

E Pluribus Unum? Memory Conflicts, Democracy, and Integration

Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Clark University

“We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

In his memorable first inaugural address, Abraham Lincoln eloquently conjured the memory of past wars to avert the looming conflict between north and south. His appeal was in vain. 150 years later, the “mystic chords of memory” recalling America’s violent past still fail to inspire the harmonious Union that Lincoln envisioned. Instead, a cacophony of memories, in fact wars over memory, threaten to divide the country even more than before.

Why are 150-year-old symbols of slavery and oppression—confederate flags and monuments—kept alive, even glorified, in the present? American awareness of its racist and violent history has done little to prevent ongoing repercussions; rather, many Americans romanticize the past. The United States is not the only country to face a new surge of racist hatred and yet some countries have been able to advance inclusion, diversity, and tolerance toward immigrants and minorities, even to secure national identity and national integration, by means of persistent efforts to work through and debate national responsibility for racism, violence, and genocide.

The conference *E Pluribus Unum? Memory Conflicts, Democracy, and Integration* assembles renowned experts to inquire into the tensions between memory conflicts, cultural diversity, and national integration. Comparative perspectives on the memory of racism, slavery, and genocide in the United States and the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes against humanity in Central Europe will be the focus.

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PROGRAM

Thursday, 11 April 2019

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

KEYNOTE

Ian Buruma, Bard College:

Bad Memories

Friday, 12 April 2019

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Thomas Kühne, Clark University:

Memory Conflicts and National Identity: Germany and the United States

10:00 – 12:15 pm

PANEL I – COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AND MEMORY POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES

John Bodnar, Indiana University:

Patriotism, Memory, and America's War on Terrorism

Phia S. Salter, Texas A & M University:

The Dynamic Psychological Resonance between Black History Representations and Sociocultural Change

Amanda Cobb-Greetham, University of Oklahoma:

For Better, For Worse—Mock Weddings, Oklahoma Statehood, and Tribal Sovereignty

2:00 – 5:00 pm

PANEL II -- GERMAN MEMORIES, AMERICAN MEMORIES

Irene Kacandes, Dartmouth College:

Victim Talk: Comparative Reflections by a US American Who Works on Germany

Jeffrey Herf, University of Maryland:

Facing and Avoiding the Holocaust in the Years of Allied Occupation, in West Germany, and East Germany: An Assessment and Some Comparisons

Dirk Moses, University of Sydney:

The Fear of "White Genocide" in the US, Germany, and Australia

Jennifer V. Evans, Carleton University:

Facebook and the Use and Abuse of History in the Digital Public Sphere

5:00 – 6:00 pm

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

James E. Young, University of Massachusetts, Amherst:

The Stages of Memory: Reflections on Memorial Art, Loss, and the Spaces Between

Saturday, 13 April 2019

9:00 – 12:00 pm

PANEL III – TRAUMA, IDENTITY, AND RECONCILIATION

Johanna Ray Vollhardt, Clark University:

Psychological Processes Contributing to Collective Memory Conflicts in the Aftermath of Collective Violence

Ron Eyerman, Yale University:

Cultural Trauma, Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity, Revisited

Ousmane Power-Greene, Clark University:

“Beyond Recognition, Toward Redress.” The State of Truth and Reconciliation Committees 100 years after the Red Summer of 1919: A Critique

Pauline Wakeham, Western University:

Truth and Reconciliation in a Post-Truth Age: Confronting Settler Amnesia in Contemporary Canada

1:30 – 4:30 pm

PANEL IV – MUSEUMS, MEMORIALS AND NATIONAL IMAGINATION

Paul Chaat Smith, National Museum of the American Indian:

The Redsonian: Negotiating the Politics of Memory at the Smithsonian’s American Indian Museum

Robyn Autry, Wesleyan University:

The Museumification of Memory: Unsettling (Black) History at the Museum

Marita Sturken, New York University:

Designing the Memory of Terror, Negotiating National Memory: The 9/11 Memorial and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice

Alison Landsberg, George Mason University:

Post-Post-racial America: Confronting the Afterlife of Slavery at the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama

4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

CONCLUDING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Michael Geyer, University of Chicago:

Introductory Remarks

John Bodnar, Irene Kacandes, Phia S. Salter:

Statements

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