Neuroscience & the Humanities

An American–German Conversation
In recent years there has been a growing interdisciplinary dialogue between researchers in the humanities and the neurosciences. The topics range from philosophical and ethical issues, such as concerns of free will and privacy, to questions of how literature, poetry, art and music have “trained” our brains to think in certain narrative structures. In this Satellite Event scientists and scholars from both sides of the Atlantic will explore a number of variations on the theme of neurohumanities dialogue.

Panel Discussion & Reception
Saturday, Nov. 12, 6:30 - 9 p.m.
Location: Goethe Institute, 812 7th Street NW, Washington DC
Moderator: Deborah Jenson
(Romance Studies, Co-Director, FHI Humanities Laboratory, Co-Convenor, Neurohumanities Research Group, Duke University, Durham, NC)

Panelists

Lasana Harris
Duke Institute for Brain Sciences
Center for Cognitive Neuroscience
Psychology & Neuroscience, Arts & Sciences
Duke University, Durham, NC

What I hope will emerge from neurohumanities conjunctures is a more comprehensive understanding of how the brain gives rise to depth of character in narratives from symbols scribbled on a page.

Oliver Lubrich
German and Comparative Literature
Universität Bern, Switzerland;
Languages of Emotion
Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

As a scholar of literature I am interested in experimental poetics. Together with colleagues from empirical psychology and neuroscience we bring aesthetics into the laboratory. In our experiments we test and rethink hypotheses of classical rhetoric.

Arthur Jacobs
Languages of Emotion & Dahlem Institute for Neuroimaging of Emotion (D.I.N.E.)
Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

Believing that poetry is the densest form of expressing how our mind works, in collaboration with colleagues from the humanities I investigate the neuronal, affective, and cognitive processes that allow us to enjoy words, images, and music.

Michael Platt
Center for Cognitive Neuroscience
Center for Neuroeconomic Studies
Neurobiology, School of Medicine
Duke University, Durham, NC

I’m interested in the anthropology and neurobiology of culture, narratives, discourse, social interaction, and the brain. My recommended reading: The Origin of Stories by Brian Boyd, and The Mind in the Cave by J. David Lewis-Williams.