

Call for Papers

Accounting for combat-related killings in Cultures of War Discourse

3rd CuWaDis-European-Group-Workshop to advance scholarly collaboration on war, discourse and culture

Goethe University Frankfurt/Main, Germany, 21st to 23rd July 2014

Deadline: 30.04.2014

The CuWaDis-workshop examines war discourse-in-action, here how and to what effect combat-related killings are accounted for in polities relatively close or distant to war. CuWaDis invites especially, but not exclusively scholars from Ethnomethodology, Symbolic Interactionism, Speech Act Theory, and adjacent interpretative and performative approaches to contribute to the workshop with empirical case-studies. The workshop takes place at the Goethe University Frankfurt/Main, Germany from the 21st to the 23rd of July 2014. It brings together scholars from Europe and Israel concerned with discourse-in-action studies on a broad spectrum of events, settings and contexts within cultures of war.

The last few decades have shown increasing public concern with killings in relation to military combat, especially with cases accounted for as “collateral damage”, “friendly fire”, or “accidents”. Inquiries into killings – here mainly civilian casualties or allies, rarely “insurgents” – take place at legal, political, organizational, or journalistic sites and settings, e.g. in criminal or civil procedure, in public hearings, in media debates, or military tribunals. At these sites, a range of discursive practices are on display as part of more or less established judicial or political procedure and ceremony: e.g. the Kunduz-inquiry in Germany in 2009, the Winograd-Commission on the Israeli war on Lebanon 2006, or the board of inquiry investigating the Nimrod air crash in the UK. Beyond these sites, moreover, and in reaction to what happens within them, we find sites of criticism, especially of the limits of the official investigations, their inconclusiveness and their unwillingness to prosecute offenders. Those wishing to present case-studies can work with these cases, relate them to other cases, or pursue similar practices in other arenas of accounting.

Scholars from various disciplines are invited to introduce such case-studies in order to explore ‘accountings’ as dynamic, contingent, and more or less forceful (political) processes of meaning and relevance making within cultural contexts. In particular, contributors are asked to (a) link discursive events to wider discursive processes, (b) identify certain patterns of accounting within wider contexts, and (c) generate hypotheses on the cultural/political treatment and control of the military-in-combat.

Please send your abstract or further inquiries to Kolanoski@em.uni-frankfurt.de and thomas.scheffer@soz.uni-frankfurt.de until 30th April 2014. Abstracts should not exceed 400 words. We are happy to provide you with more background to the series of workshops.