++++++ Call for Papers ++++

Interdisciplinary Workshop on "Rape and Revenge. Revenge Cultures and Sexualized Violence in Intermedial Perspective" on March 10 - 12, 2022

Research on sexualized violence as well as gendered experiences of discrimination have increasingly gained significance since the #MeToo debate. We would like to follow up on these discussions and add one aspect to them, namely the phenomenon of "Rape and Revenge".

The concept "Rape and Revenge," which originated in feminist film studies, attempts to make various factual and fictional events tangible and analyzable: On the one hand, it refers to forms of vigilante justice, a specific social action in which victims of sexualized violence take revenge on their rapists, or in which partners, family members, or friends (vicariously) take revenge on the rapists. These revenge cycles usually involve symmetrical retribution based on a principle of reciprocal equivalence. However, the concept of revenge can also serve as an expression of criticism of unsatisfactory sanctioning practices in current legal systems (keyword: rape culture). At the same time, imagined revenge scenarios can also be seen as a coping strategy for dealing with traumatizing experiences of violence. This reveals a (gender-)specific sense of responsibility and justice. At the same time, concepts of gender and gender orders and ideas of sexualities come into focus in a condensed way in the context of a rape culture.

Revenge following a suffered rape is one theme that has circulated in various discourses since antiquity, initially particularly in literature. A key figure in this context is the figure of
Philomela, who is raped by her brother-in-law, is also deprived of her tongue, and later takes revenge together with her sister. This topos continues, for example, in Shakespeare's drama "Titus Andronicus" (1594) which takes the revenge spiral to an extreme.

In the Middle Ages and early modern period, women seem to take a back seat as avengers. Due to the prevailing gender orders and hierarchies and the corresponding legal codes, male figures (fathers, brothers, etc.) appear vicariously as avengers. One of the few exceptions is the painter Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1653), who thematizes her revenge fantasies in numerous paintings. It was only in the course of the 20th century that women turned into their own avengers after being victims of sexualized violence – in various discourses and media: literature (poetry, drama, prose), graphic novels (anime), visual arts, film (including pornography), music, as in general as media-mediated representations in popular culture. Cult films such as the Indian movie „Bandit Queen“ (1994), the U.S. productions „Thelma and Louise“ (1991), „Promising Young Women“ (2021) or „Violation“ (2021) and the French film „Revenge“ (2017) show that the topic is also negotiated interculturally and has not lost its relevance.

But past and present empirical examples, such as the much-discussed cases of Marianne Bachmeier, who shot her daughter's rapist and murderer in the courtroom in 1981, or Valérie Bacot in 2021, who shot her rapist and husband, are also part of the phenomenon.

Deconstructing the phenomenon shows how rape and revenge practices are sites of negotiation of emotional reappraisal of experienced trauma and psychologized notions of a human regulation of affect. Furthermore, gender-theoretical readings ascribe potentials for emancipation to the phenomenon, dissolving dichotomous divisions of (heteronormative) victim and perpetrator roles and acknowledging the complexity of the social relationship.

In this interdisciplinary workshop we would like to examine different examples and questions surrounding the "Rape and Revenge" discourse.

The following questions will frame the workshop:
- In which fictional and empirical forms of expression can the phenomenon of "Rape and Revenge" be found (literature, art, law and (pop) culture, social practice, among others)?
- To which aesthetic principles and/or social and cultural conditions are these forms of expression oriented?
- Which cultural theoretical approaches and ethnographic methods can be used as analytical perspectives and tools to describe the phenomena and interpret them in a theory-based way?
- What are the potentials and limitations of scientifically grounded analysis of these phenomena, with respect to historical as well contemporary aspects?
- What can the phenomena tell us about social knowledge and social systems? How do they frame social action in societies? And how do they relate to the thematic complex of "rape culture"?

The workshop addresses early stage/undergraduate researchers (bachelor's and master's students, doctoral students) as well as post-docs and post-doctoral researchers from different disciplines, who are interested in mapping the thematic field. We aim to create a foundation for further studies of the topic in the social sciences, cultural studies, literature, art and law, ethnology and anthropology, postcolonial, queer and gender studies, and to develop innovative interpretive proposals.
We have obtained funding from the Equality Opportunity Office of the University of Hamburg (Equality Fund 2021), so that we will be able to reimburse fees, travel and accommodation costs within the usual limits. Following the workshop, a publication of the contributions will be planned.

Because of the uncertainty due to the Covid-19 situation, at the moment, we are planning the workshop to take place in presence as well as in digital form. Detailed information will follow in due course. We are planning the workshop in a bilingual form in German and in English.

Please send an abstract (approx. 1/2 A4 page, German or English) and brief information about yourself (bio and bibliographic information) by **August 31, 2021** to: christine.kuenzel@uni-hamburg.de AND manuel.bolz@uni-hamburg.de.

We look forward to your contributions! If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact us.