

This conference aims to explore the history of everyday heroism (*Alltagsheldentum*) in the United States, Germany, and Britain between 1800 and the present. For the purposes of this conference, everyday heroes and heroines are defined as ordinary men, women, and children who are honored for actual or imagined feats that are considered heroic by their contemporaries or by succeeding generations.

Scholars have devoted countless pages to war heroes, heroic leaders, and superheroes as well as to the blurring distinctions between heroes and celebrities, but they have said little about the meaning and impact of ordinary citizens' heroism. The conference seeks to fill this void. Comparing the United States, Germany, and Britain, it asks when this hero type first emerged and how it was discussed and depicted in public discourse, mass media, literature, film, and other forms of popular culture in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. In addition, the conference will shed light on the various social, cultural, and political functions that everyday heroism served in democracies and dictatorships (e.g. the norms and values it represented or the collective identities it was believed to strengthen). Finally, the conference asks what role transatlantic processes of exchange, translation, and adaptation played in its history.

Conference Venue: Goethe-University of Frankfurt
IG-Farben Building
Grüneburgplatz 1
60323 Frankfurt
Room IG 1.314

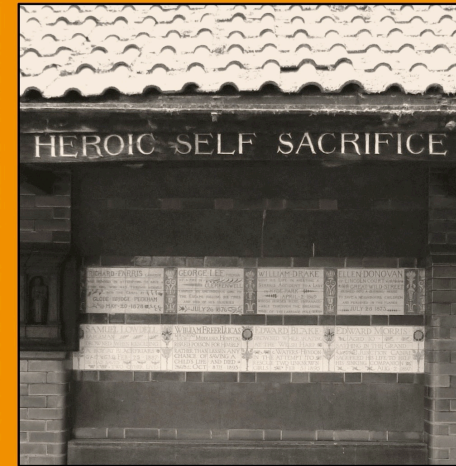
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Everyday Heroism

in the United States, Germany, and Britain from the 19th to the 21st Century



March 6-7, 2015
Goethe-University of Frankfurt

Conference Program



Friday, March 6, 2015

9:30-10:00 a.m. Arrival and Registration

10:00-10:30 a.m. Introduction

Simon Wendt (University of Frankfurt)
Studying Everyday Heroism in Western Societies

10:30-12:30 p.m. Panel 1: Everyday Heroism and Gender

Chair: Simon Wendt (University of Frankfurt)
Alice H. Eagly (Northwestern University)
Everyday Heroism by Women and Men: When and Why Gender Matters
Janice Hume (University of Georgia)
Death of the Everyday Hero: Gender Values and Memory in American Newspaper Obituaries
Sylka Scholz (University of Jena)
Socialist Everyday Heroes and Hegemonic Masculinity in the GDR, 1949-1989

12:30-2:00 p.m. Lunch

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Panel 2: Civilian Heroism in Britain in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Chair: Martin Lüthe (Free University of Berlin)
Craig Barclay (Durham University)
Heroes of Everyday Life: The Royal Humane Society and the Changing Face of Courage in Britain
Barbara Korte/Christiane Hadamitzky (Univ. of Freiburg)
Everyday Heroism for the Victorian Industrial Classes: The British Workman and the British Workwoman, 1860-1880
John Price (Goldsmiths, University of London)
"Heroes of Everyday Life": The Recognition, Commemoration, and Construction of Heroic Civilians in Britain, 1850-1939

4:00-4:30 p.m. Tea and Coffee

4:30-6:00 p.m. Panel 3: Heroic Civilians in Post-World War II Germany

Chair: Julian Hanich (University of Groningen)
Silke Meyer (University of Innsbruck)
Heroes Next Door: Structural Change in Patterns of Exceptionality in 20th-Century Germany
Kobi Kabalek (Hebrew University, Jerusalem)
Heroic Rescuers of Jews as "Unsung Heroes": An American Model for German Moral Figures in Post-World War II Germany

Saturday, March 7, 2015

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Panel 4: Changing Constructions of Heroic Civilians in 19th and 20th-Century America

Chair: Simon Wendt (University of Frankfurt)
Wolfgang Hochbruck (University of Freiburg)
Volunteers and Professionals: Everyday Heroism and the Fire Service
Matthias Grotkopp (Free University of Berlin)
Heroic Ordinariness after Cavell and Capra
William Graebner (State University of New York-Fredonia)
After Watergate and Vietnam: The Politics of the Ordinary Hero in a Conservative Era

12:00-1:30 p.m. Lunch

1:30-3:30 p.m. Panel 5: Everyday Heroism in U.S. Popular Culture

Chair: Matthias Voigt (University of Frankfurt)
Michael Goodrum (University of Essex)
Man and Superman: Everyday Heroism in Superhero Narratives
Julian Hanich (University of Groningen)
Deep Emotional Impact: Disaster Movies, Everyday Heroism, and the Function of Being Moved
Martin Lüthe (Free University of Berlin)
Beyond the "Working Class Hero": Forms and Functions of Everyday Heroism in American Popular Music after 9/11

3:30-3:45 p.m. Tea and Coffee

3:45-4:30 p.m. Final Discussion

Chair: Simon Wendt (University of Frankfurt)