

52nd AAAS Conference 2025

Ruptures, Fractures, Discontinuities: Troubling American Studies

October 3-5, 2025, University of Vienna

Keynotes by **Carole Boyce Davies** (Howard University) and
Robert McRuer (George Washington University)

To critically look at some of the most challenging issues of the 21st century, American literary and cultural studies have turned to ruptures, fractures, and discontinuities as theoretical and creative trajectories. Important interventions such as the Black Lives Matter movement, Indigenous resistances, queer feminisms, Trans* and Crip activism, the climate crisis, and a number of technological shifts challenge the American foundational myths of upward mobility, progress, the American Dream and other national unity narratives. While the latter build on and reinforce a linear and teleological framework, engaging with ruptures, fractures, and discontinuities enables new critical perspectives on both historical and contemporary events and epistemologies.

Importantly, a focus on ruptures, fractures, and discontinuities not only enables a critical lens on American history and past as well as present texts and representations, but also centers counter-hegemonic forms of knowledge production. Recent theoretical works have intervened in American studies to disrupt hegemonic epistemes (e.g. Tiffany Lethabo King's concept of "the shoal," "the glitch" as theorized by Legacy Russell, or "cripistemology" by Merri Johnson and Robert McRuer). Also, Native American and Black diasporic philosophies have always had to deal with the fractures created by settler colonialism to work through past ruptures in order to build more just and sustainable futures. Dealing with ruptures, fractures, and discontinuities thus challenges discourses of universality and exceptionalism and unlocks new ways of understanding time, space, human/non-human entanglements, power relations, aesthetics, technology, and more.

Our call invites you, echoing Donna J. Haraway, to "make trouble, to stir up potent responses to devastating events," to take on this seemingly paradoxical work of simultaneous disruption and restoration, to depart from a linear understanding of time, and to "stay with the trouble" of constantly making, unmaking, and remaking our scholarly knowledge and educational practices. Hence, we encourage you to engage with ruptures, fractures, and discontinuities in American Studies contexts, including literary and cultural criticism, history, social and political sciences, art history, media studies, disability studies, or interdisciplinary explorations in these and related fields. Possible topics may include but are not limited to:

- * Disruptive accounts to gender, queer, disability studies
- * Resistance of hegemonic spaces in Black studies, Caribbean studies, LatinX studies
- * Ruptures to settler colonialism, e.g. through Indigenous studies and/in American Studies;
- * Discourses of "troublemaking" past and present (from the American Revolution to contemporary decolonial and anticapitalist movements);
- * Geographies of discontinuity: liminal, hybrid, and contested spaces;
- * Migration as disruption and (re)creation;
- * Re-membering: fractures in narratives of trauma and healing;
- * Troubling the Anthropocene: solastalgia, climate anxiety, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, ...;
- * Ruptures as sites of crisis and possibility (e.g. disaster capitalism and responses, disturbances to the American nation-state from 9/11 to January 6);
- * Ruptured futures (Afrfuturism, Indigenous Futurisms, Cofuturisms, ...);
- * Canon ruptures and genre disruptions; e.g. in/through transmedia narratives and storyworlds, literary and cultural tradition as rupture and continuity, inspiration and innovation, avant-garde and canonization;
- * Hauntology, conjuncture, glitch: theoretical approaches to rupture, fracture, and discontinuity; from "postmodern" to "posthuman" and "cross-species"
- * Teaching rupture through American Studies (e.g. digital humanities, canon revision/recovery)
- * ...

Please send proposals for **individual presentations (250-300 words)** or **pre-formed panels (approx. 600 words)** with a short bio note by **April 30, 2025** to: aaas25@univie.ac.at.

We look forward to welcoming you in Vienna!

Alexandra Ganser, Barbara Gföllner, Marie Krebs, Martina Pfeiler, Ranthild Salzer,
Marta Werbanowska, Katharina Wiedlack