

ISSUE 18 | 2014

# JUNGE AKADEMIE MAGAZIN

ENGLISH EDITION

---

## DOSSIER

Ennui and ecstasy

## RESEARCH GROUP PROJECT

Social sustainability in the mission statements of German universities

## JA INSIGHTS

New members, symposium on laughter, new ideas for the university system

---

SCHLAGER, FOUR-FOUR TIME (BPM=60), WAGNER, FELDMAN  
BEATS, PULSES, WAGNER, SCRIABIN/STRAVINSKY GREY SAND-  
COLOURED ECSTASY KILLING TIME INTOXICATION DEATHLY  
MUSIC WAITING (FOR GODOT) DANCE ROUTINE MOVEMENT  
REPETITION RED ORANGE YELLOW EMPTINESS OUTSIDE  
WASTELAND ALONE? WITH OTHERS? (MY HEAD IS) A VOID  
SHORT-LIVED? YEARNING FOR ECSTASY/CHANGE DO ANIMALS  
EXPERIENCE ECSTASY? AND CHILDREN? PERMANENCE GOOD  
BOOK LEISURE INTERESTING PEOPLE STAGNATION SCIENTIFIC  
PUZZLES BEING STATIC MOUNTAIN PEAKS INSIDE & OUTSIDE  
CHILDLIKE THINKING AT ANY STAGE OF LIFE? COMPELLING  
LOGIC LONG SPEECHES CONTROVERSIAL DISCUSSIONS POINT-  
LESS MEETINGS SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENTS IN THE KITCHEN  
QUEUES THE FLOW STATE IN WRITING 90% OF ADVICE RE-  
SULTS THAT SUPPORT ONE'S OWN HYPOTHESIS BEGGING ON  
THE TRAM GOOD, NEW IDEAS THAT COME OUT OF THE BLUE  
STUDENT PRESENTATIONS PRIVATE: HAPPY CHILDREN ALWAYS  
HAVING TO EAT WHEN HUMANS ACHIEVE MORE THAN IS REALLY  
POSSIBLE MOTOR FOR IDEAS GREAT DEEDS IN RAPTURE PRO-  
DUCTIVITY OF? TRAVEL ACEDIA – BOREDOM AS A THREAT TO  
THE SOUL BEING OVERJOYED EXTREME SPORTS: THE BOREDOM-  
INDUCED SEARCH FOR DANGER AND KICKS DRUGS, TRANCE,  
RITUAL “BORING POSTCARDS” – BOOK BY MARTIN PARR  
ON THE BEAUTY OF THE LAWS OF NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY:

## THE JUNGE AKADEMIE

The *Junge Akademie* (JA) was founded in 2000 as a joint project of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (*Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften – BBAW*) and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina (*Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina*). It is the world's first academy of young academics. The *Junge Akademie* is co-owned by both academies, the *BBAW* and the *Leopoldina*. Since 2011 it has been firmly anchored administratively in the Leopoldina's budget and funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*) and the *Länder* Berlin, Brandenburg and Sachsen-Anhalt. Its fifty members, young academics from German-speaking countries, engage in interdisciplinary discourse and are active at the intersection of academia and society.

# CONTENTS

	3	EDITOR'S LETTER
<b>Dossier</b>	4	ENNUI AND ECSTASY
	6	STRETCHING TIME
	12	THE ECONOMICS OF FORGETTING
	16	KURZWÎLE AND LANGE WEIL
	18	THE WOODSTOCK EFFECT
	20	CARDIAC ALARM AND BOREDOM
	24	THE BOREDOM OF ANGELKISS 1030
	26	AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVITY
<b>JA News</b>	29	AWARDS, HONOURS AND FELLOWSHIPS
	30	NEW MEMBERS
	32	ALUMNI
	34	SHOULD THE SYSTEM OF UNIVERSITY CHAIRS BE ABOLISHED? The German Association of Historians and the <i>Junge Akademie</i> on the search for "New Paths in the German University System"
	36	"THE HIGHEST FORM OF DISABILITY IS DEATH" No joke: interdisciplinary symposium on laughter
	38	A LITTLE BIT OF HOLLYWOOD An unusual medium: two films by <i>Junge Akademie</i> alumni focus on academia – in very different ways
<b>Research Groups</b>	40	FUTURE-ORIENTED ACTIONS? The mission statements of German universities reveal a general lack of social sustainability
	42	"TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO MAN HAS GONE BEFORE" The RG 'Fascination' on an interdisciplinary expedition into unknown spaces
	44	A PLACE FOR EDUCATION? Changing universities: a conference run by the RG 'Science Policy: After the Excellence Initiative' shed light on substance and value, theory and practice in the concept of university education
<b>International</b>	46	ARAB-GERMAN THINK TANK What exactly is the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities, AGYA, and what does it do? Questions for <i>Junge Akademie</i> alumna Verena Lepper, president and co-founder of AGYA
	48	RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS TOGETHER A glance abroad: Scotland's Young Academy brings together researchers and entrepreneurs, skilled employees and civil society actors
<b>JA News</b>	50	EVENTS 2014/2015
<b>Last but not least</b>	52	CATCHING UP WITH ... Katja Windt



*A bleak, boring picture. But boring pictures do have interesting aspects, as does boredom itself. You just have to discover them, as this issue shows!*

#### Publisher

The *Junge Akademie (JA)*  
at the Berlin-Brandenburg  
Academy of Sciences and  
Humanities and the German  
National Academy of  
Sciences Leopoldina

#### Editorial Team of the JA

Evelyn Runge (editor-in-chief)  
Jennifer Girschbach-Noe  
Katharina Heyden  
Lisa Kaltenegger  
Cornelis Menke  
Jule Specht  
Kai Wiegandt

#### Authors of the JA

Sibylle Baumbach  
Daniel Chappell  
Wolfgang Gaissmaier  
Lena Henningsen  
Stefanie Hiß  
Gordon Kampe  
Henrike Manuwald  
Giesela Rühl

#### Co-Authors

Marlis Bärthel  
Lesley Campbell  
Ulrike Schiefelbein, Intern  
Hanna Schulte  
Sam Webb

#### Text and Co-ordination

Katharina Bröcker, Project  
Management  
Vera Klocke, Student Assistant  
Ulrich Pontes,  
Freelance Editor  
Deidre Rath, Student Assistant  
Evelyn Runge, JA Member  
Manuel Tröster, JA Office

#### Co-ordinator English Issue

Manuel Tröster

#### Translation into English

ResearchComm Ltd,  
Lynda Lich-Knight, Canterbury

#### Copy-Editing

Nathalie Schwering,  
Interpreter :: Translator :: Editor

#### Cover Photo

Evelyn Runge

#### Design

Wiebke Genzmer

#### Print

Medialis Offsetdruck GmbH

#### Circulation

500 copies

#### December 2014

© The *Junge Akademie*

ISSN 1863-0367

[www.diejungeakademie.de/en](http://www.diejungeakademie.de/en)

# EDITOR'S LETTER

Boredom is a particularly intense emotional state, says time expert Marc Wittmann in an interview with psychologist and *Junge Akademie (JA)* member Jule Specht. The correlation between our perception of time – with its concomitant perception of boredom and ecstasy – and physicality is revealed in their conversation, be it in relation to football, as a survival strategy or in the various phases of a child's or older person's life. Time and our perception of time is the theme connecting the texts in the Dossier of this *Junge Akademie Magazin (JAM)* on Ennui and Ecstasy. You can find the *JA* members' associations with these two key words in the tag clouds on the inside covers of this issue. Henrike Manuwald, junior professor in German mediaeval studies, explains the etymology and cultural history of the terms boredom/ennui (*Langeweile*) and diversion/pastime (*Kurzweil*): *Weile* (literally: while) denotes a period of time, the length of which is modified by the adjective (*lang* and *kurz*, respectively). The composer and musicologist Gordon Kampe analyses an internet video entitled "Music out of Boredom" in a most amusing and "distracting" manner. Our portrait features *JA* member Daniel Chappell, whose clinical experience has taught him that when the anaesthetist is bored, the patient is doing well. Julian Klein, composer, stage director and *JA* alumnus, explains the Woodstock Effect – 'music as a kind of drug to transport us to a different level of reality' – and reveals that ecstasy can have a detrimental effect on art: a loss of concentration and control on stage might even be dangerous. So, is boredom underrated and ecstasy overrated?

In the second part of this issue we showcase the ongoing projects of our Research Groups. We report on an interdisciplinary symposium on laughter, the search for unknown spaces and *JA* alumni's forays into the world of film.

Boredom? Not something we are familiar with at the *Junge Akademie*.

The editorial team and I hope you will enjoy this issue!  
Evelyn Runge





*'The things people do out of boredom...'* Or perhaps this supposed lack of fulfilment actually opens up opportunities of its own

# ENNUI AND ECSTASY

TEXT KATHARINA HEYDEN | PHOTO EVELYN RUNGE

‘The things people do out of boredom! They study out of boredom, pray out of boredom, fall in love, marry and procreate out of boredom and, finally, they die of boredom.’ It has been nearly 200 years since the playwright Georg Büchner could put these words into the mouth of Prince Leonce, a character in one of his plays who is spoiled for both wealth and time. Today, all-embracing boredom seems to be a thing of the past – which is precisely why we thought it was time to move this feeling into the spotlight again. In this edition, we want to track down the essence and effect of boredom in science, art and everyday life.

We had planned a dossier on ecstasy and boredom, but boredom got the upper hand and pushed ecstasy into the background. Does this imply that ecstasy is more boring than boredom? What these articles certainly do reveal is how exciting boredom can be. We are told that our perception of time, for example, depends on the intensity of our experience: in retrospect, a wealth of experiences and discoveries can make times past seem very busy and thus long-lasting. In that sense, we hope that your reading experience of this issue will be a long-lasting one!

# STRETCHING TIME

How ecstasy affects our perception of time, and what emotions and boredom have in common: a conversation between two psychologists

INTERVIEW JULE SPECHT | DOCUMENTATION ULRICH PONTES

*It is the day after the memorable World Cup semi-final between Brazil and Germany, which ended 1-7. The meeting – the first between Jule Specht and Marc Wittmann – is virtual, a video conference. Marc Wittmann talks quite freely; as a published author and one of the few experts on time perception, he is a coveted interviewee and speaker. Meanwhile, Jule Specht, herself a psychologist, largely contents herself with the role of interviewer.*

**Jule Specht:** Did you watch the football yesterday?

**Marc Wittmann:** Yes, of course. But I wasn't in ecstasy (laughs), I was dumbfounded, in incredulous amazement.

**Specht:** No ecstasy? So you're not a football fanatic, then?

**Wittmann:** Yes I am! I even used to play football myself. Perhaps a certain degree of equanimity comes with age ... But I don't think I would have got ecstatic when I was younger either. Yesterday was this incredulous amazement, like something out of a dream. There has never been anything like it, at least not since I saw my first international match on television, which was in 1976!

**Specht:** Did the 90 minutes seem like 90 minutes or did the time pass particularly fast or slowly?

**Wittmann:** The game did not feel particularly long to me. That fits in with the equanimity and the relative lack of excitement. Since the score was 5-0 after just half an hour, you weren't tempted to keep looking at the time, desperately hoping for a goal or

dreading one by the opposition. So the game, at least as I saw it, was actually a classic example of time passing quickly: when you are enjoying yourself in a way that doesn't involve extremely strong negative or positive emotions – like during an interesting conversation – time passes very quickly. And this is because we simply don't notice it.

**Specht:** So fans who were experiencing particularly strong emotions, no matter whether they were German or Brazilian, could have felt the 90 minutes lasted longer?

**Wittmann:** Exactly: when strong emotions are involved, the subjective passing of time slows down. However, I could imagine that the effect for the Brazilians was stronger: certainly, studies have shown that subjective time-stretching does work with strong positive emotions, too, but then they have to be almost intoxicating, bordering on the ecstatic. Time-stretching of this kind happens much more easily when the emotions are overwhelmingly negative.

**Specht:** It's interesting that positive emotions have more trouble slowing down our time perception than negative ones. From a hedonistic point of view, it would be a real advantage to be able to spin out phases of exuberant euphoria much longer. But if even an historical victory at football isn't able to generate the requisite degree of ecstasy, it must be all the more difficult to provoke these extremely positive emotions in the lab.

**Wittmann:** Evolutionary psychologists would say that people's first priority is survival. That is the most important thing.






---

#### THE PERSONALITY RESEARCHER

---

*The psychologist Dr Jule Specht is a junior professor at Freie Universität Berlin, a research professor at the German Institute for Economic Research and, as of this year, a member of the Junge Akademie. Her book "Suche kochenden Bettbasen. Was wir aus wissenschaftlichen Studien für die Liebe lernen können" ("Wanted: Sex Bunny Who Can Cook. What Scientific Studies Can Teach Us about Love") appeared in April 2014.*

In moments of shock during an accident, the function of subjective time-stretching becomes clear: people have more time to react appropriately. Of course we would like to have more feelings of happiness, but they would only distract us from the concerns of everyday life. If we were constantly intoxicated with happiness, we would not recognise danger. That's why negative emotions are often strong and last longer than positive ones. And that is the pessimistic worldview expounded so vehemently by Schopenhauer.

**Specht:** A feeling that is much more common than these extreme emotions – and there is probably not one of us who hasn't experienced it at some time – is boredom ...

**Wittmann:** Boredom is the absolute opposite of that state of enjoyment that we mentioned before, when one completely forgets the time: when people are bored they become fixated on time. A classic example are Sunday afternoons when you don't know what to do with yourself although you are free to do whatever you want – but somehow you just can't get motivated.




---

#### THE TIME EXPERT

---

*The psychologist Dr Marc Wittmann works at the Institute for Frontier Areas of Psychology and Mental Health in Freiburg and is a private lecturer at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. His research, which has also taken him to the USA, focuses on the perception of time. In 2012, he published a popular science book on the subject, entitled "Gefühlte Zeit. Kleine Psychologie des Zeitempfindens" ("Perceived Time. A Brief Psychology of Time Perception").*

You sit around on the couch, knowing you could ring someone, go for a walk, do this, that or the other, but you just don't feel like it. Then you start to reflect on yourself. You perceive yourself and your own negative emotions, this boredom, particularly strongly – and that's how you perceive time, too, as passing very slowly. In this respect, boredom is a state filled with especially intensive feelings.

**Specht:** What other influences, apart from emotions, might explain differences in time perception?

**Wittmann:** I think time perception is very fundamentally related to body awareness – which is also indicated by the results of my own experimental research. Because the question is, how is our sense of the passing of time generated in the present, at a given moment? We can't see time, we can't hear it, taste it or smell it, but we still perceive it very directly, at least sometimes. I feel it! And that is my body speaking. When I reflect on myself, perceive myself and my physicality more than I normally would – whether due to strong emotions or boredom –, time suddenly



*'The more I have experienced and the more I am able to recall and update, the longer the respective period seems to be'*

slows down. However, I should point out that time perception researchers are not all in agreement on how we actually get a feeling for time. There are many different, conflicting models. And in terms of neurobiology, if you took all the regions of the brain that some researcher or other has identified as definitive for time perception and put them all together, you could assemble a brain that would be almost complete. That just shows how diverse these theories are.

**Specht:** So far, we've been talking about the perspective of the moment itself. But when I look back in time at the events of yesterday evening, for example, do other aspects play a role in time perception?

**Wittmann:** Yes, they do, as the so-called time paradox illustrates: think of the waiting time at the bus stop or the dentist's. If you have nothing to distract you because you neglected to charge your smartphone, or you are too nervous to amuse yourself, time seems to pass extremely slowly. But when I look back on it later, nothing happened at all and so the time seems to have passed very quickly. So the mechanism consists of the fact that retrospection is always about stored memory: the more I have experienced and the more I am able to recall and update, the longer the respective period seems to be.

**Specht:** Right, so this explains why, when you are in the flow of things, busy doing something demanding, and time passes quickly, afterwards, it seems to have taken a long time when you

consider how much you did. But why does this paradox exist?

**Wittmann:** I would simply look at it as two different perspectives: the one is our consciousness of the present, experiencing the here and now. If I simply stop talking for a moment ..... this gap, this pause, is the experience of the moment. We have all experienced it during conversations that don't really get off the ground properly; those embarrassing seconds of silence that go on forever. This is quite different from looking back and asking yourself what your day was like – and if we have experienced a lot, we think it was a long day. If, on the other hand, it was just the same old, everyday routine, it seems like a short day. This is why time passes more quickly as we get older.

**Specht:** That's interesting – why is that?

**Wittmann:** Because our lives become ever more determined by routines. We are increasingly unable to experience new things. As children and teenagers, even as young people, something new happens every day. And this is stored emphatically in our memory because it is special and new. We can observe the same effect when we are on holiday: if we are in a new place, everything is new and special and the days seem particularly long. But the longer we stay, the more familiar everything becomes, and time passes more quickly once again.

**Specht:** In your book, you suggest that people can stretch their lives artificially.



*'When people are bored, they become fixated on time, which then passes very slowly'*

**Wittmann:** Exactly. By focusing more often on the moment, I have a greater sense of the present, I feel more and time passes more slowly while I am in the process of experiencing something. As a result of experiencing more and perceiving it more intensively, my memory also retains more, and in retrospect, time is stretched.

**Specht:** What practical use can we make of this?

**Wittmann:** I think lots of people – including me – often run on autopilot. We reel off our everyday life without really ever thinking about it. We should learn to take note of what we are doing, consciously listen to our inner selves: what am I actually doing at the moment? Who am I? What sorts of things are going on at present? Make sure you take a break. I think that is one of the reasons why so many people do yoga, relaxation exercises and other forms of meditation – because you learn to regain a certain control over time and yourself.

**Specht:** But doesn't time also seem long in retrospect when I am living a hectic life and doing a lot? Of course, this is only true when I consciously perceive all the things I do.

**Wittmann:** Exactly. And when things are hectic we usually have to start multitasking, switching our attention from one thing to another very quickly – and then we end up not doing anything properly. That's something we've all experienced, too: we are busy all day long, but when we look back on it we ask ourselves

what we actually did the whole time. And we can't find a good answer even though we really did do a lot. But because things are so hectic that we can't really do anything properly or in depth or intensively, nothing is stored in our memory. And then it suddenly seems as though time has passed very quickly.

**Specht:** So we could try to take some time out each day and ask ourselves 'What have I really done so far?' in order to tell our subjective feeling for time what has been going on.

**Wittmann:** It doesn't matter whether you are in the street or on the underground, you can always try to avoid the autopilot. Instead of letting your thoughts come randomly and associatively, you can make them more structured; consciously perceive what is going on around you, how you feel yourself. This is a good antidote to burnout. If you like, burnout is about constantly being on autopilot, but completely stressed out, in reactive mode – permanent pressure without any chance of finding peace of mind – for months or years on end. What is really needed, though, is what I call "time freedom" – that, depending on the situation, I can say, now I'm going to concentrate on the here and now, now I'm going to enjoy the moment and experience it intensively. Or, vice versa, now I have to resist certain temptations, sit myself down and get on with it, even if I won't reap the rewards immediately.

**Specht:** You are writing your second popular science book. What's it about?

**Wittmann:** Well, in my first book, I dealt with what you might call the ordinary consciousness of time with all its related phenomena. Now I want to examine the frontier areas: perception of time and self in exceptional states of consciousness – these could be drug-induced, or mystical experiences, or extreme states of meditation in people who have been practising this for years, or the experiences of neurological and psychiatric patients. For example, in certain focal epileptic seizures involving ecstatic auras the consciousness of self and time is initially enhanced enormously until it suddenly tips over into egolessness and timelessness, almost like a mystical experience, right on into unconsciousness.

**Specht:** What effects do drugs have on body awareness and therefore on time perception?

**Wittmann:** That depends on the drug: alcohol, for example, manages to make time pass more quickly. You can think of it this way: after the first glass of beer or wine, attention and working memory are gradually impaired. If I can't focus properly anymore, I can't retain things properly either and, in retrospect, time passes very quickly. I think that's the reason why many people drink alcohol. Hashish is quite a different matter. It's a good example for increasing and accentuating body awareness. In this case, people tend to overestimate a period of time. And that works retrospectively, too: although it is known that hashish causes memory loss, the awareness is so strong that enough of what one has experienced is transferred to memory to produce an extended perception of time.

**Specht:** Although you might think alcohol would be more closely linked to exciting silliness than the leisurely enjoyment of a joint.

**Wittmann:** But what we are talking about is the individual's inner experience! Emotions and thoughts in the social situation – all the things that develop there.

**Specht:** That sounds like an argument in favour of cannabis consumption.

**Wittmann:** Yes, well, there are several of those ... But the problem is, of course, that long-term consumption can have a negative impact on central psychological functions such as attention, working memory and so on, as long-term studies have shown.

**Specht:** Time perception is something that affects us all, something we have all experienced. Do you, on the other hand, feel that your research has affected your own life? Do you live the moment more frequently than other people, for example?

**Wittmann:** I find it really difficult to compare myself with others, but I can, of course, perceive the changes in myself. I'm no great meditator and never will be, although I'm prepared to give everything a try. And what I often do is to sit down quietly for a quarter of an hour and consciously do nothing – in order to feel time, to try to become immersed – not in the sense of being overwhelmed by thoughts but achieving a consciousness of the present. And, of course, I myself am affected by the existential dimensions of time. I often address them, not least in philosophical terms, which then feeds into my work on psychology. ✿





PHOTO: EVELYN RUNGE

*'Alcohol makes time pass more quickly because I can't focus properly anymore'*





*An article about happiness? An advertisement for holidays in the countryside? For tampons? Good stock photos can be used for many different purposes*

# THE ECONOMICS OF FORGETTING

See and forget: this is the principle behind the global image market. And in this case, two things converge that are not usually compatible: photography and boredom

TEXT EVELYN RUNGE

A lot of money can be made with boring photographs. Hardly a day passes when we do not see any, usually without consciously perceiving them. Examples? A white cup containing fresh coffee with a heart/a spiral/a leaf captured in the froth and a spoon nestling neatly on the saucer. A woman in the countryside, preferably in landscape format, spreading out her arms/leaping up in the air against the light/sitting in a yoga position surrounded by grass covered in daisies/poppies/other flowers – or, instead of grass and flowers, rapeseed in bloom. A man beams with joy, looks up/at the camera/at the display and is completely satisfied with himself/the world/his boss – but above all, with his smartphone.

Photos like these are used as symbols, online and in print, in newspapers, magazines and advertising. The aesthetics are all similar: the focus on the motif, the background bright and hazy, non-specific product design and fashion. The photos are context free and abstract, so-called stock photography, produced in advance and sold by agencies, often cheaply. The art historian Wolfgang Ullrich calls these pictures “joker images” – they are universally applicable and compatible, can be used for editorial purposes as well as for advertising and product design, and are thus an ideal source of supply for the global image market.

These are images based on the economics of forgetting. The less the recipient is able to remember about a specific image, the more frequently this or a similar one can be sold. The joker images are both the goods and the currency in a visually-hungry marketplace, which has been driven by digitisation and has probably still not reached its zenith.

## **The opposite of the global stock photo market**

The situation is different when it comes to key photographs and iconic images. They are representative of an epoch or become icons of an historical event. An example: a mother with her right hand up to her cheek stares into the distance; two children with their faces turned away from the camera rest their heads on her shoulders, a baby lies in her arms. Or another: a naked child in the midst of a group of children running towards the photographer with a long road behind them and thick smoke on the horizon. Lots of people will be able to recall these images – the “Migrant Mother” by Dorothea Lange, 1936, which became the iconic image of the Great Depression (page after next), and Kim Phúc, the little girl fleeing the napalm attack on the village of Trang Bàng in Vietnam in 1972, captured by Nick Út (see: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2009632262/>).

These are photographs that are not (so easily) forgotten – nor the names of the photographers. In the global marketplace for stock photography, by contrast, the name of the photographer is irrelevant. The technical possibilities offered by the Internet and digital photography have changed the job of the photographer as well as the job description and job title. In Germany, you can call yourself a photographer if you have completed the relevant vocational training; a photo journalist, on the other hand, is not a protected job title. And those who earn their living with stock photography describe themselves as photo producers. The line between professional and amateur photography is blurred.

### Stock photos for the American Dream


The business models of microstock agencies like iStockphoto, Photocase, Shutterstock or Fotolia are similar: they provide sales structures for photographers and work with amateurs. Some of these agencies have a portfolio of several million photos, like Fotolia with more than 14 million. The photographers receive a percentage of the revenue generated by their pictures based on their previous sales figures and the exclusivity of their images. On their websites, the microstock agencies provide detailed information on the kind of photos they are interested in, the keywords they should be tagged with, the resolution that should be used for upload and the motifs that require the consent of the people featured.

A prominent example for the crossover between amateur and professional photography is the Dane Yuri Arcurs, who describes himself as one of the top-selling photographers of the 21st century. He started taking amateur photos for photo platforms when he was still a student of psychology back in 2006. In 2009, he earned three million dollars. Today, he no longer reveals his income. His one-man start-up has turned into an enterprise with more than 100 employees around the globe. Arcurs – who signed an exclusive contract with Getty Images in summer 2013 – now trains tomorrow's stock photographers: The Yuri Arcurs Photography Boot Camp 2012 was like a casting show. Of the 1,500 applicants, 120 were invited to attend and 15 were finally chosen to study with the master himself.

In addition to the economics of forgetting, the stock photography sector exhibits the ubiquitous economics of attention as

well: in today's world, according to Georg Franck, the degree of attention paid to people is under threat. There is only a limited amount of the resource "attention", whilst the flood of information seems to be boundless. If you make it into the lime-light, you get the attention. Yuri Arcurs is a well-known stock photographer; he is, perhaps, the only one who has made a name for himself, particularly as his career is the American Dream exemplified.

'Intellectual property,' Mark Getty prophesied back in 2000, 'is the oil of the 21st century.' As the founder of Getty Images, one of the largest photo agencies in the world, he soon recognised how digitisation would change the global image market. In March 2014, the agency announced it could offer 35 million pictures covering news, sports, entertainment as well as historical archive material for non-commercial online use free-of-charge. In return, the agency receives the data on who is using which image and for how long. Data thus become a non-monetary currency and the name Getty Images appears on numerous websites.

This kind of name-dropping could prove profitable because the demand for copies of stereotypical photographs seems to be growing unabated – and joker images fit the bill perfectly. 

---

*The media scientist and journalist Evelyn Runge, a member of the Junge Akademie since 2011, conducts research at the University of Hildesheim.*



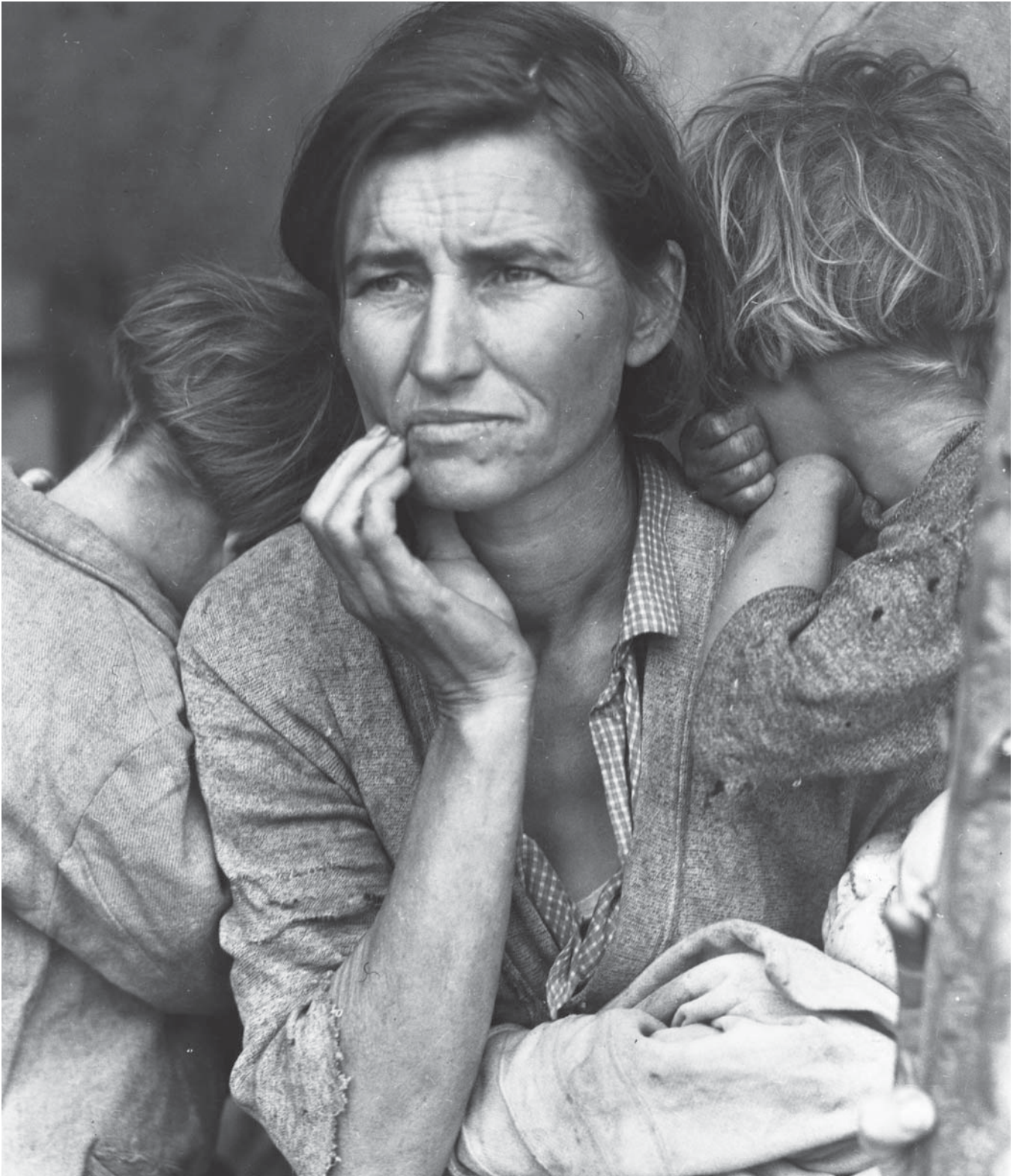


PHOTO: DOROTHEA LANGE, LC-DIG-FSA-8B29516

*The opposite of a stock photo, as it were: the "Migrant Mother" by Dorothea Lange (1936), a key image of the Great Depression*

# KURZWÎLE AND LANGE WEIL

## Is *Langeweile* (boredom/ennui) the opposite of *Kurzweil* (diversion/pastime)? Notes on semantic change and cultural history

TEXT HENRIKE MANUWALD

If we look at how the words *Langeweile* (boredom/ennui) and *Kurzweil* (diversion/pastime) are formed, it all seems quite simple at first: both words include the noun *Weile* (literally: while) to denote a period of time and an adjective (*lang* = long/*kurz* = short) to modify it. In Middle High German texts we can find examples of *lange Weile* being used to indicate a long while, such as in a love song by Reinmar “the Elder”, dating from around 1200 A.D.: ‘Ich hân lange wile unsanfte mich gesent’ (‘I spent a long while in painful yearning’). This clearly illustrates the difference from the way the term is used today. In New High German, *Langeweile* is not employed in a purely temporal way. Rather, *Langeweile* means a subjective attitude towards time associated with an element of dullness that makes us perceive time as passing slowly. *Kurzweil*, on the other hand, refers to something that makes us feel that time passes pleasantly and quickly.

### Boredom and the banishment of time

If we focus on the extended meanings of “long while” and “short while”, we can observe that they did not develop at the same time. Whilst the usage of *kurz(e)wile* in non-temporal ways can be traced back to the second half of the 12th century, *lange weil* or *langweil* (initially it is not important whether it is written as one word or two) in its present-day sense only started to emerge sporadically in the Upper German area in the second half of the 15th century, and to establish itself more firmly from the 16th century onwards. So is it true, as we read in Friedrich Ludwig Karl Weigand’s “Deutsches Wörterbuch” (“*Dictionary of German*”), that, in relation to *Kurzweil*, *Langeweile* was developed as a parallel in form and a contrast in sense.

The hypothesis of a formation by opposition is doubtful because the literal meaning of *Kurzweil* had already faded into the back-



The vice of indolence (acedia), a 15th-century illustration (Hugo of Trimberg, “*Der Renner*” (“The Runner”), adapted by Johannes Vorster, UB Heidelberg cpg 471, fol. 52r, detail)

ground by 1500 and the figurative meanings of “long while” and “short while” are not on the same level: as early as 1200, *kurz(e)wile* denotes all kinds of pastime or amusement with which to *vertreiben* (pass/kill; literally: banish) the time. The “*Nibelungenlied*” (*Song of the Nibelungs*), for example, contains the line ‘mit maneger kurzewile man nû die zît vertreip’ (‘now one banishes the time with many kinds of pastime’). In the court culture of the Middle Ages, “banishing the time” could refer to jousting, dancing, board games as well as music-making and story-telling. The latter was a preferred form of entertainment to pass the time on journeys and make the distance seem shorter. But *kurz(e)wile* occurs most frequently in connection with festive gatherings at court. Phrases such as ‘er kürzete ir die stunde’ (‘he shortened the hour for her’) from Gottfried of Strassburg’s “*Tristan*” reveal that, in these situations, time was perceived as



something that needed structuring, otherwise it might seem long to those present. At one point in the “Song of the Nibelungs”, a tournament is explicitly described in terms of banishing the time so that it did not seem long (‘sus vertriben si die wile: diu dûhte si niht lanc’). The noun *Langeweile* is probably the result of a contraction of the syntactic unit (*lange*) *weil/zeit vertreiben* (“long while/banish time”). In this context, *Kurzweil* seems to be a means of preventing or banishing the mood of boredom.

### Boredom: burden or asset


Even before the emergence of the relevant meaning of “long while”, the perception of time as long is often coupled with a feeling of vexation, as is particularly well illustrated by a stanza penned by Conrad of Würzburg (1220/30–1287):

Sô wê mir tumber daz mich iemer langer tage verdrizuet,  
und mîner jâre frist enwec sô rehte balde schiuzet,  
daz ein bach niht fliuzet  
sô drâte ûz velse noch ûz hage!

Woe is me, foolish one,  
that I ever feel vexed by (too) long days,  
whereby the years allotted to me  
streak by so very quickly  
that a stream could not flow faster  
out of the rock or the forest!

As this stanza paradoxically juxtaposes days perceived as long and the brevity of life, the concept of boredom approaches a general weariness of life, resembling the ancient Roman *taedium vitae* and the Existentialist ennui of modern times. In the Middle Ages, reflections on this kind of world weariness are most common in the context of the vice of *acedia*. In the late Middle Ages, *acedia* was essentially interpreted as indolence in the sense of sloth – which is why *acedia* in the 15th-century illustration featured above is understood as idleness. But originally, *acedia* implied a much more fundamental kind of indifference, which prevented one from leading a life focused on God, and thus, in terms of Christianity, from leading a meaningful life. Seen in this light, symptoms of *acedia* can also include restlessness and the pursuit of worldly goods. Terminologically, the historical debate on *acedia* is not

connected with the semantic field of *Langeweile* but it does reveal interconnections between *Langeweile* and *Kurzweil* that are not based on oppositions: what *Langeweile*, in the sense of weariness/tedium, and *Kurzweil*, in the sense of distraction by entertainment, have in common is the absence of a focus on what is essential.

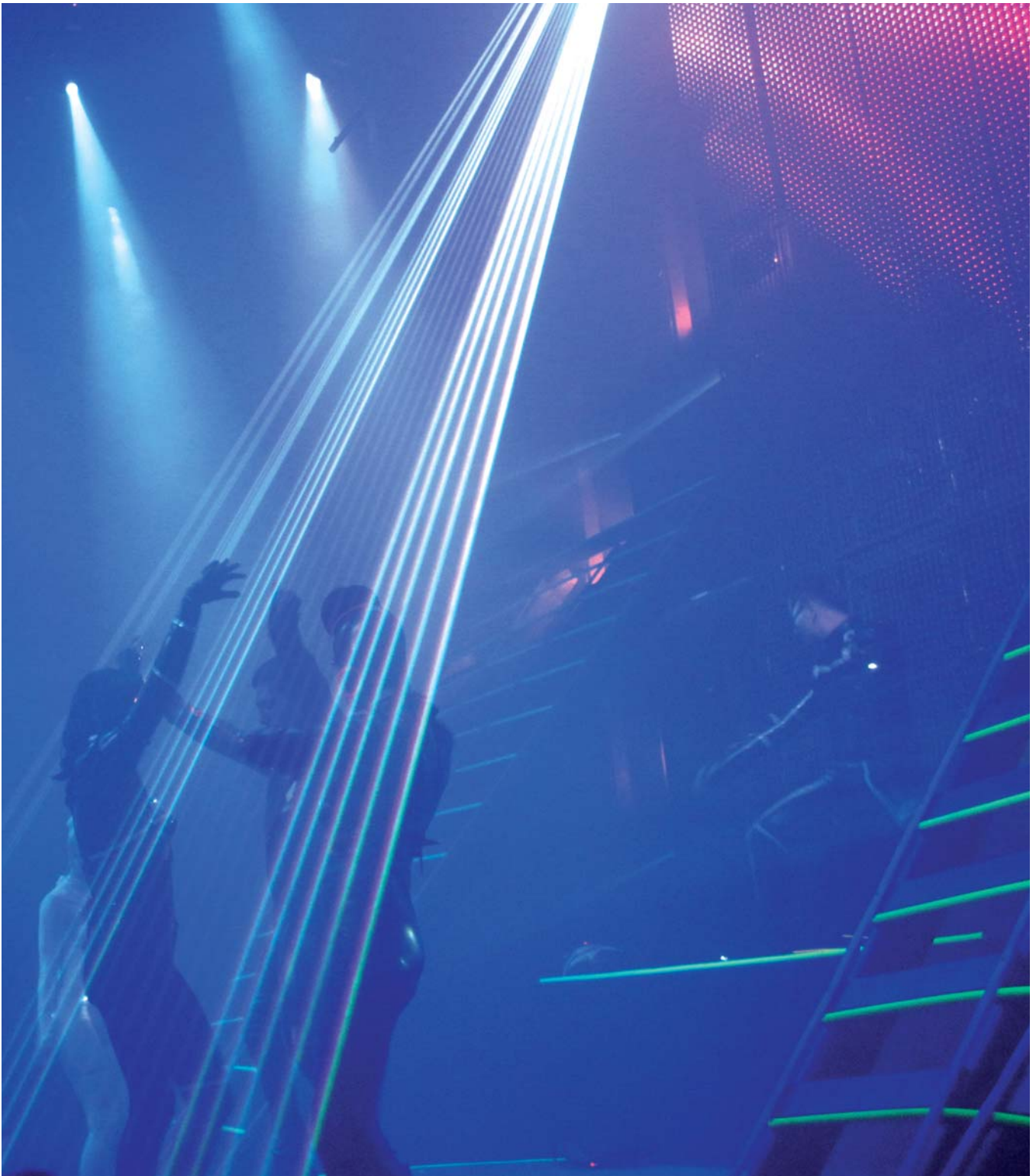
When we look at the complex history of meaning relating to the word *Langeweile*, however, we can find examples of it being posited as the very precondition for concentrating on what is essential. In his “Ausgedrückte Entblößung des falschen Glaubens” (“*Precise Exposure of False Belief*”) of 1524, Thomas Müntzer rails against those who devote much time to distraction (‘ueppig die zeyt verkurtzweylen’) and not enough to the faith. He criticises them for never having tasted the *lang weyl* through which God’s work can be recognised (‘das sie die lang weyl nit gekost haben/ durch welche gottes werck allein erfunden wirt’). It would certainly not be appropriate to draw a direct line from this concept of internal contemplation, which is related to the tradition of mediaeval mysticism, to any positive connotations of *Langeweile* in current usage. It is nevertheless remarkable that, today, there is a growing demand for children to have the right to boredom, which is seen as a necessary transitional phase on the path to creative activity. Just as in Müntzer’s work, the counter concept cited is a shortening of time (*Verkurtzweilen der Zeit*), that is, rushing from one “entertainment appointment” to the other. In the context of such a line of reasoning, *Langeweile* once again emerges as the opposite of *Kurzweil*. 

### Further reading:

- A. Bellebaum: *Langeweile, Überdruss und Lebenssinn. Eine geistesgeschichtliche und kultursoziologische Untersuchung*, Opladen 1990.
- L. Völker: *Langeweile. Untersuchungen zur Vorgeschichte eines literarischen Motivs*, München 1975.

---

*Henrike Manuwald, a member of the Junge Akademie since 2012, is a junior professor in German Mediaeval Studies at the University of Freiburg.*



*Music can be intoxicating – but to induce genuine ecstasy, something extra is usually needed, like an erotic moment*

# THE WOODSTOCK EFFECT

A frequent theme, but rarely the means or the end: on the role of ecstasy in the creative process – the thoughts of Julian Klein

RECORDED BY ULRICH PONTES

Without a doubt, music is the phenomenon most likely to induce ecstasy. It depends, of course, on our definition of ecstasy, but if we take it to be a state of rapture in which we seem to move outside of ourselves, we have the Woodstock Effect: music as a kind of drug to transport us to a different level of reality. It is, above all, a phenomenon of pop culture, but one in which non-musical things play a significant role, such as the erotic moment at the frenzied hailing of an idol. For me as an artist, however, and as a composer, the idea of inducing ecstasy or other intense emotional states in an audience is purely theoretical. In practice, it is extremely difficult because “the audience” can rarely be seen as a homogenous group. And with regard to my own artistic work I can also claim that I never primarily try to have a certain effect on my audience. I approach it the other way round, I try to construct a space for experience, a space in which diverse kinds of experience can occur without me being able or willing to predict them, let alone control them.

States of ecstasy are not the order of the day in the creative process either. Of course, you get excited when something works out well. And at rehearsals you can experience moments of intense joy which can sometimes be quite euphoric. But this never involves a loss of control, which I think is one of the facets of real ecstasy. And, anyway, during the creative process, it would not be advisable to lose concentration and control in this way. It is more likely to happen during theatrical or musical rehearsals that you try to play yourself “empty”. This is part of the repertoire of artists’ strategies: that you try to achieve a state in which the powers that generate the drive to be interesting, that generate originality or the will to create, are all shut down. Or, to put it another way: a point at which you have shed all ideas and left them behind you; where everything that occurs to you,

everything you have said, where everything has been played and tried. When you really reach rock bottom and, instead of avoiding this moment, consciously bear the boredom it emanates, this can be very fruitful. In my experience, something sustainable often emerges, something with that special quality of not being one of the things that immediately occur to you.

As an artistic theme, ecstasy has always been interesting and still is. Whereby, even if an actor is supposed to play a figure in ecstasy, it does not follow that he or she actually has to enter this state – on the contrary, it is only in very rare, exceptional cases that this is the desire and intention (see reference). Think of Stravinsky’s ballet “Le Sacre du Printemps”, which presents a kind of ecstatic state and, indeed, induced one amongst the audience at the premiere, although it was partly negative: some people were beside themselves with horror. For the artists on stage, this is a seriously difficult task. They have no time at all to work themselves up into a frenzy; they have to control themselves and take care not to injure themselves during the complicated choreography. So you cannot always equate the contents themselves with the work that is done on the contents. Quite the opposite: you can assume that the more effortless and intense something seems, the greater the hard work, practice and control that have gone into it. ✿

**Further reading:** Julian Klein: Emotionstheater?, in: *Forum modernes Theater* 25/1 (2010), pp. 77–91.

---

*The composer and stage director Julian Klein heads the Institute for Artistic Research, which he founded in Berlin. He was a member of the Junge Akademie from 2003 to 2008.*

# CARDIAC ALARM AND BOREDOM

When the alarm sounds, it is time to drop everything and save lives: as an anaesthetist, Daniel Chappell has an unusual routine for a researcher

TEXT ULRICH PONTES | PHOTOS EROL GURIAN



*Daniel Chappell's daily routine: management between coffee machine ...*

'Hours of boredom, minutes of thrill, seconds of terror.' This is Daniel Chappell's spontaneous response to the themes of boredom and ecstasy. 'I don't know who originally said that, but it sums up the job of an anaesthetist very well indeed.' Hours of boredom? 'If you see someone sitting in the operating theatre with their arms folded and their legs crossed, that'll be the anaesthetist,' Chappell explains. 'And the fact that he's twiddling his thumbs is a good sign. It means the patient's doing well.'

But then the surgeon might suddenly utter an 'oh' or a 'damn.' 'He might have nicked an artery or something – at which point, the anaesthetist's boredom comes to a very abrupt end.'

"PD Dr D. Chappell", it says on the white coat the young doctor is wearing over his scrubs. At the beginning of the year, the British consultant and Associate Professor, who was brought up in Germany, became the head of the Department of Anaesthesia at Munich University Hospital of Gynaecology & Obstetrics, an imposing old building in the famous Maistrasse boasting a staircase with a vaulted ceiling and a little park in the courtyard. Four delivery rooms with operating theatres for caesarian sections, four operating tables for other gynaecological surgery, an anaesthesia preparation and recovery room, and a staff rest room with easy chairs and a workstation, where his team of at least four other anaesthetists as well as nursing staff can have a break: this is Daniel Chappell's workplace. Management between the coffee machine and the vital signs monitor, starting at 7.15 in the morning. The pockets of his white coat bulge with the essential implements for the day: cordless phone, beeper, pen and a sheet of A-4 paper with the list of scheduled operations.

## Jack of all trades

A male nurse approaches, also in scrubs. 'Do you need anything?' – 'Just quickly, theatre three is reserved, should I reserve number one, too?' 'Yes,' Chappell decides briefly, 'Lisa's doing number one, she's already finished.' In his capacity as head of department he decides which operation will take place in which operating theatre, and when. He has to ensure that patients are brought from the wards on time, and be prepared to change the schedule

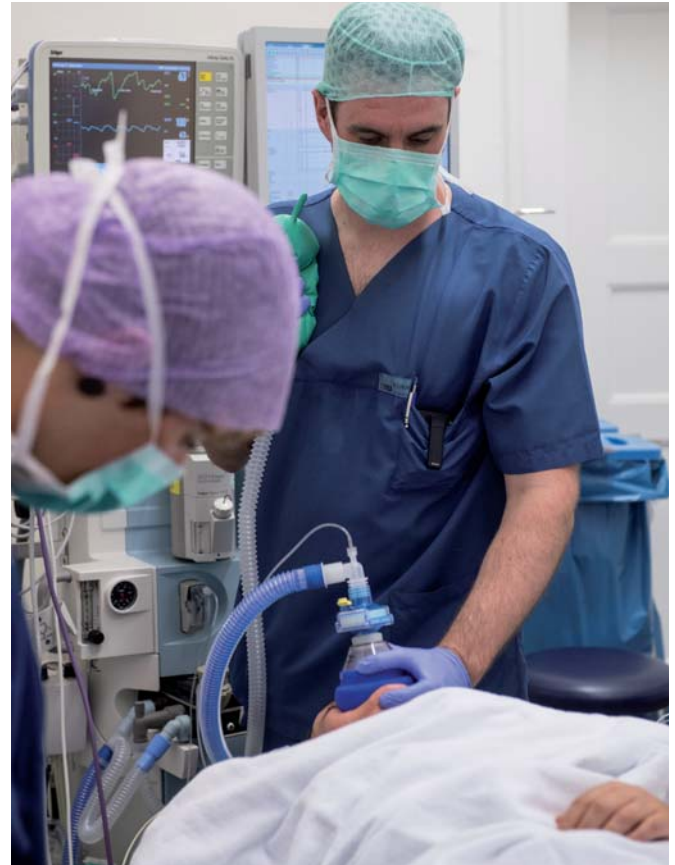


at short notice if premedication has not been administered correctly. 'Nobody wants to make any decisions because then they'd have to take the rap,' says Chappell, explaining his role. 'So I have to make all the decisions – I'm basically the Jack of all trades around here,' comments the broad-shouldered doctor, with a grin. He takes it in his stride that people constantly want something from him and sometimes bombard him with their complaints. 'You learn to let it roll off your back, otherwise you'd go mad.' The phone rings. 'Chappell, Anaesthesia, hello?' Central administration is on the line, wanting to know the inventory number of the printer in the staff rest room. Chappell bends down next to the desk with the printer on it and reads out the number. Whatever the topic is, be it the daily co-ordination around with nurses, anaesthetists, and gynaecologists, the education of students and trainee midwives, missing accounting documents, supposedly overpriced drug orders or the leasing agreement for the semi-professional staff coffee machine, Daniel Chappell is responsible for everything, or, at the very least, the go-to person.

On top of all of this, he has to take care of his core tasks as a doctor: in his capacity as head of Anaesthesia he is in charge of caring for private patients. And, of course, he can be confronted with stressful and even awful moments at any time: the seconds of terror when the cardiac alarm on the beeper goes off because someone has collapsed somewhere and he has to drop everything and run, resuscitate, and possibly save a life. Or when one floor below the heart of not just one foetus suddenly stops functioning properly during birth so that the mother has to be anaesthetised in the operating theatre, have her abdomen cut open and the baby removed within five minutes, but – as happened recently – two emergencies of this kind occur simultaneously. A nightmare scenario. 'You come back upstairs afterwards feeling like you need a fortnight's holiday.'

### **The office? 'I hardly ever get anywhere near it.'**

Because there is always a chance of something happening, Daniel Chappell always has to be present unless he can organise a stand-in. Lunch in the canteen? Not on the schedule. Time spent in his office at the end of the corridor one floor above? 'I hardly ever get anywhere near it.' And research? Has to be done *en passant*. He reckons he manages to devote about ten hours a week to research, but 80 per cent of that is in his spare time.



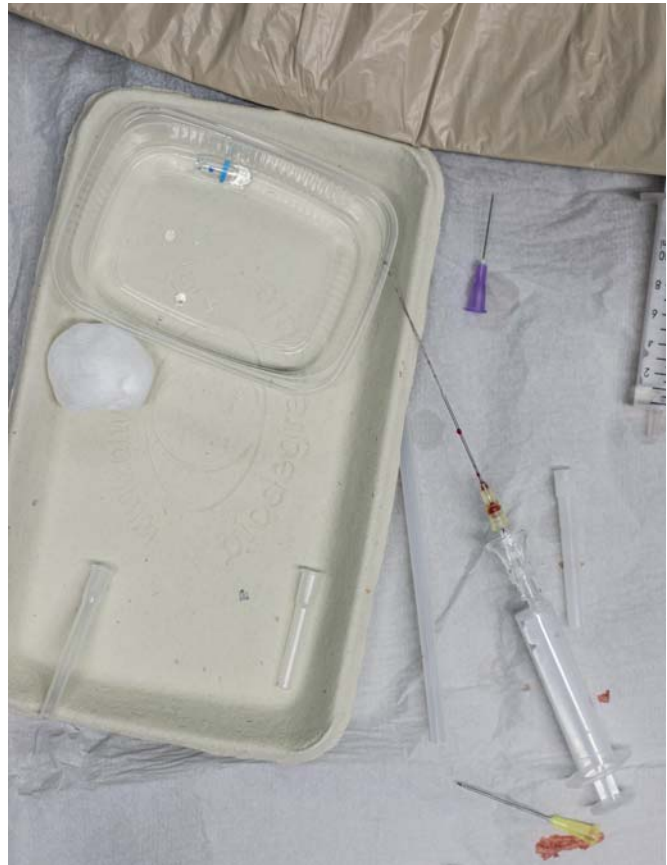
... and vital signs monitor – the department head has many responsibilities



The rest is done during weekends and night shifts when he watches over all the hospitals in the inner city as the after-hours reserve for anaesthetic issues. During these times, he may have the opportunity to work on a paper. Or if there are any quiet moments during the day, he sits down at the computer in the staff rest room and answers his e-mails, reviews scientific papers for specialist journals or communicates with his colleagues in the *Junge Akademie*.

In this forum he is very active: in the Research Groups 'Ethics in Practice' and 'Teaching', as treasurer of the Board, and as the speaker welcoming new members, an occasion on which he likes to reveal his sharp-edged wit, Daniel bestows a few verbal lashings on current events, and mentions that his enthusiasm for Bayern Munich is lukewarm at best. He himself has been a member since 2010, long enough to discover that his life is rather different from that of the other young academics in the *Junge Akademie*. It is not just that research always has to play second fiddle to his job, he also has to fight for every opportunity to attend conferences. To this end, he often does a 24-hour shift, so that when he finishes at 7.30 in the morning, he has the rest of the day off and, preferably after a quick visit to his wife and child, heads off for his lecture. 'Other JA members can organise a week-long summer school on Lake Constance or take part in a two-day workshop at the drop of a hat. I really envy their freedom and flexibility!'

On the whole, however, Daniel Chappell does not consider himself to be worse off as a practicing physician than colleagues in other disciplines 'because I think it's easier for us to get funding for our research.' In medicine, after all, the goal is clear: better treatment for patients. He really started to enjoy research when it became obvious that he, too, could do something to benefit patients. 'I had a lightbulb moment at a conference when someone presented my work and said it could be a promising approach for patients.' Daniel Chappell is therefore in awe of researchers like humanities scholars. 'There are people who dedicate themselves to something although they themselves say only a handful of people will ever read their books. I really



*Utensils with negative connotations? Not for Daniel Chappell*



admire that kind of passion and commitment.’ Overall, this has been his most important experience at the *Junge Akademie*: sharing ideas with people from completely different disciplines like history, the philosophy of science, or theatre studies.

### Doing and enabling research

Daniel Chappell has raised a good 300,000 Euros in funding from the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG). This allows him to finance his investigations and pursue the project that has dominated his research career from the word go: to obtain a better understanding of the structure and functionality of vascular barriers. Particularly in critically ill patients in intensive care, they often fail to retain the water in the bloodstream and prevent it from entering the tissue. However, the funding means that he can finance other researchers as well. He has employed a younger physician, a postdoc, who can now work on the topic full time – just as he himself did between 2006 and becoming a consultant, when he devoted two and half years entirely to research. Whilst this slowed down his clinical career, it certainly paid off in the end: in 2010, Daniel Chappell won the research prize of the European Society of Anaesthesiology and in 2012, the Karl Thomas Prize, awarded by the German Society for Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care, for his *Habilitation* dissertation.



*Doctor first, researcher after: helping patients is Daniel Chappell's priority*

Nevertheless, he has no doubt that he did not become a doctor because he wanted to conduct research but because he wanted to help people. Therefore, despite boredom and terror, he would not want to give up working in a hospital – and there are the exciting, good moments, the thrill, as well. ‘To administer a good local anaesthetic for a hand operation, for example,’ to painstakingly trace and anaesthetise the individual nerves so that the operation can be carried out with the patient fully awake, is great and challenging. ‘Or to administer an epidural in the delivery room and see the smile on the face of the expectant mother when the pain suddenly subsides, is very rewarding.’ Whilst Daniel Chappell, eyes shining, describes the picture-perfect moments in the life of an anaesthetist, his hands fiddle with the beeper – the cardiac alarm could go off at any time. ❀

# THE BOREDOM OF ANGELKISS1030

Even the apparently mundane does not have to be boring at all:  
a cursory analysis of a randomly googled piece of music

TEXT GORDON KAMPE

In 0.43 seconds, Google.de produces nearly 716,000 hits for the terms “Musik und Langeweile” – music and boredom. The search algorithms have certainly done their job – even the very first result could be called a direct hit: Google comes up with a YouTube video entitled “Musik aus Langeweile” (“*Music out of Boredom*”) by the erratic user Angelkiss 1030 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=di4r7pyqzFo>). According to AngelKiss1030, s/he wrote the song out of boredom, and appeals to those leaving comments not to judge this debut piece too harshly (“Bitte nicht böse Urteilen dieses Lied mahte ich aus langeweile und war men erster anlauf überhaupt sowas zu machen :)”).

Perhaps this video signature with its overtones of concrete poetry is, however, the first indication that AngelKiss 1030 is not playing a straight game with the listener (or clicker). The song does not really have a title; rather, the title already describes the situation and mood of the author when the song was written. Or does the purported title perhaps say less about the mood of the author and, instead, try to reveal information about the material used? Not music out of *boredom*, then, but music *out of* boredom. The moment the sound is heard is coupled with a critical distancing from the sound if the concept of boredom has negative connotations for the author.

## Conditioning title, positive bemusement

Even before one second of the music has died away, due to the obvious play on ambiguities, it is therefore possible to place the “work” in the context of engaging with postmodern strategies. And, of course, the vagueness of the title puts the very concept of the work itself to the test once more. The recipients are conditioned by the title and yet, in terms of expectations, its bluff is soon called because the piece that lasts just over two minutes is

not boring at all: the first striking features, which provoke positive bemusement, reveal themselves within the first 30 seconds. Here are some paradigmatic examples to elucidate the constellation: AngelKiss1030 is quite obviously inspired by the Eurodance of the early 1990s. “Rhythm is a Dancer” (Who could forget that horror hit, courtesy of Snap!?) may well have provided the inspiration. And on top of this, AngelKiss1030 seems to want to verify whether an accompanying readymade rave from the mid-era of the Love Parade is still stylistically viable in the present day.

In music, it can sometimes be interesting not only to abandon formulae, rules and laws, but also to run through certain aesthetic assumptions within a given canon of form, material or sound. In this respect, AngelKiss 1030 not only adopts a relatively flamboyant form: refrain, bridge, intro or outro – all these seem to be in the “wrong” place – but also pays little heed to the way a commercially “correct” song is supposed to be constructed.

Furthermore, there is a remarkable adjustment in the vocal filter settings after 28 seconds: the vocal part suddenly recedes into the background of musical activity, whereby the statement in the text ‘There’s a fire burning’ initially seems to be contradicted. On closer scrutiny, however, this filter adjustment is absolutely logical because it is not just the comprehensibility of the text that is important but especially the increasingly expansive beat, which is undoubtedly meant to signify the fire burning.

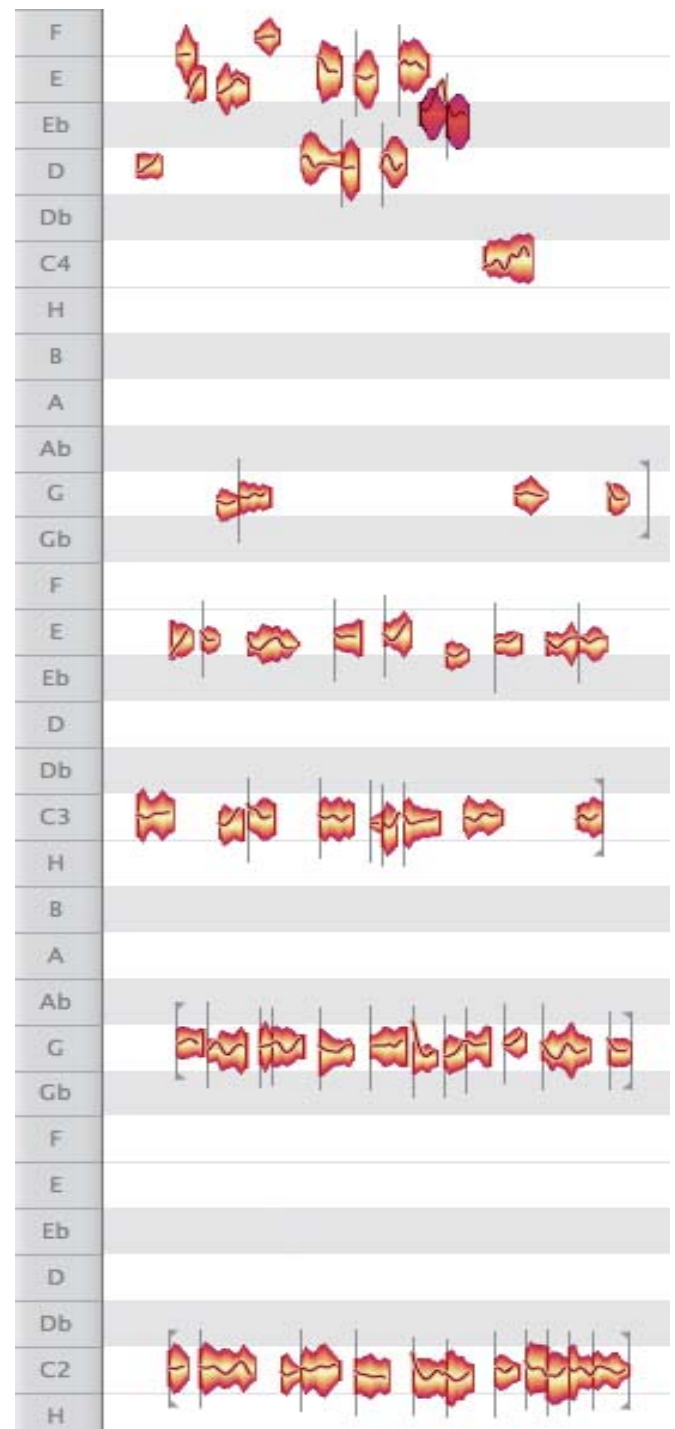
## Criticising capitalism by adjusting filter settings

By employing what in compositional terms is the fairly simple medium of adjusting the filter settings, on the one hand AngelKiss1030 semanticises the loop used; on the other, a semantic

bleaching takes place below the surface because, as it seems to come from a loop library, the loop identifier that is pre-defined by title is effectively formatted by being re-semanticised. If, on top of this, the loop does not come from a freely-available loop database (there are certain overlaps in sound and style with the Melody 130BPM loop on the [www.free.loops.com](http://www.free.loops.com) database), but from a commercial loop factory, the semantic formatting could be interpreted as intentional criticism of capitalism: an off-the-shelf product is individualised by re-formatting the loop name. Another indication of AngelKiss 1030's critical impulse is the fact that, precisely at this point, the text reads 'There's a fire burning', which in this context is certainly an allusion to Prometheus and thus to the implicit educational moment in "music out of boredom". It is thus small wonder that it is at this very juncture that the kinetic moment in the music increases, because AngelKiss 1030 quite obviously refuses to allow a contradiction between the movement of the mind and the concomitant movement of the body.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the play on ambiguities is echoed in the harmonic disposition. From this point of view, the stylistically rather unusual chromatic shift in the vocal part after 20 seconds is remarkable: the diagram clearly shows that, although the bass line is arranged around the harmonic centre of C, the third in the C-major triad can only be found in the mid-range accompaniment, which has the effect of making the excessively emphasised portamento in the vocal part (highlighted in red in the diagram) from E to E-flat carry considerable acoustic weight. This induces a brief, harmonic state of limbo between major and minor which, as a result of the mere grazing of the notes D and F on either side, is almost compressed into a horizontally fanned-out microcluster.

These cursory remarks on "Music out of Boredom" have tried to show that even music that is titled as boring, or is possibly composed completely of boredom, does not actually have to be boring. This is impressively demonstrated by the reception of the video which has now (as of August 2014) been clicked on nearly 800 times. Whilst the user DJVolumeVirus, despite a positive general response, cannot quite hide a certain degree of scepticism 'umm, well, out of boredom, but it's good, keep going!!!!', neonymus is euphoric about AngelKiss1030 'Keep at it, it sounds really cool!'



An analysis using Melodyne not only visualises the notes used but also slight variations in pitch within the note

The musicologist and composer Gordon Kampe, a member of the JA since 2012, conducts research at Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen.



# AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CREATIVITY

## Why periods of conscious boredom are worthwhile: the psychologist Henrike Moll on inactivity, impatience and the curse of constant stimulation

INTERVIEW DEIDRE RATH AND ULRICH PONTES

**JAM:** Our topic is boredom. As a researcher, have you yourself experienced boredom?

**Henrike Moll:** Not very often, I have to admit. I'm really interested in my work and it doesn't tie me to my desk. I only get bored when I have to wait for something – if I have a meeting, for example, and the person is late but there is not enough time to start on anything worthwhile. And I am pretty impatient, which is why I try to ignore red pedestrian lights when I'm crossing the road and immediately turn my back on a post office or restaurant if I see there is a long queue. On the other hand, boredom does not play a role in my research either, so I can only speak as an “informed amateur.”

**JAM:** Are there different types of boredom?

**Moll:** There are definitely different degrees, and some of them are certainly preferable to being in a hurry or a rush. We even talk about experiencing slight boredom in positive terms, a state in which we are not doing anything in particular, so we just let the world pass by, as observers without any strong emotions. At the other end of the scale we find boredom of the type that can make us restless and angry. A tendency to experience this kind of boredom has often been linked to aggression, risk propensity and substance abuse. So-called apathetic boredom, which leaves you feeling unable to motivate yourself or snap out of it, manifests itself in depression, obesity and diabetes. However, most of the time when we do not know what to do with ourselves, we are almost by definition actually quite alright – because boredom presupposes that our basic needs have been satisfied.

**JAM:** Does boredom have its uses?

**Moll:** It is useful as a point of departure for creativity: we can think freely and hit on ideas which do not occur to us in the hustle and bustle of things. Or to put it another way: an over-structured and over-planned life – without any time to allow your thoughts free rein – is unsatisfactory. We are missing something. We feel we are being controlled or overloaded.

**JAM:** Why do some people get bored more quickly than others?

**Moll:** The standard theory is that people who need a high degree of external stimulation in order to achieve an optimum level of arousal are more prone to boredom. To feel well, these people need and seek the thrill, or else they feel bored. Other people naturally have a higher state of arousal and therefore need significantly less stimulation. They prefer a more low-stimulus environment. Neurobiologists then started to pay attention to the transmitter dopamine, which is released when we experience states of pleasurable arousal. It was suggested that the sensation-seekers had lower dopamine activity and therefore threw themselves into thrilling situations. In my opinion, there is a problem in quantifying “stimulus” – depending how frequently our attention and interest are aroused, one and the same thing may be more or less stimulating or motivating. Anyway, according to more recent findings, it tends to be the more negative temperament and personality characteristics that correlate with a proneness to boredom: weak impulse control, a lack of



## THE PSYCHOLOGIST

*Henrike Moll, born in 1976, is an assistant professor, teaching and conducting research in developmental psychology at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. She is particularly interested in social cognition and especially the question as to how children learn that things and situations can be considered and interpreted from different perspectives – without this ability there would be no empathy. Henrike Moll has been a member of the Junge Akademie since 2011.*

perseverance in pursuing goals, a penchant for procrastination or a tendency to compulsive and dogmatic behaviour.

**JAM:** When it comes to children, we allow them ever fewer opportunities to get bored. We prefer to sit them down in front of the television or let them have a smartphone ...

**Moll:** Yes, that's true. We are afraid of boring our children, so we constantly stimulate them. But television and playing around with video games can be incredibly boring! Perhaps we should not see boredom and busyness as opposites. And even if many of the things we give our children to do are supposed to be a substitute for boredom, many types of activity are not necessarily satisfying or appropriate. I am really shocked about the amount of time many young children spend watching television or playing with an iPad, whereas ambitious, educated parents with all their amazing toys, play groups and manoeuvres for keeping their children busy do not necessarily do any better.

**JAM:** Why not?

**Moll:** As I have already mentioned, I think that unplanned time not involving pre-arranged activities – that is, moments when boredom could occur – are important. This is how children learn to be independent and possibly do things together with other children, make up their own role plays, define and create situations. It is here that the child has an opportunity to experience itself as an active agent who can determine what goes on. This is extremely valuable! By the way, one of the aspects that has not received much attention so far and has not been researched at all is the cognitive preconditions for boredom. A new-born baby or even a one-year-old cannot get bored because it does not perceive time. If you only live in the present, you do not experience boredom. Only when the initial stage of language development is underway and a sense for certain periods of time emerges – coupled with certain expectations as to what should or could happen during this time –, the possibility of boredom arises.



*Especially for children, boredom can be meaningful: as the point of departure for accomplishing something themselves*

**JAM:** Recent studies suggest that later, in puberty for example, boredom can lead to aggression, drug abuse and even dropping out of school.

**Moll:** In Western countries, youth is a moratorium during which young people are on hold, caught between childhood and adulthood. You don't want to do the things you're allowed to do and you're not allowed to do the things you do want to do. So you spend your time hanging around at bus stops and parking lots or in lessons you're not interested in. And, yes, there is a connection between habitual boredom and drug abuse, addiction, bulimia, so-called externalised behaviour like vandalism and aggression and so on. The problem at this age is that one has developed a certain cognitive and imaginative horizon that does not mesh well with being dependent on parents or guardians: you are still driven around like a child, but in your thoughts you are already miles away. Young people in villages are particularly vulnerable because they are more likely to be stranded in a cultural desert. That is why it is very important to open up cultural opportunities for young people and allow them to be independent.

**JAM:** In the world of work the counterpart of burn-out, bore-

out, has become an issue in the last few years. Can underload and boredom cause stress and illness?

**Moll:** Bore-out? Really? I have never heard that term before, even though here in the US people think up neologisms for more or less ordinary problems almost every day. But it seems plausible: employees behave as if they were busy, in accordance with employers' expectations, but they are not always very busy, and many jobs are certainly not as interesting and varied as job advertisements would lead us to believe – nor as the employees themselves would like to believe. Capitalist working conditions can, therefore, provoke a degree of alienation and this certainly means an unhealthy level of stress for those affected.

**JAM:** Last but not least: what would you recommend for people to do if boredom really does threaten to become unbearable?

**Moll:** I think it's important to be able to occupy yourself even without the usual gadgets and tools. If I get bored sitting in a dentist's waiting room or have to sit outside and wait for someone with no book to hand, I try to go through things systematically in my mind – at the moment it's usually Persian vocabulary because I'm trying to learn Farsi. ✿

## AWARDS, HONOURS AND FELLOWSHIPS

---

### SVEN DIEDERICHS | LIVER CANCER JUNIOR RESEARCH AWARD

Sven Diederichs is the proud recipient of the 10,000-Euro liver cancer junior research award, jointly conferred by the German Society for Gastroenterology, Digestive and Metabolic Diseases and Bayer HealthCare. The award honours his achievements in researching molecular changes in hepatocellular carcinoma, in particular on the level of non-protein-coding RNA.

---

---

### TOBIAS ERB | HEAD OF A MAX PLANCK RESEARCH GROUP

Tobias Erb will head his own Max Planck research group following his successful submission to a central call for applications on any topic. He is now able to pursue his research topic, storage of CO<sub>2</sub> with the help of genetically-engineered bacteria, independently at his chosen location, his choice being the Max Planck Institute for Terrestrial Microbiology in Marburg. Starting in 2015, he will have access to funding for personnel and material expenses for a period of five years.

---

---

### LISA KALTENEGER | CHRISTIAN DOPPLER AWARD OF THE CITY OF SALZBURG

In June, Lisa Kaltenecker received the Christian Doppler Award of the government of the Federal State of Salzburg. The astrophysicist, who will be working at Cornell University in Ithaca, USA, received the award endowed with 3,000 Euros in the category 'Applications of the Doppler Principle in Technical Sciences, Mathematics and Physics'. The Christian Doppler Award for outstanding scientific and technical achievements and inventions has been conferred every other year since 1972.

---

---

### GIESELA RÜHL | FRITZ THYSSEN FOUNDATION GRANT HOLDER AND RECIPIENT OF THE CARUS AWARD

The Fritz Thyssen Foundation is providing a total of 180,000 Euros in financial support for an international research project co-ordinated by Giesela Rühl. The objective of the two-year grant is the publication of a three-volume, English-language encyclopaedia on private international law, featuring contributions by 180 authors from around the world.

In addition, Giesela Rühl will receive prize money amounting to 5,000 Euros: this is the endowment of the Carus Award, conferred every two years by the City of Schweinfurt on the Leopoldina's Carus Medal recipient. Giesela Rühl was awarded the Medal in September 2013.

---

---

### JADWIGA ZIOLKOWSKA | BEST RESEARCH PAPER AWARD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

Agricultural economist Jadwiga Ziolkowska was honoured for the article 'Evaluating Sustainability of Biofuels Feedstocks: A Multi-Objective Framework for Supporting Decision Making' in the specialist journal "Biomass & Bioenergy". The University of Texas at Austin granted her an award for the best original paper.



# NEW MEMBERS



## JENNIFER GIRRBACH-NOE

If you thought that particle physicists tend to be introverted, shy wallflowers who spend their days hunched over their computers in dark rooms, you have not met Jennifer Girrbach-Noe from the Theoretical Elementary Particle Physics Group at TU Munich. Basically, she wants to answer one simple question: 'What's in there?' – and in asking that, she is searching for nothing less than the theory of everything. On this quest, she hops around between CERN, the big bang and dark matter, trying to track down a new kind of physics beyond the standard model. She also hops around in her spare time, albeit in a more conventional manner: as a competitive B-class ballroom dancer. We are thrilled to welcome a dynamic, extroverted, newlywed member!

## DIANA GÖHRINGER

Conquering technical obstacles for computer architectures by parallelising space and time: what sounds like an assignment for Mr Spock is really an attempt to put Diana Göhringer's research in a nutshell. A junior professor in electrical engineering and information technology at Ruhr-Universität Bochum, she works on application-specific multi-core-architectures, field-programmable gate arrays and dynamic-partial reconfiguration. You just cannot simplify what is complicated. Small wonder that she finds her life-work balance by dedicating a lot of her spare time to her family and pets. We are looking forward to conquering interdisciplinary obstacles together, especially since in our world, space and time have long been relative and parallelised!



## FLORIAN MEINEL

'Rules are nice when they apply to others, not so great when they apply to me.' This is not only the motto of certain former German football league managers, but also the basis for Florian Meinel's research. The expert in public law at HU Berlin is studying public institutions that both impose and monitor compliance with their own rules and control systems. Even though this may sound a lot like FIFA, Florian Meinel, a skilled amateur left winger, did not receive a call-up after Marco Reus had to withdraw from Germany's World Cup squad. Instead, we at the *Junge Akademie* are hoping for a run on goal with combinations, direct passes, and splendid crosses into and outside of the box.

## KRISTINA MUSHOLT

To have or have not – no, that is not the question for her. The human biologist, neuroscientist and philosopher is studying the philosophy of the mind in the neuro- and cognitive sciences. After stints in Italy, England and the US, she is now teaching at Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg. She reflects on the ability to reflect on oneself, the consciousness of the self and its interactions with social cognition. In her free time, she likes to roam Neukölln as well as the philosophical blogosphere. Her motto 'Philosophy and Neurosciences' is a taste of the interdisciplinary exchange that we can look forward to. We cannot wait for stimulating reflections on ourselves and others!



## JULIA PONGRATZ

For 10,000 years, man has been altering the surface of the earth – Julia Pongratz studies the effects of these activities on climate. Since her return from Stanford, the trained geographer has been researching at the Max Planck Institute for Meteorology in Hamburg. With her Emmy Noether research group, she is trying to integrate forestry into earth system modelling. Earth system models not only have the advantage that they reveal the interactions between climate and land use, but they also allow her to do her research at room-temperature in the absence of mosquitoes. In years to come, we hope to discover how this fits in with her outdoorsy hobbies of sailing, mountain-climbing and surfing.

TEXT DANIEL CHAPPELL, GIESELA RÜHL



### CARINA SCHMITT

Why does social security sometimes deepen the gulf between rich and poor? Why is it that in some places only a small proportion of the population benefits, whereas in other places everyone wins? Carina Schmitt is obsessed with these questions. After spending time in Ecuador and the USA, the trained political scientist is researching at the Centre for Social Policy Research at the University of Bremen. She explores when and why states introduce systems of social security and when and under which conditions they work. Sometimes, she tours the world on her racing bike: from Seattle to San Francisco, from the Atlantic coast across the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean, from Schwerin to Munich. We are looking forward to intense social-political debates!

### JULE SPECHT

How do you find the partner of your dreams? Is speed dating the fast lane to a happy love life? When is the right moment to say 'I love you'? Jule Specht explores such questions – as a junior professor in psychology at FU Berlin as well as in her popular science book "Suche kochenden Betthasen" (*"Wanted: Sex Bunny Who Can Cook"*). The core of her research is personality development during adulthood. In her spare time, she enjoys culture, writing a blog or going on cycle tours with a picnic basket and her two children. We are looking forward to a lot of vitality and energy, as well as some psychological advice as to how to tell our partners we love them, even when we are setting off for yet another weekend with the *Junge Akademie*.



### CHRIS THOMALE

Everyone knows the Holy Trinity, but have you heard of the legal trinity? According to Chris Thomale, it consists of German, social studies and mathematics. What, does that mean you beguile your clients and opponents with your eloquence and knowledge of human nature, and then lean back and count your money? A likely story! The law expert at the Institute for Commercial Law at the University of Freiburg as well as Yale Law School says that in its complexity, civil law is like the workings of a clock, which he is trying to simplify with combinatorial logic. Language is essential, since law is always applied language. We are looking forward to initiating Chris Thomale into the trinity of the *Junge Akademie*: enthusiasm, curiosity, and independence!

### BERNADETT WEINZIERL

The dream of flight has become a reality for Bernadett Weinzierl, both in her private and her professional life. She has a degree in meteorology, a Ph.D. in physics, and is a junior professor in experimental aerosol physics at LMU Munich as well as head of the Helmholtz junior research group AerCARE. She and her team explore how particles such as ash and dust change on their journey through the atmosphere. She often does that from the air: when all of Europe was grounded in 2010 because of an ash-spewing volcano, she took off in her research plane and helped get an idea of how the ash was distributed in the air. Grounded, waterborne or airborne, we hope the passionate flyer will also help us maintain our perspective!



### KAI WIEGANDT

What images of humans does literature create? How do they affect current debates? Kai Wiegandt wants to know these things. He studied English, German and philosophy in Berlin, Freiburg and at Yale. Now he is working at FU Berlin. He explores the role of rumours in Shakespeare's tragedies as well as John Maxwell Coetzee's attempts to sound out the boundaries of human nature. This latter endeavour took the professed writer and gourmet to South Africa for a year, which might be the reason why he would like to relocate Berlin to the seaside – but maybe that is only a rumour, too. We, for our part, are looking forward to exciting discussions about literature, philosophy, and politics!

# ALUMNI



## RAFAELA HILLERBRAND

is the embodiment of our interdisciplinary ideal. As a physicist and philosopher, she brings her two fields together in a way that is relevant to society. For example, she explores what it actually means to act ethically in technology and science, especially in the face of uncertainty. She was speaker of the *Junge Akademie* Board and, amongst other things, worked in the Research Groups 'Ethics in Practice', 'Why the Social Sciences?' and 'Culture and Climate'.

## ALEXANDER KNOHL

3,700 commentaries, 688 participants, 462 proposals for the university of the future: this was the outcome of "UniGestalten", a competition for "New Ideas for Everyday Life at the University", which Alexander headed at the *Junge Akademie*. His dedication to future generations not only benefits students across disciplines – the geo-ecologist also contributed to many research groups, such as 'Culture and Climate', 'Sustainability' and 'Science Policy'. If you cannot find him up one of his climate towers in a forest in Göttingen with his students, he might be with composer Gordon Kampe, turning his measurement data into music.



## MAGDALENA NOWICKA

is a sociologist with an interest not only in interdisciplinary but also in multi-ethnic societies. She introduced her research topics of migration and mobility as well as inequity and poverty to the *Junge Akademie* in many ways. Magda likes to look far beyond the boundaries of her discipline, which is why she also contributed to 'Science Policy', 'Fascination', new ideas for everyday life at the university and was a *Junge Akademie* Board member. Within her own discipline, she also marches to the beat of her own drum by using a more qualitative research approach. Chances are that she will continue to do so, and successfully.



## KLAUS OSHEMA

'Clear-cut questions, clear-cut answers?' Neither the sciences nor real life are that easy. Klaus was our specialist for multiple perspectives: internally, as a member of the *Junge Akademie* Board and the *Junge Akademie Magazin* editorial team; externally, in the project "*Junge Akademie macht Schule*" as well as in interdisciplinary seminars with Rebekka Voß and Moritz Schularick. He co-edited the "Calendar of Ambivalence", which features 52 interdisciplinary voices from within the *Junge Akademie*. We could always count on Klaus's passion for debate and his unbeatable witticisms – which we will miss.



## WOLF GERHARD SCHMIDT

At the *Junge Akademie*, Wolf fused word and sound into a whole that is larger than its parts. Amongst the many things he did as speaker of the research group 'Sound(worlds)' was to organise a much-acclaimed conference in Paris on the identity-building nature of sound, tone and music from the perspectives of cultural theory and social history. Being a pugnacious educational idealist, he also explored the infamous question of nature versus nurture, which informs our notions of social interactions far beyond science.



TEXT WOLFGANG GAISSMAIER, EVELYN RUNGE



### CARSTEN Q. SCHNEIDER

Carsten was a good match for the Research Group that asks the question: 'Why the Social Sciences?' As a political scientist, he is interested in regime changes, political inequalities and democratisation; as director of the Center for the Study of Imperfections in Democracies in Budapest he crossed both academic and geographic boundaries. In this case, we at the *Junge Akademie* did not get around to crossing an actual border: we never managed a field trip to his small vineyard on Lake Balaton. But perhaps we can still make it happen by stepping up our alumni work at *Junge Akademie*.

### FLORIAN STEGER

could not conceive of a scientific academy that did not tackle ethical questions. He believes that all disciplines should make their contribution. So he took the reins and founded the Research Group 'Ethics in Practice', inviting everyone to contribute their subject-specific perspective to conferences and publications. He himself has always remained true to his own ethical principles and does not shy away from defending positions that are less than comfortable, injecting them into public debates with vigour and vehemence.



### FABIAN JOACHIM THEIS

Fabian is your man when it comes to battling disease. The mathematician analyses and models biological systems. In the *Junge Akademie Magazin*, he visualised his research outcomes on uterine cancer cells. Together with Sylvia Cremer, he won an award for their interdisciplinary project "Antnet", which studied the social behaviour of ants for disease immunisation. Fabian was also involved in the project "*Junge Akademie macht Schule*" to help secure interest in interdisciplinary research.

### STEFANIE WALTER

Stefanie Walter's subjects are globalisation, international monetary and financial policy, and comparative political economy in general – hot topics in today's insecure, crisis-ridden world. She researches and teaches in Zurich – a perfect location for her topic, as this is the turf on which the powerful from the world of finance meet the excellent from the world of science. At the *Junge Akademie*, she often shared her expertise in economic policy or scientific policy advice.



### ROBERT WOLF

"Who's in a state of crisis?" was the *Junge Akademie* prize question of 2009. Robert served as a jury member then. He himself never gets into a state of crisis, as we could ascertain during the last five years. Robert is always relaxed, genial – and in control of things: as a member of seven Research Groups and two projects, the professor of chemistry at the University of Regensburg still found the time to serve as a Board member for two years and be in charge of finances.



# SHOULD THE SYSTEM OF UNIVERSITY CHAIRS BE ABOLISHED?

## The German Association of Historians and the *Junge Akademie* on the search for “New Paths in the German University System”

TEXT ULRIKE SCHIEFELBEIN

It was an unusual sight: following the lecture given by a post-doctoral research fellow, a group of largely established professors stayed on to debate how the German university system could be completely turned on its head. The lecture with the provocative title “Abolish the System of University Chairs” presented proposals from the *Junge Akademie* position paper of the same title. The presenter was Bielefeld-based philosopher of science, Cornelis Menke, representing the *Junge Akademie* Research Group “Science Policy: After the Excellence Initiative”. Here are its demands in a nutshell: the funds that are currently being used to finance personnel affiliated with university chairs should be employed to increase the number of “simple” professorships significantly, which would, amongst other things, allow young scholars to develop their individual research profiles at an earlier stage (see info box).

The debate, held in Berlin in June, was part of a joint conference run by the German Association of Historians and the *Junge Akademie*. Its objective was to get representatives of science and politics to discover “New Paths in the German University System”, with a focus on well-known weak spots: the precarious situation of mid-level faculty between fixed-term contracts, the need to be extremely mobile, a lack of family-friendliness at universities, and the use of quantitative methods in assessing research performance.

Cornelis Menke’s lecture kicked off the first panel discussion with the title “The German University System in International Comparison.” The sweeping, yet cost-neutral proposals in the

position paper were met with universal acclaim and approval, which might come as a surprise, given that the panelists themselves have or used to have their own chairs, which means they benefit or have benefitted from the very system that the position paper wants to see abolished.

### **The Grand Delusion of the Humboldtian Ideal?**

Nevertheless, participants like social democratic educational politician Jürgen Zöllner, himself a former university chair holder and university president in Mainz, praised the position paper as ‘incredibly good’ because, according to him, it would allow universities to reinvent themselves. Zöllner also demanded that universities of applied sciences be diversified and full universities be exclusively dedicated to academia. Much to the dismay of the rest of the panel, he declared the Humboldtian ideal an ‘unnecessary burden’ and a ‘grand delusion’. In order to do away with it, he proposed establishing a separate career path for teaching staff, including performance-based pay. Etienne François, who has held professorships both in France and in Germany, praised the current German system, stating that its liberties had benefitted him greatly. On the other hand, he found that in comparison to the French university system, female and (international) junior scholars face more barriers in Germany.

During the second panel discussion on “Family and University Career”, Aarhus-based professor Rosa Magnusdottir presented family-friendly working time models from Denmark, historian Ricarda Vulpius made a controversial plea for more part-time positions, and Konstanz-based sociologist Thomas Hinz present-



*Panel versus audience:  
the topic of evaluating institutions made for lively debates*

ed his research on how to facilitate dual careers that would make mobility more compatible with family life. Structural questions quickly turned into a debate on fundamental attitudes. According to Hinz, time commitment is just part of academic work ethics. Vulpius countered that ‘academic excellence’ does not equal ‘infinite availability’. Like Vulpius, Magnúsdóttir complained that the culture of constant presence predetermined by child-less academics imposes certain working schedules on everyone, although she thinks that part-time positions are an illusion, given the excessive working hours in research. During the debate on “Scientific Quality – Problems of Evaluating Institutions”, panel and audience nearly split into two camps. Whilst the panel unanimously supported research ratings, pointing to the high degree of differentiation, the audience was on the defensive: who was supposed to finance and implement such complex evaluations? Why and for whom were rankings even needed? How was one to deal with the fact that ratings reflect back on institutions as a performance standard?

At the end of the conference, however, all the participants agreed that structural diversity and predictability are both essential, and that the debate on alternatives to precarious “career” paths in the university system at a possible sequel to the conference would benefit from involving voluntary as well as involuntary drop-outs.



*Happy co-hosts:  
Cornelis Menke and JA Managing Director Ruth Bendels*

#### POSITION PAPER OF THE RESEARCH GROUP ‘SCIENCE POLICY’

The thought-provoking paper with the title “After the Excellence Initiative: Personnel Structure as a Key to Higher-Performing Universities” was published in November 2013 and can be downloaded from [www.diejungeakademie.de/publikationen/stellungnahmen](http://www.diejungeakademie.de/publikationen/stellungnahmen). A detailed summary can also be found in *Junge Akademie Magazin*, no. 17, starting on p. 26.

# “THE HIGHEST FORM OF DISABILITY IS DEATH”

No joke: interdisciplinary symposium on laughter

TEXT DEIDRE RATH



*The participants' profiles were intriguing and diverse*

“Come on, tell us a joke!” said the reporter from the local press to Gordon Kampe. This little sentence encapsulates a common misconception. When scholars met in Essen at the beginning of May for “In Stitches – An Interdisciplinary Symposium on Laughter”, their intention was not to tell jokes, as the newspaperwoman had surmised. Rather, the purpose of the symposium was to explore the many facets of laughter in a (for the most part) serious, scientific manner: in politics, the arts and culture as well as everyday life.

*Junge Akademie* member, composer and musicologist Gordon Kampe organised the symposium. He had no trouble raising interest amongst students and colleagues at Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen. His aim, he says, was to find speakers who did not usually deal much with the topic. He thus gathered together academics from the fields of art, music and theatre as well as religion, law and neurosciences. The presenters' profiles were intriguing and diverse, not just in terms of their academic qualifications: Bianca Stücker, for instance, who teaches musicology at Folkwang University, is also a writer, Gothic music composer and tattoo artist.

## A lesson in laughing yoga

As is usual at a *Junge Akademie* event, it also experimented with new formats, like the hour-long session of laughing yoga that kicked off the symposium. Under expert guidance, audience and presenters were hopping through the lecture hall imitating the sounds of laughter. It was a completely new way of experiencing laughter physically, and one that was reflected in the participants' faces which exhibited a range of emotions from amusement to embarrassment.



We laugh when we are having fun, when we are happy. Well, it is not always quite that simple, actually. The symposium touched upon the negative connotations of laughter as well as the positive, as did Konrad Bach in his lecture. It fell to the theatre studies scholar from Freie Universität Berlin to systematise and categorise the broad topic. Laughter in the arts and culture was the subject of *Junge Akademie* member Sibylle Baumbach's presentation. She explored theatre productions at Shakespeare's "Globe" and tragicomic moments in drama that leave audiences torn between laughter and tears.

Katharina Towfigh approached the topic from a totally different angle. In her lecture on lyrically-minded judges and ludicrous German legal regulations, the law expert drily quoted official sources, "In terms of benefits rights, death constitutes the highest form of disability."

The first day of the symposium ended with a concert given by Folkwang University students performing an electro-acoustical work by Turkish composer Kerim Karaoğlu: "Grin" is an experiment in turning laughter into music, using the clip of a Turkish television presenter having a laughing fit. The result is a soundscape that veers towards the disturbing – abstract, bizarrely alien.

No joke-cracking conference, then, but an event at which academia not only unveiled robust results but also its humorous side. The conference was well received by the presenters and the broader public alike, who attended in large numbers. Organiser Gordon Kampe stated that, even after the conference, he still cannot tell any jokes.



*The conference was well received by the audience, even in the absence of traditional jokes*



# A LITTLE BIT OF HOLLYWOOD

An unusual medium: two films by *Junge Akademie* alumni focus on academia – in very different ways

TEXT VERA KLOCKE

A close-up of a small, old notebook with stained, dog-eared pages. Indian symbols and strange formulas are written in ink on the brownish paper. A thumb is turning the pages; then the scene cuts to a young man chasing a white, luminous figure across a misty campus between grassy hills and trees: “The Zahir”.

Translated from Arabic, Zahir means “the Revealed”. It is the title of a short film by Olga Holtz about a young psychology professor’s growing obsession, sparked by a mysterious notebook. The true extent of his obsession, which had previously been nothing more than an academic research topic, reveals itself to him when he experiences it for himself. In her film, Olga Holtz vehemently rejects the negative connotations of the term obsession: she absolutely wants it to be perceived as a positive, ‘burning passion’, a state of mind that, according to her, is not only vital in the arts, but also, and especially, in academic research.

“The Zahir” is one of two film projects that have been produced to date with financial support from and by members of the *Junge Akademie*. In this case, the *Junge Akademie* footed the post-production bill of 6,000 Euros. The second film is a video on quantum physics by Philip Walther, which uses 3D animation to visualise research findings.

“The Zahir” was shot on the campus of Berkeley University, where Olga Holtz worked and studied film from 2012 to 2013. When she walks around the well-kept grounds now, one year after her film was completed, the campus means more to her than just a former film set – because Olga Holtz is also a professor at Berkeley. Her research field: numerical analysis and the complexity of algorithms.

## Her colleagues do not understand

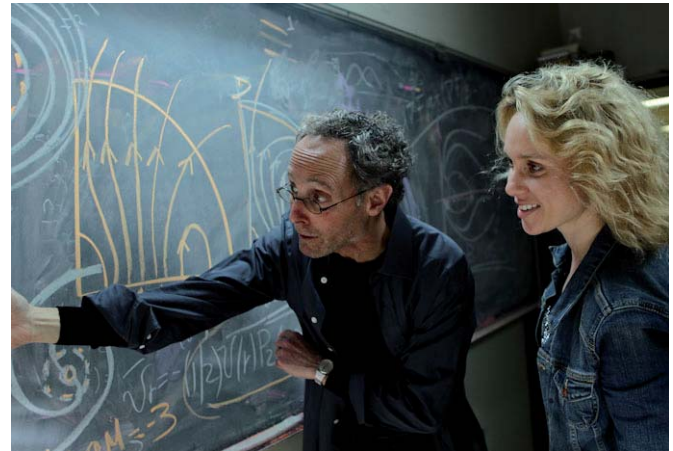
In the academic world, Olga Holtz’s film-making has ruffled a few feathers. Colleagues’ comments ranged from labelling it ‘popular science’ to accusing her of ‘abandoning maths’ for work that is not ‘serious science’, she relates, laughing incredulously, unable to fathom how anyone could see it that way. Her film addresses precisely this side of academia, which is often driven purely by careerism and competition, as is revealed in one of the first scenes, where the young scientist seeks a colleague’s help to discover the secret of the notebook. Yet instead of helping him, the cranky professor ridicules the young scholar’s scientific work and meddles in his investigations.

It took four twelve-hour days of shooting to make “The Zahir”. Now Olga Holtz knows that film-making is incredibly hard, but also ‘magical’. She plans to continue sharing her passion for science ‘with people in a creative way’ in the future. Her current project, which she pursues at night after a day of mathematics, is a feature film inspired by Aner Shalev’s book “Dark Matter”.

As a mathematician with a second life as a director of feature films, Olga Holtz is exceptional. By contrast, visualisations such as the one produced by Philip Walther have become a regular feature of the natural sciences. This particular five-minute video shows the experimental set-up of an optical quantum computer and has become an important part of Philip Walther’s lectures. The *Junge Akademie* alumnus is a professor at the Vienna Center for Quantum Science and Technology at the University of Vienna. The video was made in 2012, during Walther’s last year with the *Junge Akademie*. It shows how individual photons propagate through the machine and are processed with the help of wave plates and superpositions with other photons on beam splitters,



Pages from the notebook that sparks the action in “The Zahir”



Mathematician and filmmaker Olga Holtz (right) with one of the actors

which are visualised in the video as cubes. According to the researcher, these quantum physical effects make certain calculations much more efficient than they would be on a conventional computer.

### **It all started with fingers, a pencil and a napkin**

Philip Walther himself has mixed feelings about the trend towards visualising research outcomes: he says that it has almost become a necessity nowadays. Technical possibilities push users to invest more and more time and effort. People feel pressured to use 3D visualisations for things that could easily be rendered in 2D, just because they look better. On the other hand, visualisations are not only significant for the academic world itself. ‘They also offer great opportunities for showcasing the research we are doing in the lab and entering into discourse with the public.’ This is particularly relevant for fields like quantum physics, where outsiders are both intrigued and baffled by what seems like hocus-pocus.

The physicist came up with the idea for the video with Harvard graduate Lauren Aleza Kaye. The first sketches were done on a napkin in a pub. With his fingers, a pencil and paper, Philip Walther explained to his companion what the individual quantum physical processes should look like. Kaye, who had trained with Pixar in Hollywood before going to university, wanted to use the video to beef up her portfolio – and therefore offered the product

to Philip Walther at cost price. Their collaboration was facilitated by the fact that Lauren Aleza Kaye is a physics and mathematics graduate herself and therefore not only knew what had to be done, but also understood what it was all about.

For Philip Walther, the video project was like ‘walking a tight-rope between making it aesthetically pleasing and getting it right.’ And he is sure that this will not be his only effort. New research outcomes are already waiting to be visualised. Walther feels that making a video that appeals to both scientists and non-scientists is not a constraint, but rather a challenge. As the scientific maxim says, ‘The bigger the breakthrough, the fewer the words that are needed.’

---

*Olga Holtz was a member of the Junge Akademie from 2008 to 2013. She currently works as a professor of mathematics at TU Berlin and at the University of California, Berkeley. From 2012 to 2013, she also studied film production and directing at the Berkeley Digital Film Institute.*

*Philip Walther was a member of the Junge Akademie from 2007 to 2012. He is a professor of physics at the Vienna Center for Quantum Science and Technology at the University of Vienna. His research group is dedicated to the development of quantum computers.*

# FUTURE-ORIENTED ACTIONS?

## The mission statements of German universities reveal a general lack of social sustainability

TEXT STEFANIE HISS, MARLIS BÄRTHEL AND HANNA SCHULTE

The term sustainability is being thrown around a lot these days. Sustainable actions are often called for in the face of crises and other problems, invoking a key aspect of sustainability: its enduring nature. Acting sustainably means acting for the long term, such as by taking into account the implications of a decision for future generations. Scientific approaches often present sustainability as a three-pillar model comprising economic, ecological and social sustainability. These three dimensions, it is argued, need to be considered equally in one's actions and decisions.

The *Junge Akademie* Research Group 'Sustainability' explores the topic of sustainability from diverse angles, with a core focus on sustainability and the university. Against the backdrop of current budget cuts, it is important to discover how universities deal with and integrate sustainability concepts into their daily operations. In the private sector, it is currently considered good form to publish a sustainability report in addition to the standard business report. Although some universities do report on their sustainability performance, the practice is not nearly as common as it is in the corporate world.

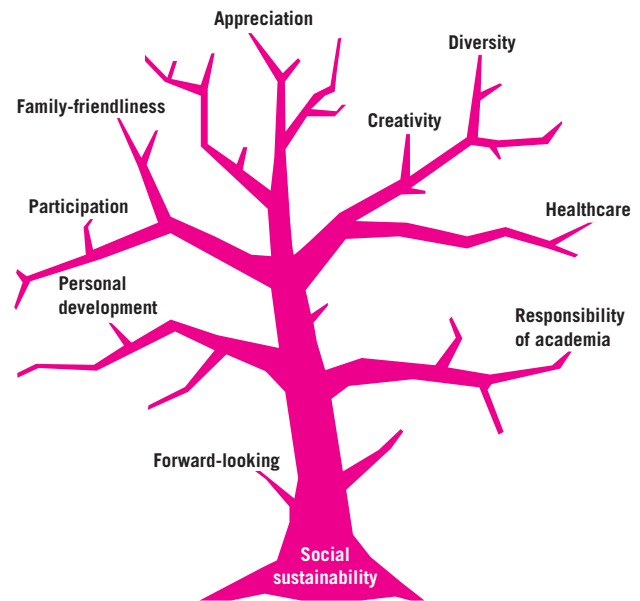
Beyond formal sustainability reporting, there are other options for evaluating universities' sustainability practices. Our Research Group analysed the mission statements of 44 German universities (*Technische Universitäten* and *Volluniversitäten*) to ascertain how they communicate aspects of social sustainability. The social dimension of sustainability is often omitted or neglected, in large part because it is difficult to define and capture social sustainability empirically; however, a number of methods are used to quantify and assess sustainability in the academic context. Our analysis focused exclusively on mission statements,

examining which aspects of social sustainability are mentioned and how they are presented.

### Self-image and organisational culture

The mission statements of organisations are an intriguing subject to explore. Not only do they carry information about the self-image of the organisation and the culture it envisions for itself, but they convey basic principles and set goals, giving indications of future actions. They also provide guidance for the organisations' members and can be used for public outreach. University mission statements vary in their genesis: not all universities state who was originally involved in drawing up their mission statement, and only one university in our sample stressed that their mission statement was the product of a university-wide dialogue. Not all universities, however, publish a mission statement in the first place.

Almost half of the 44 university mission statements examined used the term sustainability. Many of these universities stated that their actions and use of resources were guided by the principle of sustainable development. The mission statements rarely labelled structures or processes within the organisation as explicitly 'sustainable', preferring instead to emphasise aspects like forward-looking research and teaching, or the special responsibility that science bears towards society. The notion of sustainability was also invoked in the context of interdisciplinarity and internationalism. Additional passages in the mission statements could also be interpreted as referring to specifically social aspects of sustainability, even when this connection remains only implicit.



For example, the conditions under which gainful employment is performed can be seen as a core dimension of social sustainability. A quarter of the mission statements analysed in our study referred to 'good working conditions', such as a 'stimulating environment'. A quarter of the mission statements contained passages about employees' 'individual personality development' or about fostering their 'creativity' and 'performance development'. These mission statements also included aspects such as a 'co-operative' and 'appreciative' professional and living environment, as well as employees' 'motivation' and 'satisfaction'. However, the statements rarely addressed concrete provisions for 'health care' or 'professional development', and only three mission statements mentioned 'positions for trainees'.

A quarter of the mission statements stressed that 'all members of the university community participate' in formulating the university's future strategy. The mission statements referred to the basic principle of 'academic self-governance', a 'participatory leadership style,' 'autonomy' and 'efficient committee work'. In most cases in which 'efficient committee work' was mentioned, active participation of all university status groups was described as 'desired' or 'encouraged'.

### Most points are vaguely worded

The guiding notions of 'equality', 'equal rights' or 'diversity' featured more prominently in the mission statements we analysed. What these broad terms mean and how they are to be implemented, however, varies greatly from one document to the next: some universities describe themselves as diverse in the broadest sense, emphasising 'equal opportunities' for all, independent of, for instance, 'sexual orientation' or 'age'. 'Gender' or 'nationality'

as categories indicating social disadvantage are mentioned more frequently than, for example, 'disability' or 'social background', and 'gender equality' is cited frequently. 'Promoting women' in their academic careers only features in about a quarter of the mission statements, while more than two thirds state that a 'family-friendly environment' and the 'compatibility' of family and academic life are either a given or a goal. Some mission statements cite a 'certificate' relating to this work-life balance, but few mention any concrete provisions. Most mission statements define the 'promotion of junior researchers' as a key task, to be implemented by procedures or structures such as 'graduate schools'.

The examples given in this paper demonstrate that universities do describe aspects of social sustainability in their mission statements, although the phrasing of these mission statements, which is usually vague and general, rarely pinpoints current topics, such as the promotion of women at all stages of career development. Our results indicate that, overall, universities need to define better what sustainability means for them. Further research comparing universities' communication of sustainability efforts with their actual activities and implementation can help to understand better and promote sustainability in higher education. ✿

---

*Stefanie Hieß, Junge Akademie member since 2011, is a professor of sociology at Friedrich Schiller University Jena.*

*The mathematician Marlis Bärthel and the sociologist Hanna Schulte are members of staff at Friedrich Schiller University Jena.*



# “TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO MAN HAS GONE BEFORE”

The RG ‘Fascination’ on an interdisciplinary expedition into unknown spaces

TEXT LENA HENNINGSSEN, SIBYLLE BAUMBACH AND KATHARINA HEYDEN



*A place to experiment with new identities, new forms of social interaction, even romantic love: coffee shops in China exude the fascination of an unknown space*

Since the spatial turn, the humanities have been brimming with discourse about space, but have not yet sufficiently explored unknown spaces, despite the fact that uncharted territories and unfamiliarity are precisely what make a space fascinating. Reason enough for the RG ‘Fascination’ to set out on a mission: ‘To boldly go where no man has gone before’ was the motto of the two-day interdisciplinary conference that took place in Berlin at the end of May.

The search for “unknown spaces” often leads into outer space and the realm of science fiction. Yet a second glance reveals a whole world of other unknown spaces: cultural spaces, spaces of the mind, of consumption, of literature and the arts – at the conference, the concept of “space” was deliberately defined in very broad terms. It encompassed geographical (physical) spaces, historical, social, and media spaces, as well as cognitive (knowledge) spaces, and art spaces. If we define fascination as the promise of an aesthetic boundary experience, as a magnet imbued with an ominous (and sometimes destructive) enchantment, the question arises as to whether the fascination of the unknown can continue to exist in an ‘increasingly disenchanting’ world (Max Weber).

What exactly is the fascination of the unknown, how can it be preserved? What role do unknown spaces play in constructing individual and social identities? How are they explored, conveyed or even created artistically? How can unknown spaces be opened up, how can we fill them, make them familiar, and then make them unfamiliar again? Scholars from the fields of

Sociology, Theatre Studies, English Studies, Ethnology, Religion, Chinese Studies, History, Theology and Comparative Literature discussed these and other questions. The objective of the conference was to explore the function and mechanisms of unknown spaces from an interdisciplinary point of view. This included practices of appropriating, observing, and describing as well as processes of constructing and semanticising unknown spaces.

### From the theatre via the ghetto to the desert

Specifically, the conference examined the topic of opening up unknown spaces in participatory theatre (Benjamin Wihstutz, FU Berlin), in the post-Soviet culture of sub-letting (Katja Grote, HU Berlin) and in slum tourism: Andreas Pott from Osnabrück examined the “ghetto” as a source of fascination, not only for scholars engaged in field studies, but also for poverty tourists. To them, stepping into an unknown space is a form of self-validation and confirmation of their own lifestyle far away from the slums they visit. *Junge Akademie* member Katharina Heyden (Berne) presented the ambivalent fascination of the desert and its skilful literary and iconographic treatment in the “Vita Antonii”, a late antique Christian bestseller that idealises the desert as a place of refuge.

Next up was the question of how unknown spaces are filled. It was shown that strange and hence fascinating spaces can provide a shell for new identities, but also for defining political meaning. *Junge Akademie* member Klaus Oschema (Heidelberg) showed that mediaeval cartography visualises unknown spaces, but subordinates geographical information to political or religious agendas. The National Cathedral in Washington creates fascination by sanctifying the idea of nation, as Jens Kugele from Gießen demonstrated. *Junge Akademie* member Lena Henningsen (Freiburg) explained that the branches of the global coffee shop chains in China also exert the fascination of an unknown space: they allow customers to experiment with and experience new identities, new forms of social interaction, even romantic love.

### Fictional compositions, subjective cartography

After Matthias Wüthrich from Basel had led an expedition into the scientifically largely unexplored terrain of protestant notions of space, the programme on the second day of the conference focused on alienating spaces. What happens when we distort the perception or use of spaces? How does this regenerate the

familiar in a new way? *Junge Akademie* member Gordon Kampe (Essen) presented his own compositions that adopt and then alienate spaces – for instance, by using a dumpster as a musical instrument, or by musically introducing trams into a real space with no tracks, or by overlaying the sounds of an airport and those of a village. This last performance even featured local politicians who provided part of the alienating effect. Sonja Frenzel from Cologne subsequently turned to the British metropolis of London: using subjective cartography, familiar sights of the metropolis become strange and situational as the individual moves through the space. In contemporary urban poetry, the familiar is alienated in the lyrical representation of unfiltered perception – an effect that is further enhanced by the reading process.

As shown by Julia Weber (FU Berlin), installation art is a particularly appropriate format for addressing the topic of spatiality and distorting spaces: when artists like Rachel Whiteread or Gregor Schneider, for instance, turn houses inside out or remodel them in such a way that they seem conventional at first glance, but are hardly usable upon closer inspection, because they can only be accessed via a tiny hatch or the windows are mere illusions or the proportions are all wrong. The viewer’s amazement or discomfort at this alienated “home” certainly reveals the “eerie” side of fascination – an inspiring yet disturbing, indeed fascinating finale before the participants returned home. ✿

---

*Lena Henningsen is Junior Professor of Chinese Studies at the University of Freiburg and has been a member of the Junge Akademie since 2013.*

*Sibylle Baumbach is Junior Professor of English Literature and culture at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and became a Junge Akademie member in 2011.*

*Katharina Heyden is Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Berne and has been a member of the Junge Akademie since 2012.*

# A PLACE FOR EDUCATION?

Changing universities: a conference run by the RG ‘Science Policy: After the Excellence Initiative’ shed light on the concept and value, theory and practice of university education

TEXT CORNELIS MENKE

Since the turn of the 21st century, reforms have profoundly changed what it means to study at a university: New degrees have replaced the old ones in many subjects, the number of courses of study has increased sharply and preparing students for their professional lives has become a declared objective of university education. Reform efforts are still in progress, raising the question as to what (university) education is worth – what exactly education is and what constitutes its value.

At the beginning of July, the RG ‘Science Policy: After the Excellence Initiative’ organised a conference in Berlin with the title “University as a Place of Education? Perspectives for the 21st Century” in order to contribute to the debate on the value of

education. Research Group members Cornelis Menke and Sibylle Baumbach conceived the conference together with professor emeritus and educational expert Heinz-Elmar Tenorth from Berlin, the philosopher of science Martin Carrier from Bielefeld and Thomas Lüttenberg, who heads the International Office at Bielefeld University.

## What is the value of education through research?


The conference focused on different concepts of education and how they can be implemented: which skills and what type of knowledge can and should universities teach? What is the value of education through research, and how realistic is this goal now and in the future? What goals and educational ideals are behind the university colleges currently being founded throughout Europe? What has been their experience so far, and how do they view the situation? What is the value of international exchange, for students as well as for the universities themselves?

The conference sought to bring together educational theory and practice. First, Heinz-Elmar Tenorth and his colleague from Berlin, Dietrich Benner, presented the wealth of concepts behind the notions of “education through research” and “education through science”: they range from participating in specialist training through participating in the scientific community to the modern idea of “learning through research”. The Munich-based philosopher Julian Nida-Rümelin criticised the academisation of education and the ever-increasing growth in student numbers. The preference for an academic education implicit in this development could end up damaging both academic and dual vocational education.





Three lectures addressed the perspective of university colleges at European universities. Konstantin von Freytag-Loringhoven from Rostock described the history and function of American colleges – of the liberal arts colleges on the one hand and the junior or community colleges on the other hand –, arguing the case that the American model could hardly be transferred to Europe. Wolfgang Freitag and Carl Matthias Kaiser introduced two European university colleges: Freitag presented the newly founded University College Freiburg, which offers a four-year Bachelor's course in “Liberal Arts and Sciences”, whilst Kaiser presented the Centre for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities at the University of Bergen in Norway, which focuses on the relationship between academia and society.

Finally, Britta Baron from Alberta explored the significance of internationalisation from the perspective of North American universities. She emphasised the inherent value of international co-operation, which universities nowadays also use for their own “branding” purposes. Internationalisation and globalisation are catalysts for change at universities – whether it is eye-opening insights into conditions abroad that shed new light on their own practices, whether co-operation has a levelling effect on structures as partners adapt to each other, or whether it is simply competitive pressure acting as a motor for development. 



*Wilhelm von Humboldt: can his ideals retain their authority in the 21st century?*

*Cornelis Menke, a member of the Junge Akademie since 2010, is a philosopher of science and Diltbey Fellow at Bielefeld University.*



# ARAB-GERMAN THINK TANK

What exactly is the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities, AGYA, and what does it do? Questions for *Junge Akademie* alumna Verena Lepper, president and co-founder of AGYA

INTERVIEW ULRICH PONTES



*Pleased with the successful launch: President Verena Lepper at the German AGYA opening conference at the end of June in Berlin*

**JAM:** AGYA was officially founded in Qatar in 2013, and at a conference in Germany in 2014 it reached its target size of 50 members. How did you get there?

**Verena Lepper:** It grew gradually, out of *Junge Akademie* work. The Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) invited us to Amman in 2009 and I attended on behalf of the *J.A.* This was where I learned about the Arab World Academy of Young Scientists and got involved. Given that international collaboration plays a big role at the *J.A.*, Kirill Dmitriev, who was also to become a member of *J.A.* later, and I had the idea of inviting junior researchers from the Arab world to Germany. We sent out the invitations at the end of 2010, and in the summer of 2011, we hosted 35 junior researchers from ten nations in Berlin for three days. We received a return invitation and, under the sunny Moroccan skies, as we deliberated on how to follow up on this with Klaus Lucas, Vice President of the BBAW, we came up with the idea of the world's first bilateral *Junge Akademie*.

**JAM:** An idea that surely needed funds as well as enthusiasm.

**Lepper:** Exactly. My Arab colleague Alaa el-Sadek and I agreed that we would look for funding sources. So I told people about our idea on various occasions here in Berlin. It became clear that we could make a large-scale funding request to the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research – which was granted, because the ministry liked our idea of founding a sort of Arab-German think tank. In the interim, my Arab counterpart had successfully negotiated with Arab organisations such as the Qatar Foundation. Over there, you do not simply submit an application.

It is all about personal contact – ‘drinking tea together’. At some stage we got the green light and Kirill and I travelled to the Gulf for negotiations. There was a series of video conferences, not least on Sunday mornings ..., and at some point, fortunately, we got confirmation. By the way, financial support is not everything. We are very lucky and grateful to have a strong Advisory Board: a committee of ten eminent personalities representing major research and science institutions in Germany and the Arab world.

**JAM:** What is the composition of the academy?

**Lepper:** It is modelled on the German *Junge Akademie* with 50 members, each appointed for a five-year term. 25 are from Germany, 25 from the Arab world, and all of them completed their doctorates within the past three to ten years. The main criterion is clearly academic excellence; achieving an even distribution of countries and subject areas is only a secondary consideration. In fact, 16 out of 22 Arab states are represented, which is an extremely good quota. We expressly did not require Arabic or German language skills – our working language is English. Our membership includes the usual suspects: the classical scholar of Islam, the DAAD alumnus, the political scientist with an interest in the Arab world – but we also have an engineer, a biologist and a historian whose academic focus is on completely different regions – a wealth of characters!

**JAM:** What sort of work do you do?

**Lepper:** As the central feature, the members have established and now collaborate in five interdisciplinary research groups. One deals with energy and the environment, for example, another with shared Arab-German cultural heritage. Two offices, in Berlin and in Bahrain, support our academic work. On the German side, we are an independent BBAW project. AGYA basically provides the infrastructure for collaboration: online platforms to facilitate sharing ideas as well as a very generous travel budget. It enables all members to meet up to five times a year: we have one plenary meeting in Germany and one in one of the Arab countries, as well as various Research Group meetings in different locations.

**JAM:** To what extent is the Academy affected by politics?

**Lepper:** We have no political agenda and are able to define the contents of our work independently. Members alone decide on topics and activities for the Research Groups, we are open to everything. As I was the one who wrote the grant applications, I can tell you that, of course, you worry about the topics that could lend themselves to such a bilateral academy behind closed doors – but when the whole thing comes to life with real people, you cannot be sure where it will lead. I now find it extremely exciting that we cannot anticipate our debates and ideas.

Of course, we shall make statements on higher education and science policy – one of our Research Groups explicitly deals with university systems. Another one works on the topic of political transformation and is planning to issue a policy paper that actively discusses and evaluates Germany’s role vis-à-vis researchers in the Arab world in the process of transformation. It will make recommendations on this topic area. Also, our Advisory Board was instrumental in ensuring that the applicants selected had leadership qualities and a sense of social responsibility. Two of our Arab members, for example, had already been offered positions as ministers in their country’s government. It is thus quite possible that, in the long term, our work will also have an impact on policy. And the political world is already watching us: the German Minister for Foreign Affairs asked us to accompany him on his trip to Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. In the early summer, I was therefore able to represent and introduce AGYA in this context, before we had even held our first plenary meeting in Germany. I am confident that we will make ourselves heard in many ways. But our objective clearly remains interdisciplinary work at the interface of academia and society!

**JAM:** Just like the *Junge Akademie*. Does your work differ from ours in any way?

**Lepper:** Our content profile is different, of course, and it is also distinctly international in nature. So we cannot simply duplicate JA structures, although we modelled our concept on many of its features. As ambassadors of academia and culture, our German and Arab members now work together bilaterally. We also notice the difference in our everyday routines. For example, some of our members are devout Muslims, so we provide a prayer room at our meetings, and we also make sure all of our meals include a Halal option in accordance with Muslim dietary rules.



# RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS TOGETHER

A glance abroad: Scotland's Young Academy brings together researchers and entrepreneurs, skilled employees and civil society actors

TEXT LESLEY CAMPBELL AND SAM WEBB

The RSE Young Academy of Scotland (YAS) was established by the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2011. Inspired by Young Academies in Europe, YAS was set up to provide a platform for able and innovative young entrepreneurs, professionals and academics to develop a coherent and influential voice, and to address the most challenging issues facing society in Scotland and beyond. Members are elected for a five-year period and, after recently appointing its third cohort, the membership now stands at 156.

YAS is unique in its interdisciplinary approach. As well as members from a range of academic disciplines the Young Academy of Scotland also includes a number of practitioners whose main area of interest lies outside academia. Therefore particle physicists and biologists sit alongside doctors, civil servants, entrepreneurs and leaders from the charity sector. The inclusion of practitioners has not only enabled a broadening of the YAS remit, but also opened the academy up to a wider audience and a larger range of collaborators. YAS has sought members that not only have a strong track record of interdisciplinary work but that are also interested in contributing to the public good.

With a focus on the central themes of Knowledge, Employment, Young People, Health & Wellbeing, YAS conducts its activities through a number of Working Groups. The influence of YAS's diverse and motivated membership is already reflected in a number of events and projects. For example, a workshop on 'Addressing Hate and Violence' brought together community activists, police practitioners, representatives from central and

local government and a range of local community stakeholders to discuss their experience of the challenges facing Scotland's diverse communities.

Below is a selection of YAS working groups that have already produced some exciting outputs and helped to establish YAS as an influential and proactive organisation within Scotland.


**Research the Headlines:** One of YAS's enduring and most successful projects to date is the blog 'Research the Headlines' - <http://researchtheheadlines.org/>. Utilising the multidisciplinary nature of the YAS membership, this popular blog addresses the way that research is discussed and portrayed in the media by analysing newspaper coverage from an expert but independent position. Launched in August 2013, the blog has covered topics ranging from weather forecasting to literacy skills to diabetes. To celebrate its one year anniversary, a competition will be launched for primary schools and universities to offer students the opportunity to write their own blog pieces about the portrayal of research in the media. In preparation, the blog has initiated a series of 'how to' tips. Starting with 'Don't stop at the headline', these tips are being released fortnightly.

**Excellence in Education:** At the end of 2013, twelve videos were scripted and filmed by YAS members to create a free learning resource to complement the national numeracy curriculum. These videos show how YAS members use numeracy skills in their everyday professional and personal lives. Learners can, for example, find out how cardiologist Marc Dweck uses numeracy

# RSE YOUNG ACADEMY OF SCOTLAND

in the diagnosis and treatment of heart attacks or discover how astrophysicist Catherine Heymans uses spread sheets when buying a new mobile phone. All videos are available on the YAS website and YouTube channel.

**Scottish Constitutional Reform:** An issue that is of particular importance in Scotland this year is the referendum on Scottish Independence. In response to a popular call for access to key facts to enable the public to make an informed choice on voting day, a series of events was organised by YAS in conjunction with the David Hume Institute. Senior politicians from each of the five parties in the Scottish Parliament were invited to speak about the 'implications of constitutional change'. The YAS membership and the Scottish Youth Parliament were canvassed to identify issues of importance. This process culminated in an open letter to the five speakers to encourage them to address these important issues. This letter along with a series of reports from each event is published in a booklet on the YAS website.

These examples of YAS's work demonstrate the wide remit that is enabled by a diverse membership. Coupled with ongoing projects focusing on open data, health communications and computing in schools, YAS is already beginning to realise its aims for the public good. The Young Academy will continue to develop these and diversify its activities, building upon its connections with organisations, both in Scotland and internationally. 

*Lesley Campbell is the Manager, Sam Webb the Executive Assistant at RSE Young Academy of Scotland.*

*Information and contact: [www.royalsoced.org.uk](http://www.royalsoced.org.uk)*



*Composer and YAS member Jane Stanley at a meeting in Aberdeen standing next to the banner featuring other members*



*Members of YAS in George Street, Edinburgh – very near the seat of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*



# EVENTS 2014/2015

## 2014 in review

- 28 March **“Equality of opportunity: What promotion programmes and initiatives for academia must provide”**  
Presentation of *Junge Akademie* position paper “Personnel structure as a key to higher performing universities” at the workshop run by the discussion group on gender research and equality in academia.  
*Berlin*
- 
- 25 April **JA at the Board of Trustees of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin**  
Presentation of the position paper “Personnel structure as a key to higher performing universities” by the RG ‘Science Policy: After the Excellence Initiative’.  
*Berlin*
- 
- 1 May **“Puppets Ask – Academics Answer”**  
With Sibylle Baumbach and Gordon Kampe.  
*Halle/Saale*
- 
- 2 May **JA at the German Association of University Professors and Lecturers**  
The RG ‘Science Policy: After the Excellence Initiative’ participated in an exchange on future personnel structures for junior researchers.  
*Bad Godesberg*
- 
- 2–3 May **“In Stitches!”**  
Interdisciplinary symposium on laughter – see article on page 36.  
*Essen*
- 
- 5–8 May **“Water Issues and Ecological Sustainability in Areas of Urbanisation”**  
*Junge Akademie* conference in co-operation with the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina and the Brazilian Academy of Sciences.  
*São Carlos (Brazil)*
- 
- 10 May **JA at the German National Academic Foundation**  
Information fair “Careers in Academia”: *JA* members advised students on pursuing an academic career.  
*Cologne*
- 
- 28 May **JA at the German Council of Science and Humanities**  
Invitation to a hearing on good academic practice (committee on tertiary education)  
*Cologne*
- 
- 30–31 May **“To Boldly Go Where No Man Has Gone Before.’ The Fascination of the Unknown: Space”**  
Conference run by the RG ‘Fascination’ – see article on page 42.  
*Berlin*

## 2014 in review

- 10 June **“New Paths in the German University System”**  
Conference run by *Junge Akademie* and the German Association of Historians – see article on page 34.  
*Berlin*
- 
- 27 June **First *Junge Akademie* alumni meeting**  
*Berlin*
- 
- 4–5 July **“The University as a Place of Education? Perspectives for the 21st Century”**  
Organised by the RG ‘Science Policy: After the Excellence Initiative’ – see page 44.  
*Berlin*
- 
- 6–10 July **“4<sup>th</sup> German-Russian Young Scientists Forum”**  
*JA* conference in co-operation with Leopoldina, the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Council of Young Scientists of the Russian Academy of Sciences.  
*St. Petersburg (Russia)*
- 
- 17–24 August **Summer academy of the German National Academic Foundation**  
Week-long summer academy, organised by *Junge Akademie* members and alumni for German National Academic Foundation students.  
*Schloss Salem, Lake Constance*
- 
- 16–18 October **Ideas workshop**  
*St. Goar*
- 
- 6–7 November **“Growth at All Cost?”**  
Workshop run by the RG ‘Sustainability’.  
*Berlin*
- 
- 14–16 November **“Testing Institutions”**  
Conference run by the RG ‘Art as Research?’ with Pirkko Husemann, Bernhard Herbordt/Melanie Mohren and Silja Klepp.  
*Hildesheim*

## What’s on in 2015?

- 24 January 2015 **„Salon Sophie Charlotte 2015“**  
Host contribution by the *Junge Akademie*.  
*Berlin*
- 
- 16–19 February 2015 **“The Future of Research in a Digital Age”**  
Joint interdisciplinary conference run by the *JA* and the Israel Young Academy.  
*Jerusalem*

# CATCHING UP WITH ... KATJA WINDT

There is a life after the *Junge Akademie* – which is why this space is reserved for alumni

**1. Is joy important for your work? Should it be?**

Yes, even during difficult times. Enjoying work gives me the motivation I need.

**2. What do you enjoy about your work?**

The freedom to determine things myself.

**3. What is humankind's greatest achievement?**

Exploration of space and knowledge of our galaxy.

**4. If you were to die tomorrow, what achievement would you look back on with most pride?**

My children.

**5. What aspects of your research are relevant for humankind?**

Optimising production (manufacturing products faster, meeting time and cost targets better).

**6. What advice would you give Ph.D. students?**

Always to consider the potential applications of research outcomes.

**7. What advice would you give professors?**

To be good teachers, too.

**8. What was humankind's greatest mistake?**

To underestimate the potential of diversity.

**9. What does the German academic system need?**

Competition: it generates top-level performance.

**10. Should we abolish the universities?**

No, because universities and research institutions drive progress.

**11. What has your career at university and in research made of you?**

It has made me a more critical and independent thinker.

**12. What did the *Junge Akademie* make of you?**

It opened up transdisciplinary approaches in my research.



ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE

Katja Windt, born in 1969, was a member of the *Junge Akademie* from 2004 to 2009, as well as speaker of the *Junge Akademie* from June 2006 to June 2007. She is a professor of global production logistics and became the President and CEO of Jacobs University Bremen in February 2014.

**13. Do you have anything to add?**

We still have a long way to go in terms of making family and career compatible.

**14. Any final words?**

Onwards we go...

BOREDOM IN STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY EXPERIMENT CONFIRMS THEORY I GOT TO KNOW BOREDOM AS AN ADULT A SHORT (INTELLECTUAL) HISTORY OF ECSTASY FOOTNOTES MEDITATION AS THE PRECONDITION FOR ECSTASY? FINANCES ECSTASY = DIVERSION? DOES NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH ECSTASY OR IS THE OPPOSITE – DOES THAT FIT ON THE BACK PAGE?, IS IT THE FLIP SIDE? IS ECSTASY PRODUCTIVE? TIME PERCEPTION IS THERE LONG-LASTING ECSTASY? TIME ECONOMY (HOW) CAN ECSTASY BE NEUROLOGICALLY SUBSTANTIATED – AND BOREDOM? CAUSES OF FEELING BORED? DANCE CULTURALLY DETERMINED BREAKTHROUGH BETWEEN DISCOVERIES EXCITING TIME STRUCTURING/ECONOMISATION SUCCESS (UN)EVENTFULNESS IN ART FUN WHAT IS AN EVENT? TO CREATE SOMETHING HAS BECOME A RARITY DUE TO THE INTERNET BREAKING THROUGH BOUNDARIES GOOD FOR RESEARCH (YOU CAN WORK WELL DURING LECTURES AND HIT ON NEW IDEAS) MUSIC INSTITUTE MEETINGS LOVE APPLICATIONS FOR SUMMER(...)SHIPS FROM INDIA NEW DATA WHY DO WE GET BORED? FIELD RESEARCH IN NEW COUNTRIES IS BOREDOM A “GENUINE” FEELING FOR TIME? IS BOREDOM PRODUCTIVE? MONOTONY NO CHALLENGE ALWAYS BAD? OLD DATA AND POSTPONED PUBLICATIONS BUREAUCRATISATION OF UNIVERSITIES UNPROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP OF MEETINGS REVIEWS CHECKING POOR ASSIGNMENT PAPERS

## JUNGE AKADEMIE MAGAZIN

The *Junge Akademie Magazin* was conceived by members of the *Junge Akademie*. It provides insights into projects and events of the *Junge Akademie*, reports on members and publications, and intervenes in current academic and science policy debates.





## Die Junge Akademie

at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy  
of Sciences and Humanities and  
the German National Academy  
of Sciences Leopoldina

**Office**

Die *Junge Akademie*  
Jägerstraße 22/23  
10117 Berlin  
Germany

**Phone** +49 30 20370-650

**Fax** +49 30 20370-680

**E-Mail** [office@diejungeakademie.de](mailto:office@diejungeakademie.de)

**Internet** [www.diejungeakademie.de/en](http://www.diejungeakademie.de/en)