

Call for Papers: “Refractions of Bob Dylan - Cultural Appropriations of an American Icon”

Conference at the University of Vienna, May 19-21, 2011

This conference, which almost directly coincides with the seventieth birthday of the US-American artist, invites you to investigate various aspects of ‘metamorphoses’ of Dylan. What about the ways in which Dylan’s texts and the text “Dylan” have been translated, adapted and re/constructed? How and to what ends were they appropriated, and how did they become relevant for cultural, political or social productions mainly in non-American cultures? A strand of the conference is especially interested in topics concerning Dylan and Austria.

Dylan’s cultural production in the second half of the 20th century, his songs, but also his changing images and self-fashionings have informed and productively re/shaped certain images of America from outside and within. The conference wants to look at cultural appropriations of ‘Dylan’ in different cultural, regional, and political contexts. It is thus interested in the political function and appropriation of popular culture, and in the broad field of Americanization. It might be helpful to envision Americanization here not predominantly as cultural imperialism but also as a “liberating form of expression” (Kooijman) for other cultures, and as active cultural appropriation. Along Robert Kroes’s lines who argues that “the only culture Europeans had in common in the late twentieth century was American culture”, investigations of ‘Dylan translations’ in any (European) regional or national cultures are welcome.

This is a call for papers and also for whole panels. It invites topics from the fields of cultural studies, literary studies (American, German, Comparative), history, the Arts, film studies, music and musicology studies, and folk studies to look at adaptations of lyrics and songs, but also of self-constructions and stage personae or of trans-lations of certain “structures of feelings” (Williams) into divergent cultural settings. I would like to encourage topics that not only focus on Dylan’s songs and lyrics and their adaptations, but on aspects of cultural appropriations of Dylan’s persona/e, his own work in film or films about him (e.g. *Masked and Anonymous*, *I’m Not There*), his creative writing and life writing (e.g. *Tarantula* or *Chronicles Vol. 1*), or his paintings. It might also be interesting to discuss cultural appropriations of other US American popular icons in a contrastive way.

The conference will also take a fresh approach to the tradition of academic gatherings. It will, for instance, include a singer/songwriter session in which (Austrian) musicians talk about and sing out their influences and translations of the “Song and Dance Man”.

Possible Clusters

- Dylan and/in Austria; Dylan and/in Europe; Reception of Dylan in ...
- America/Dylan and trans/regional youth cultures (in Europe)
- Globalizing Dylan – Localizing Dylan
- Metamorphoses of Dylan
- Transformative powers of Dylan and “Dylan”
- Dylan performing – Performing Dylan
- Hegemonic appropriations of Dylan
- Dylan “performing” America
- Fan cultures

Please send your proposals for panels and/or papers (200-400 words) to eugen.banauch@univie.ac.at

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