

On “Anxiety Culture”

Ulrich Hoinkes – Kiel University

In our current world, everyone is likely to feel anxious in the face of a very broad spectrum of threats and dangers we are all exposed to, whether as a matter of fact or in latent expectation. This socially spread feeling of anxiety is due to the omnipresence of discussions on phenomena like earth warming, health hazards, unpredictable terrorist attacks, political instabilities and outbreaks of wars, uncontrollable migration waves, religious hostilities leading to violence, socio-economic inequalities, uncertain future of many people’s own living conditions and so on.

As a result, we live in a society affected by a kind of anxiety disorder which very often attains the individual, but is also summing up to a general mental state in the communities we live in. This is why ‘Anxiety Culture’ seems to be an appropriate notion to suggest an analytical perspective for a better understanding of and handling with the bigger social problems and precarious aspects of today’s living conditions.

Our contribution tries to show that there is a tradition of sociological theory building as well as some kind of public awareness which can be easily linked to the definition of this term as a successor of other analytical key notions for social, political and economic development like ‘risk society’ (Ulrich Beck ♡2015, using this term since the 1980s) or ‘liquid modernity’ (Zygmunt Bauman ♡2017, using this term at the beginning of this century). ‘Anxiety Culture’ can be seen as the attempt to describe what happens now when our world is in ‘metamorphosis’ (Beck, in his last posthumous publication of 2016) and all the established theories that are to explain current social change and the world’s imminent future prove to be failing.

Social Threats, Pain and Suffering in Chinese Past and Present

Angelika Messner – Kiel University

Pain and suffering in Chinese history and today is been used as a mental source for counter-discourses, as means of critique of ongoing threatening situations, on a societal level.

In late 19th century, for instance, when the Chinese (Qing) Empire was nearly to decline, and foreign troupes invaded the borders, Chinese students (living at that time) in foreign countries raised their voices against the court in Beijing. They referred to a text from the 17th century, The *Yangzhou shi riji* (Account of ten days of Yangzhou) which describes a massacre – that raged in Yangzhou in 1645, killing hundred thousand of people.

Pain and suffering are certainly biochemical processes. Yet, in order to get rid of this most common and unmet problem in the modern world (in the Western as much as in the Eastern hemisphere), especially in the domains of medicine and psychology --- we need better models of the nature of pain and suffering. The debate on the meanings of pain is largely present in medicine, neurobiology and psychology. What is badly missing are historical analysis of the lexicons in use in different periods and regions, past and present. With other words --- we need to know more about the emotion-knowledge applied in order to get insights into ways people experience pain physically and mentally.

My paper is concerned with the oscillation between the realities which are supposedly situated simultaneously in the realms of language and in the social and bodily realities of pain. Tracking this oscillatory movement between the (let’s say) biochemical processes and the cultural and social textures, will reveal insights into the very textures of pain and suffering in their socio political and corporeal dimensions.

The *langue* of Innovation in (Foreign Language) Education

Tim Giesler – Bremen University

The basic conditions under which teaching languages in school contexts takes place have not undergone drastic changes within the last 200 years of institutional schooling. Despite an on-going – and as of yet unresolved – debate on the focus on formal or functional aspects, on the integration of the pupils’ L1 (or other languages), as well as on the role of culture and its theoretical underpinnings, teachers usually fall back on a compromise sometimes portrayed as ‘eclectic’ teaching. The extreme methodological amplitudes defined in theory (cf. Thornbury 2011) do not seem to exist in teaching practice.

Additionally, those extreme positions have all long been defined, discussed and tried out so most of the 'innovative' language teaching methods are really only just old wine in new wineskins. Language teachers and language teaching – according to the 'grammar' of schooling (Tyack & Tobin 1994) – are mostly unimpressed by 'new' methods. The 'educationalization' of social problems (Tröhler 2016) on the other hand calls for a constant reform of teaching to address social problems: a 'global' world and 'new' media, ecological issues and other social threats allegedly demand for innovative (language) teaching methodologies.

My paper will address the dichotomy between a persistent and stable *langue* of innovation on the one hand and surprisingly only small readjustments of a tried and tested (language) teaching methodology.

Gender Trouble(s), or: Anxiety about Gender Authenticity in Legal Discourse

Jens T. Theilen – Kiel University

This presentation aims to apply the framework of anxiety culture to the production and application of gender norms. Its main focus will be on legal judgments concerning transgender rights, based on two assumptions. The first is that the law as an institutionalised social practice will reflect broader socially and discursively constructed anxieties; however, it will often hide them behind the ostensible objectivity of legal (and especially judicial) reasoning. Overcoming anxiety culture in the legal context thus requires that it first be laid bare. The second assumption is that cases concerning transgender rights are particularly well-suited for this task since anxieties often crystallise with particular clarity where minority rights are concerned. While the impact of gender norms is ubiquitous, their regulatory effect comes to the fore most violently in cases perceived as transgression, and it is those cases that I will be concerned with. An analysis of various judgments dealing with legal gender recognition for transgender persons, particularly those of the European Court of Human Rights, will reveal what Alex Sharpe has long since dubbed a "judicial concern over transgender 'authenticity'": the experiences of transgender persons are not taken for granted, but rather subjected to scrutiny and required to conform to a particular form of narrative in order to achieve legal recognition. To formally ensure this alleged "authenticity", different legal orders establish

various preconditions such as the divorce requirement, sterilisation or other bodily modifications, and a psychiatric diagnosis of gender identity disorder. My hunch is that each of these requirements can be connected back to a form of anxiety: in particular, challenges to the sterilisation requirement have led to near-panicked reactions even by usually placid courts when faced with the idea of a woman procreating or a man giving birth. The presentation aims to substantiate this hunch in more detail and discuss its implications.

The Judiciary's Response to Anxiety in Legislation: Mass Surveillance in the UK, Germany and the EU

Felix Bieker – Unabhängiges Landeszentrum für Datenschutz Schleswig-Holstein (ULD)

Legislators on the national as well as the EU level have introduced surveillance measures in reaction to a public discourse focused on threats of terrorism and serious crime. These measures include data retention as a particularly far-reaching instrument of massive online surveillance. While there has been little evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of such blanket retention in the fight against terrorism and serious crime, this instrument is lauded by politicians as a powerful tool in a public debate informed by anxiety. This anxiety can be observed on both sides of this at times emotional debate: the anxiety concerns terrorist attacks as well as the undermining of democratic values through mass surveillance. In this heated atmosphere courts have been charged with reviewing legislation on data retention.

This presentation will take the UK, Germany and the EU as case studies to show different approaches to such legislation in three distinct legal cultures. As the courts award the respective legislators varying degrees of discretion, their engagement with these anxiety-induced measures has come to differing conclusions. The UK and German approach can be contrasted by way of a least similar comparison, whereas the EU approach, albeit in a supranational context, is even stricter than the German approach: While the UK courts tend towards a wider margin of appreciation, the German constitutional court and the EU Court of Justice have been very critical of purported claims on the effectiveness of mass surveillance and reviewed these measures more strictly. By analyzing these different approaches the presentation aims to illustrate in how far the courts engage in or remove themselves from anxiety-driven debate.

Crisis and Change in Global Politics

Dirk Nabers – Kiel University

The presentation develops a discourse theory of crisis and change in global politics. Crisis is conceptualized as structural dislocation, resting on difference and incompleteness. Change is seen as the continuous but ultimately futile effort to gain a full identity. The incompleteness and contingent character of the social represents the

most important condition for democratic politics to become possible and for a theory of crisis and change to become conceivable. In this new understanding, crisis loses its everyday meaning of a periodically occurring event. Instead, crisis becomes an omnipresent feature of the social fabric. It represents the absence of ground and of social foundation, and it rests within the subject as well as the social whole.

How “silent violence against women” can threaten public life

Elaheh Salehi – Kiel University

Despite the positive evolution of women's conditions in Western societies, violence against women still exists in various forms. In addition to domestic violence, women are still physically or sexually assaulted and are subjected to rape or attempted rape. Thus, violence against women is always a source of fear and panic in our society. Men, by their aggressive behavior towards women, create dangerous social spaces for them.

Moreover, women are subjected to psychological violence and verbal abuse that cannot be seen and therefore is "invisible", which appears in the form of contempt, discrimination, devaluation, denigration and attacks on the dignity of women. This is especially true when it comes to a professional hierarchy, because the field of work is still categorized by gender divisions. Since high-level positions have long been reserved for men, today women are largely absent in the political sphere because of these gender-based and discriminatory stereotypes. The sexist insults of men addressed to

women constitute a redoubtable weapon to wound the latter. Insults with sexual connotations are used to discredit women in the public sphere.

Sexism in language provides sufficient means to despise and denigrate women. The contempt of women results from the education of children, a macho and gendered education in which man, for often obscure reasons, is presented as a stronger being whose pride should never be hindered or challenged. On the other hand, girls learn female stereotypes: a girl should be sensitive, weak and submissive. How can our societies reduce sexism in women's public life? Can changes in our educational systems help eliminate sexism? Could increasing opportunities for women in male dominated trades change the contempt of women in society?

Digital communication as a Topic for Foreign Language Education

Meike Hethey – Bremen University

Fake news, hate speech, self-aggrandizement in social media, “global logorrhea” (T. Garton Ash)... When it comes to digital communication, the public discourse lately seems to emphasize problematic aspects of the Web 2.0. But global digitalisation is irreversible and has become as such an important issue in school education. But how do curricula and learning programs and materials face the complexity of the digital phenomena? Do they focus on technical competences or do subject-specific approaches exist?

By taking foreign language education as an example my paper will point out, that with regard to digitalisation, pedagogical objectives are combined to a technic-orientated approach. On the one hand, digital communication is perceived as a challenge for students. They need to build up a reflective attitude and critical competence to be able to evaluate digital information, to control and to protect their own identity in social media and to participate in digital communication.

On the other hand, a technic-orientated approach focusses on the use of digital devices and applications (cf. i.e. KMK 2012). It is evident that subject-specific aspects as the transformation of narratives (cf. Nünning et al. 2012), changes in the author-reader-

relationship (cf. Hartling 2009) or the building of new media genres in this cultural process of worldmaking (cf. Goodman 1992, Nünning et al. 2010) until now – with only a few exceptions – do not determine the examination of digitalisation in the foreign language classroom.

To analyse some of the reasons for this lack of subject-specificity, the paper will focus on the political decision of the German conference of secretaries of education and cultural affairs to establish media competence in a top-down process as an educational cross-section as well as on the inadequate interaction between subject-specific and media-didactics. The paper will conclude with some considerations on a subject-specific approach to the topic of digital communication in the foreign language classroom.

Developments Concerning Indigenous Linguistic Minorities in a Globalized Society

Alastair Walker – Kiel University

In this paper I should like to touch upon two aspects concerning indigenous linguistic minorities, both of which may well have a bearing on the future of our society.

The increasing globalization world wide has in the course of time led to various reactions. One such reaction about the beginning of the 1970's was originally concerned with the question of human rights where various underprivileged sections of society began to protest against a tradition of oppression. One example were the indigenous linguistic minorities in Europe who demanded the recognition of their languages and the right to use them in all societal domains. This went hand in hand with an increase in regionalism, or perhaps even nationalism, where particular regions, including language communities, are seeking more autonomy if not some form of independence, resulting in a number of albeit highly heterogeneous regional movements. Reactions against globalization, which might be seen as the revolt of the neglected, have, however, now gone beyond pure regionalism as Brexit, for example, would seem to indicate. Thus the question is what role indigenous linguistic minorities and regionalism might play within broader geopolitical developments in a possible restructuring of Europe.

The second aspect to be looked at is the idea that every language is a window to the world. It is generally accepted that every language gives a different perspective on the world or “reality”, which is one valid argument for preserving languages as part of the genius of mankind. The question is, however, to what extent this still holds true. Due to globalization and the increase in language-contact situations, minority languages seem to be tending to adapt to the majority languages in a process of levelling or attrition, hence (partly) losing their unique individuality.

“Death” of Minority Languages: A Social Threat?

Elmar Eggert – Kiel University

Some developments in society can be perceived as social threats if they entail drastic changes to the traditional social status or relations that the people concerned consider a disadvantage for themselves. Even very slow evolutions like the substitution of the language use in more and more domains or a complete language shift, which might imply the death of a language, are considered as a social threat. As these changes generate the feeling of an essential loss of traditional values and of a threat to important parts of the minority speakers' social identity, many people demand public interventions or, at least, a social and political commitment in favour of the minority or endangered language.

A lot of these diglossic situations are a main topic of discussion not only in many regions with two or more languages (regardless of their official status), but also in national politics where these language conflicts lead to political discussions and decisions (as has been the case in Catalonia). In this talk, some examples from the Romance-speaking world will be presented and compared to the local contexts in Schleswig-Holstein. The general aim of the talk is to debate whether these topics should be dealt with in language classes at all and how teachers and pupils would have to be prepared beforehand in order to be able to discuss these aspects in class.

Language Use and the Refugee Crisis – an Analysis of Spanish Newspaper Articles

Anika Schewe – Kiel University

Nowadays the refugee movement has become one of the most popular topics in the public discourse. Looking at recent newspaper articles, one term that is closely related to the topic of the migratory flow is the term 'crisis'. In Germany, the reception of the refugee movement is widespread but what about Spain? In order to get an overview on the Spanish perception of the refugee movement, four different newspaper articles were analysed with the help of a corpus-based discourse analysis. This corpus-based discourse analysis is based on the theories of Ingo H. Warnke and Jürgen Spitzmüller, who are pioneers in the field of linguistic discourse analysis. In order to see how this linguistic tool can be applied on a specific discourse, the public discourse about the refugee movement in Spain will be analysed. Questions that will be tackled are if and how Spanish newspapers form the public discourse about the refugee crisis linguistically. Therefore a study was conducted on the presentation of the Syrian refugee movement within articles from *El Mundo*, *El País*, *El Confidencial* and *ABC*. An analysis of the individual texts and a comparison of all occurring phenomena helped to answer the questions: Which linguistic means are used in Spanish newspaper articles? How do they affect our perception of the refugee crisis? And finally, is the 'refugee crisis' a linguistic construction?

Arguments in Online Discourses: A Linguistic Analysis Including Frame Semantics

Lambert Schultz – Kiel University

Classic arguments base upon data and warrants that lead to a conclusion. Online discourse in comparison are often characterized by other forms of legitimizations of statements. Van Leeuwen indicates in this context: authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization, mythopoesis. In addition, you can mention the well-directed use of images, that are intended to support the message of the text.

But there are also images that the text itself creates. George Lakoff stated that our language processing is frame-based. Words create mental interpretation frames in our heads and thus shape our understanding of a situation. My talk analyzes the arguments of a contribution on Instagram and shows how the frames that it evokes help to support a thesis.

The Dangers of Paradigms in Education

Fernando Henríquez – Kiel University

In free and advanced societies, the education system faces formidable tensions and paradoxes. On the one hand, it has the responsibility to teach the advantages of the democratic system. On the other, it is an accomplice in the inherent hypocrisy of contemporary democracies, in which, democracy is understood as a system of elite decision and public ratification. Unfortunately, this means that the political decisions are only tolerable as long as social, ideological institutions are in the hands of groups that act in general accord with the needs of those who manage the economic power.

Far from favoring independent thinking, throughout history schools and universities have always played an important institutional role within a system of control and coercion. Although we claim to have a democratic education, the truth is rather different: we have a very elaborated colonial educational model designed primarily to train teachers with methods that devalue the intellectual dimension of education. Accordingly, since teachers are educated within this system, they are also committed to help a world order designed to intimidate and indoctrinate. With this in mind, rethinking the whole epistemological bases of modern education is important.

From Romance to Tragedy. Some Reflections on the Importance of Genre in Anxiety Culture

Michael Schapira – Hofstra University

"Philosophy, and in particular moral philosophy, is still deeply attached to giving good news." So begins the English philosopher Bernard Williams' *"The Women of Trachis: Fictions, Pessimism, Ethics."* It is a stark opening statement, and later in the essay Williams recommends "stark fictions" (a loose constellation of literature stemming from Greek tragedy's presentation of "extreme, undeserved, and uncompensated suffering") as "a necessary supplement and a suitable limitation to the tireless aim of moral philosophy to make the world safe for well-disposed people."

This presentation asks, following Williams' quote, whether it is not only moral philosophers who suffer from a surfeit of optimism and an abiding but ungrounded commitment to making "the world safe for well-disposed people," but rather educators, policy makers, prominent media outlets, and other actors who play a large role in navigating anxiety culture.

The presentation begins by invoking a whole range of conceptual oppositions: how political realism stands to liberalism in international relations, how non-ideal stands to ideal theory in political philosophy, how historicism stands to transcendental idealism; or to move towards more everyday concepts, how romance stands to tragedy, how optimism stands to pessimism. What each of these oppositions should suggest is that different basic orientations open up different sets of attachments, especially to literatures considered and questions pursued.

The goal of this presentation to ask what kinds of question spaces and political projects are opened up by projects that run on a continuum from optimism ("providing the good news") to pessimism. The American philosopher William James famously believed that philosophical works were often as much about the temperament of the philosopher as the argument itself ("tough minded" and "tender minded" to continue our conceptual oppositions). This may be true, but my goal in plotting this continuum is to demonstrate that generic reflections (as in Williams' reflection on tragedy and "stark fictions") can have programmatic importance for a field. I will use the example of contemporary Post-Colonial theory to demonstrate this, but will conclude with some general remarks about education, politics, and media in anxiety culture.

Catalonia's Independence Process and its Hindrance by "Anxiety Culture"

Bàrbara Roviró

Catalonia at present is an Autonomous Community ('Comunitat Autònoma') and an integrative part of the Spanish State. Yet it is right now officially heading for its complete independence in order to become an internationally recognized political state of its own. The decisive step is to be the referendum Catalonia has decided to hold on October 1st 2017. In my talk, I will try to point out how the Catalan Government's engagement in the

independence process is being hindered by the official Spanish state policy which reacts to its main fear of being gravely weakened in its economic power in case Catalonia should break away. In face of the democratic and peaceful way Catalonia is following, there is hardly any argument left for the Spanish State than to declare any political separation from the political entity of Spain as definitely illegal. But this categorical attitude, rhetorically reduced to a simple 'no', doesn't provide any basis for a constructive public discourse on the matter. So, what happens is that defenders of the Spanish unity make use of discursive strategies which do not refer to facts but intend to establish the frightening outlook for political disorder, economic collapse and social strife. Stoking these fears and evoking some kind of uncontrollable future for an independent state of Catalonia comes close to a dystopian view on the possible result of a quite normal democratic process. It is indeed a way of shaping the public discourse in order to make use of what can be referred to as the 'Anxiety Culture' by which our modern societies are deeply affected.