

Fictions of History
An Interdisciplinary Conference on Critical Theory
Keynote Talk: Stephen Greenblatt
Keynote Roundtable: Mark Anderson, Daniel Kehlmann, & Judith Ryan

The Critical Theory Certificate Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York in conjunction with the Center for the Humanities and the New York Public Library presents the sixth annual interdisciplinary conference on Critical Theory to be held May 5th-6th, 2017. This year's conference will be devoted to a theory of historio-poetics, the confluence of fiction and history.

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle draws an explicit contrast between history and poetics, asserting "The historian tells what happened and the poet tells what might happen." While Aristotle's distinction proposes a clear demarcation between the two disciplines, subsequent schools of thought have recognized the interpolation of both genres, positing that a text, whether literary, ethical, or political, is a product of the historical context within which it was created. Conversely, just as the context of a work determines its creation, fiction often serves as a means of chronicling and reconstructing history. As historical narratives are refracted through various literary genres and artistic media, new interpretations of the same set of facts begin to emerge. This emergence of multiple and sometimes contradictory histories has made it more difficult than ever to delineate the boundary between fact and fiction. Yet it is often the fictional narratives that a society creates that define and shape its culture and historical memory. The integration of fiction and history thus serves as a means of engaging with and critiquing accepted historical interpretation, which in turn makes possible the emergence of new discourses.

This conference seeks to employ Critical Theory to examine all aspects of historio-poetics—its evolution, practice, and role in shaping literature, political discourse, history, and identity—in order to understand the mutual relationship between history and fiction. We welcome a wide range of disciplines and theoretical approaches, including literary theory, psychoanalysis, identity theories, historiography, semiotics, philosophy, cultural studies, postcolonialism, gender studies, and political theory.

This conference will be devoting several special sessions to the work of W.G. Sebald.

Some of the topics that this conference seeks to address include, but are not limited to:

- The relationship among fiction, history, and memory
- Historio-poetics as a means of questioning and critiquing accepted narratives
- Fiction and narratives of personal history and identity
- Globalization and competing/contradictory histories
- Mythology, history, and fiction
- Fiction, history and the interrogation of political structures
- The intersection of multiple media (including the visual arts) in historio-poetics
- Use of irony, parody, and satire as figures of historio-poetics
- Fiction, history, and the comprehension of self and other
- Fiction and trauma
- Historical doctrine and myth in religion
- Historio-poetics as performance
- Fiction, history, and technology
- Fictionalized narrative as an ideological and political tool
- Historio-poetics as a means of examining the creative process
- Psychological effects of integrating fiction and history
- Fiction history and the reimagination/reconstruction of time and space
- Theoretical approaches to the interrelation of fiction and history

Please submit a 300-word abstract for a 15-minute paper by March 1st, 2017 to fictionsofhistoryconference@gmail.com. Proposals should include the title of the paper, the presenter's name, any technology requests, and a 50-word bio including institutional and departmental affiliation, as well as current position. We also welcome panel proposals of 3-4 papers.