

SATIRE AND IN-CAPACITY

Program in Poetics and Theory, New York University
Program on Representation, E. U. Viadrina, Frankfurt/O
The Jacob Burns Institute for Advanced Legal Studies

The two workshops on in-capacity to be held at the Cardozo Law School and at New York University continue a research program begun at the Program on Representation, E. U. Viadrina, Frankfurt/O.

Forms of incapacity and figures of the impossible have a remarkable relevance and currency in present discourses in the humanities. Although their literal meaning seems to denote the mere opposite of anything that leads to success and completion, they have acquired a strange surplus value: They function as a cipher for theoretical hopes that strive for a new form of thinking beyond ruling ideas of practice, subjectivity and thought - e.g. as a cipher for a thinking beyond sovereignty (cf. *Bartleby's I prefer not to*), for a conception of subjectivity not reduced to a set of competences (cf. the figure of infancy) or for a thinking that exposes the deconstruction of metaphysics (cf. the thinking of the im-possible), to name but a few.

The figures of incapacity indicate a fundamental change in the notions of the human subject and its abilities: They mark a conception of subjectivity that is not confined to competence and the actualization of abilities. This new conception does no longer treat moments of incapacity as the sheer opposite or mere privation of human capacities. On the contrary, incapacities are considered as an equally constitutive part of being a subject and having an ability. "In-capacity" in this sense seems to belong to the essence of any capacity, insofar as a capacity does not only exist in the form of its actualization in a present performance, but just as much in the form of suspension or deferral of actualization: as a "potential not to" (Agamben).

By means of a series of conferences we aspire to investigate a number of figures and forms that are understood in different discourses as in-capable or im-possible in this new and laden sense. This investigation intends to clarify how the complex modality of the in-capable and the im-possible can be understood in its own right, and not as identical to incompetence and impossibility in the usual sense.

Friday, April 8, 9am-5pm
Cardozo Law School, 55 Fifth Avenue

Kathrin Thiele (*Frankfurt an der Oder / Buffalo*)
A Figure of (In)capacity: Becoming

Thomas Khurana (*Potsdam / Frankfurt an der Oder*)
Notes on the Temporality of In-capacity

Dirk Setton (*Potsdam / Frankfurt an der Oder*)
The In-capacity of Language: On the Concept of Initiation

Michiel Bot (*NYU*)
Inability, Interpretation, and Suspense in Franz Kafka's Trial

Ysette Guevara (*NYU*)
For When I Am Weak, Then I Am Strong: The Rhetoric of Humility in Sor Juana's Answer

Matthew Koreiwo (*NYU*)

On Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*

Erica Weitzman (*NYU*)

Imperium Stupidum: Svejek, Satire, Sabotage