

# CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: SUMMER SCHOOL 2020

## »TACET AD LIBITUM: TOWARDS A POETICS AND POLITICS OF SILENCE«

WWU MÜNSTER  
GRADUATE SCHOOL PRACTICES OF LITERATURE  
19-24 JULY 2020

Silence (*tacere* or *Schweigen*) has been considered by Franz Rosenzweig among others as a subversive act or defiant stance of the tragic hero against overwhelming power mechanisms of necessity, i.e., totalization and universality. It has also, however, been regarded as an epiphenomenon (or a result) of marginalization and oppression by postcolonial theorists. The latter's understanding marks silence as an *end*, a potential violent effect of the logics of exclusion and marginalization by "signifying machines". The former understanding marks silence as a *means* of rendering mechanisms of powers inoperative. Therefore, the significance of silence appears to oscillate within an aporia of means and ends, singularity and universality, *a-thesiology* and *thesiology*, performance and logos. For the Münster Lectures and Summer School to be mutually complementary, we want to re-explore these known aporias from the perspective of silence as a concept which may occasion an ethics, poetics, and politics of "pure means" or violent ends. Can a logic of silence call for something more than resignation or defiance, complicity or conformity, and if so, how can the notion of silence be expanded into the realm of political action, or into new realms with new voices? The Summer School will be divided into three sections: **Theory, Poetics and Politics**. We do, however, foresee a continuous interaction between the three fields.

### MÜNSTER LECTURES



The Summer School will open with the Münster Lectures which seek to combine the merits of theoretical and literary insight of renowned scholars, prominent writers, and cultural activists to discuss current debates, both scholastic and social. The Münster Lectures are open to doctoral candidates, post-doc researchers, humanities students, and the general public. The Münster Lectures aim to strengthen not only the interdisciplinary exchange among members of the university, but also bridges the gap between the university and the city of Münster.

Jane Njeri Kamau (Jennifer) from International Women\* Space Berlin will share her story of being a refugee woman in Germany and of the importance that lies in self-organizing by utilizing combined skills to self-educate and to self-empower. Jennifer's talk will be complimented by Gayatri Spivak's presentation on subaltern women and discourses of silence/-ing. These two lectures will be followed by a moderated discussion between the two speakers. The Münster Lectures are free and open to the public.

## SUMMER SCHOOL 2020: TACET AD LIBITUM

### Panel 1: Theory

The first panel will discuss the concepts of silence (*silere* and *tacere*) which revolve around the paradigms of (a-)representability, (a-)temporality, (a-)historicity, and (a-)teleology. Under what ideological premises can silence be considered subversive and/or oppressive? Does the concept of silence require a rethinking of temporality? If silence is understood as a withdrawal from the sphere of semantics (or meaning), what consequences does this have on the processes of signification and representation that allow to address injustices? How does silence remain politically relevant today given its former exclusiveness to the tragic hero? Would it be possible to rethink the primacy of speaking over silence, or meaning over performativity?

### Panel 2: Poetics

The second panel focuses on works of art in search of a poetics which transcends the mere re/presentation of silence. This panel is deeply interested in the various functions that silence partakes in works of art, which are reflected in the formal/structural/narrative strategies that it employs. Does silence merely conceal the inappropriable, hinting towards negativity in language? Does silence function as a residual manifestation of what is sayable, or does silence hint at the need for a re-understanding of language and signification? Are there any commonalities between mediality and silence? How does the concept of silence interact with ideas of genres? If the subject is created by the instance of speech, how does a work of art give accounts of non-subjects (of silenced subalterns or those who prefer not to speak)?

### Panel 3: Politics

The third panel will interrogate the ethical and political implications of the aforementioned panels: Does silence lead to new ethical paradigms or does it ask for reactionary political concepts of tragedy and necessity? Can an adequate understanding of silence articulate community and commonalities outside the primacy of “thetical” language and positive law, beyond normative and imperative approaches of community-building based on exclusion and the interminably marginal? Can silence constitute a bridge towards thinking about post-identity, or does it remain a mode of concealment of injustices and unbridgeable differences?

## Student Conference

On July 22, the participants of the summer school will be asked to present their work-in-progress on the topic. The conferences will be divided in three panels: theory, poetics and politics, which will be moderated by two speakers each.

## Concluding Remarks

The final day, July 24, will conclude the summer school with a roundtable discussion among all the participants.

## HOW TO APPLY?

Applications require three parts: Part 1: A **letter of motivation** (one paragraph) describing your interest and involvement with the topic of silence along with a statement of financial need and any further requests, such as child care. Part 2: An **abstract** (300 words) of your proposed presentation paper which describes your argument and its relevance to the topic of silence. Part 3: include a **short biography** (300 words). Applications should be submitted as a single document (PDF or Word document) via email to [silence2020@uni-muenster.de](mailto:silence2020@uni-muenster.de), together with the author's name and institutional affiliation (if applicable). The **deadline** is **10 April 2020**, and selected participants will be notified by the end of April. The conference language is English, wheelchair accessibility and child care is currently being discussed with the university. If you have special needs, please include them in the letter of motivation.

## PARTICIPANTS, FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE & SPECIAL NEEDS

The Summer School is open to doctoral students, post-doctoral researchers and advanced MA students working in the humanities of all disciplines of cultural studies, philosophy, history, literature, political science, sociology, and related fields of research. Submissions from early-career researchers and from researchers of diverse backgrounds are especially encouraged.

Some travel funding may be available for candidates under special circumstances, e.g., financial needs. If you would like to apply for travel funding, include with your submission a one-page statement of financial hardship with a declaration that you are unable to receive funding from another university institution. If you also require child care and/or wheelchair access, also include this in the letter of motivation, and selected participants who request these services will be notified when the details are finalized with the university.

## KEY DETAILS

<b>Events</b>	Münster Lectures, Summer School 2020: “Tacet ad Libitum: Towards a Poetics and Politics of Silence.”
<b>Dates</b>	19-24 July 2020
<b>Location</b>	WWU Münster, Germany
<b>Organizers</b>	Hector J. Feliciano Soto, Akshay Chavan, Michael Aaron Mason. Coordination Office of the GSPoL: Dr. Anna Thiemann
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Participating Experts</b>	Marc Crépon, Peter Fenves, Alexander García Düttmann, Eva Geulen, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
<b>Participants</b>	max. 30
<b>Costs</b>	100€ (not including accommodation)
<b>Application Deadline</b>	10 April 2020
<b>Online Website:</b>	<a href="http://silencemuenster.wordpress.com">silencemuenster.wordpress.com</a> , Twitter: @sigetics
<b>Contact</b>	Selection committee, <a href="mailto:silence2020@uni-muenster.de">silence2020@uni-muenster.de</a>