impossibility of transgression to a primordial state.
- The beach as a utopian space

Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*: “Once on the beach they separated...Nancy waded out to her own rocks and searched her own pools...brooding, she changed the pool into the sea...and then, letting her eyes slide imperceptibly above the pool and rest on that wavering line of sea and sky...she became with all that power sweeping savagely in and inevitably withdrawing, hypnotized, and the two senses of that vastness and this tininess...flowering within made her feel that she was bound hand and foot and unable to move...”

Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*: “...the reply of narrativity to the aporias of time consists less in resolving these aporias than in putting them to work, in making them productive.”

Franco Moretti, *The Atlas of the European Novel*: “...geography is not an inert container, is not a box where cultural history ‘happens’, but an active force, that pervades the literary field and shapes it in depth.”

Frederick Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*: “...antinomy itself [is] the central structure and the beating heart of Utopia as such.”

Please submit abstracts of up to 250 words to:

Beach.Conference@ncl.ac.uk

Deadline: 31st January 2009

Philippe Cygan
Christian Mieves

Contact:

e-mail: Beach.Conference@ncl.ac.uk

website: <http://conferences.ncl.ac.uk/beachconference>