

LMU Graduate Student Panel Report

# "DIKES OF COURAGE: Martin Luther King, the Civil Rights Movement and the Aesthetics of Protest"

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NOVEMBER 23/24, 2018  
LISBON, PORTUGAL



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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First and foremost, we would like to thank Teresa Botelho, Isabel Oliveira Martins and the student organizers at Nova University of Lisbon for hosting this event.

Thank you to the Lehre@LMU, Studienbüro Fakultät für Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften, and Felix Bokelmann for funding this experience and enabling us to participate in the international *Dikes of Courage* conference. We would also like to acknowledge the LMU faculty and staff for creating the opportunity.

A special thank you to Dr. Bärbel Harju, Dr. Anita Vrzina, and Constanze Sabathil, MA; for their constant guidance and support throughout this whole process. It was a true blessing to have such a wonderful teaching team with us during months of preparation and the conference in Lisbon.

Finally, a big thank you to our team of presenters and documenters. You did a spectacular job in representing our university in this conference. Your hard work and dedication to your topics is something you should all be proud of. I am glad to be apart of the team that documented every minute of it.

This report was written and edited by Megan Bosence. All photos included in this report were taken by Stephanie Berens, Megan Bosence, and Annika Wiedemann.

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# INTRODUCTION

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The international *Dikes of Courage* conference was held on the 23/24th of November at the Nova University's Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, in Lisbon. The conference was not only inspired by Jeanne Theoharis's recent book *A More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History* (2018) but also a number of international academics wanting to revisit the legacy of Martin Luther King and collected memory of the Civil Rights Movement.

The conference invited scholars to rethink how we represent and reflect on the Civil Rights Movement in American History. The scope of topics that were part during the *Dikes of Courage* conference came from various diverse fields of research, including visual arts, music, literature, television and film.

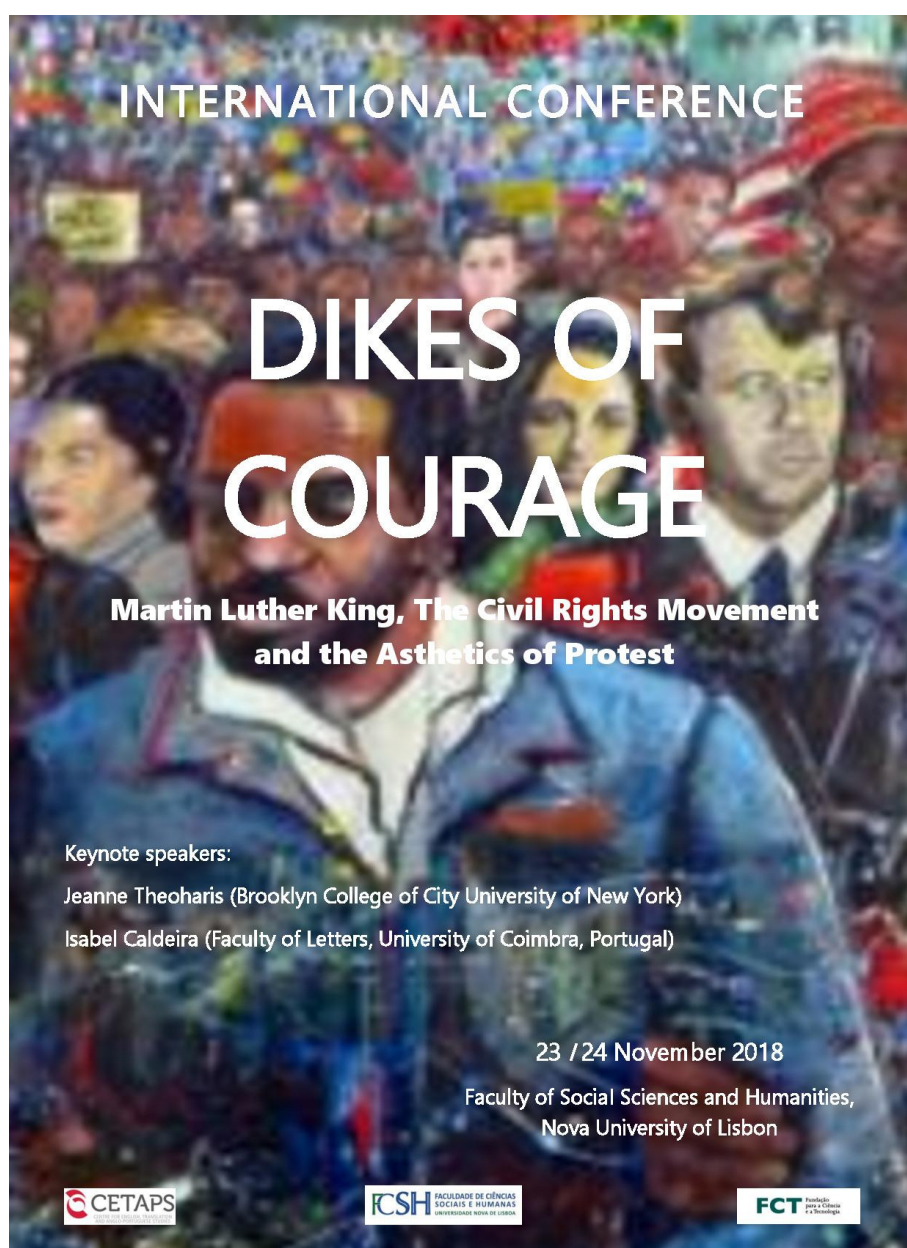
Within these guidelines, our team of students from the Amerika-Institut at LMU Munich embraced the opportunity to explore the developments in the Black Lives Matter Movement, and how we as young academics can correlate these recent events to the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement. This report is a summary of our team's presentations, afterthoughts and overall experience participating in the *Dikes of Courage* conference.

-Megan Bosence



# CONFERENCE POSTER

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

## DIKES OF COURAGE

**Martin Luther King, The Civil Rights Movement  
and the Aesthetics of Protest**

Keynote speakers:

Jeanne Theoharis (Brooklyn College of City University of New York)

Isabel Caldeira (Faculty of Letters, University of Coimbra, Portugal)

23 / 24 November 2018

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Nova University of Lisbon



# ABOUT THE LMU STUDENT PANEL

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## #BlackLivesMatter and the Aesthetics of Protest

Inspired by the rise of protest movements like March for our Lives and Black Lives Matter in the United States, but also by the recent wave of demonstrations that defend a society of openness and diversity against right wing populism in Germany, we set out to explore the role of art in contemporary activist practices in our MA course “The Art of Protest” in the winter term 2018/19. The fact that more than twenty students not only registered for the class, but also participated passionately in discussions, independent study projects, and workshops speaks to the relevance and urgency of the topic.

Aesthetic practices and social movements are intricately linked. Our seminar examined the cultural dimension of social movements, analyzed the role of music, film, literature, poetry, painting, and performance art for both the internal dynamics of movements and their broader impact on society. We investigated how art brings about and reflects cultural change and raises awareness for political and social issues; and we showcased art and activism as an established part of social movements' repertoire.

Timing was great: The Nova University's conference “Dikes of Courage: Martin Luther King, the Civil Rights Movement and the Aesthetics of Protest” addressed many of the issues addressed in our seminar and especially corresponded with our students' interest in the Black Lives Matter Movement. In the summer before the seminar started, students responded to our call to present at the conference and handed in abstracts for a student panel. Both the organizers of the conference and the LMU committee that approved our funding found the students' ideas convincing.

Our students did not disappoint! In the four panels devoted to “#BlackLivesMatter and the Aesthetics of Protest,” their hard work and dedication paid off: They confidently presented and defended their research. It was their first active participation in an academic conference and they made it look like a walk in the park! The amazing feedback from the audience was just the icing on the cake.

We would like to thank Teresa Botelho, Isabel Oliveira Martins, and their team for inviting us to participate in this inspiring conference. A special thank you to Lehre@LMU for making this academic adventure possible.

To all our students, once again, thank you for making this seminar such a rewarding experience!

- Anita, Bärbel, Constanze

# THE TEAM

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Top Left to Bottom Right: Dr. Bärbel Harju, Constanze Sabathil, Megan Bosence, Naomi Osagie, Annika Wiedemann, Melina Haberl, Joyce Oduwa Osagie, Sabrina Luttenberger, Stephanie Berens, Milica Cortanovacki, Dr. Anita Vrzina, Sophia Hörl and Stephanie Matthias, Dr. Teresa Gruber, Ray Moore, Joanna King, and Dannie Snyder.



# CONFERENCE DAY ONE

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## Presentation One

### Laughing Matters: Racism, History, and Humor on the Big Screen



**Constanze Sabathil** received her MA in American Studies from the University of Munich in 2018. She studied at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, where she focused on African-American history and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s/60s. While in Detroit, she conducted research for her M.A. thesis on the origin and development of the Black Lives Matter Movement and met with leaders from the 1960s as well as current activists. She presented her research in an exhibition on “Black Protest” at Munich’s Amerikahaus in 2017. Currently, she co-teaches a class on the Art of Protest and continues to closely follow the developments within US society.

It is not only the heightened visibility and media attention to anti-Black violence and the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement that remind us that the issues at the very heart of the civil rights struggle are not a thing of the past; films and, increasingly, TV shows shed a light on both the long history and the continuing presence of racial injustice in the US. Hardly a laughing matter...

Looking at Spike Lee's 'BlackkKlansman' (2018) and Jordan Peele's 'Get Out' (2017), this presentation will explore how the two films use humor as an aesthetic strategy, what they laugh at and to what effect. Does the insertion of comedy satire, and hyperbole into narratives of tragedy and social realism only serve as a tool for comic relief? Or does the juxtaposition of humor and a somber tone predicted on (the illusion of) historical accuracy and realism increase a sense of urgency and make the images presented more powerful? We will argue that the humorous, highly aestheticized rendering of racism and trauma in these films functions not only as a strategy to make 'difficult' topics more palatable to a wider audience, but importantly, their recreation of the past in and for the present moment inspires a deeper understanding of the ways history informs and determines the present.

-Constanze

# PRESENTATION THOUGHTS



With  
Constanze Sabathil

So how was it for you playing both roles as part of the teaching team and the presentation team? Because it meant that you were balancing in between guiding the students as a teacher, as well as presenting your own research.

CS: Well, like you said, it was two fold for me, being a part of the teaching team and giving a talk myself. It was a great experience because it gave me the opportunity to have a look in both worlds during the conference. Being in a teaching team with such experienced teachers and seeing our dedicated students in action was wonderful. I was also fortunate in a sense as my talk was the very first on the first day, so after that I could solely focus on our group and their great presentations.

I think travelling in such a big group makes it a whole different experience and I really loved it because there was always someone you could talk to. Participating as part of a group was really nice and I was happy to share it with them.

How do you think this experience has helped you further your academic career as a graduate and opened up possible opportunities for the future?

CS: This experience in Lisbon defiantly made me realize that I like these kinds of settings. Meaning conference settings, teaching settings, and academia in general. It also made me realize that I still have an appreciation for my topic. This was my first experience at a conference after my master's degree, so I wasn't a student anymore, I was a post academic.

During my master's program I focused on African American studies, the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Lives Matter Movement and so my topic for this conference was something new to me but within my focus. I have a lot of appreciation for the field of research and this opportunity made me want to go deeper into the topic and expand my knowledge.

I think that gaining experience at the *Dikes of Courage* conference was crucial for furthering my career as a teacher and presenter. You get to see what works well, maybe what doesn't work well and I could take mental notes on what to do for my own research, presentations and how to guide my students in the future.



## Presentation Two

### Disruptive Sounds – The Musical Protest of Childish Gambino, Beyoncé, and Kendrick Lamar



**Joanna King** is an MA student of American Studies at the University of Munich. She received her BA degree in International Studies and German from the University of Oregon in 2013. During her studies she has focused on music and dance, art history, popular culture and literature, and African American Studies. She is interested in cultural politics and plans on pursuing a career in public relations.

**Joyce Oduwa Osagie** received her BA in American Studies from the University of Munich in 2018. During her studies, Joyce focused on African American Studies, in particular on the Black experience of racism, police brutality, and activism. Her BA thesis explored the similarities and differences of the Black Panthers and Black Lives Matter Movement. Joyce is planning on pursuing an advanced degree in Journalism, Media, and Globalization at the University of Hamburg.

**Sabrina Luttenberger** is an MA student of American Studies at the University of Munich where she received her BA degree in 2018. During her studies she focused on music in the United States, especially the connection between popular music, environmentalism, racism, and human rights. Her BA thesis explored American radio comedy shows in the 20th century. She is interested in music journalism and the importance of music in popular culture, and plans on pursuing a job in journalism, preferably on the radio.

Our paper will focus on the disruptive potential of music in the era of #blacklivesmatter by analyzing three examples: Childish Gambino's "This Is America" (2018), Beyoncé's 2016 Super Bowl performance, and Kendrick Lamar's "Alright" (2015).

Childish Gambino uses music and video imagery as a medium to disrupt, confront, and challenge attitudes concerning race, social structures, and ideas that make up American identity. This became particularly evident in his viral music video "This is America", which critically interrogates contemporary race relations. Beyoncé chose the 2016 Super Bowl to create a disruptive moment when she and her dancers performed her song "Formation" in black berets and uniforms reminiscent of the Black Panthers' attire. The public outcry following her performance not only revealed the deep-seated racism in U.S. society, but also created a space for public discourse on it. Kendrick Lamar explicitly uses his music as a weapon in the fight against racism and police violence. His politically charged 2016 Grammy performance, often described as shocking and fearless, is a comment on the unjust treatment and mass incarceration of Black people as well as a shout-out to BLM.

We will argue that these three case studies illustrate the important role of music for both the internal dynamics of the current BLM movement and its impact on society. These highly political, mass-mediated musical disruptions have the power to interfere with normative cultural perceptions and subvert the notion of a post-racial America.

-Joanna, Joyce, Sabrina

# PRESENTATION THOUGHTS

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With  
Joanna King, Joyce Oduwa Osagie,  
and Sabrina Luttenberger

You guys were the largest group presenting in this conference. What were some of the challenges you had to face while preparing here in Munich and presenting in Lisbon?

JK: We had to analyze three separate pieces within a very limited timeframe, our greatest challenge was getting our message across in a concise, but powerful way. It was tempting to elaborate, as each piece had a lot to unpack. However, it was less intimidating being a group of three than presenting alone.

JOO: Yeah; I would agree. I was really nervous at the conference, but being in a group of three, I felt more confident. I knew I could rely on my group for any advice or problem solving that would come up before or during the conference.

SL: What I liked about our presentation was that our topics all made sense together and our structure was strong. So even if we were a big group trying to figure out how to make things work, in the end I loved how we coordinated and built up on each other.

Speaking as an audience member, you guys did such a good job on presenting and responding to the Q+A afterwards! So my next question is, how did you feel responding

to some of those discussion questions at the end of your presentation?

JK: Well, the first question we received was actually a compliment. That helped calm our nerves! There were a couple of questions that stumped me, but thankfully Joyce was able to jump in and professionally answer them. I was proud of her confidence! Being in an international setting with diverse backgrounds expanded my perspective. It was an encouraging and eyeopening experience.

SL: It was nice because we had a wide variety of experience to rely on. I was excited after the conference because there were aspects that I never thought about when analyzing music and they were very inspiring going into my MA.

JOO: It really did help that my team was so encouraging, and I have to admit I do like the experience of presenting. It was nice to hear how the audience responded, how they engaged, and what questions they had. The Q+ A was also a great chance to discuss the topic in greater detail with everyone. I would definitely present and attend more conferences in the future.

### Presentation Three

## The Theater of Protest: The Transformative Effect of #BlackLivesMatter Performances



**Dannie Snyder** is a Master's student of American Studies at the University of Munich. She received her first BA in Theatre Studies with a Minor in Music and her second BA in Film Studies from George Mason University, Washington D.C. As a student, as an artist, and as teacher with various non-profit organizations and juvenile detention centers, she has focused on using art to inspire personal and social change. From Theatre of the Oppressed to Imaging Blackness, Culture Jamming to Feminism, she is interested in a wide variety of art and cultural studies.

Analyzing various #BlackLivesMatter events, this paper and interactive performance argues for and exemplifies the transformative effect and the power of theatre to inspire social change, particularly by transforming spectators into what Augusto Boal calls "spect-actors." BLM events, following the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement and BARTS, exhibit elements of the theatrical and participatory, such as the use of musical call and response techniques in street protests. Through the studies of consciously theatrical performances of dramatized expression and props/costumes that contain deeper levels of audience interaction, this paper and interactive performance will argue the higher efficacy of the highly stylized BLM events that allow the spectators an opportunity to actually contribute to the shape of the story.

In a second move, taking the forms and techniques from Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed as its starting point, this paper and interactive performance will then explore ways for activists to invite spectators to alter staged images of an oppression, experiment with various methods for overcoming it, and thus show how theatre performances can serve as "rehearsals for revolution" and how these tactics can be applied in street protest to maximize their transformative effects.

-Dannie

# PRESENTATION THOUGHTS

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With  
Dannie Snyder

So I know that your presentation was partly a performance. You chose to write a poem, use props and actively incorporate the audience members into the presentation. How was that experience for you?

DS: It was a really fun challenge to transform a traditional thesis essay into a poem as well as interactive activities with the audience. Which would show what I am arguing instead of telling my argument. I wanted to guide the audience towards my conclusions but to leave space for the spectators; I wanted to inspire spectators to continue pondering and discussing, to reach their own conclusions.

I really wanted to be more of a facilitator that helps people arrive at their own conclusions, and to take that out of the conference space and to keep exploring that. It may leave the audience a little bit unsatisfied, and this is why I didn't want a traditional Q+A for my presentation. I wanted people to still have questions and now they have to go take action outside the conference in order to get answers.

Afterwards, I got really good feedback. Generally people told me that it was nice to have something different and unexpected.

You could feel the room get more comfortable as you went on. It was kind of special to see how you broke down not only assumptions of how to present at a conference, but maybe what is effective.

DS: Yeah, and I think that was something that was missing from the conference because you have a lot of people talking about protests and in a lot of the examples, people are talking about disrupting spaces and so why not disrupt the space of the conference?

It feels ironic because we are following the specific roles of the conference where audiences expect the speaker to sit behind a desk or stand at a podium and read their essay aloud. I have always tried to balance talking about artists and being an artist myself and in our department at the LMU I think we are encouraged to find this creative balance. As I finish my MA in *American History, Culture and Society* and pursue a career in education, I hope to continue inspiring my colleagues in breaking traditional molds and in using less brain-banking techniques.



# Day One Highlights

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# CONFERENCE DAY TWO

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## Presentation Four

### “... Or Does It Explode?” – Art, Activism, and the Black Lives Matter Movement



**Sophia Hörl** is an MA student of *American History, Culture, and Society* at LMU Munich. She received her BA degree in North American Studies at LMU Munich in 2018. Her BA thesis explored the topic of racial passing in American literature of the 20th century. She is interested in American visual arts, film, and photography as well as contemporary literature, and is planning to write her Master's thesis in one of these fields.

**Stephanie Matthias** is an MA student in American Studies at the University of Munich, where she received her BA degree in 2018. For a 2017 pop-up exhibition at Munich's Amerikahaus, she examined iconic photographs of black protest movements from the 1950s until today. In her BA thesis she analyzed the Second Presidential Debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon.

Our paper will explore four representatives of the contemporary African American art(ivism) scene, focusing on the function of visual art in the era of #BlackLivesMatter. Photographer Devin Allen's work "A Beautiful Ghetto" captures and interprets the Baltimore protests after the death of Freddie Gray in 2015. Baltimore-based artist Shan Wallace's "What We Learn While Waiting" reveals everyday racism and inequalities in the life of black Americans. Sculpture and performance artist Dread Scott effectively connects past and present in his artwork "A Man Was Lynched by Police Yesterday," his installation "Or Does It Explode?," and his performance "On the Impossibility of Freedom in a Country Founded on Slavery and Genocide." While touching on pressing issues such as police brutality, Theater Gates' "Minority Majority" installation literally turns reality into art by utilizing fire hoses from protest marches.

Examining these four artists' works, we will explore the dynamics of art as protest and the aesthetic frames used by the artists to voice their criticism. What is the function of visual art in social movements in general and the Black Lives Matter movement in particular? What are the dynamics between the movement and its artists? Is activism an effective means of resistance? Our presentation will analyze the political and societal effects of the selected artworks and connect them to aesthetic practices of the long civil rights movement, framing visual art as a powerful tool to express political dissent beyond traditional forms of protest.

# PRESENTATION THOUGHTS



With  
Sophia Hörl and Stephanie Matthias

How was your first experience presenting and attending in an international conference?

SM: I really liked it because there were people from all over the world talking about diverse topics within the civil rights movement. It was very interesting to see through the cultural lens of everyone attending and presenting.

And this was also your first semester in the American History, Culture and Society MA program. Do you feel that this experience will be useful going into the next three semesters of your degree?

SH: I think it sets the bar kind of high. I feel way more experienced now that we presented in Lisbon, and I feel more confident in my abilities as an academic.

There will definitely be other conferences coming up throughout your time here at the LMU. How do you think you would promote others to join in this experience?

SM: I would say it was a very good and very important experience to have as a MA student. It was a lot of work and it took a lot of preparation. Of course we were nervous of how things will turn out but now that

we look back on it, the whole experience was so great and I am glad I did it.

SH: I think that one of the hardest parts to overcome is to find the courage to sign up and attend. At first I thought that conferences were only something for professors, PhD students or higher academics. But after some encouragement from our professors and having now experienced the *Dikes of Courage*, I now realize that it is really open to everyone. If you have a topic that truly interests you, it is well researched and you are motivated, then I think that gaining experience at a conference could be really beneficial for your academic career and in general.

It also gives you different perspectives into your own topic. For example, our topic revolved around photography and art in the Black Lives Matter Movement, and there was a whole session before us on photography that gave us really great insights into where our own research could expand.

SM: Yes, I think this experience only solidified my interest in black protest and I look forward to continuing my research in this direction during my MA.

## Presentation Five

### Is Orange the New Black (Lives Matter)? Police Brutality and Judicial Injustice on TV



**Milica Cortanovacki** is a BA student of American Studies at the University of Munich. During her studies she has focused on African American Studies, Modernism, and Queer Studies. In her BA thesis she will explore the topic of queerness in Southern Regionalism in Tennessee Williams' work. She is interested in the voices of the marginalized and wants to pursue an advanced degree in Drama, Theatre and Performance at the University of Sussex in Great Britain.

**Melina Haberl** is a BA student of North American Studies at the University of Munich. During her studies she has focused on African American Studies, Film Studies, and Cultural History. Her BA thesis explored the representation of post-traumatic stress disorder in American film. She is interested in the American film industry and economy and is planning on pursuing a career in e-commerce, preferably at an American company.

Throughout its six seasons, the Netflix hit TV show *Orange Is The New Black* (OITNB) has depicted the U.S. prison system as brutal and racialized. With the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement and the increased media attention to racially motivated police brutality in the U.S., BLM entered the narrative of OITNB in season 4, both as a direct reference and as a framework for the depiction of the institutional racism of the U.S. judicial system.

Focusing on the fate of two inmates, Poussey and Taystee, this paper will investigate how BLM, its tactics, and its politics are represented in the show in the storyline and the narrative structure. Poussey's tragic death by suffocation, the ensuing peaceful protest with a violent ending, and the unfair treatment of Taystee in the justice system are a clear reference to the brutal killings of black men and women at the hands of white police officers and the actions and tactics of BLM; the ambiguity with which OITNB treats these events, however, remains problematic.

In this paper we will analyze these two storylines to ask whether the politics in the show and its effects, i.e. the politics of the show, are necessarily one and the same. And, on a more general level, we'll question whether a TV show can be – and if OITNB is – a tool of resistance and for raising awareness; or, as critics have suggested, whether OITNB is just another example of the exploitation of black trauma for white entertainment.

-Milica and Melina

# PRESENTATION THOUGHTS

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With  
Milica Cortanovacki and Melina Haberl

Because we were such a large group travelling, presenting and learning together, how do you think this benefited you going into the *Dikes of Courage*?

MH: I think the team was really great. The teaching staff was wonderful and always helpful giving us feedback. And our classmates gave us some courage and support if needed. So it defiantly helped to have the people that you know with you.

MC: We were the only ones that had such a big crew. You felt really supported by the people who were there with us from LMU, and you could sit and listen to the talks with them, talk to them about what you just saw etc.

Although you are both finishing your bachelor's degree and moving forward toward new possibilities, do you think that you will take this experience and possibility think about presenting at another conference in the future?

MC: I think this was very special as a first experience, because we were very lucky to be supported to the fullest. Although it will not always be like this every time you attend a conference, because maybe you will be totally

alone, but I can think back to this experience and it could give the strength and confidence to go forward.

MH: I think I definitely want to go to more conferences now after finishing this one. I have always liked presenting in general, but to do it in a more intellectual, professional setting was a new experience for me.

MC: Yeah, I agree with that, I would recommend it to everyone to attend and participate in a conference. I mean you get to travel, meet with your peers, have great discussions and feedback on your research. What's not to like?

MH: It was a great feeling having more experienced people listening to what you have to say and responding to that. It is a totally different experience from a classroom setting where you are presenting on your topic and maybe you are the only one in the room who has the specifics. Where as this conference was totally different, you are in a room full of people that have a larger background knowledge into your topic and they can add something different into your research.



# Day Two Highlights

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# DOCUMENTATION TEAM

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## Students Behind the Scenes Recording, Photography, Videos, Interviews and Blogs



**Stephanie Berens** is in her first MA semester of American History, Society and Culture at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität of Munich. She also did her BA in North American Studies at the same university. In her BA thesis Steffi wrote on the representation of gender and sexuality in Patricia Highsmith's novel *Carol*. She is especially interested in Gender and Queer Studies, American Literature from the 20th and 21st Century, and Feminist and Post-Colonial Theory. *Dikes of Courage* being her first conference, Stephanie especially liked attending as part of a group, which made the new situation less intimidating and more fun. Stephanie saw the conference as an opportunity to get an insight into the academic world beyond the university classroom and to see what working in the field of American Studies could be like.

**Megan Bosence** is a third semester MA student of American History, Society and Culture at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University of Munich. She received her BA with Honours in Art History and a Minor in History from the University of Victoria in 2015. Since then she has worked within the museum setting and volunteered on various cultural projects. Megan's interest in the topic of the conference was primarily due to her strong passion for the field and the ability of art to inspire change. Her main interests lie in North American culture and she intends to pursue a career in museum studies. As a part of the documentation team, Megan wrote an academic report on the conference and its panels.

**Annika Wiedemann** is in her first semester of the American History, Society and Culture MA program at the LMU in Munich. Having written her Bachelor's thesis on "Mr. Age of Enlightenment" – Thomas Jefferson in American Popular Culture and Historiography," her main interests are in American cultural history and its portrayal in popular culture. Other fields of study Annika focuses on in her MA degree are (African) American Literature, Gender and Feminist Studies and Indigenous Studies. *The Dikes of Courage* Conference being her first conference, Annika was mainly looking forward to gaining new insights into the field of American Studies and to getting to know other academics with similar interests.

# DOCUMENTATION THOUGHTS



With  
Stephanie Berens, Megan Bosence,  
and Annika Wiedemann

What was your motivation to be a part of the documentation team for the *Dikes of Courage* conference?

SB: Well it was a great opportunity to expand my knowledge, see what it is like to be part of a conference, while taking a backstage role to the team. I feel like this was a perfect opportunity for me to get into my master's, get some exposure and gain some experience for my future. Now I can say that I know what to expect for next time.

AW: I really wanted to be a part of the whole thing, but in the call for papers they mentioned that you could sign up to be a documenter, so that really caught my eye. Next time I would like to challenge myself and present, because I think that it really takes you out of your comfort zone and allows you to grow through the experience. I was so happy to be behind the scenes this time because I had some experience writing for a newspaper. So I was able to put that to good use for our blog.

I know that the three of us were all collectively gathering material at the conference but I was wondering what were some of the challenges you faced while documenting?

AW: Well I have had some experience taking photos at events. But it was funny because at the conference in Lisbon we were the only ones taking photos. So it felt a little awkward because we were very noticeable throughout the event. Usually I am pretty comfortable with getting up and taking photos from a few different angles but this was a very small intimate conference so that was an unexpected challenge for us.

SB: I think we knew what we wanted to document but we didn't really have a concrete plan on how to go about that. In a way it was good because we didn't know how big the space would be, the quality of light and sound, so thankfully we adapted well. I mean of course I have to say that when we look back at our photos I wish I used a different camera setting to capture better shots, but at the time I was very focused on working with what we had. All in all, I am pretty happy with what the three of us came up with.

AW: This experience also gave us great insight into what it means to document a conference, why it is important to take these opportunities to present your work and get feedback in a higher academic setting.

# CONCLUSION

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We hope that this report gave insight into our experiences at the *Dikes of Courage* conference in Lisbon. For most of us this was our first experience presenting our research in an international setting, but I think it is safe to say it will not be our last. Our students and teaching staff hope to maintain connections to the fellow scholars that attended the conference and we look forward to building on our shared knowledge in the future.

-Megan Bosence

# LINKS

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For more information on our journey to Lisbon visit Stephanie Berens and Annika Wiedemann's blog page. Where you get a glimpse into our class on *Art of Protest*, presentation preparation, conference reflections, videos, interviews, and more... Click [here](#).

If you would like to see the official events page for the *Dikes of Courage* conference please click [here](#).

