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**Neue Literaturgeschichtsschreibung
japanologisch**

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Abstract Panel

Literary History in Japanese Studies

Literary history is a subject that has been somewhat neglected in Japanese Studies. Following English speaking models, current research tends to stress theory. Harald Meyer (University of Bonn) comments that “This approach, though often referred to as theory orientation, remains ill-defined and yet has resulted over the past several decades in a reluctance in German Japanology to engage in major work about Japanese literary history” (Harald Meyer, 2015).

In Japan, however, literary scholars have become aware of the historicity of what is known as contemporary literature (*gendai bungaku*). Since 1995, when the previous five decades were commemorated under the motto *sengo gojūnen* (50 years after the war), it has hardly been possible to speak of contemporary literature as “post-war literature” (*sengo bungaku*), the point of reference of

which is 1945 (Kawamura Minato, 1999). The literature of the Heisei Era (Heisei *bungaku*; Urata Kenji, 2015), the beginnings of which date from the death of Emperor Hirohito (1901-1989) and the end of the Shōwa Era in 1989, meanwhile covers nearly three decades and comprises a substantial set of texts. From the 1990s onwards one might now distinguish several phases in contemporary literature. Events such as the Aum Incident and the Kōbe earthquake, both in 1995, and the triple catastrophe of Fukushima on March 11, 2011 mark significant caesuras. They emphasize the perceived distance from post-war literature as well as “classical contemporary literature” (*gendai bungaku*; 1960s to 1990s).

The time has come, therefore, to take a fresh look at Japanese literature. Established works of literary history are beginning to show their age and their guiding principles need to be subjected to renewed scrutiny. Today, authors and works of the classical modern period around 1900 (Jap. *kindai bungaku*) and of the present day would be approached from different angles. Instead of reconstructing the biographical and historical context of a “literary work of art” – often taking a comparative view – current constellations of research would attempt to grasp complex interconnexions by means of a multidisciplinary strategy. Matters that deserve closer study include for instance the literary market, the performance of authors as “intellectuals”, counselors or lifestyle icons, literature as an instrument of cultural policy, “national literature”, contemporary literature and its place in the political sphere, popular and mass literature, diversity and interdependence of genres, literature and visual culture, innovation in literary formats (cell phone novels, “twitter literature”), literary journals and the media in the context of literature, literary prizes, fashionable research paradigms (“trauma”), specialized histories (for example *genbaku bungaku*, narratives of technology, religious poetics, regional literature, the achievement of “cultural translators”) as well as the traditional literary canon, Japanese postmodernism, less well-known writers/texts and last but not least up-to-date academic teaching of Japanese literature.

Japanese and western research on modern Japanese literature need to be perceived as integral parts of a wider history of research that is subject to critical reflexion from a twenty-first century perspective. Taking stock inevitably means scrutinizing one’s own work and therefore a reconsideration of the history of Japanese Studies with specific reference to literary studies may well turn out to be a fascinating subject, one which has been neglected for a reason: ever since “Fukushima”, probing questions have been asked about broader contexts and about “critical Japanese Studies”.

Presentations

1. Lisette Gebhardt (Frankfurt): Japanologische Fachgeschichte im Bereich der Literaturforschung: Ergebnisse, Inhalte, Haltungen,
2. Mechthild Duppel (Tokyo): „Japanische“ Autoren und „japanische“ Genres oder Nationalliteratur und Weltliteratur – zur Frage nach “fremden” Einflüssen auf das Schreiben im modernen Japan
3. Frank Jacob (New York): Neuerfindung: Die historischen Ursprünge der modernen japanischen Literatur
4. Beate Wonde (Berlin): Mori Ôgai: transkulturelles Modul und „Blogger“ – Literaturgeschichte neu gesehen als Zeitgeschehen
5. Simone Müller (Zürich): Literaturgeschichte als Debattengeschichte - Überlegungen zu einer japanischen Literaturgeschichtsschreibung im Spiegel intellektueller Diskurse
6. Christian Chappelow (Frankfurt): Zwischen Diversifizierung, Transition und (Dis)Kontinuität - Zur Relevanz des Forschungsfelds Lyrikgeschichte im Kontext zeitgenössischer japanologischer Literaturwissenschaft