

**Call for Papers: Annual Conference of the DGfA “Knowledge Landscapes North America,”  
Bonn, May 28-31, 2015**

- 1. Making News: Forms and Formats of Knowing in North America**  
Hanjo Berressem (Köln) / Sarah Wasserman (Berlin)
- 2. From Metaphor to Matter: The New Materialism in American Knowledge Production**  
Laura Bieger (Freiburg) / Jan D. Kucharzewski (Hamburg)
- 3. Knowledge Landscapes: Nature, Knowledge(s), and Early American Literary Culture**  
Juliane Braun (Würzburg) / Astrid Haas (Bielefeld) / Tim Lanzendorfer (Mainz) / Julia Straub (Bern)
- 4. The Campus Novel: Literary Form as a Way of Knowing Institutional Structure**  
Dustin Breitenwischer (Freiburg) / Andrew Gross (Erlangen)
- 5. Indigenous Knowledges in North America**  
Birgit Däwes (Vienna) / Kerstin Knopf (Greifswald)
- 6. Contested Knowledges in Historical North American Contact Zones**  
Alexandra Ganser (Vienna) / Gesa Mackenthun (Rostock)
- 7. Tacit Knowledge**  
Katharina Gerund / Heike Paul (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg)
- 8. Playing with the arts and sciences”: (Post-) Feminist Discourse and the ‘Tools of Patriarchy’**  
Johanna Heil (Marburg) / Anna Thiemann (Münster)
- 9. “Owning (Human) Nature?” Literary Knowledge Production and the Life Sciences**  
Karin Hoepker (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg) / Heike Schäfer (Konstanz)
- 10. GeoKnowledges: Mapping in the Analog and Digital Humanities**  
Ingrid Gessner (Regensburg) / Marc Priewe (Stuttgart)
- 11. Contested Science: Biology and Biomedicine in Public Debate since 1945**  
Axel Jansen (Heidelberg/Tübingen) / Frank Usbeck (Dresden)
- 12. Knowledge Production and Circulation in the Context of ‘Teaching America’**  
Jun.-Prof. Dr. Uwe Küchler (Bonn) / Prof. Dr. Laurenz Volkmann (Jena)
- 13. “Knowledge – Race – Space: (De-)Segregated Landscapes of Lore in Historical Perspective”**  
Anke Otrlepp (Kassel)

**14. “(Trans)Pacific Knowledge Landscapes”**

Nicole Poppenhagen (Vienna) / Jens Temmen (Potsdam)

**15. Caribbean and Inter-American Perspectives in North American Studies and Knowledge Production**

Josef Raab (Duisburg-Essen) / Wilfried Raussert (Bielefeld) / Nicole Waller (Potsdam)

## **1. Making News: Forms and Formats of Knowing in North America**

Hanjo Berressem (Köln) / Sarah Wasserman (Berlin)

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The desire to be informed, to be “in the know” seems innate to humans and inherent to human society. And “news,” it has been said, “is how the world knows about itself” (c.f. Andrew Pettegree’s new book, *The Invention of the News*). In other words, knowledge becomes operative only through its distribution: it must be passed on, transmitted, channeled. News reveals how knowledge requires media—be it a newspaper, a radio broadcast, a television show, or a twitter feed. Although media ecologies change according to culture and time, the topics of the news and their mode of presentation follow well-rehearsed formulae and routines: disasters, revolutions, wars politics, crime, scandals, obituaries, sports, the weather. We are interested in the construction of these categories and in the changes that the news enacts on recipients’ sense of self as they encounter new formats of information and new knowledge of the ‘world outside.’

The 24-hour news cycle that defines news media today has its origins in a number of earlier formats: it is possible to trace an arc from “yellow journalism” that proliferated in the U.S. at the end of the nineteenth century to the “all-news radio” format developed in the United States during the 1950s and 60s to the twitter-feeds informing news outlets today. Similarly, the vast majority of video blogs that proliferate on YouTube mimic the form and technique of the news anchor, a figure that emerged on American television in the late 1940s. This workshop therefore focuses on the national, historical contexts in which enduring modes of knowledge construction and transmission were consolidated. Because of the success of these modes, much of our knowledge today can be said to be implicitly “American.” What, then, are the roots and resonance of the news in North America? How does it structure the very concept of knowledge over the long 20<sup>th</sup> century?

This inter-disciplinary workshop considers news as a historical phenomenon *and* as a conceptual construct that shapes how and what we know. We invite papers that examine modes and moods of distribution (radio news, newscasts before movie-screenings, the TV news studio, the gestures and rhetorics of delivery, the use of images, clips, interviews and ‘experts’), the categories of knowledge that the news shapes (scientific, political, entertainment, etc.), as well as the representation of news in literature, television, film and music. Although news is a form of knowledge based on notions of objectivity, accuracy and fact, it overlaps in significant ways with several other forms: gossip, rumor, propaganda, and fiction. We are therefore also open to papers that challenge the very category of news, especially through investigations of literary texts, television shows, or films, from the late nineteenth century until today.

**A note about format:** This panel will feature six speakers, each delivering a 10-minute paper to allow ample time for discussion. We hope that this format will allow for a lively conversation, more akin to a round table than a conventional panel.

**Confirmed Speakers:**

**Prof. Dr. Klaus Benesch**

Professor of English and American Studies  
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität  
“Border Radio: News from Elsewhere”

**Prof. Dr. Frank Kelleter**

Professor of American Cultural Studies  
JFK Institute at the Free University Berlin  
“Four Theses on the News”

## **2. From Metaphor to Matter: The New Materialism in American Knowledge Production**

Laura Bieger (Freiburg) / Jan D. Kucharzewski (Hamburg)

In a *New York Times* article entitled “The Next Big Thing in English” (2010) Patricia Cohen observes that English departments at many American universities have turned their attention to “materialist” approaches to literary studies. There is a growing tendency to investigate literary production from the perspective of cognitive, evolutionary, and neurological theories. These approaches rely on the allegedly empirical data produced by various “hard sciences” in order to legitimize the relevance of literary studies in our highly contested landscapes of knowledge. Parallel to this “internal” materialism of the neuro/cognitive sciences, an “external” materialism has gained ground. This latter development, recently described by Mark McGurl as the formation of a “new cultural geology,” includes concerns with the anthropocene and philosophical movements such as “object-oriented ontology” and “speculative realism.” Firmly in place as it seemed from the 1970s to the early 2000s, the poststructuralist dominance in the humanities is being challenged by a resurgence of materialist epistemologies as alternative ways of knowing. At the same time, authors such as Richard Powers, Jonathan Franzen, Siri Hustvedt, and Cormac McCarthy have produced a corpus of novels that examine the human condition from a decidedly materialist point of view, shifting the focus from psychology to neurology, from mind to brain, from historical to geological time, from metaphor to matter.

This workshop explores the renewed presence of materialist epistemologies in American knowledge production, be it academic, literary, philosophical, or cultural. Whereas a push beyond the postmodern paradigm seems to unite the movements mentioned above, interest in the material world serves vastly diverging ends. One is to counter poststructuralism’s alleged relativism by infusing literary and cultural studies with materialistic considerations. The growing number of literary works with neo-naturalist tendencies, the Darwinistic environments of TV shows like *The Wire* and *Breaking Bad*—all of this attests to a decidedly materialistic discourse about the human condition in contemporary American culture. Yet there is also the desire to acknowledge the “relative puniness of the human in the play of elementary and fundamental forces” (McGurl) and along with it revise the idea of nature being progressively dominated by science.

We invite papers that investigate these tendencies and explore the role of the new materialism in contemporary American knowledge production. To name but a few of our guiding questions:

- How can we account for the new materialism’s explanatory power and attractiveness at this present moment in American culture? Who benefits from it?

- Does the new materialism contradict or expand on postmodern thinking? What are its implications for our conceptualizations of agency, selfhood, and autonomy?
- What kinds of narratives sustain the new materialism? Who produces and circulates these narrative, and for whom? What can we say about their form? Has American literature entered a “neo-naturalist” phase?
- Are academic discourses in the American humanities gradually being subordinated to positivistic narratives? Can materialist epistemologies invigorate humanities discourses or do they mark a return to essentialist ideas?

Confirmed Speakers:

**Hubert Zapf (Universität Augsburg)**, “Matter, Metaphor, and Cultural Ecology”

**Marius Henderson (Universität Hamburg)**, “Plastic Writing: Materializations of *Poietic* Language in the Anthropocene“

Please send abstracts of no more than 400 words and a short biographical statement to:

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### **3. Knowledge Landscapes: Nature, Knowledge(s), and Early American Literary Culture**

Juliane Braun (Würzburg) / Astrid Haas (Bielefeld) / Tim Lanzendörfer (Mainz) / Julia Straub (Bern)

This workshop aims to explore the diverse modes of knowledge production in colonial America and the early United States, with a focus on the relationship between knowledge and nature. The production of new knowledge in early America takes place in a context in which “knowledge landscapes” are not a metaphor: knowledge was produced in direct contact with nature and the mediation of knowledge was crucial for the transfer between those producing knowledge in contact with nature and those aiming to make use of either, in a new social constellation. As a result, new knowledge cultures emerged on the American continent. For this panel, we seek papers which investigate the particular constitution of knowledge(s) in the American contact zone in relation to nature (and landscape), and which highlight some of the agents that have played a role in knowledge production and dissemination, also in transatlantic or hemispheric contexts. The workshop emphasizes the complexity of “knowledge” and “landscape” in this regard: if distributing knowledge about American nature was a key point of early narratives of exploration, the different population groups that met in America engaged in a more complex relationship between knowledge about the natural world they lived in and the development of new knowledges through the observation of, presence in, and written description of nature. In so doing, papers may explore the distinct systems and practices of knowledge the European settlers, African slaves, and indigenous nations brought with them, as well as the subgroups which constituted them. How did the residents of Early America come to have and employ different knowledge formations to make sense of nature and society?

The workshop thus aims to understand the origins of the idea of “knowledge landscapes” in nature in Early America and in the human engagement with it. It seeks papers that cover a broad field of inquiry in which it is possible to perceive the intimate relationship

between human knowledge, cultural production, and nature in Early America. Possible topics include:

- the role of knowledge transfer between indigenous and colonial populations
- the representation, circulation, and interpretation of knowledge and nature in writing, visual art, or music
- shifting forms and functions of the description of nature from exploration narratives onwards
- states and flows of knowledge in or across specific areas of expertise, such as religion, philosophy, natural history, medicine, or engineering, and their relationship to nature
- processes of transatlantic knowledge transfer both about the American landscape itself and the impact of these transfers on European landscapes
- alternative and marginalized knowledge systems, such as indigenous, African, or lower-class knowledge cultures
- the intertwinements of gender and knowledge, such as the roles of men and women in knowledge production and dissemination

Please send proposals of approx. 250 words together with a short bio to all four organizers of this workshop.

### **Organizers:**

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Dr. Astrid Haas (Universität Bielefeld) [astrid.haas@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:astrid.haas@uni-bielefeld.de)

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PD Dr. Julia Straub (Universität Bern) [julia.straub@ens.unibe.ch](mailto:julia.straub@ens.unibe.ch)

### **Speakers:**

PD Dr. Margit Peterfy, (Heidelberg): “Nature into Real Estate: Poetic and Commercial Visions of American Landscapes”

Damien Schlarb, M.A. (Mainz): “The Book of Nature: Literary Receptions of Empiricism”

## **4. The Campus Novel: Literary Form as a Way of Knowing Institutional Structure**

Dustin Breitenwischer (Freiburg) / Andrew Gross (Erlangen)

The campus novel takes the production of knowledge as its theme and an important landscape of knowledge—the university—as its setting. This panel will concentrate on the American campus novel, which developed in tandem with the expansion of the university system in the years following WWII, when the massive influx of students on the GI Bill, along with a massive influx of federal research money, transformed the structures of academic knowledge. As a subgenre the campus novel has accompanied and commented on the growth of English literature as a discipline, along with literary criticism, creative writing, American studies, and cultural studies; it has also commented on what some see as the decline of the humanities in relation to what campus novelist C.P. Snow called the other “culture” of science. It is common to look to the campus novel for attacks on the foibles of modern academia. This panel proposes to follow the pioneering work of Mark McGurl and explore genre as a formal analogue of institutional structure—an analogue that tells us something about literature, knowledge, and the programs and disciplines that help produce them. In other words, the panel aims to provide pictures from an institution to see what literature has to say about the production of literary knowledge and its relation to other knowledge economies.

Papers may include, but are not limited to the following:

- the campus novel as a space of knowledge (*Wissensraum*)
- the professor as literary hero/picaro/clown
- discourses of elite culture and literary anti-intellectualism
- creative writing classes at US universities
- science in/and literature

**Confirmed speakers:**

Catrin Gersdorf (Würzburg): “The Hog on Campus: Jane Smiley's *Moo* and the Object of Academic Knowledge”

Heinz Ickstadt (FU Berlin): “Beyond the Campus Novel: John Williams's *Stoner*”

Please send abstracts (250 words) and a short bio (preferably via email) to

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## 5. Indigenous Knowledges in North America

Birgit Däwes (Vienna) / Kerstin Knopf (Greifswald)

According to Michel Foucault, knowledge and power have always been intimately interconnected in Eurocentric societies, producing systems of containment that rely heavily on public institutions of knowledge production and distribution. Discourses of knowledge are thus both agent and subject of control, limitation, and exclusion; and academic and scientific disciplines are controlling instruments of discourses and of power (1971). In general, Western science has viewed Indigenous knowledge as primitive, folkloric, unscientific, and insignificant, and has thus reproduced colonial relationships in the academy (Kovach 2010). By contrast, Mi'kmaw scholar Marie Battiste describes Indigenous knowledge systems as dynamic and innovative, as cultural practices that are processual and adaptive to environments, neo/colonial influences, new technologies, and political developments (2002; 2005). Tewa scholar Gregory Cajete similarly understands Indigenous knowledge as interdisciplinary, inclusive, and in flux: “Native science is a metaphor for a wide range of tribal processes of perceiving, thinking, acting, and ‘coming to know’ that have evolved through human experience with the natural world” (2000). Indigenous knowledge is often compactly contained in stories and legends (Johnson 2012; Kovach 2010).

With the more recent turns toward transnational, interdisciplinary, and culturally relative understandings of world views, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers have begun to “indigenize the academy,” to integrate Indigenous and Western knowledge discourses and practices on an equal basis (Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Mihesuha/Wilson 2004; Kuokkanen 2007; Wilson 2008; Kovach 2009; Gilliland 2009). This response to academic colonialism does not

mean privileging Indigenous epistemes, discourses, practices, and methodologies but rather initiating a dialogue between Indigenous and Western knowledges, education, cultural beliefs, and values, with the aim to combine their respective competences (Duran 1995; Peat 1994; Cajete 2000; Atleo 2004; Armstrong 2009).

Featuring a theoretical framework talk by Gregory Cajete, this panel explores Indigenous knowledge practices and representations of Indigenous knowledge landscapes in contemporary North American literature, culture, society and the arts. We invite papers that may address but are not limited to the following issues:

- Differences and commonalities between Indigenous knowledges and Western knowledge systems and methodologies
- Ways in which land, its patterns and cycles inform Indigenous knowledges
- Intersections between Indigenous systems of knowledge and ecological issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Modes and media of transmitting Indigenous knowledges
- Transnational and transcultural perspectives on Indigenous knowledges
- Strategies to refract neocolonialism in institutions of knowledge production and distribution
- Examples of mutual influences, integration and collaboration between Indigenous and Western knowledges and knowledge practices
- Appropriated Indigenous knowledge as naturalized Western knowledge (e.g. Inuit knowledge that supported British Arctic expeditions; Indigenous terms and items in Western cultures)

**Confirmed Speakers:**

Prof. Dr. Gregory Cajete (U of New Mexico, USA), “Indigenous Knowledge and the Rise of the Indigenous Ecological Mind”

Prof. Dr. Katja Sarkowsky (U of Münster, Germany), “All my Relations: Indigenous Life Writing, Constructions of the Social, and Autobiographical Knowledge”

Dr. Katharina Motyl (U of Tübingen, Germany), “The Evolution of Indigenous Concepts of ‘Addiction’ and Indigenous Rehabilitation Regimes Today”

**Please send paper proposals (ca. 300 words) and a short CV to:**

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**6. Contested Knowledges in Historical North American Contact Zones**

Alexandra Ganser (Vienna) / Gesa Mackenthun (Rostock)

Knowledge has always emerged and been transformed through contact between people and cultures. Processes of epistemic transculturation are accelerated by mobility, travel, economic exchange, but also by war, slavery and forced migration. The general assumption that these encounters automatically led to the voluntary exchange of knowledge has been a long-held ideal, but is merely a metaphor that obscures far more complex and conflictual processes, as the

critical history of knowledge of the last few decades has shown (see, e.g., on the power-relatedness of scientific knowledge: Foucault, Bourdieu, Latour, Burke; on the cross-cultural production of knowledge: Stoler, Schaffer et al., Hock/Mackenthun; on knowledge and empire in the Atlantic/the Americas: Delbourgo/Dew, Mignolo, Cañizares-Esguerra). American colonial encounters have not always led to peaceful convergences of different knowledge systems or epistemologies. More often than not, the epistemological canon that became institutionalized in the nineteenth century is the result of ideological struggle and contestation—in the etymological sense of the term, the (conflictual) co-existence of "witnesses" from different cultures, but also of witnesses from different cultural groups *within* colonial and creolized societies. The knowledge they produced has variously been referred to as local knowledge, subjugated knowledge, counterhegemonic knowledge and the like. Our panel seeks papers that combine empirical examples with theoretical reflections about the mechanisms of epistemic exchange between Native and other ethnic knowledge and European epistemologies in the period before 1900, inquiring into the genesis of our contemporary knowledge about cultural exchange in the Americas. Next to inviting contributions that work with an extended definition of "text" by including, e.g., maps, images, and artifacts, we are especially interested in critical reflections on analytic methodologies in dealing with such sources. More broadly, we would like to encourage papers that combine empirical analysis with critical investigations of lingering theoretical assumptions – such as the latent (not to say romantic) essentialism in speaking of 'alternative' epistemologies – and that seek to provide descriptions of epistemological encounters based on commonalities and convergences, dialogue, and negotiation.

Thematically, contributions may include, but are not limited to, the following themes: investigations of cross-cultural knowledge exchange/contests in the colonial period, including critical reflections on the (im)possibility of reconstructing 'alternative' epistemologies through the documents of the conquerors; the nineteenth-century interest 'boom' in Native American and, to a lesser degree, African American, 'folklore,' including reflections on how to use the collected materials as evidence of 'alternative' knowledge; general reflections on the reliability and readability of oral material as evidence of other epistemologies; papers investigating the production of 'creolized' knowledge in different social and ethnic contact zones, etc. Examples may derive from all of North America, from Canada to Panama (and if necessary beyond).

### **Confirmed speakers:**

**Prof. Dr. Barbara Buchenau (Univ. Duisburg-Essen)**

"Conceptualizations of Space and Time in the Cartography and Ethnography of Early New England and New France"

**Prof. Dr. Oliver Scheiding (Univ. Mainz)**

"Native Agency and Empire Building in the Colonial Southeast"

Please send paper proposals to:

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- Cañizares-Esguerra, Jorge. *Nature, Empire, and Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2006.
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- Stoler, Ann Laura. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power. Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2010.

## **6. Tacit Knowledge**

Katharina Gerund/Heike Paul (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg)

Taking Michael Polanyi's famous dictum that "we know more than we can tell" as a starting point, our workshop sets out to examine the 'tacit dimension' of knowledge and knowledge production in the North American context. Tacit knowledge arguably underlies all explicit and propositional knowledge; it is culturally and historically specific, individually embodied and/or collectively shared. It may be articulated, but at times lies beyond the grasp of language. And yet, tacit knowledge can be considered essential for everyday practices and social interactions and also for the persistence of larger cultural configurations and social formations (e.g. racializations and race-based hierarchies, gender roles, religious and quasi-religious belief systems, and 'structures of feeling' [R. Williams] at large).

It is the goal of this workshop to examine theories and case studies regarding the nature and function of tacit knowledge in North American cultures, to discuss the conceptualization of tacit knowledge as non-propositional and to critically interrogate power asymmetries involved. Who defines which forms of knowledge as valid, available, and legitimate? What kind of knowledge appears 'tacit' or explicit from which perspective? How and when is the 'tacit' explicated or revealed (e.g. in literary texts, cultural practices, or embodiments – for instance as habitus [P. Bourdieu]); and – vice versa – how can explicit forms of knowledge become implicit, incorporated, or even 'silenced'?

Papers may address, among other things, phenomena of tacit knowledge in various forms of individual and group-specific repertoires of (insider) knowledge, the role of affect and feeling as part of the implicit dimension of what we know as well as problems of implicit bias often connected to the tacit dimension in cultural encounters and intercultural exchange.

## **Confirmed Speakers:**

**Sabine Broeck** (Universität Bremen): “On Knowing and Unknowing Anti-Black Violence“

**Katharina Thalmann** (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen): "Il/legitimate Knowledge: Karl Popper and the 'Conspiracy Theory of Ignorance.'"

Please send proposals for 20-minute papers (approx. 300 words) as well as a short CV to both Katharina Gerund ([katharina.gerund@fau.de](mailto:katharina.gerund@fau.de)) and Heike Paul ([heike.paul@fau.de](mailto:heike.paul@fau.de)).

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## **8. “Playing with the arts and sciences”: (Post-)Feminist Discourse and the ‘Tools of Patriarchy’**

Johanna Heil (Marburg) / Anna Thiemann (Münster)

In the early stages of the U.S.-American feminist movement, learned women and activists such as Margaret Fuller aspired to rival “men of science.” Nearly two centuries later, in the so-called postfeminist era, Siri Hustvedt observes that science is still thought of as “masculine” and that, similar to women in the art world, female professionals in the sciences are still struggling to prove their worth. Hustvedt’s recent comments on women and/in the sciences underline the persistence of discriminatory practices that have engaged feminist scholars and activists for more than two decades. Since its emergence in the 1990s, the interdisciplinary field of feminist science studies has come a long way in analyzing and challenging mainstream/malestream discourses of science and various forms of gender inequity—be it a bias towards women’s abilities in the sciences, practices that reduce women to mere objects of the scientific gaze, or the marginalization of distinctively ‘female’ experience and ways of knowing. Yet, it would be wrong to cast feminism and science as fierce enemies. As the examples of Fuller and Hustvedt indicate, many (post-)feminist artists, writers, and theorists are not categorically hostile to science but playfully use it and appropriate its tools for subversive ends. Fascinated by the transformative power of scientific discoveries and methods of thinking, quite a few among them integrate scientific perspectives into their work to envision better social realities or to add feminist dimensions to scientific inquiries. However, it is an ongoing debate in (post-)feminist circles whether the ‘master’s tools’ of science, theory, and rationality provide an adequate means of undoing oppression and bringing about genuine change. More radical artists, novelists, poets, and theorists dismantle the ‘tools of patriarchy’ in their works; they challenge logocentric and phallogocentric discourses or re-contextualize and transform them by negotiating or erasing disciplinary boundaries between science and the arts, treating them as different aspects of a single aesthetic and epistemology.

This workshop invites papers investigating (post-)feminist perspectives on science and the production of scientific knowledge in art, fiction, and nonfiction. Topics may include but are not limited to:

- science and (post-)feminist literature (utopia, science fiction, life writing, poetry, etc.)
- science and (post-)feminist visual arts
- science and (post-)feminist performance arts
- (post-)feminist literary science studies
- (post-)feminist writers and scientific nonfiction
- (post-)feminist situated and embodied knowledge in the sciences
- *écriture féminine* in/and scientific discourse
- the medicalization of the female body
- biotechnologies and the female body

### **Confirmed Speakers**

Prof. Dr. Jeanne Cortiel (Bayreuth): Rescuing the Female Child: Utopia, Risk and Apocalypse in the Resident Evil Films

Dr. Katja Schmieder (Leipzig): The Other Within: Re-/Presentations of Gynecology in Popular Texts

Please send a 300-word abstract and a short CV to Johanna Heil (johanna.heil@staff.uni-marburg.de) and Anna Thiemann (amthiemann@uni-muenster.de).

### **9. “Owning (Human) Nature?” Literary Knowledge Production and the Life Sciences**

Karin Hoepker (FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg) / Heike Schäfer (Konstanz)

At the crossroads of scientific, public, and literary knowledge production, this workshop investigates how North American literary writing has, throughout the centuries, addressed the constitution of knowledge about humanity and its nature in its myriad cultural specificities. “It is a suggestive fact about human nature,” argues Marjorie Garber in her 2003 *Manifesto for Literary Studies*, “that it was once the intellectual property of poets, philosophers, and political theorists and is now largely the domain of scientists.”

The cultural validity of the humanities, and of literary studies in particular, has become somewhat tenuous. What is more, the question of ownership has taken an entirely new turn across the disciplines with what Haraway called the “intellectual property caper” of the life sciences. When in the late 1980s and early 90s genome sequencing and coding came into reach, the question of owning (human) nature became a very literal one and heated debates on the “trademarking” of genetic sequences and altered life forms flared up. The nexus of script and the possession of knowledge took a radical turn that would redefine our understanding of property rights and “authorship.” The core conception of knowledge shifted from human self-reflection towards data, code, and information. Thus, in a disciplinary landslide, the humanities seem to have handed over their authority and explanatory power for the subject matter that had been at the heart of its disciplinary field - what it is to be human.

Caught in a strangely awed inertia, literary studies, philosophy, and the arts seem to have buckled to the material determinism of the sciences without questioning the *kind of knowledge* provided, as had Thomas Nagel in his famous 1974 essay, refuting the reductionist scientific models of consciousness: we may know its genetic code, we may dissect its brain, we may explain the workings of its neuronal networks, and yet we still don’t know what it is *like* to be a bat. It is the humanities which have the tools, the training, and the theoretical framework to ask such questions, to engage in thought experiment, and to explore how literature and other cultural products imagine and picture the distinctiveness and historicity of human experience that evades the descriptive grasp of the sciences: What does it *mean* to be human.

Our workshop invites papers engaging “the pleasure of thinking through and with literature” (Garber) for a consideration of

- the kinds of knowledge literature may provide,
- how literature engages with the contest for explanatory power between the sciences and the humanities,
- the potential of the imaginative beyond a simplistic binarism of the “two cultures”,
- the socio-historical embeddedness of knowledge production (manifest in locations like the lab, the field, the university, the biotech company)
- the historical lines of fascination and suspicion toward scientific investigation.

Contributions will take an interest in the specificities of both literary and scientific forms of knowledge production in North America and engage the question how literary ambiguities of signification and counterintuitive modes of argument may impact and contextualize disciplinary knowledge productions in science and technology.

#### **Invited talks:**

**John Purdy** (Western Washington University):

“A Radical Reclamation: Native American Re-inscriptions of ‘Life Science’ in the Twentieth Century”

**Heike Schäfer** (Universität Konstanz):

“Mind is primarily a verb”: Knowledge, Experience, and Signification in Dewey’s Pragmatist Evolutionary Thinking and Modernist Poetry

#### **Organizers:**

##### **Dr. Karin Hoepker**

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#### **10. GeoKnowledges: Mapping in the Analog and Digital Humanities**

Ingrid Gessner (Regensburg) / Marc Priewe (Stuttgart)

Maps are visual knowledge spaces that have long been powerful instruments to produce meaning. In both the “analog” and “digital” humanities maps bridge the gap between data and knowledge through visualization, corpus-building, preservation, diagrammatic exploration, and narrative. Especially for the digital humanities maps are key technologies for analyzing information that may yield new knowledge. For instance, in their recent digital humanities study *HyperCities* (2014) Todd Presner et al. introduce the practice of “thick mapping,” by which they mean “the humanist project of participating and listening that transforms mapping into an ethical undertaking.” Other mapping projects investigate phenomena of globalization and deterritorialization and, as such, explore the edges, corners, borders and centers of maps.

The present technologies can be combined to produce polyvocal memory maps as they exist for many cities around the globe, avatar-based explorations of real, imagined, or ancient places, and hour-by-hour mappings of social protest movements around the globe. In a more profane sense, the “digital” and “maps” are fused in 3-D models of buildings and street views of GoogleMaps; and the field of social media mapping includes data visualizations, photographic documents, and Twitter streams.

Taking its cue from the organizers’ call to map North American knowledge landscapes, the workshop seeks to explore the productivity of on- and off-line American Studies mapping projects. While we want to know more about Digital Palimpsest Mapping Projects (DPMP) or “deep maps,” such as Shelley Fisher Fishkin’s Chinese Railroad Workers Project, we are also interested in works such as Rebecca Solnit’s reinvention of the traditional atlas in *Infinite City* (2010), the literary re-mapping of the San Francisco Bay area, or Tom Koch’s cartographic visualizations of epidemics. We are equally interested in papers that analyze historical maps with regard to their specific contexts, interests, and uses.

Theoretically the workshop is positioned at the interface of cultural geography and geo-spatial literary and cultural studies. We seek papers addressing the cultural/historical/political/social/economic impacts of maps and mapping in all areas of North American and transnational literature, art and culture. Papers may address one the following areas of inquiry: mapping as knowledge visualization for scholars and the general public; maps as aesthetic artifacts; intermedial mapping; transhistorical mappings of knowledge networks (how ideas travel); deep/thick maps; medical cartographies; literary cartographies; GeoCriticism; maps and empire; mapping social activism; narrative mapping / maps as narratives.

### **Confirmed Speakers**

**Dr. Birgit Bauridl** (Regensburg): “MapScapes and SignPosts: Deepening the Transcultural Knowledge of the Grafenwöhr Military Community”

**Alexander Bräuer** (Rostock): “Assessing Geographical Information Systems as Mapping Tools for Colonial Encounters”

**Prof. Dr. Erika Doss** (Notre Dame): “Memorial Mapping: Transnational 9/11 Memorials and Geographies of Global Anti-Terrorism”

Please send a short CV and a one-page proposal to both Ingrid Gessner ([ingrid.gessner@ur.de](mailto:ingrid.gessner@ur.de)) and Marc Priewe ([marc.priewe@ilw.uni-stuttgart.de](mailto:marc.priewe@ilw.uni-stuttgart.de)).

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### **11. Contested Science: Biology and Biomedicine in Public Debate since 1945**

Axel Jansen (Heidelberg/Tübingen) / Dr. Frank Usbeck (Dresden)

Since 1945, few fields of research in the natural sciences have raised as many controversial issues as the biological sciences. During World War II, physics had provided the natural sciences with public and political relevance through nuclear technology. But while this technology raised some concerns during the 1950s and 1960s, particularly among researchers, it was not until the advent of genetic engineering in the early seventies that a critical public

assessment of scientific research came into its own. Since then, biology and associated medical fields have been associated with heated public confrontations on a wide range of issues that include the rise of biotechnology, abortion, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), genetics and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), cloning, and human embryonic stem cells. Some Americans, moreover, continue to reject the foundation of biological research by endorsing creationism in lieu of evolution. Many of these debates addressed issues relevant in other societies as well. In the United States, however, they were marked by intense and zealous arguments over basic principles of American society such as questions of equality, the separation of church and state, or scientific bias or elitism.

This workshop provides an opportunity to reflect on such conflicts in historical and cultural perspective and, by implication, on the historical and cultural role of science in the US in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Some discussions related to biology and medicine have concerned questions of individual responsibility and political and economic justice as they pertain to decisions about access to medical treatment and care. Similar debates have been concerned with the role of insurance or pharmaceutical companies, and their political and economic impact on a national and global scale. Biological research has also opened up issues entangled in polarized political-moral debates premised on religious belief.

We invite contributions to explore the history of such debates through an investigation of cultural tokens: protagonists, positions, or perspectives in particular public debates since 1945 that touch on biological or biomedical research and on its political and/or cultural implications. We would like to focus on questions such as: What have been main trajectories and turning points of such debates? What assumptions, strategies, and political agendas were revealed in these discussions, as well as in cultural reflections on such debates? What role did biologists/biomedical researchers play in public debate? How has their involvement been interpreted? Finally, what are the implications of debates on knowledge production and dissemination in the life sciences for the continuously evolving role of research science in the United States? Papers could address contributions to or reflections on such debates and pertain to any genre, including essays, TV-series, blogs, literary fiction, and life writing. They could relate to sources such as personal correspondence, newspaper articles, or television coverage of particular events. We would equally welcome broader considerations of the shifting public context for biological and biomedical research science in the United States since World War II.

### **Preliminary list of presenters**

Dr. Stephen Mawdsley (Faculty of History, University of Cambridge/UK): “Teens Against Polio: Mobilizing Youth for Vaccination in Cold War America”

Prof. Dr. Michael Hochgeschwender (Amerika-Institut, LMU München): “Modern Bioethics and the Roman Catholic Church in the United States”

## **12. Knowledge Production and Circulation in the Context of ‘Teaching America’**

Uwe Küchler (Bonn) / Laurenz Volkmann (Jena)

The question of knowledge and content for foreign language learning has currently been relegated to the margins of the educational arena. This seems surprising in light of the ever more dynamic global exchange. In recent EFL debates, the issue of what content knowledge should be taught appears to be of dwindling significance, given the new paradigm of teaching/learning testable communicative competences in the global village. However, in German

*Fremdsprachendidaktik* there remains a strong tradition of reflecting on *what* is taught and learned rather than just *how (measurable)* practically applicable language skills are taught. Recent output and standard-oriented reforms have caused debates especially in areas such as literature, Cultural Studies or aesthetics, where objectives and learning outcomes are difficult to measure. We, therefore, propose to reconsider the conceptualization of knowledge for teaching EFL in light of current global developments and educational output-oriented reforms. Presentations invited for this workshop may focus on, but are not restricted to, the following questions:

**1. *Fremdsprachendidaktik* as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge:**

What room is there left for the consideration of content knowledge, especially American Studies? How do educational reforms reflect the (troubled) relationship between *Fremdsprachendidaktik* and American Studies? What role does knowledge (including modes of knowledge production and circulation) play in educational disciplines in North America and Europe/ Germany?

**2. Teachers' Training and Professional Knowledge in the Teaching of American Studies:**

What do (aspiring) teachers need to know (about the USA/ North America)? What is considered professional knowledge for future teachers of EFL? How is this body of knowledge (re)shaped and conceptualized in the context of recent reforms, e.g. *Praxissemester*?

**3. Global Knowledge Circulation, Commodification and English as a Lingua Franca:**

How does the English language (as lingua franca) impact the formation of (academic) knowledge? (How) Can foreign language education help American Studies to do multilingual justice to its multicultural heritage? How does the conceptualization of *Fremdsprachendidaktik* as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge influence international knowledge exchange with North America?

**SPEAKERS** (contacted in advance)

- Dr. Bianca Roters (Köln): „Teacher Knowledge from an Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Perspective: Germany and the US”
- Prof. Dr. Dr. mult. Peter Freese (Paderborn): tba

**PLEASE CONTACT:**

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**13. Knowledge – Race – Space: (De-)Segregated Landscapes of Lore in Historical Perspective**

Anke Otrlepp (Kassel)

Access to knowledge has often been defined by the class and gender backgrounds of historical actors eager to learn. Particularly in the United States, access to knowledge was and is also

contingent on a person's race. The combined effects of race, class, and gender have led and continue to lead to the exclusion from sources of knowledge of large numbers of Americans. This workshop seeks to explore the history of segregated landscapes of knowledge with a focus on race. Excluded from access to institutions of learning during slavery, African Americans continued to experience discrimination in all areas of everyday life particularly in the southern United States where a pervasive system of racial segregation emerged. Denied access to educational institutions, libraries, and other sources of knowledge reserved for the use of whites, blacks pooled their own resources.

Drawing on afro-diasporic traditions and contemporary inspirations African Americans created schools, colleges, libraries, and museums. They also engaged in other forms of cultural and knowledge production that continue to define the landscapes of knowledge well into the 21st century. This workshop invites speakers to address the connections between knowledge, race, and space in historical perspective. Please send paper proposals to Prof. Dr. Anke Ortlepp, Fachbereich 05, Universität Kassel, Nora-Platiel-Str. 1, 30127 Kassel, Email: Anke.Ortlepp@uni-kassel.de

#### Confirmed Speakers:

Martin Lüthe (FU Berlin), „African American Rap Music as a Trans-medial Archive”

Mabel O. Wilson (Columbia University), “Negro Buildings: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums”

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#### 14. “(Trans)Pacific Knowledge Landscapes” Nicole Poppenhagen (Vienna) / Jens Temmen (Potsdam)

Critic Arif Dirlik has provocatively argued that the Pacific is “a EuroAmerican invention” (*What is in a Rim?* 4-5). In a similar vein, Yunte Huang suggests that the Pacific has been imagined as an object of “territorial expansion” and “typological fulfillment” by western imperial knowledge (*Transpacific Imaginations* 4). From James Cook’s voyages in the eighteenth century to twentieth-century military endeavors, the Pacific figured as a space of projection for various imperial projects, which followed trajectories of territorial expansion and human progression that originated in Euro-American thought. Following this notion, critics like Stuart Banner (*Possessing the Pacific*), Elizabeth DeLoughrey (“Heliotropes”), Rob Wilson (*Reimagining the American Pacific*), and Konai Helu Thaman (“Decolonizing Pacific Studies”) have argued that framing the exchanges of culture, knowledge, and labor across the Pacific as largely shaped by Anglo American practices and values, renders the Pacific itself as a gap to be bridged, thereby silencing and obliterating local, indigenous, and contesting epistemologies.

Treading in the footsteps of scholars such as Arif Dirlik, Rob Wilson, Yunte Huang, and DeLoughrey this workshop will inquire into how foregrounding local, indigenous,

Oceanic/Pacific, Asian (American), ecocritical, transnational and/or transpacific knowledges turns the Pacific from a “knowable” space into a space of knowledge production, thereby complicating the monodirectional trajectory of imperial knowledge progression in the Pacific. Proposing then that North American knowledge landscapes cannot be theorized without considering the numerous transpacific encounters and exchanges, this workshop invites papers that investigate how the notion of transpacific epistemologies renegotiates, contests, or contributes to North American knowledge landscapes.

Questions to be addressed may include but are not limited to the following:

- In what ways do Asian, Australian, and Oceanic (to name just a few) perspectives complicate the notion of an Anglo American “imperial” Pacific by adding conflicting and/or equally imperialistic perspectives?
- How have the works of indigenous or Pacific authors contributed to a consciousness of a global ecosystem?
- How do Asian, Australian, and Oceanic forms of knowledge production and dissemination propel the region from being an epistemological gap to a hub for knowledge exchange?
- How do transpacific flows of labor, money, commodities, and cultures create alternate knowledge landscapes, and/or lead to epistemological repercussions in North America?

### **Confirmed Speakers**

- Dr. des. Vanessa Künnemann (Georg-August University Göttingen, Germany): “Middlebrow Mission and the Education of America: Pearl S. Buck's Creation of an American China”
- Angela Kölling, PhD (University of Gothenburg, Sweden): “Oceania Knowledges: Traditional Voyaging, Ecocriticism and the Haunting Specter of ‘Salvage Colonialism’”
- Dr. Iris-Aya Laemmerhirt (TU Dortmund, Germany): “Trans-Pacific Field of Dreams: The Pacific as a Contact Space and Conflict Zone in Hollywood”

Please submit a short bio and abstracts of about 300 words for a 20-minute presentation to both Nicole Poppenhagen and Jens Temmen.

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### **15. Caribbean and Inter-American Perspectives in North American Studies and Knowledge Production**

Josef Raab (Duisburg-Essen) / Wilfried Raussert (Bielefeld) / Nicole Waller (Potsdam)

In a programmatic essay published in *PMLA* in 2003, Djelal Kadir cautioned against a kind of nationalist, reductionist U.S. American Studies that would reflect “the continuity of America’s ongoing national and nationalist project.” He deemed the knowledge landscapes used by many

American Studies scholars to be all too confined by national outlooks and national boundaries. A year earlier, John Carlos Rowe had similarly questioned a practice of American Studies that is governed by the notion of American exceptionalism. He wrote: “If a single nationalist mythology of the United States no longer prevails, our understanding of just what constitutes the cultural border of the United States is no longer clear.”

The transnational turn in American Studies has meanwhile led to a stronger consideration of transnational flows and global processes in our academic practice. At the same time, the growing body of Caribbean American literature and the proliferation of U.S. Latina/o Studies reflect the changing demographics of the United States and promote revisions of knowledge production. Convinced that it is time to open up the knowledge production in North American Studies to Caribbean and other inter-American contexts and concepts, this workshop will ask how theories, approaches, practices, and texts that originate in the Caribbean, Canada, or Latin America can enlarge and invigorate our discipline.

Many scholars of Caribbean history and culture have emphasized the Caribbean as an important in-between space affected by European and North American forces, a location of competing colonial desires. Moreover, the Caribbean also became a space in which fundamentally new concepts originated, which in turn affected Europe and North America. For example, Stephan Palmié and Francisco Scarano claim that the Caribbean became the seedbed for global racism and for global anti-racism. Likewise, indigenous and African diasporic populations developed seminal concepts that have become crucial for the study of cultural interaction in the Americas and elsewhere. As an in-between space the Caribbean has brought transformation and knowledge to other latitudes. Edouard Glissant’s notion of fluidity, Antonio Benítez-Rojo’s view of the Caribbean as a “meta-archipelago” which has “neither a boundary nor a center,” Aimé Césaire’s “négritude,” Patrick Chamoiseau’s “créolité,” concepts like maroonage and syncretism all interrogate the contact and conflict of indigenous, African, American, European, and Asian epistemologies in the context of Caribbean land- and seascapes and have influenced literary and cultural theory beyond the Caribbean.

Grounded both in the Caribbean and in other parts of the Americas, Edwidge Danticat’s notion of a Haitian diaspora and Walter D. Mignolo’s “border thinking” widen the scope past the Caribbean and point the way both to a critical examination of definitions of knowledge and to an inclusion of inter-American knowledge production in North American Studies. José Vasconcelos’ theory of “mestizaje,” Héctor García Canclini’s “hybrid cultures,” Anibal Quijano’s “coloniality of power,” Nelson Maldonado-Torres’s “decolonial turn,” Norma Alarcón’s transborder feminism and other inter-American approaches all lend themselves to expanding the knowledge production in North American Studies, well aware of the limits of such an expansion and of the danger of misappropriation.

This workshop will explore ways and areas in which Caribbean and/or inter-American perspectives have become crucial to our work as Americanists. We invite theoretical and methodological contributions as well as exemplary analyses of Caribbean and/or inter-American contexts and concepts that can contribute to and complicate our conceptions of North American Studies.

One-page abstracts should be sent to [Nicole.Waller@uni-potsdam.de](mailto:Nicole.Waller@uni-potsdam.de), [Josef.Raab@uni-due.de](mailto:Josef.Raab@uni-due.de) and [Wilfried.Raussert@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:Wilfried.Raussert@uni-bielefeld.de) by January 15, 2015.

### **Presentations:**

Heike Raphael-Hernandez (Universität Würzburg): 18th-Century Caribbean Maroon Cultures, Moravian Missionary Documents, and Early Beginnings of African Inter-American Rebellions  
Rebecca Fuchs (Universität Mannheim): Santería as a Site of Knowledge Production in Cristina García’s *The Agüero Sisters*

Julia Roth (Universität Bielefeld): Daughters of Caliban: A Decolonial Gender Perspective and Inter-American Studies

Astrid Fellner (Universität des Saarlandes): Border Knowledges: Native American Gender Systems from an Inter-American Perspective