

**Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin –
Nordeuropa-Institut**
Network partner of j o l n e s –
Joint Learning in Northern European Studies



An interview with **Dr. Clemens Räthel** (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin – Nordeuropa-Institut)

Transcription

Dr. Clemens Räthel

My name is Clemens Räthel. I am a research assistant at the Department for Northern Europe here at the Humboldt University in Berlin and I am responsible for cultural and literary studies.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES THE INSTITUTE FOR NORTHERN EUROPE AT HU BERLIN?

So, as the name already says, the Department for Northern Europe, we have a cultural studies approach, which means that we tend to look at a region, "not only" the Scandinavian countries, but also Finland, Iceland, Greenland and the Sami culture, the Sami regions play a big role. We have four subject areas: linguistics, medieval studies, cultural and literary studies, and we offer five languages that students can learn. So we are relatively broadly positioned, and yet I think we are quite successful in our efforts to explore this area together. So these are not four pillars that have nothing to do with each other, but there are many intersections. Because, how can you do literature if you have no idea about history and if you don't deal with linguistics, and what would Scandinavian studies be without the knowledge, so to speak, from before, from medieval studies? So it's a great pleasure here and it's a very fruitful exchange.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION IN THE j o l n e s NETWORK MEAN FOR A RARE SUBJECT LIKE SCANDINAVISTIC AND YOUR DEPARTMENT ?

So for our department, it is of course great that through this network we come into contact with students who are not studying with us. That might sound a bit strange at first, but what's great about it is that it brings a lot of other experiences, a lot of other knowledge, a lot of other focal points into the classroom. That means that we as teachers, but also our fellow students, benefit greatly from the fact that someone else has studied somewhere else, perhaps is taking a seminar somewhere else at the same time, and can tell us something that we can't deliver. This means that the different Scandinavian institutes are linked together in a very concrete way in the classroom. And of course it's great for us as teachers, or for me as a teacher, to see what our colleagues in other locations are doing and that this is often an inspiration or results in concrete research collaborations, so that I say, "Oh, you're doing something here and there. Could you help me with something?" or "I just did this and that". And that

happens, they're not always huge things, but that's sometimes nice because it's so hands-on and promotes exchange and makes it definitely possible.

Credits

The interview was conducted on June 02 2021 via Zoom.

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