SFB 1150 „Cultures of Decision-Making"

Project Area A "Narratives and Reflections of Decision-Making": Abstracts of the projects

Project A01 Poetics of Decision-Making in German Narrative Literature of the Middle Ages (Bruno Quast)

A thorough reconstruction of discourses and practices of decision-making, as constructed in German vernacular narrative texts of the 12th and 13th centuries, is the main objective of this project. These shall be examined on the basis of action-theoretical as well as historical-anthropological approaches. In particular, the analysis reconstructs conventional narrative forms of depicting and reflecting situations of decision-making in the text corpus. The interplay between medieval literature and social rules of decision-making shall be examined with regard to different textual levels which the literary genres provide. All in all, the project aims to reconstruct the poetics of decision-making underlying the narrative literature of this era.

Project A02 Contingentia and Disputatio. Decision-Making in Scholastic Theory of the Western European Middle Ages (Martin Kintzinger)

From the 12th century onwards, scholastic theory as well as the practice of academic disputation focused on conceptualizing decision-making in social situations. Discussed in a broader context of contingency and free will, decision-making signified an act of independence from all types of predetermined fate. General statements and treatises on decision-making were elaborated out of academic debates, which were taking place particularly in the 14th century at Oxford University as well as (later) at the University of Paris. The ensuing contributions of these debates will be examined in this project as well as how they reflected on social and political realities.

Project A03 Grammars of Decision-Making: The Philosophic-Action-Theoretical Perspective (Michael Quante)

In this project, a context-sensitive conception of decision-making is to be developed. Within their systematic context, grammars of decision-making are determined in the sense of: self-deciding as an internal action, deciding as a social-institutional event, and decision results as a consequence of actions. The structures of "deep grammar" (in Wittgenstein's sense) will be shown to be transcendental conditions that constitute our practices of ascription and description.

Project A04 Hercules at the Crossroads? Scenarios of Decision-Making in the Autobiographical Construction of Life Courses (Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf)

This project analyzes scenarios of decision-making in autobiographical texts from the 19th century to the present. It considers both the autobiographical form and the autobiographical self as media of social communication. It seeks to answer the question of what role decision-making plays in the construction

of modern life courses. The subject of the studies are strategies, resources and rhetorics of decision-making, both in the autobiographies of men and women of letters as well as in political autobiographies.

Project A05 Between Privacy and the Public Debate: Decisions on Reproduction in Germany and the US in the Second Half of the 20th Century (Isabel Heinemann)

The project examines how reproduction became the subject of private and political decision-making in Germany and the US in the second half of the 20th century. It inquires into how the popularization of medical knowledge as well as processes of individualization and liberalization have interacted. It also asks how decisions on reproduction have been framed by public debates, political and legal attempts at standardization, and by expert interventions.

Project A06 Social Practices and Media Narratives of Matrimonial Decision-Making in India (Helene Basu)

This project proceeds from the assumption that arranged marriages emerge from social processes of decision-making. By focusing on mediality, cultural narratives of marriage in India – as a situation of decision-making – shall be examined both in lived practice as well as in their mass (TV, movies) and digital media representations. The project aims to provide an ethnological contribution to the pluralization of a historical cultural perspective that does not reduce decision-making to individual intentions but understands it as a social practice.