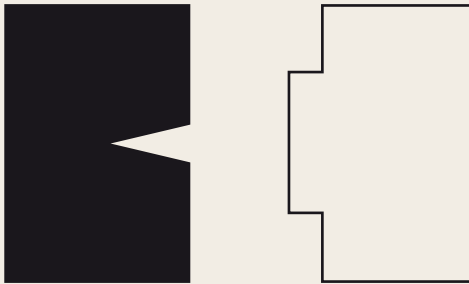


According to Donna J. Haraway and Karen Barad, the realness of the world appears in the fact that the world is in connection. What figure could symbolize this better than that of diffraction? Like reflection, diffraction is an optical metaphor. Yet, in contrast to the concept of reflection that of diffraction neither relates to the mirror-metaphor nor follows the model of the copy. Hence both Haraway and Barad proclaim a "diffractive turn." Yet, they differ with regard to the kind of realism they advocate. While Haraway proposes a figural realism, working with style, language and metaphors, Barad delineates an agential realism, which refers to quantum mechanics. As opposed to Haraway, Barad does not intend to create new stories, figures or myths. Instead of relying on semiotics, she argues for an ontological turn. She wants to unify quantum mechanics with the subatomic world in a new epistemology. In her talk, Deuber-Mankowsky will present Haraway's and Barad's different references to diffraction and then compare their positions.

Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky is Professor of Media Studies at the Ruhr-University Bochum. She has published extensively on topics in feminist theory, representation and mediality, media theory and philosophy as well as religion and modernism. Her book *Der frühe Walter Benjamin und Hermann Cohen. Jüdische Werte, Kritische Philosophie, vergängliche Erfahrung* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2000) was awarded the Humboldt University Prize for best dissertation. English translations of her writings include *Lara Croft: Cyber Heroine* (Minneapolis London: UMP, 2005). Her most recent book is entitled *Praktiken der Illusion. Kant, Nietzsche, Cohen, Benjamin bis Donna J. Haraway* and was published in 2007 (Berlin: Vorwerk 8).

ICI Lecture Series – On Complementarity 'Our positions are complementary, not in conflict!' – Recognizing complementarity offers an attractive model for the coexistence of different knowledges, systems, and cultures. However, different positions rarely simply add up like pieces in a puzzle to provide a full, harmonizing picture. The pieces usually seem to be too large and it requires violence to make them fit – for instance, by constructing others as a complement that provides just what one misses – or to make them compatible where they overlap. Instead of being visualizable in terms of a jigsaw puzzle, the principle of complementarity such as it was introduced by Niels Bohr in order to address the apparent particle-wave duality in quantum physics remains puzzling. It allows for the possibility that different perspectives not only constitute objects differently, but constitute different objects. While there may be no perspective from which the different objects can be seen together, considering them nonetheless as equally necessary for a fuller account stimulates a radical rethinking that unsettles traditional oppositions of identity and difference, subject and object, epistemology and ontology.

Conceived within the framework of the ICI Core Project Tension/Spannung, the **ICI Lecture Series On Complementarity** explores the critical potential of complementarity in the Sciences, the Arts, and Politics.



Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky

Diffracting the Rays of Knowledge: Figural and Agential Realism in Donna Haraway and Karen Barad