

Co-Conveners: Duke University, Dept. of Germanic Languages and Literature, and UNC Chapel Hill, Dept. of Germanic and Slavic Languages & Literatures

Friday, 22 November 2019

4:00 – 5:30 pm | UNC–Chapel Hill | Hamilton Hall 569

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“Ein lustiger Guerillakrieg.” Comedy and Censorship in the Vormärz

As the turbulent decades before the Revolution of 1848 progressed, radical and liberal dramatists such as Georg Büchner, Karl Gutzkow, and Heinrich Laube wrote dramas that functioned as stand-ins for their liberational aspirations. Given the sneakiness with which these authors had to pursue their aims due to censorship, their dramatic works evoke what Heinrich Hubert Houben, the first major historian of German censorship, has elsewhere called “ein lustiger Guerillakrieg.” The authors pursued surreptitious strategies to smuggle a message into the popular medium of the stage under the nose of the censoring apparatus. These works, therefore, offer a perspective on a literary form that accomplished goals similar to more traditional political critiques by recourse not to reasoned argumentation, but to witty, often allegorical ridicule. The talk is an assessment of German Vormärz comedy, the authors who wrote it, and the agents of the Metternichean Bund who kept those authors in check.

JEFFREY HERTEL is a graduate student of the Carolina-Duke Graduate Program in German Studies, where his research focuses on early nineteenth-century drama. He has a forthcoming article in *Monatshefte* on Johannes R. Becher’s *Levisite oder der einzig gerechte Krieg*.

Moderator: JAKOB NORBERG | Duke University, Department of Germanic Languages and Literature

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