

ORGANIZER:

Commission The North Atlantic Triangle: Social and Cultural Exchange between Europe, the USA and Canada

CONCEPT AND MANAGEMENT:

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REGISTRATION:

Registration mandatory by 15 Nov. 2021 via email to anna.zalto@oeaw.ac.at; please indicate whether you would like to participate on-site or online.

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AUSTRIAN
ACADEMY OF
SCIENCES

NOVEMBER 18–20, 2021
AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
JOHANNESSAAL
DR. IGNAZ SEIPEL-PLATZ 2
1010 VIENNA



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

POLARIZATION IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC TRIANGLE



PROGRAM

THURSDAY, 18 NOVEMBER

14:00–16:00

Welcome Address & Introduction

Arnold Suppan | Vice President of the Austrian Academy of Sciences
Markus Schweiger | Executive Director of the Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation
Waldemar Zacharasiewicz | Chair of the Commission The North Atlantic Triangle

Keynotes

Manfred Prisching | University of Graz
Resentment and Anger: Deep Structures of Social Polarization
Reinhard Heinisch | University of Salzburg
In from the Cold: The Mainstreaming of Radical Right Populism in the US and Europe: a Comparison
Eva Nowotny | Former Ambassador; University of Vienna
Recent Developments in the Transatlantic Relationship

COFFEE BREAK

16:30–18:00

Perceptions of Polarization on the Other Side of the Atlantic

Chair: Werner Sollors

Wynfrid Kriegleder | University of Vienna
Germanophone Novelists of the 19th and 20th Centuries Depicting a Polarized America
Kirsten Krick-Aigner | Wofford College, Spartanburg, SC
Between Assimilation and Otherness: An Examination of Jazz and the Reception of Ernst Krenek's 1927 Opera "Jonny spielt auf"
Jörg Türschmann | University of Vienna
"God of Carnage": The Representation of Suspicious Comrades in Screen Fiction

FRIDAY, 19 NOVEMBER

09:30–11:00 **Polarization and Its Impact on National Identities: Europe, Canada, the USA**

Chair: *Christoph Irmscher*

Martin Löschnigg | University of Graz
Beware of Uncle Sam! Anti-Americanism in Canadian Literature

Werner Sollors | Harvard University
Challenges of Diversity in American Culture

George Blaustein | University of Amsterdam
The Politics of Threnody: On Grief and American Polarization

COFFEE BREAK

11:30–13:00 **Polarizations at the Intersections of Race, Gender, and Class**

Chair: *Herta Nagl-Docekal*

Carmen Birkle | Philipps University Marburg
Overcoming Polarization: Kamala Harris and the Intersectionality of Race and Gender in Politics

Dawn Gartlehner | University of Vienna
United we Stand. Divided we Fall: Frances E. W. Harper and Pertinent Lessons for the Struggle for Gender and Racial Equality

Brigitte Buchhammer | University of Vienna
Alison Jaggar's Research on Polarization at the Intersection of Gender and Poverty

LUNCH BREAK

15:00–17:00 **Racial Polarizations**

Chair: *Philipp Gassert*

Robert H. Brinkmeyer, Jr. | University of South Carolina, Columbia
"I'll Take My Stand" and "What the Negro Wants": Understanding Race, Region, and Nation in the Shadow of Europe

Rebecca Brückmann | Ruhr-University Bochum
Pointing Fingers: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Black Freedom Movement and White Supremacist Resistance

James C. Cobb | University of Georgia, Athens
Polarity and People on the Move: Domestic Migration and the Shifting Political Landscape of the American South

Tatiana Konrad | University of Vienna
Segregation, Environmental Racism, and Polarization in the USA in the Era of Climate Change

SATURDAY, 20 NOVEMBER

10:00–12:30 **Protest, Polarizations and Politics**

Chair: *Carmen Birkle*

Rolf Kreyer | Philipps University Marburg
Make Political Discourse Rational Again: Language and Polarization

Philipp Gassert | University of Mannheim
Is Social Polarization Always Bad? A Historical Perspective on the Postwar Sociology of Conflict

Mitchell G. Ash | University of Vienna
Hasn't America Always been a Polarized Country? The Persistent Renewal of Polarization in American Political Culture

Christoph Irmscher | Indiana University, Bloomington
Polarizing Science under Trump

13:00 **End of Conference**

SPEAKERS' ABSTRACTS AND CVs

(in order of the program)

MANFRED PRISCHING

Resentment and Anger: Deep Structures of Social Polarization

Equality and inequality are regarded as essential categories for evaluating a society and explaining its stability or conflictuality. When looking at specific cases, one always refers to certain attention-grabbing cleavages. But there are several social divisions that may reinforce each other: class, qualification, age, gender, race, social milieus (lifestyle), localism versus cosmopolitanism (native and migrant), authoritarianism versus liberalism, region (urban and rural). Objective inequalities are only one element, there is also the perception of divisions as well as their evaluation from the point of view of fairness. Cases of adequacy and fairness are judged differently in welfare-state European and in "American Dream"-believing countries. Complexity and liquidity, the loss of communities, concerns about prosperity and security trigger stress. Dynamics come into play when individual perceptions form collective situational definitions or when political movements instrumentalize and exacerbate respective feelings. Some of the cleavages are related; some correlations are coincidental; and in general, "parallel" cleavages are considered more dangerous. There is no society without divisions and inequalities, yet it is appropriate to ask which constellations (characteristic of countries of the Western world) are compatible with the preservation of a democratic-liberal system.

Manfred Prisching, Mag. Dr., Professor of Sociology at the University of Graz. Born in 1950. After studying law (Dr. jur. 1974) and economics (Mag. rer. soc. oec. 1977), Prisching worked at the Institutes for Philosophy of Law, for Economics and Economic Policy, and for Sociology at the University of Graz. Habilitation for Sociology in 1985. Stays abroad at universities in Maastricht (NL), at Harvard University (Cambridge/Boston), at the Universities of New Orleans, Little Rock, and Las Vegas. Various research awards and visiting professorships. 1997-2001 Scientific Director of the University of Applied Sciences in Styria. Corr. Member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Former Member of the Austrian Science Council.

Recent books: *Verrückt. Verspielt. Verschoben. Unsere spätmoderne Gesellschaft: Texte und Bilder*, 2014; *Zeitdiagnose. Methoden, Modelle, Motive*, 2018; *Bluff-Menschen*, 2019.

REINHARD HEINISCH

In from the Cold: The Mainstreaming of Radical Right Populism in the US and Europe – a Comparison

Contemporary radical populism is a belief system that sees society as divided into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, corrupt elites and the common people, whose interests are betrayed by the former. As a result, populists promise radical change to restore the sovereignty and dignity of 'the people'. The success of populist political ideas is due to a crisis of legitimacy of established institutions that have not responded adequately to the political and socioeconomic changes brought about by modernization and internationalization. The causes and political effects are similar in the U.S. and Western Europe, leading to the mobilization of an electorally relevant segment of the citizenry. Radical right-wing populists in particular are able to tap into the resentment of voters who see their own political and economic power in decline and their identity threatened by cultural change and immigration. Therefore, the Tea Party and the Trump phenomenon are not only inherently comparable to the radical populists in Western Europe, but both are increasingly moving from the margin of politics into the center. The main differences are institutional: the electoral system, the nature of political parties, and the personalization of electoral campaigns have allowed the populist radical right in the U.S. to dominate the entire right, while in Europe, it remains divided, with the radical right and center-right parties often becoming competitors but occasionally also collaborators. Moreover, in the United States, the extreme polarization causes political gridlock as the American system of checks and balances depends on political cooperation across party lines to pass legislation. The continued inability to respond legislatively to widely perceived problems has further undermined the legitimacy of U.S. institutions and additionally fed grievance politics.

Reinhard Heinisch is Professor of Comparative Austrian Politics at the University of Salzburg and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Sociology. Previously, he taught at the University of Pittsburgh, where he was most recently Professor of Political Science. His research focuses on comparative populism, Euroscepticism, political parties, the radical right, and democracy. His more than 70 scholarly publications include articles that have appeared in the *Journal of Common Market Studies*, *Party Politics*, *West European Politics*, *Democratization*, and *Comparative European Politics*, among others. One of his most recent book publications is an edited volume entitled *The People and the Nation: Populism and Ethno-Territorial Politics in Europe* (Routledge, 2019). He has been an associate faculty member of the University of Pittsburgh European Studies Center since 2009 and regularly teaches at the School of International Politics at Renmin University in Beijing, China. He is currently PI in an EU Horizon2020 project on Populism and Civic Engagement and received the Austrian National Science Award from the Lupac Foundation of the Austrian Parliament in 2017.

EVA NOWOTNY

Recent Developments in the Transatlantic Relationship

Confronted as we are by a global situation marked by rapid change and many uncertainties, the relevance of the transatlantic relationship is unbroken. Of course, the political interests of the EU and the US are not identical. The US are an island continent, politically and economically less dependent on global developments than Europe. The EU is surrounded by a cordon of instability and potential threats, from neo-imperialist Russia to inherently unstable autocracies, zones of conflict and failing states in the Middle East and the southern rim of the Mediterranean. More so than the US, Europe needs a stable and reliable international order based on the rule of law. To maintain such a world order alone, exceeds by far the political possibilities of the EU, but also of the US, as recent events have demonstrated with shocking clarity. Cooperation between the EU and the US in a solid transatlantic partnership is thus in the fundamental political interest of both partners. In this respect, the EU and the US are tied together by a joint responsibility, indeed, by a common destiny.

Ambassador Eva Nowotny holds a Ph.D. from the University of Vienna with history as her major subject and German literature as a minor. She joined the Austrian Foreign Service in March 1973 and had her first foreign posting at the Austrian Embassy in Cairo, where she stayed from 1975 until 1978. She then was transferred as Counselor to the Austrian Mission at the United Nations in New York and worked in this capacity until summer 1983. Upon her return to headquarters in Vienna, Dr. Nowotny was appointed Foreign Policy Advisor to the Austrian Federal Chancellor, a position she maintained until November 1992. From November 1992 until January 1997, Dr. Nowotny served as the Austrian Ambassador to France, from January 1997 until December 1999 as the Austrian Ambassador to the Court of St. James. In December 1999 she was appointed Director General for EU affairs at the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and stayed in this function until September 2003. From September 2003 until September 2008, Ambassador Nowotny was the Austrian Ambassador to the United States of America, with accreditation to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas and as Permanent Observer to the Organization of American States. Ambassador Nowotny retired from the Foreign Service in October 2008. Immediately after her retirement, she was appointed President of the Austrian UNESCO Commission, a position she held until February 2018. Since February 2013, Ambassador Nowotny has served as Chairman of the Board of the University of Vienna.

Ambassador Nowotny is married to Dr. Thomas Nowotny, retired member of the Austrian Foreign Service and political scientist. In addition to her career in the Foreign Service, Ambassador Nowotny has always maintained her interest in and her connection to academia and is involved in a number of think tanks and academic institutions.

WYNFRID KRIEGLEDER

Germanophone Novelists of the 19th and 20th Centuries Depicting a Polarized America

From the very beginning, Germanophone novelists writing about the USA tended to depict a highly polarized country. This is already evident in the very first of these novels, David Christoph Seybold's *Reizenstein: Die Geschichte eines deutschen Offiziers* (1778/79) and will continue into the 21st century. In my presentation, I will analyze a few of these books: the novels of Charles Sealsfield (1830/40), Ferdinand Kürnberger's *Der Amerikamüde* (1855), the novels of Karl May (1870s-1910), Gerta Hartl's series for young adults *Kleines Herz* (1958-1978), and Uwe Johnson's *Jahrestage* (1970-1983). I will argue that some of these European novelists, while pretending to write about the USA, exported home-made conflicts and polarizations to the New World and made them look like typical American problems, thus exculpating their own society from any responsibility for unsavory developments at home.

Wynfrid Kriegleder, *1958, Professor of German Literature at the Department of German Studies, University of Vienna. Visiting Professor at Berea College, KY (1989/90) and the University of Kansas (2012). Research Grants at Duke University (1997) and Yale University (2007). Member of the OEAW Commission "The North Atlantic Triangle" and the OEAW Interdisciplinary Schubert Research Center.

Selected Publications: *Vorwärts in die Vergangenheit. Das Bild der USA im deutschsprachigen Roman von 1776 bis 1855* (1999); *Eine kurze Geschichte der Literatur in Österreich. Menschen – Bücher – Institutionen* (2011, 2014, 2018). Many articles on German and Austrian literature. Main research interests: the USA in Germanophone literature, history of Austrian literature. Homepage: <http://germanistik.univie.ac.at/personen/kriegleder-wynfrid/>

KIRSTEN KRICK-AIGNER

Between Assimilation and Otherness: An Examination of Jazz and the Reception of Ernst Krenek's 1927 Opera "Jonny spielt auf"

My paper will examine how Ernst Krenek's opera "Jonny spielt auf" and jazz in general were received in Austria in the early part of the 20th century while tied to conversations about Blackness and Otherness by using the Jewish Austrian artist Bettina Bauer Ehrlich's (1903-1985) 1928 oil painting referencing the opera as a springboard for discussion. Krenek's opera premiered in Leipzig in 1927 and embodied the artistic leanings of the Weimar Republic by melding the classical and the modern. While touring throughout Europe and the United States, the popular opera also came through Vienna in 1928, where it was met with protests from Austro-Fascists. Although the opera was all the rage throughout Europe, it was eventually banned by the National Socialists and ultimately showcased in 1938 as "degenerate" at the exhibit "Entartete Musik". Bauer Ehrlich's depiction of the controversial blackface mask in her still life of jazz instruments reveals how the character of Jonny and his

Otherness is portrayed as malicious. The debate around the opera's representation of Blackness demonstrates why this opera is still understood as highly controversial. Pulling together strands of perceived Otherness in the arts, both for Bauer Ehrlich who had to flee National Socialist persecution in 1939 and the reception of jazz during the Austrian Republic, the article reflects on polarization and Otherness on both sides of the Atlantic.

Dr. Kirsten A. Krick-Aigner is Professor of German at Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, U.S.A. She has published widely in the field of Austrian and German Studies with a special focus on 20th and 21st-century Austrian women writers. Other interests include German Expressionism, Jazz in the German-speaking world, Holocaust Studies, and pedagogy on literature and film. Her recent publications include two co-edited volumes on jazz in literature, together with Dr. Marc-Oliver Schuster, *Jazz in Word: European (Non-) Fiction (2017) and Jazz in German-Language Literature (2013)*, and her volume on Austrian women writers, *Unredeemed Past: Themes of War and Womanhood in the Works of Post-World War II Austrian Women Writers (2011)*.

JÖRG TÜRSCHMANN

"God of Carnage": The Representation of Suspicious Comrades in Screen Fiction

The wolf in sheep's clothing is the basic motif of all conspiracy theories. The suspicion that a benevolent act is a hostile act destroys trust in the other because civilian manners can no longer be relied on. Under the influence of the Me-Too movement, the prestigious awards for Polanski's film *J'accuse* about the affair of the Jewish officer Dreyfus led to violent protests in 2020. The interaction between suspicions, generalizations and the search for a scapegoat leads to conspiracy theories and the call for direct plebiscitary democracy and opinion leadership. The suspicious person loses the right to defend his or her own attitude. It is striking that this mechanism is a form of agenda setting in a current social situation. In a way, the fate of actor Kevin Spacey coincides with his role as US president in the television show *House of Cards* (2013-2018). The critical staging of the suspicious character, who represents the Trump administration, becomes a criticism of the suspicious television actor himself. – The aim of the lecture is to deal with the paradox that someone who helps to launch the criticism becomes its object. In this way, fiction turns into pamphlets – against its authors. Examples like *Fahrenheit 9/11* and *Fahrenheit 11/9* by Michael Moore (2004 and 2018) besides *Indignados* by Tony Gatlif (2012) will also help deepen this contradiction.

Jörg Türschmann is professor of literature and media (Spanish and French) and Director of the Department of Romance Languages and the Center for Canadian Studies at the University of Vienna. Recent publications: *deSignis. Publicación de la Federación Latinoamericana de Semiótica (FELS)*, 34, "Culturas del Transporte en América Latina. Redes, prácticas, discursos, ficciones," 2021 (ed. with Gonzalo Aguilar, Wolfram Nitsch and Christian Wehr); *Cine global, televisión transnacional y literatura universal. Estéticas*

hispánicas en el contexto de la globalización. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2021 (ed. with Matthias Hausmann); *TV-Serien aus dem französischen und spanischen Sprachraum. Heidelberg: Springer, 2021* (ed. with Julien Bobineau).

MARTIN LÖSCHNIGG

Beware of Uncle Sam! Anti-Americanism in Canadian Literature

Despite the fact that, in Canada, the majority of people are more 'American' than 'European', Anti-Americanism has pervaded Canadian discourses, reducing the political, economic, technical, environmental and cultural complexity of total relations between Canada and the US to polarizing oppositions. Forms of Anti-Americanism in Canada have ranged from the politically systemic (crucial in the process of forming a unified Canada in the nineteenth century) to a 'contingent' Anti-Americanism created by specific events and developments like, for instance, the perceived aggressiveness of the Bush and Trump administrations. In particular, there has been a "low-grade anti-Americanism" that results from Canada's cultivating an image of herself as a "kinder, gentler, more nuanced" country than the US (H. M. Sapolsky). In my paper, I shall discuss negative attitudes to the giant next door as expressed in Anglo-Canadian literature, focusing on reflections of this "low-grade anti-Americanism" that has served as an indispensable element in a process of national and cultural self-assertion. My examples will range from Sarah Jeanette Duncan's gauging of Canada's position between Europe and the US in *The Imperialist* (1904) to the rendering of fears of invasion in Ray Smith's *Cape Breton is the Thought Control Center of Canada* and Denis Lee's *Civil Elegies* (both 1968), from the projection of 'American' as a metonym of exploitative capitalism in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972) to contemporary depictions of a border that Atwood has referred to as a "one-way mirror", a term that denotes the essential function of the US as a foil in Canadian culture.

Martin Löschnigg is Associate Professor of English and Chair of the Section on Postcolonial Literatures at the University of Graz, Austria. He is vice director of the Graz Centre for Canadian Studies, a Corresponding Member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and a member of its commission on European and North American Cultural Relations. His research interests include narratology, autobiography, the literature of war and Canadian literature, and he has published widely on these subjects. Recent book publications include: *North America, Europe and the Cultural Memory of the First World War* (co-ed. with Karin Kraus, 2015), *The First World War Then and Now* (co-ed. with Sherrill Grace and Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, 2018), *The Great War in Post-Memory Literature and Film and The Enemy in Contemporary Film* (both co-ed. with Marzena Sokołowska-Paryż, 2014 and 2018) and *The Anglo-Canadian Novel in the Twenty-First Century: Interpretations* (co-ed. with Maria Löschnigg, 2019).

WERNER SOLLORS

Challenges of Diversity in American Culture

Starting from two new books, Jeffrey Ferguson's *Race and the Rhetoric of Resistance* and Heike Paul's *Amerikanischer Staatsbürgersentimentalismus* (American Civic Sentimentalism), I shall try to pursue the questions whether today's democracies on both sides of the Atlantic have particular difficulties in producing "civic sentimentalism" as a social glue and whether "resentment" plays an increasing role in the relationship among different groups.

Werner Sollors received the Dr. phil. degree at the Freie Universität Berlin and taught there, at Columbia University, the Università degli Studi di Venezia, New York University Abu Dhabi, and for more than three decades at Harvard University, where he is now Henry B. und Anne M. Cabot Professor of English, Emeritus. Coeditor with Greil Marcus of *A New Literary History of America*, he is the author of *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Literature and Culture*, *Neither Black nor White yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature*, *Ethnic Modernism*, *The Temptation of Despair: Tales of the 1940s* and, most recently, *Schrift in bildender Kunst: Von ägyptischen Schreibern zu lesenden Madonnen*. He has edited such books as *The Return of Thematic Criticism*, *Multilingual America*, and *An Anthology of Interracial Literature*. He is Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Corresponding Member of the Academia Europaea and the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, and Honorary Member of the Bavarian America Academy. Living in Venice, he is writing *Venezianische Bagatellen*.

GEORGE BLAUSTEIN

The Politics of Threnody: On Grief and American Polarization

This paper is an inquiry into the politics and cultural history of grief against the backdrop of polarization in the United States. Joe Biden—uniquely associated with intimate grief in the popular political imagination—will be its point of departure and return. The politics of grief were charged even before the pandemic. Trump's election inspired applications of Kübler-Ross's stages of grief to national politics, in earnest or in jest. Where Trump demonically channeled grievance, liberalism gravitated toward expressions of collective grief coiled with nostalgia. Grief, it would seem, is also polarized. But such an inquiry bisects simplistic generalizations about polarization—a term that can obscure as much as it reveals. Lamentations about polarization often presume equal and opposite departures from a "center", once "vital" but now "disappearing"; such a presumption, though, obscures American politics' steady, decades-long shift to the right. (The term "asymmetric polarization" better captures this reality.) Intra-party conflicts—between base and party leadership, and among the different factions within each party's unnatural coalitions—have been just as important as inter-party battles for electoral supremacy. Contradictions abound.

A noisy, media-saturated hyperpartisanship has hovered over—or rather takes place within—a history of dismal continuities and complex transferences between the two partisan "poles", neither of which, after all, proposes a genuine break from the prevailing regime of accumulation. One-dimensional, quantitative measurements of polarization thus tell us little. Humanists can approach the subject via the more slippery but potentially more illuminating routes of emotions and politics. Grief is one such avenue, and the longer cultural history of grief and mourning lets us reach, as it were, beyond the poles. Biden, it so happens, has embodied the contradictions of modern grief. This was central to his appeal, in ways that illuminate deeper American expressions and idioms.

George Blaustein is senior lecturer of American Studies and History at the University of Amsterdam. He is the author of *Nightmare Envy & Other Stories: American Culture and European Reconstruction* (Oxford University Press, 2018), a study of Americanist writing and institutions in the 20th century. He is a founder and editor of the forthcoming *European Review of Books*, a multilingual magazine of culture and ideas. His essays on American political mythologies and transatlantic literary & intellectual history have appeared in *N+1*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker* and *De Groene Amsterdammer*, as well as *Amerikastudien/American Studies* and *American Quarterly*. He received his doctorate in the History of American Civilization from Harvard University and was president of the Netherlands American Studies Association (NASA) from 2014 to 2020.

CARMEN BIRKLE

Overcoming Polarization: Kamala Harris and the Intersectionality of Race and Gender in Politics

In the preface to her book *The Truths We Hold: An American Journey* (2019), now Vice-President of the United States Kamala Harris describes Donald Trump and his government as basically un-American, criticizes many of the decisions he made and actions he took, and suggests that now is the time for "a battle for the soul of our nation" (xii). Quoting from Thurgood Marshall's speech on July 4, 1992, she shows that this "battle" has to be fought against "'the fear, the hatred, and the mistrust'" (xiii) that Trump et al. have triggered in the American people and through which they have undermined democracy, liberty, and justice (xiii). Her means of improvement is "to speak truth" (xiii), which is the opposite of what the Trump administration stands for with his more than 30,000 recorded lies. While Harris takes her criticism of the previous president as starting point for her autobiography to clarify her oppositional position, she does not use the term polarization even if what she argues can easily be read in this way. "Fake News" or "alternative facts" or outright lies are in a binary relationship to truth. My analysis revolves around Harris's use of words, language, and communication as means of approaching and overcoming deep-seated and traditionally grown gender and racial distrust believed to be triggered by fear and leading to a seemingly polarized American people. I briefly take issue with the idea

of a “culture war” in the United States since those who suggest this idea do not seem to look more closely at the two components “culture” and “war”. Words have been abused in the past and have resulted in conspiracy theories that often develop in times of crisis and that have been cultivated by Trump and his government. Unraveling these conspiracy beliefs, their groundings, structures, and distribution, leads me to two identity categories that play a role in conspiracy beliefs, on the one hand, and are constitutive of what Kamala Harris stands for, on the other hand: gender and ethnicity and their intersectionality. Harris is also faced with the ideas of the American Dream and the Promised Land that have gone sour for some people in the United States. Both concepts will have to be redefined and filled with meaning in the future. Kamala Harris, as part of the Biden administration, has a hill to climb, not in order to bring American exceptionalism to the world but to overcome fear, hatred, and mistrust within the nation, not by starting another Civil War but by forming “a more perfect union.”

Carmen Birkle is a professor of North American Literary and Cultural Studies at Philipps-Universität Marburg. She was president, vice president, executive director, and international delegate of the German Association for American Studies. Currently, she is the treasurer of the European Association for American Studies. She is Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at Philipps-Universität (2017-23). She is the author of two monographs – *Women’s Stories of the Looking Glass* (1996) and *Migration – Miscegenation – Transculturation* (2004) – and of numerous articles, and (co-)editor of 15 volumes of essays and special issues of journals. She is General (Co-)Editor of the journal *Amerikastudien / American Studies* (open-access). She is currently at work on a monograph situated at the intersection of American literature, culture, and medicine in the 19th and early 20th centuries. She also contributes to a larger interdisciplinary project on “Geschlecht – Macht – Staat”.

DAWN GARTLEHNER

United we Stand. Divided we Fall: Frances E. W. Harper and Pertinent Lessons for the Struggle for Gender and Racial Equality

Since its foundation, the United States has precariously teetered atop intersecting fault lines of gender and racial inequality. Civil War promises of a “nation ... of the people, by the people, for the people” quickly vanished in the Reconstruction Era. Just five years into the postwar era, deep fissures split apart the very activists who had so valiantly united in their struggles for abolition. Frances E. W. Harper, a black lifelong activist, lecturer, and writer, found herself at the epicenter of what would become known as “the great schism” of women’s suffrage. In 1869 a dispute within the American Equal Rights Association (AERA) about the best course of action for universal suffrage publicly erupted. Should advocates support the Fifteenth Amendment granting all men (and only men) the right to vote as an initial step for the broader goal of universal suffrage, or should they reject the amendment in favor

of an all-or-nothing stance advocating for voting rights regardless of race or gender? The American Equal Rights Association was the first casualty of the controversy and promptly disbanded along with the dream of a united struggle. The all-or-nothing advocates led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). Although the NWSA was plagued by white members who did not shy away from the use of racist tropes to gain southern support, Sojourner Truth joined forces with Stanton and her allies. Frances E. W. Harper, however, refused to do so. Harper instead aligned her interests with the newly-formed counter-group, the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) in full support of the Fifteenth Amendment. Harper’s difficult decision to forego “the lesser question of sex” and her lifelong work for racial and gender equality offers pertinent historical lessons for the multifaceted struggles still polarizing the nation today.

Dawn Gartlehner is an American living in Vienna and author of the historical fiction novel, *Women and Wild Savages* (2015). She has an MFA in writing and is currently a PhD student at the University of Vienna in the final stages of her dissertation entitled “Birthin’ Babies, Catching Husbands, and Bustin’ Chains: Women’s Portrayal of Women in Southern Historical Fiction of the US Civil War (1892 - 2002)”. Her dissertation examines historical fiction novels on the US Civil War authored by female writers of varying backgrounds in light of issues of gender, class, and race.

BRIGITTE BUCHHAMMER

Alison Jaggar’s Research on Polarization at the Intersection of Gender and Poverty

Does poverty wear a woman’s face? The problem of polarization by poverty along the category of gender should be one of the most important topics of feminist philosophy, as Alison Jaggar demands. The separation of society based on the entanglement of poverty and gender has also been reflected in global world affairs through the polarization of the wealthy developed world and impoverished countries, pauperized by exploitative policies, starting with colonialist practices and further exacerbated by neoliberalism. Scrutinizing neoliberal policy is one of the most urgent challenges for feminist philosophy. Many forms of disadvantage experienced by women in the southern hemisphere are imported through the economic systems of first-world countries. These forms of polarization must not be viewed as ‘traditional ways of mistreating women inside this culture’. It is absolutely essential to make careful differentiations between cultural-traditional gender stereotypes, which are the basis of discrimination and polarization on the one hand, and those imported forms of discrimination against women which are absorbed from the industrialized nations into their less wealthy counterparts as an outcome of economic practices on the other. In her enquiry regarding the question of responsibility for this injustice, Jaggar refers to Pogge’s works on human rights. Some general philosophical reflections on the term “polarization” should prove helpful. It is essential to philosophically elucidate the anthropological foundations which Kant explained in the fourth sentence of the

'Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht': the 'ungesellige Geselligkeit' of human beings. Since human beings are made of such 'crooked timber', philosophy must take up the task of developing principles for an adequate moral and legal theory and human rights as a sound basis for equitable societal arrangements. What can feminist philosophy contribute to overcoming the unjust division of society? Here, a look at Kant's theory of the ethical commonwealth is worthwhile. Is there an intersection between Jaggar's revealing, engaged analysis and Kant's theoretical exposition?

Brigitte Buchhammer studied philosophy at the Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna and theology at the Catholic Private University Linz and at the Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Vienna. She graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy in Vienna in 2010 with the dissertation subject: "Feminist Philosophy of Religion. Philosophical-systematic foundations", published as a book in 2011 by LIT-Verlag (<http://www.lit-verlag.at/isbn/3-643-50316-9>). 2013 founding member of SWIP Austria (Society for Women in Philosophy). Organization of the annual SWIP symposium and editing / publishing the conference proceedings. 2013 to present President, SWIP Austria 2010 to present University teaching at Austrian and international universities (University of Vienna, Johannes Kepler University Linz, Catholic Private University Linz, Goethe University Frankfurt). Lectures in Naples, Berlin, Paderborn, Athens, Washington, Linz, Graz, Vilnius, Riga and Beijing. Research residency in Washington, Catholic University of America in 2014 and 2016. Research-project: Feministische Religionsphilosophie im Anschluss an Hegel. Research interests: gender studies, feminist philosophy, social, legal, moral and religious philosophy.

ROBERT H. BRINKMEYER, JR.

"I'll Take My Stand" and "What the Negro Wants": Understanding Race, Region, and Nation in the Shadow of Europe

During the 1930s and 1940s, perceptions of race, region, and nation in the United States underwent profound challenges resulting from the rise of Fascism and Nazism in Europe. For many Americans, the rise of European totalitarianism fostered what has been called the Democratic revival, a surge of enthusiastic support for the democratic system as a bulwark against the antidemocratic forces sweeping over the world. For white Southerners and black Americans, the situation was much more complex, as seen in two pivotal essay collections, *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (1930) and *What the Negro Wants* (1944). Although their essays differed in details and emphases, the contributors from each group worked from a generally accepted set of principles. For the Agrarians, it wasn't American democracy that stood opposed to Fascism but Southern traditionalism, since they believed industrial capitalism was leading America into plutocracy and totalitarianism. They dismissed the widespread criticism that Southern segregation was a version of Nazi racial policy, arguing instead that the only hope for stopping American totalitarianism (be

it Fascism or Communism) was to embrace traditionalism and regionalism. For the writers of *What the Negro Wants*, European Fascism underscored the flaws of America's democratic system (not merely those of Southern segregation) by highlighting the racial inequities at the heart of the American system. American democracy would remain deeply flawed as long as blacks were not granted full freedom and equality. Many of the contributors warned that failure by the U.S. to grant blacks the freedoms for which the Allied nations proclaimed they were fighting meant that the U.S. risked becoming similar to the very systems with which they were then at war.

Robert H. Brinkmeyer, Jr. is Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina, where he served as the Director of the Institute for Southern Studies and was the Claude Henry Neuffer Professor of Southern Studies and the Emily Brown Jefferies Professor of English. He has published widely on modern Southern literature and culture, including five books: *Three Catholic Writers of the Modern South*; *The Art and Vision of Flannery O'Connor*; *Katherine Anne Porter's Artistic Development: Primitivism, Traditionalism, and Totalitarianism*; *Remapping Southern Literature: Contemporary Southern Writers and the West*; and *The Fourth Ghost: White Southern Writers and European Fascism, 1930-1950*. Professor Brinkmeyer received a Guggenheim Fellowship to complete *The Fourth Ghost*, and that book won several awards, including the Association of American Publishers 2009 PROSE Award for the best book published that year in literature, language, and linguistics and the 2009 Warren-Brooks Award for Excellence in Literary Criticism.

REBECCA BRÜCKMANN

Pointing Fingers: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Black Freedom Movement and White Supremacist Resistance

When the Supreme Court of the United States declared racial segregation in public schools as unconstitutional with its 1954 verdict in *Brown v. Board of Education*, segregationists across the South formed a resistance movement which came to be known by its self-designation as "Massive Resistance". Segregationist politicians as well as grassroots activists attacked the ruling from a variety of hostile positions, including the evocation of states' rights, denouncing Black Freedom activists as communist agents, and seeking biblical justifications for continued racial segregation. Often described as the first "epitome" of this white supremacist countermovement, the desegregation crisis of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, from September 1957 to the spring of 1959, not only galvanized white supremacist activism in the US South and across the nation, but it also evoked a strong reaction around the globe. The conflict produced several iconic images, most notably the photograph of the white student Hazel Bryant screaming at the Black student Elizabeth Eckford, and sparked controversy among the people of many countries. Little Rock received substantial international media coverage. In Germany, September 1957 was the month of a federal election, but Little Rock nonetheless made the front pages. This talk will

analyze US-American, German, and transatlantic discourses on Black activism and the white supremacist backlash in regard to the mid-20th century Black Freedom Movement and its current iterations and legacies, arguing that after World War Two and the Holocaust, Germany contributed to a polarization in transatlantic relations by developing the rhetorical trope of a negative American exceptionalism in regard to race, particularly anti-Black racism, while fostering its own “collective amnesia” about German colonialism, which lingers until today.

Rebecca Brückmann is an assistant professor of North American History in its Transcultural Context at Ruhr-University Bochum, Germany. She received her Ph.D. from the Graduate School of North American Studies of the John-F.-Kennedy-Institute at Freie Universität Berlin in 2014. She has held research and teaching positions at Freie Universität Berlin, Universität zu Köln, and Universität Kassel. Her research interests include North American cultural, social, and spatial history, with a particular focus on Southern history, African American history, the history of white supremacy, gender history, and the history of borderlands. Her publications include the monograph *Massive Resistance and Southern Womanhood: White Women, Class, and Segregation* (University of Georgia Press, 2021), chapters on the history of racism, white supremacy, and intersectionality, as well as articles in the *European Journal of American Studies* (2019) and the *South Carolina Historical Magazine* (2016).

JAMES C. COBB

Polarity and People on the Move: Domestic Migration and the Shifting Political Landscape of the American South

Population migration out of the southern states by both blacks and whites played a key role in realigning national politics in the 20th century. The influx of southern migrants also contributed to racial and cultural as well as political polarization in the northern cities where they settled. As the outcomes of the 2020 national elections suggest, the reversal of those migration patterns, especially among blacks who began to return to the South in significant numbers in the 1970s, now promises to point the traditionally conservative politics of several southern states into a more liberal direction. At the same time, the continuing influx of newcomers from northern and western states is also exacerbating internal polarities within the southern states that are their preferred destinations. Metropolitan areas attract the overwhelming bulk of the newcomers, especially people of color, but also those who are generally more affluent, better-educated, and likely to be more politically engaged. This trend is notable in several southern states, including Texas and North Carolina, but its effect has been most immediate and dramatic in Georgia, where the 4 most populous metropolitan counties, all of which boast non-white majorities fed by in-migration, accounted for nearly as many of Joe Biden's votes in 2020 as the remaining 155 counties combined. This paper will explore the growing socioeconomic disparities reflected in the political polarities fueled by in-migration, and consider how the resultant shift in influence

within the southern states might, at some point, reshape the national political map as well.

James C. Cobb is Emeritus B. Phinizy Spalding Distinguished Professor in the History of the American South at the University of Georgia. A former president of the Southern Historical Association, he has published 13 books and more than 50 articles that focus on the interaction of economy, politics and culture in the American South. His books include: *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1990*, *The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity*, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity*, and most recently, *The South and America since World War II*. He is currently completing a biography of the famed Southern historian, C. Vann Woodward. He was chosen by the Fellowship of Southern Writers to receive the 2014 Woodward-Franklin Award for Distinguished Historical Writing, and in 2017, he was inducted into the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame. He has served as Senior Visiting Mellon Fellow at Cambridge University and as Fulbright Visiting Senior Specialist at the University of Vienna and has been an active participant in the European Southern Studies Forum.

TATIANA KONRAD

Segregation, Environmental Racism, and Polarization in the United States in the Era of Climate Change

Climate change is a global issue that does not know any borders. Climate change and environmental degradation in general pose a threat to every individual, every nation, and the planet as a whole. The unity that would be expected within nations, as well as among nations, in times of crisis is, paradoxically, not there. Climate change is one of the issues that is conspicuously polarizing in the United States. There are several ways to probe the issue of climate and polarization in the U.S. This paper uses race as a lens through which one can understand how the climate crisis and environmental degradation are perceived in the U.S. It argues that racial injustice is the direct cause of environmental inequality in the U.S. Denying people of color access to environmental and climate justice, racism continues to segregate the nation as well as divide the country into healthy regions and places where toxic waste and pollution accumulate. The paper explores the intricate relationship between environmental (in)justice and racial (in)justice and claims that recognizing and fighting against environmental racism is one way to stop polarization in the U.S.

Tatiana Konrad is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of English and American Studies, University of Vienna, Austria. She holds a PhD in American Studies from the University of Marburg, Germany. She was a Visiting Researcher at the Forest History Society (2019), an Ebeling Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society (2018), and a Visiting Scholar at the University of South Alabama, USA (2016). She is the author of *Docu-Fictions of War: U.S. Interventionism in Film and Literature* (University of Nebraska

Press, 2019), the editor of *Transportation and the Culture of Climate Change: Accelerating Ride to Global Crisis* (West Virginia University Press, 2020) and *Cold War II: Hollywood's Renewed Obsession with Russia* (University Press of Mississippi, 2020), and a coeditor of *Cultures of War in Graphic Novels: Violence, Trauma, and Memory* (Rutgers University Press, 2018).

ROLF KREYER

Make Political Discourse Rational Again: Language and Polarization

Cognitive linguist George Lakoff draws a bleak picture when he discusses Enlightenment reason in the context of US-American political discourse: "That what makes us people is we're all rational animals, and therefore we have the same reason, because we're all human beings. So it follows from that: If you tell people the facts, that will lead them to the right conclusion. And, it doesn't work. The facts mean nothing ..." In light of Pizzagate, Q-Anon, fake news, alternative facts and so-called rigged or stolen elections we might find it hard to disagree with this statement. However, the fact that this statement is from November 2014 indicates that there must be another aspect in which Lakoff deems facts irrelevant in political discourse. The present paper wants to focus on this other aspect. Based on (cognitive) linguistic research, the paper will explore in which sense rationality can be regarded as overrated in discourse in general and in political discourse in particular. It will show that our self-image as "rational animals" is not as accurate as we would like it to be. In addition, it will show how typical language use exhibits features, such as conceptual metaphors, presuppositions or frames, that can make it easy to undermine rational thinking. The paper will provide numerous examples from authentic political discourse, illustrating how these features are exploited, thus contributing to further polarization in the political landscape. Finally, the paper will make suggestions as to how we can help to make political discourse rational again.

Rolf Kreyer is professor of modern English linguistics at the University of Marburg. His main research areas include corpus linguistics, syntax, cognitive linguistics, serious games in higher education and the relation of linguistics and language teaching. He is the author of *Inversion in Modern Written English. Syntactic Complexity, Information Status and the Creative Writer* (Gunter Narr, 2006), *Introduction to English Syntax* (Peter Lang, 2010) and *The Nature of Rules, Regularities and Units in Language. A Network Model of the Language System and of Language Use* (De Gruyter Mouton, 2013).

PHILIPP GASSERT

Is Social Polarization Always Bad? A Historical Perspective on the Postwar Sociology of Conflict

In 1908, the German philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel argued that social expressions of conflict, such as *Hass* ("hate"), *Konkurrenz* ("competition"), and even *Mißgunst* ("resentment", "malevolence"), should not be seen as purely *soziologische Passiva* ("negative sociological entities"). Conflicts may (but they do not always) contribute to the creation of society if certain basic rules are accepted. If two parties struggle with each other, they tend to accept the legitimacy of the other side. This creates moments of societal integration. While highly controversial at the time, Simmel's "liberal idea" of conflict became prominent in postwar American sociology, being adopted by transatlantic intellectuals such as Lewis Coser. In their interpretation, conflict was understood as necessary and unavoidable, yet socially useful, if it was properly institutionalized, especially in "Western" democratic systems. This presents an interesting contrast to our present, because we tend to see conflict as polarizing and disintegrating – as some people are no longer willing to discuss certain issues with each other. In my paper I hope to explore the historical context that shaped Simmel's and Coser's ideas and to ask whether their theoretical insights are still relevant. As I will argue, the liberal and anti-totalitarian "sociology of conflict" became prominent among postwar sociologists such as Coser (who was of German-Jewish origin but had to flee Germany as a young man in 1933) because they had experienced the destructive forces of war and genocide in mid-twentieth century Europe.

Philipp Gassert is Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Mannheim (Germany) and former President of the German Association for American Studies. He has published widely on transatlantic history as well as the history of protest. His most recent volumes include *Der 11. September 2001 – 100 Seiten* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2021) and the edited volume *The INF Treaty of 1987: A Re-Appraisal* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021).

MITCHELL G. ASH

Hasn't America Always been a Polarized Country? The Persistent Renewal of Polarization in American Political Culture

Accounts of just how long polarization has been a central feature of American politics vary considerably. In this talk I propose a number of possible dates marking the persistent renewal of polarization in American political culture, ranging over three centuries: (1) 1787 – the so-called "grand compromise" and the "3/5 clause" installed the division between slave-holding and (supposedly) free states at the core of American political culture. (2) 1876 – The Civil War never ended, Reconstruction did. As a result, the fundamental polarization of American political culture along racial lines was renewed and persisted for nearly a century. (3) 1964/65 – The Civil Rights Act of 1964

and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 might have ended this polarization. Instead, they laid the foundation for a realignment of polarized politics from the 1980s onward, in which the former party of Lincoln renounced its heritage in order to become predominant in the South. (4) 1994 – The victory of Newt Gingrich’s “Contract with America” initiated a refusal of bipartisanship by the Republicans (heartily reciprocated by progressive Democrats), which has been renewed regularly since. With Trump’s victory in 2016 and still more since his defeat in 2020, this refusal appears to have become Republican party policy for the foreseeable future. Taken together, these and other such conflict points suggest that consensus-oriented historical accounts of American political culture based on the notion of a common identity expressed in the glorious phrase “We, the people” tell, at best, only part of the story.

Mitchell G. Ash (PhD Harvard University) is Professor Emeritus of Modern History at the University of Vienna, Austria. He is a member of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. Ash is author or editor of 16 books and more than 170 articles and chapters in German and English on the sciences in political, social and cultural contexts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including studies on the work of émigré German-speaking scholars and scientists in Great Britain and the United States (for example: *Americanizing Psychoanalysis. Review essay.* *Modern Intellectual History* 14:2 (2017), 607-617). He has conducted seminars on American political culture and published commentaries on U.S. politics (for example: *US-Verfassungskrise? Das Problem heißt Polarisierung. Antwort auf Peter Graf Kielmannsegg.* *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* – Einspruch online, 26.02.2021. <https://www.faz.net/einspruch/us-verfassungskrise-das-problem-heisst-polarisierung-17207213.html>).

CHRISTOPH IRMSCHER

Polarizing Science under Trump

After Trump took office in January 2017, many federal scientists reported that the administration actively undermined or dismissed their work. Some were fired, while others left in frustration or protest as political appointees began to interfere with everything from nutrition research to Covid-19 data to survey reports, and climate science. 1,600 government scientists are estimated to have left in the first two years of Trump’s presidency alone. In key organizations, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, climate deniers assumed positions of leadership. Calls to “Fire Fauci” (the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases) regularly energized Trump’s base (and still do). By contrast, for the first time in their history, the editors-in-chief of prominent scientific journals, *Nature*, *Scientific American*, and the storied *New England Journal of Medicine* felt forced to take a public stance against the Trump administration’s science denial and endorsed his opponent. While it has been pointed out that, even under Trump, the funding of science agencies has—thanks to congressional interventions—remained steady or, in

some cases, increased, there can be no doubt that the rhetoric of science denialism now enjoys new national respectability, which continues under the Biden administration. Even more crucially, American scientists have found themselves pushed into an unaccustomed role, that of political advocacy. If Rachel Carson, in *Silent Spring* (1962), imagined institutional science as largely complicit with governmental interests, it has increasingly emerged as an oppositional force (“The March for Science”). In *The Scientific Life*, Steven Shapin pointed out that, despite the identification of modern science with the impersonal forces of industry, academe, and government, older expectations (associating the science with moral uplift and the science practitioner as beyond the pressures of business realities) still persist, and one could ask if the current moment will lead, or has already led, to a renaissance of such older notions. While the Biden administration has made a commitment “to follow the science,” the controversies surrounding vaccinations appear to indicate that the new polarization connected with American science is here to stay. As the editor of the weekly newsletter of the Concerned Scientists at Indiana University (CSIU), with over 1,200 subscribers, I have tracked the controversies surrounding science and scientific evidence for over two years and intend to use some of my own experiences for this paper.

Christoph Irmischer is a Distinguished Professor of English and Director of the Wells Scholars Program at Indiana University. A regular book reviewer for the *Wall Street Journal*, he is the author of many books, including *The Poetics of Natural History*, recently re-issued in a 20th-anniversary edition.

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