

Interdisziplinäres Kolloquium HeSe 18/19

U M K Ä M P F T E R Ä U M E

dienstags 18:15 Uhr in HEL 164

Vortrag am 30.10.2018:

Agnes Czajka (Open University):

“The Loss of Non-Identity: Another Approach to Europe in Crisis”

The modern, if not postmodern condition has often been characterised (and indeed, mourned) as one of unnerving rootlessness and homelessness, engendered by loss of identity, culture, and the solid and fixed ‘politics of home’. These literal and metaphorical losses have been blamed for the many intersecting psychic and social crises that characterise the contemporary condition. Re-rooting, and the excavation and recuperation of identity have, in turn, been prescribed as remedies to these existential crises of identity and belonging.

I’d like to suggest that precisely the opposite is the case. The crises, I argue, are engendered not by a loss of identity, but the loss (through forgetting) of non-identity, or more accurately, the non-identity of culture and identity. As Jacques Derrida has argued, ‘what is proper to a culture is not to be identical to itself...not to be able to identify itself, to be able to say ‘me’ or ‘we,’ to be able to take the form of a subject only in the non-identity to itself’. Using the work of Derrida – particularly his deconstructive ‘method’ – I hope to lay out the case for understanding contemporary crises of identity and belonging as rooted in the loss of ‘non-identity’. I will then turn to the Mediterranean as the cipher of multiple, fluid and shifting ‘non-identities’ that have often been lost and forgotten, and consider how a ‘return’ to non-identity can temper the existential crises plaguing contemporary Europe.