Call for Papers:

**Populäre Erscheinungen: Der deutsche Schauerroman um 1800 im internationalen Kontext/ Popular Visions: The German Schauerroman and its International Contexts**

Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg vom 30.01-1.02.2009

The Gothic has long been recognised as an integral component of literary history and cultural studies in anglo-american literary studies. This is by no means true of the German “Schauerroman”. Although German and English forms of the Gothic were the object of similarly intense critical debate from the late 1780s, the Schauerroman has almost completely disappeared from German literary histories (and indeed many of these works have actually disappeared into the vaults of German libraries). From its inception, the Schauerroman was criticised as populist and trivial, and this entirely negative portrayal has continued, with few exceptions, until the present. Despite critical questioning of concepts of canonization since the 1960s, there has been almost no considered Germanist or comparative study of the German Schauerroman on the basis of modern literary, critical and cultural theory. The aim of this conference, organised in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin, is not, however, merely the “rehabilitation”, but a differentiated and critical reconsideration of a forgotten literary mode on the basis of modern theoretical concepts. Rather than merely dismissing the Schauerroman as the anti-rational, anti-modern and trivial pendant to the rational works of the Enlightenment and Classicism, modern analytical methods such as Cultural Materialism, New Historicism and Historical Anthropology can enable an important reconsideration of the mode. When viewed as a concomitant element of literary and social processes of modernization in the course of the Enlightenment, existing on an axis running parallel with and not opposite to the rationalization of social and cultural modernity and providing a medium for the articulation for the uncertainties and anxieties, the taboos and internal problems of modernity, then one can move beyond the unsatisfactory and pejorative labelling of the Schauerroman as trivial. The Gothic thus becomes a test-case for critical approaches of dealing with popular cultural phenomena; indeed there is a case to be made, that the Gothic be considered as the first modern literary phenomenon of mass-culture. Of importance are also the inter- and intra-cultural transfer processes: the Gothic around 1800 is a thoroughly international mode and develops as a conglomerate of translations, adaptations and plagiarisms and is thus an important example of developing processes of cultural transfer in modern Europe and beyond.

Some (by no means all) of the central questions to be addressed are:
Can the *Schauerroman* be defined more precisely: where does the term first arise and how has it been defined (e.g. “Ritter-, Räuber- and Schauerromane” as a problematic and confusing “moniker” that requires re-consideration)? Does “Schauerroman” transcend historical borders as a meta-term or is it historically limited to the period “around 1800”? Would a differentiation between “Schauerroman” and “Schauerliteratur” (as parallel to Gothic novel and Gothic Fiction) be constructive? How do these different dimensions of the term interact? Is *Schauerroman* merely a particular form of the Fantastic or should one differentiate these? Which works can be considered as *Schauerromane* and can one reconstruct a “canon”? The “limits” of the *Schauerroman*: the mysterious events in the *Schauerroman* are no longer considered wonderful or fairytale-like, rather they are coloured by a disruption either in the text itself or at the level of reader-reception. The question that arises is where the borders to a literature of the wonderful can be drawn? Can the *Schauerroman* be better defined through these limits? What role does the *Schauerroman* have in Enlightenment poetics (of the wonderful)? Where and when (if at all) does the *Schauerroman* end? Can one differentiate the *Schauerroman* from forms of the literary fantastic in and after Romanticism? Are such differences actually useful or helpful? The question of the relations between the *Schauerroman* and “High-Literature” shall also need to be addressed.

The *Schauerroman* “around 1800” is part of an intense process of cultural transfer between England, France and Germany. How should one deal with this international nature of the mode? How important are these transfer processes for the development of individual national forms such as the *Schauerroman*? What translation and reception processes can one identify in these international relations? Does this international nature have consequences for the definition of “Schauerroman” as a literary historical term?

What is the relationship of the *Schauerroman* to the canonical “High-Literature” of the late Enlightenment prose-market, poetry and Weimar Classicism (e.g. Goethe, Schiller, Bürger, Göttinger Hain)?

The *Schauerroman* and the history of its own literary history: e.g. how does the traditional categorization of the *Schauerroman* as trivial and populist hinder its criticism and consideration within literary history? Can one “rehabilitate” or better contextualise the *Schauerroman* through recourse to modern theories of popular culture studies? What role can the consideration of the literary market (publishing, readership, distribution of works etc.) play in these critical methods? Does the
important role of women as writers and readers of this fiction influence such critical procedures?

- Is the term “Schauerroman” an indication of its contextualisation within (late-) Enlightenment anthropology? Can theoretical concepts of the pleasure of anxiety be explained as general trend within the (late-) Enlightenment? Are such theories satisfactory for explanations and historical contextualisation of the Schauerroman?

- The Gothic as part of Cultural Studies: is the identification of the Schauerroman and the Gothic as a part of late-Enlightenment modernization and modernity (as has become apparent in Anglo-American discussions) also relevant for the German context in the light of theories of a delayed modernity? Can tropes such as the spectre and monstrosity be considered as metaphorical or symbolic forms to articulate or problematize technological, scientific or medial modernization (e.g. can one view ghost stories as a means of integrating the phantasmagoria into society)? Is the historical novel of chivalry a heterotopic space in which contemporary social and political issues can be addressed? What themes and areas of modernity come into question here (e.g. secret societies, religion etc.)?

Please send your abstracts (in English or German) of no more than 250 words by 15th February 2008 to:

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