Call for papers: Dreams and the Animal Kingdom in Culture and Aesthetic Media

23-25 September 2021

Saarland University, Saarbrücken (Germany)

International and Interdisciplinary Conference held by the Research Centre 'European Dream-Cultures', funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG)

Animal dreams — dreams of animals, by animals, and inspired by animals — have concerned poets, mythographers, fabulists, dramatists, painters, musicians, choreographers, filmmakers, and writers of short fictions. Animal dreams have, in fact, become embodiments of the traversal of genres by thinkers, scientists, and writers whose fictions have been inspired by the possibilities of myth, fable, allegory, hybridity, monstrosity, and symbolic hallucination. Animal dreams span all the arts, and they also extend into the worlds of philosophy and even the borders of scientific metaphor. Dreams and dream-images of animals transcend cultures and are frequently taken as avatars, portentous spirits, or disguised divinities. Despite the prevalence of animal dreams across a panoply of genres, media, and cultures, the topic has so far been neglected even by those who have pioneered the emerging fields of animal studies and dream studies.

In accordance with the concept of Saarland University's research centre 'European Dream-Cultures', which investigates the literary, aesthetic, media and cultural histories of the dream, this international conference will pursue the subject of 'Dreams and the Animal Kingdom' across different genres, cultural epochs, and aesthetic media. We invite proposals for papers (20 minutes plus time for questions and discussion), pre-constituted panels (three papers of 20 minutes each plus time for discussion), or workshops/roundtables (concentrating on more practical aspects such as research methods, creative practice, teaching) from researchers in the disciplines of art, theatre, film, media, music and literary studies, as well as history, philosophy and other related fields. Contributions should investigate cultural or aesthetic representations of dreams of/by mammals, aquatic fauna, insects, birds, serpents, hybrid mythological creatures, as well as fabulous, fantastical, or cryptozoological animals or other denizens of the animal kingdom, broadly conceived. In accordance with our desire to create a growing and collegiate network of dream-researchers, our aim will be to avoid parallel sessions at the conference, so that participants can hear all papers and take part in all discussions of their choosing.

Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- An author's particular dreams about one or more animals
- A single image involving a species interpreted variously in different cultural settings
- Thematic approaches to dreams about various fauna
- Representations of dreaming animals
- The presence of animals in dream interpretation manuals
- Media and multimedia sensitivity in artistic visions of animal dreams or dreaming animals
- Dreams involving fabulous or mythic creatures
- Historical or Art Historical consequences related to dreams about animals

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Please submit your proposal as a Word file to traumkulturen@uni-saarland.de no later than 15 January 2021. Please describe your project – in English, German, or French – in an abstract not exceeding 200 words and include a short, topic-appropriate CV. For proposals for panels, workshops, or roundtables, please include such a CV for each panellist/participant.

Since this international conference is aimed at researchers from different countries and cultures, the official conference language will be English, but papers may be presented in English, German, or French.

We anticipate the inclusion of cultural events in our programme, and plan to organise a sightseeing trip to nearby places of interest. Please note the Dream-Cultures website (http://www.traumkulturen.de/veranstaltungen/konferenzen-co.html) for up-to-date details such as keynote presentations.

Following the conference, we will publish selected contributions in an edited volume.