



**ANGST**

**KON(JUNK)TUREN  
EINES GEFÜHLS.**

**ON FEAR AND  
ANXIETY**

**February 1 – 3,  
2007**

**Einstein  
Forum,  
Potsdam**

**Chair:**  
**Rüdiger Zill, Potsdam**

**With generous support from the  
Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung**

**Illustration: Francisco Goya, Colossus, 1808–1812 (Detail)**

Note about the lectures: A German title indicates that the talk will be held in German.

During the past several years, the Einstein Forum has devoted a number of conferences to examining the meaning and structure of emotions in society. One of the questions guiding our inquiry has been whether ages and cultures possess distinctive emotional signatures with their own predominant sentiments, feelings, and passions. Were there eras shaped principally by fear or by greed, by love or by melancholy? Have cultures and societal groups tended toward a particular mood? How do the rules and norms governing what we are supposed to feel change? And how do our real feelings change? What happens to our emotions in general when an individual feeling dominates an age? Do emotional economies pass through different states of equilibrium? Can their taxonomies shift altogether?

These questions apply not only when comparing extended periods—do we control our emotions more today than in previous centuries?—but also when comparing relatively brief intervals. Does our society contain more anger and fear now in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century than it did in the 1990s? Have current levels of envy and greed changed in relation to the 1980s? How have the new digital media affected emotional states? What about the visual arts, film, literature, and music? Do particular media accompany particular emotions?

In recent years, philosophers and cultural anthropologists have given increased attention to the emotions and their variability. Scientists too have done the same, making important contributions in areas such as neuroscience. Unfortunately, however, most of the new analysis and research has remained isolated within individuals fields. The Einstein Forum decided to improve this situation by bringing together thinkers from diverse disciplines to share their insights. In December 2003, the Einstein Forum held the conference *Passion(s) in Culture(s)*, which aimed to understand the historical and societal roots of emotion. It was followed by conferences that thematized one emotion in particular: a conference on compassion (*Zivilisationsbruch mit Zuschauer*) in December 2004 and one on envy (*Evil Eyes: On Envy*) in February 2006. With the conference *Anxiety and Fear*, the Einstein Forum now wants to turn to fear and anxiety, examining their different forms and manifestations.

### ***The Age of Fear?***

Judging by our language, we currently suffer from a legion of fears and anxieties. Fredd Culbertson, the creator of [www.phobialist.com](http://www.phobialist.com), has assembled a list of all the names we have to describe our fears, from Ablutophobia (fear of washing or bathing) to zoophobia (fear of animals). It appears that the many fears of the present age have necessitated the creation of an entirely new vocabulary.

The suspicion that we are living in a particularly phobia-laden time is supported by the many self-help books addressing fear. Type in “anxiety” at Amazon.com and invariably the first results are fear management manuals: *Beyond Anxiety and Phobia: A Step-by-Step Guide to Lifetime Recovery, Dying of Embarrass-*

*ment: Help for Social Anxiety & Phobia, and Mastering Your Fears and Phobias: Therapist Guide (Treatments That Work)* are just a few of the many hundred on offer. At the same, the market for anti-anxiety medication is booming, fueled no doubt by the circumstance that fear is itself a market force, whose potency remains unrivaled among the passions.

Can we conclude that people today are particularly preoccupied by fear? The German weekly newsmagazine *Focus* posed a version of this question to the historian Jean Delumeau, whose book *La peur en Occident* is regarded as the definitive history of collective fears in Europe from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Specifically, the editors at *Focus* asked, did September 11 initiate a new age of fear? “At the very least,” Delumeau responded, “one can say that the terrorists responsible for 9/11 struck a deep nerve of civilization, something that had never been achieved before with a single attack of such simple means. Behind the event itself, however, lies a series of long-term developments. In earlier times, people who lived in the country were fearful, exposed as they were to all sorts of attack. The cities, which possessed a minimum of control and order, appeared to be islands of security. Today the big cities are the most dangerous.”

Delumeau’s adopts a rational approach. He explains fear in terms of its concrete problems and their historical shifts. But do fears always have to do with real dangers? According to Barry Glassner, our current fears are mostly ill-placed: »Why are so many fears in the air, and so many of them unfounded? Why, as crime rates plunged throughout the 1990s, did two-thirds of Americans believe they were soaring? How did it come about that by mid-decade 62 percent of us described ourselves as “truly desperate” about crime – almost twice as many as in the late 1980s, when crime rates were higher?«<sup>1</sup>

### ***Anxiety and Fear***

It is a widely-held belief that anxiety and fear refer to distinct states. Anxiety is a free-floating feeling whose object remains unknown or hard to determine, while fear always has concrete causes. Fear is always fear *of* something; anxiety can’t be pinned down and in its most extreme form is just *angst*, a general feeling of dread. Even if this differentiation is not always adhered to in general language usage, it leads us nevertheless to a further question: is it fear that is increasing in our society, or is it anxiety.

At the beginning of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno write, “In the most general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty.” “But,” they continue, “the fully enlightened earth radiates

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<sup>1</sup> Barry Glassner, *The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things*. New York 1999, p. XI

disaster triumphant.”<sup>2</sup> According to Horkheimer and Adorno, our desire to conqueror fear implicates us all the more in our own demise. By trying to remove the causes of fear, we only produce means to new ones just as great as before: nuclear war, climate disasters, health risks due to genetic manipulation, and so on.

But if it is anxiety—rather than fear—that is increasing, then the situation becomes harder to grasp. Indeed, one could adopt a line of argument that runs contrary to that of Horkheimer and Adorno: paradoxically, the less reason we have to be anxious, the more anxious we become. In the past, when the infant mortality rate was greater and life expectancy shorter, death was everywhere. To cope in such a world, one required a completely different psychological management of anxiety—a more effective one, perhaps?—from today. Suffering that occurs infrequently hits all the harder; the longer suffering can be postponed, the greater the chance for us to become anxious about its arrival.

But there is another issue as well: anxiety and fear have recently experienced a rehabilitation of sorts. For a long time, they were considered undesirable, the opposite of courage, and children were frequently admonished not to be “fraidy-cats.” Today, by contrast, certain situations demand that we feel—even avow—fear and anxiety.

### *Cultures of Fear*

Fear certainly has its uses. Most notably, it safeguards our survival. Not for nothing is fear a primal response anchored deep within our nervous system. Beyond that, however, fears are based on conditioning. Are the cultures of fear we experience today—fear of terror, fear of criminal violence, fear of epidemic—justified and real? Or have they been artificially produced for political purposes? Are there differences between national obsessions? Do the Americans fear differently than the Europeans? How do those differences manifest themselves politically?

These questions appear in a different light when compared to other cultures of fear. In *La peur en Occident*, Jean Delumeau discovers fear of ghosts, fear of the dark, fear of plague, fear of revolt, fear of Satan, fear of foreign people and religions, fear of women, fear of witches, and fear of heretics...

The goal of the conference is to examine several exemplary instances of fear—from the past, from other cultures, and from the present—and to compare them with each other. Which fears have survived, which have fallen by the wayside? Which have been intentionally produced, and how? Whom do fears serve? Can they take on a dynamic all their own?

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<sup>2</sup> Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming, New York, 1995, p. 3

## ***Agent of Fear 1: Religion***

Religion is society's largest producer of fear. It also functions as its most effective manager, representing one of the few instances in which an otherwise threatening feeling acquires positive association. The fear we all should possess is "fear of the lord," an expression in which respect for our heavenly father becomes welded to respect for our biological ones. (The German *Ehrfurcht*, or reverence, may have a similar origin.)

As well, the sanctions of purgatory and hell count among the most successful imaginary places of fear. They even retain their power when examined with the tools of modern science: the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch physician and occultist Johannes Wier calculates in his *De praestigis daemonum* (1564) that "there are 7,409,127 demons under the command of 79 princes who answer directly to Luzifer himself."<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, however, religion tries to allay fear and remove it, promising not only hell but eternal life. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Ultimately, what religion provides is a source of solace for suffering in this life.

## ***Agent of Fear 2: Fairy Tales and Myths***

Collective fears require a medium to propagate. For many years, that medium was the oral narrative, where paradigmatic fears could crystallize in traditional myths and fairytales. (According to the folklorist Lutz Röhrich, even sagas are, at root, expressions of fear.) Today there is a genre of story, known as the urban legend, in which a story is told from personal experience, though it circulates widely in many variations. One of those stories begins like this: "An acquaintance of a woman I know at work was driving on a lonely country road at night. At some point, he sees a hitchhiker and decides to stop. As the hitchhiker approaches the car, the driver glimpses a pair of brass knuckles in the stranger's hand. Frightened, he steps on the gas and takes off—but not before hearing a thud against the car. In the next town he reaches, the man contacts the authorities. The police inspect his vehicle and notice that the rear window is broken. When they look into the car they find—to their horror—the severed hand of the hitchhiker, still holding the brass knuckles."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Jean Delumeau: *Angst im Abendland. Die Geschichte kollektiver Ängste im Europa des 14. bis 18. Jahrhunderts*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1985, vol. 2, p. 381

<sup>4</sup> Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, *Die Spinne in der Yucca-Palme. Sagenhafte Geschichten von heute* (Munich, 1990), 31.

### ***Agent of Fear 3: Media***

Of course, a more effective means of propagating collective fears is modern media. Is the great (and, for the most part, unfounded) fear of bird flu conceivable without television's incessant and detailed reporting on it? What fears are played on most frequently? Which have the greatest (media) impact? How do representations of fictive fears reinforce those of real ones, and vice versa?

### ***Agent of Fear 4: Film***

"Fear," Alfred Hitchcock said once, "is a feeling people like to have when they are certain of their safety. Of course they tremble, but because they are in familiar surroundings and they realize that their fear is only in their imagination, a feeling of extraordinary happiness creeps up on them. It is the happiness provided by the sweet warmth of the lamp below the shade and the soft recliner in which they sit. For me, the reader is in the same position as the moviegoer."

The interesting thing is not that fear can be associated with pleasure—something films share with roller coasters and parachuting—but the question as to which fears scary movies and catastrophe films (as well as melodramas) utilize. Which themes have survived? Which have disappeared? Why does George Cukor's 1944 *Gaslight* seem homey and outdated today? Why are certain vampire films from the silent movie era now only humorous?

### ***Agent of Fear 5: Politics***

The role played by fear in politics has been frequently demonstrated and widely discussed; it is even thematized by politicians themselves. "Terrorism," former vice-president of the United States Al Gore writes, "is the ultimate misuse of fear for political ends. Indeed, its specific goal is to distort the political reality of a nation by creating fear in the general population that is hugely disproportionate to the actual dangers that the terrorists are capable of posing."<sup>5</sup> Fear has always been an instrument of war, whether in intimidating the opponents or in mobilizing one's people against an enemy. However, in certain situations, such as the phenomenon of nuclear deterrence during the Cold War, fear on both sides has prevented armed conflict. Has the political instrumentalization of fear changes throughout the ages? Dictators have frequently used fear against their own people. Arbitrary arrests produce a climate of fear; the secret police always come at night. One hears the steps in the stairwell. Where will they stop? Are they coming after me or my neighbor?

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<sup>5</sup> Al Gore, "The Politics of Fear," in *Social Research* 71, vol. 4: (winter 2004), special conference report issue, *Fear: Its Political Uses and Abuses*.

## Speakers and Talks

### **JAN ASSMANN**

Professor Emeritus of Egyptology, Ruprecht Karls Universität Heidelberg

#### ***Über das Phobische***

Professor Assmann will be speaking about the phobic.

**Jan Assmann** was appointed Professor of Egyptology at the Ruprecht Karls-Universität Heidelberg in 1976. He has been a fellow at the Institute for Advance Study in Berlin (1984/1985), a scholar at the J.P. Getty Center in Santa Monica (1994/1995), and a fellow at the Munich C. F. v. Siemens Foundation (1998/1999). He has taught in Paris (Collège de France, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, EHESS), Jerusalem (Hebrew University, Dormition Abbey), and the US (Yale University, Rice University). He is a recipient of the Max Planck Research Prize (1996) and the German Historian's Prize (1998) and holds an honorary doctorate of theology from the department of Evangelical Theology of the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster (1998). Some of his recent publications are *Moses der Ägypter* (1998); *Weisheit und Mysterium. Das Bild der Griechen von Ägypten* (2000); *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis* (2000); *Tod und Jenseits im Alten Ägypten* (2001); *Die Mosaische Unterscheidung oder der Preis des Monotheismus* (2003); *Die Zauberflöte. Oper und Mysterium* (2005); *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt* (2006); and *Thomas Mann und Ägypten. Mythos und Monotheismus in den Josephsromanen* (2006) Recent English translations of his work include *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (1998); *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs* (2003); *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt* (2005); and *Religion and Cultural Memory* (2006)

### **BORWIN BANDELOW**

Professor of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Universität Göttingen

#### ***Krank vor Angst***

To listen to the media, humans are scarred of many things, from terrorists, wars, and catastrophes to strange diseases like bird flu and SARS. But concern about these real dangers is not what makes people literally *sick* of fear. Neither is it anxieties about unemployment or lack of savings, justified as they may be these days. Far more frequently, those whose apprehensiveness brings them to seek psychiatric care suffer from unrealistic fears: sidewalks, elevators, trains, criticism, undetected disease. All fear has a purpose, though. The rational kind protects our safety, as when fear of automobile accidents motivates us to wear seatbelts. Likewise, the irrational kind also plays an important role in our lives. The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard wrote that fear “not only paralyzes; it

also contains the unending possibility of our ability that serves as the motor of human development.” Though it may sound paradoxical, the great human achievements in art, music, literature, and science all stem indirectly from fear.

**Borwin Bandelow** is a doctor of neurology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy and a practicing psychotherapist. He studied in Göttingen and Tübingen, earning his medical degree in 1978 and completing his habilitation in psychiatry and psychotherapy in 1996. Since 1995, he has directed the Polyclinic and the Anxiety Disorders Unit at the Universität Göttingen. In 2002, he was made chief physician and Professor of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy. Bandelow edits the *German Journal of Psychiatry* and is president of the Society for Anxiety Research. His many publications include *Panik und Agoraphobie. Diagnose, Ursachen, Behandlung* (2001); *Angst- und Panikerkrankungen* (2003); *Social Anxiety Disorder* (2004, coeditor); *Das Angstbuch. Woher Ängste kommen und wie man sie bekämpfen kann* (2004); and *Celebrities. Vom schwierigen Glück, berühmt zu sein* (2006).

#### **JOANNA BOURKE**

Professor of History at the School of History, Classics, and Archaeology, Birkbeck College, University of London

#### ***Fear in a Gendered World: Women and Violence in the Modern World***

Fear has been ranked as one of the most destructive emotions of the modern period. It is also highly gendered. Most famously, philosopher Susan Brownmiller noted in her influential polemic *Against Our Will* (1975) that early man’s “discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries of prehistoric times, along with the use of fire and the first crude stone axe.” This paper interrogates such rhetoric. Within historical time and geographic place, what uses have been made of fear as a disciplining force? While innumerable surveys have shown that female fear has constrained their lives, both levels of fear and responses to it differ significantly by race, class, generation, and political standpoint. The paper addresses the history of gendered fear as a way of reflecting upon the state of modernity.

**Joanna Bourke**’s work has ranged from the social and economic history of Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to social histories of the British working classes between 1860 and 1960, to cultural histories of military conflict between the Boer War and the Vietnam War, and, finally, to the history of emotions. She is currently writing a history of rapists in 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20-century societies. Some of her other works include *Husbandry to Housewifery: Women, Economic Change and Housework in Ireland, 1890-1914* (1993); *Working-Class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity* (1994); *Dis-membering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (1996); *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-Face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare* (1999); *The Second World War: A People's History* (2001); and *Fear: A Cultural History* (2006).

## **Program**

**Thursday, Feb 1, 2007**

7:00: Martin Schaad:  
*Welcome*

7:15 Jan Assmann:  
*Über das Phobische*

**Friday, Feb 2, 2007**

9:30 Rüdiger Zill:  
*Waves of Fear*

10:30 Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner:  
*Die Angst in der Geschichte*

11:30 *Coffeebreak*

12:00 Borwin Bandelow:  
*Krank vor Angst*

1:00 *Lunch*

3:00 David Konstan:  
*Fear and Anxiety.*  
*The View from Ancient Greece*

4:00 Joachim Radkau:  
*Diffuse Angst und Sehnsucht*  
*nach Leidenschaft*

5:00 *Coffeebreak*

5:30 Elisabeth Bronfen:  
*Fears of the Night*

**Saturday, Feb 3, 2007**

**All talks take place at the  
Einstein Forum, Potsdam**

- 10:00 Joanna Bourke:  
*Fear in a Gendered World.  
Women and Violence in  
the Modern World*
- 11:00 Corey Robin:  
*The Language of Fear.  
National Security in  
the 20th Century*
- 12:00 *Coffeebreak*
- 12:30 Eva Horn:  
*WTC Paranoia.  
Politische Ängste nach 9/11*
- 1:30 *Lunch*
- 3:00 Konstanty Gebert:  
*Too Much to Feel?  
On the Delayed Experience of  
Fear in Traumatic Situations*
- 4.00 Christa Ebert:  
*Poesie gegen die Angst.  
Die Dichtung von Anna  
Achmatova und Ossip  
Mandelstam in der Zeit  
des Terrors*
- 5:00 *Coffeebreak*
- 5.30 Eviatar Zerubavel:  
*Silence and Fear.  
The Social and Psychological  
Consequences of Co-Denial*

**ELISABETH BRONFEN**

Professor of English and American Studies, Universität Zürich

***Fears of the Night***

Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* is a good place to open a discussion on fear and the cinematic image, for the film's artist-murderer wants just that: to capture mortal fear with his camera's lens. His failure to do so is paradigmatic, as the analysis of three classic films, each from a different Hollywood genre, shows. The melodrama *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane*, the gothic thriller *The Shining*, and the conspiracy film *Conversation* all use camera movement to orchestrate a space of fear while utilizing the pathos-laden gestures of the actors to embody that space. Which camera cuts produce fear most effectively?

*Elisabeth Bronfen* studied German, English, and comparative literature at Radcliffe and Harvard, earning her PhD in 1986 with a thesis on Dorothy Richardson. She has been Professor of English and American Studies at Zurich University since 1993 and has guest lectured in Sheffield, Copenhagen, and New York (at Columbia). Currently, she is writing a cultural history of the night and an introduction to the work of Stanley Cavell. Recent publications in English include *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (1996); *The Knotted Subject: Hysteria and its Discontents* (1998); and *Home in Hollywood: The Imaginary Geography of Cinema* (2004).

**CHRISTA EBERT**

Professor of Literature, Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt an der Oder

***Poesie gegen die Angst. Die Dichtung von Anna Achmatova und Ossip Mandelstam im der Zeit des Terrors***

“In the room of the ostracized poet, fear and muse work in shifts.”

This line, written by Anna Achmatova after visiting her friend, the poet Ossip Mandelstam, in Voronezh, in March 1936, describes life as a poet in a totalitarian regime. In a culture of political terror, where fear is both the “dominant emotion” (Hannah Arendt) and a taboo subject, writing becomes subject to its own set of laws. The very mention of fear and terror amounts to a transgression that warrants punishment for violation of the political order—a condition that the poetry of Mandelstam and Achmatova, written in the time of Stalinism, captures impressively. Both were shaped by Acmeism, a hermetic current of poetry from Russia's pre-revolutionary modern, similar to Le Parnasse. Though after the Revolution they opened their work, in the words of Mandelstam, to the “noise of the time,” they resisted being co-opted by the political class. In the 1930s, the poets—accused of practicing an un-Russian aestheticism—began to characterize society's collective fear. They gave a name to the silent suffering of the people and corrected the official image of the Soviet Union according to which “man could breathe freer than anywhere else.” But it was the Acmeist credo—

“towards a cultural memory”—that enabled them to oppose political fear through the literary. Mandelstam’s poem for Stalin (which led to his arrest) as well as his Voronezh poems and Achmatova’s “Requiem” are to be considered. **Christa Ebert** studied Slavic and Romantic languages in Berlin and Rostow am Don. She completed her habilitation in 1990, on Russian Symbolism, and then worked at the GDR’s Academy of Sciences and the Forschungsschwerpunkt Literaturwissenschaft, Berlin. Since 1994 she has been Professor of Literature and East-European Literature at the Europa-Universität Viadrina in Frankfurt an der Oder. She has held research fellowships in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Prague, and New York. Some of her recent publications are *Sinaida Hippus, Seltsame Nähe. Ein Porträt* (2004); and *Die Seele hat kein Geschlecht. Studien zum Genderdiskurs in der russischen Kultur* (2004). She has also co-edited a number of volumes from the *Ost-West Diskurse* series.

### **KONSTANTY GEBERT**

#### ***Too Much to Feel? On the Delayed Experience of Fear in Traumatic Situations***

Drawing on his experience as a war correspondent, Konstanty Gebert will address the issue of coping with fear, and its implications for the psychological experience of the individual. The speaker will look at non-recognition of threat, displacement of its perceived source, and temporal delay as methods of coping with fear. He will then propose some tentative conclusions about the impact of these mechanisms on reality perception.

**Konstanty Gebert** is the founder and editor-in-chief of the monthly magazine *Midrasz*, to which he also regularly contributes. He was a war correspondent in Yugoslavia during its Civil War, served as advisor to Tadeusz Mazowiecki in 1993 and 1994, and was a rapporteur for the United Nations Human Rights Commission. His work has appeared in *Survey* (London), *La Nouvelle Alternative* (Paris), *MicroMega* (Rom), *Respect* (Prag), *Beselo* (Budapest), *Svijet* (Sarajevo), *Maariv* (Tel Aviv), *The Guardian* (London), *The New Republic* (New York), and *The Los Angeles Times*.

### **EVA HORN**

Professor of Modern German Literature, Universität Basel

#### ***WTC Paranoia. Politische Ängste nach 9/11***

Even if most conspiracy theories to emerge in the wake of the 9/11 attacks have been put to rest, a new manifestation of what Richard Hofstadter once described as the “paranoid style” continues to shape the political imagination of today. At the center of this paranoia is the idea of a globally-connected and globally-operating enemy. Which fears and ensnarements of our globalized society does the new paranoid style give voice to?

**Eva Horn** has been Professor of Modern German Literature at the Universität Basel since 2005. Before that, she was an assistant professor in the department of cultural studies at the Europa-Universität Viadrina in Frankfurt an der Oder. Her research interests include, among others, the anthropology of war and the history of the subversive. From 2001 to 2006 she was a junior member of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften. She is the author of *Trauer schreiben. Die Toten im Text der Goethezeit* (1998). She co-edited the volumes *Grenzverletzer. Von Schmugglern, Spionen und anderen subversiven Gestalten* (2002), *Anthropologie der Arbeit* (2002) and *Literatur als Philosophie – Philosophie als Literatur* (2006). Her newest work, *Der geheime Krieg. Ver-rat, Spionage und moderne Fiktion*, will be published later this year.

### **HEINZ DIETER KITTSTEINER**

Professor of Modern European History, Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt an der Oder

#### ***Die Angst in der Geschichte***

By increasing their control over nature, humans not only lost their fear of once unmasterable forces; they also lost the forms in which that fear was given concrete expression. What is more: despite humanity's progress, the process of civilization has taken place within historical structures that cannot themselves be mastered. So fear remains with us. Not the fear that Freud called *Realangst*—anxieties produced by concrete external factors—but a traumatic fear that presents no basis for human action. The classical philosophers of history coined terms such as “the invisible hand” and “natural intention” to describe the instances supposed to act for us instead, though by the mid-nineteenth century even these conceptions had reached a state of crisis. Fear in history is fear of a history that has become unmanageable. The main alternative technique developed to cope with our fears is repersonalization, by which diffuse fears are transformed into concrete ones, which because they can be confronted can also be overcome. The repersonalization of anonymous structures occurs mostly in the form of strikingly condensed images: synergistic allegories and heroic figures believed to be at work underneath the historical surface. In the political posters and billboards of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, these condensed images appeared as the Proletariat, the Soldier, the Capitalist, and the Jew.

**Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner** has been Professor of Modern European History at the Europa-Universität Viadrina since 1993. Previously, he held the Friedrich-Schiller Chair of History at the Universität Jena (1993), was a fellow at the Institute of Cultural Studies in Essen (1991-93), and an assistant in the history department at the Universität Bielefeld (1983-85) and in the philosophy department at the Freien Universität Berlin (1980-83). His research areas include the philosophy of history, the history of ideas, and modernity. He is the author of *Naturabsicht und Unsichtbare Hand. Zur Kritik des geschichtsphilosophischen Denkens* (1980); *Gewissen und Geschichte. Studien zur Entstehung des moral-*

*ischen Bewußtseins* (1990); *Die Entstehung des modernen Gewissens* (1991); *Listen der Vernunft. Motive geschichtsphilosophischen Denkens* (1998); *Out of Control. Über die Unverfügbarkeit des historischen Prozesses* (2004); *Mit Marx für Heidegger. Mit Heidegger für Marx* (2004); and *Wir werden gelebt. Formprobleme der Moderne* (2006).

#### **DAVID KONSTAN**

Professor of Classics, Brown University, Providence Rhode Island

#### ***Fear and Anxiety: The View from Ancient Greece***

The ancient Greeks' conception of fear, and of the emotions generally, does not correspond precisely to modern accounts. For Aristotle, fear, like all emotions, is cognitive and intentional. As such, it depends on rational judgments of what constitutes a danger (hence non-rational animals and immature human beings cannot experience fear) and that the judgment is an inseparable constituent of the emotion (hence one cannot speak of a mere "feeling" of fear). This view, while powerful, renders the idea of anxiety problematic to the extent that anxiety is free-floating and has no apparent object. In the generation after Aristotle, Epicurus maintained that an irrational fear of death continually haunts the majority of mankind (it is irrational because death cannot harm us and hence it is not a danger). Though Epicurus retains a cognitive interpretation of fear, Konstan suggests that this irrational fear approximates the modern sense of anxiety.

**David Konstan** first taught classics at Wesleyan University, where he was also the director of its Humanities Program. He became Professor of Classics and Comparative Literature at Brown University in 1987. Since 1992, he has been the John Rowe Workman Distinguished Professor of Classics and the Humanistic Tradition. Professor Konstan also teaches in the Graduate Faculty of Theatre, Speech, and Dance. His works include *Roman Comedy* (1983); *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (1994); *Greek Comedy and Ideology* (1995); *Friendship in the Classical World* (1997); *Pity Transformed* (2001); and *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (2006).

#### **JOACHIM RADKAU**

Professor of Modern History, Universität Bielefeld

#### ***Diffuse Angst und Sehnsucht nach Leidenschaft***

In 1900 Carl Hilty, the Swiss legal expert whose self-help guides used to lay on the nightstand of Konrad Adenauer, poked fun at his northern neighbors by casting doubt on the line from Bismarck that "We Germans fear God but nothing else in the world." In reality, Hilty thought, the Germans didn't fear God much, but they were anxious about everything else. The pathological symptom of the so-called nervous age, one self-diagnosed *en masse* starting in the 1880s, was the decline of old concrete fears and the rise of new diffuse ones. This diagnosis

led increasingly to a positive revaluation of the passions, a revaluation that had been in the making in Germany since *Sturm und Drang*. For over two thousand years, surmounting the passions was considered the path to wisdom. Now passion itself was supposed to save us from those diffuse fears and desires, whose symptoms were called “neurasthenia” at the time. Max Weber, well known for his nervous constitution, thought passion was the origin of true science.

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#### **COREY ROBIN**

Professor of Political Science, Brooklyn College, City University of New York

#### ***Language of Fear: National Security in the 20th Century***

While most analysts of political fear focus on ideologies like Marxism or fascism, few have attended to the significance of national security as a purveyor and signifier of fear. But in the modern era, there is no more influential or potent public language of fear than that of national security. An examination of key modern political theorists and selected events in American history shows how national security packages and domesticates the use of fear in political life. Security itself is a potent language of fear—one that is particularly appealing to political elites—because it offers the single-most effective vocabulary, at once neutral and universal, for pursuing and justifying partisan political projects.

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**EVIATAR ZERUBAVEL**

Professor of Sociology, Rutgers University, New Jersey

***Silence and Fear: The Social and Psychological Consequences of Co-Denial***

When facing frightening situations, people may resort to denial, and frightening information often becomes undiscussable as a result. Indeed, fear is a major source of silence, as in situations where a group of people tacitly agrees to ignore something of which they are all personally aware. Such situations, commonly known as “conspiracies of silence,” involve the sociological phenomenon of co-denial—perfectly captured in the famous image of the three monkeys who see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil. Yet fear is not only a major source, but also a major product, of conspiracies of silence. When no one else around us acknowledges the presence of the proverbial elephant in the room it only seems more frightening. To overcome fear, we must therefore discuss the undiscussables that help produce it in the first place.

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**RÜDIGER ZILL**

Einstein Forum, Potsdam

***Waves of Fear***

How can we speak of the history of an emotion? Before one can examine the complex history of fear, one must first consider its boundaries, how it changes in connection with other emotions. Only then can we understand what it could mean to call a period of time “an age of fear.” Is it true that our fears diminish as we gain more control over nature? Or does the decline of external fears only lead to an increase of the internal ones? Perhaps, in place of linear developments, it is better to speak of cultures of fear—times when fear is more culti-

vated—and times when it is more overlooked. Public discourse in Germany after the Second World War merits further consideration in this regard.

**Rüdiger Zill** has been on the Einstein Forum's academic staff since 1997. He has worked for many years as a freelance writer for radio and newspapers. After completing his dissertation in 1994 on the function of models and metaphors in philosophical theories of the emotions, he worked as an assistant in the philosophy department at the Technische Universität in Dresden. He has edited the volumes *Gestalten des Mitgefühls* (2006) and *Ganz Anders? Philosophie zwischen akademischem Jargon und Alltagssprache* (2006) and co-edited *Hinter den Spiegeln. Zur Philosophie Richard Rortys* (2001). He is also the co-editor of the edition suhrkamp series *Erbschaft unserer Zeit*.

### **KALEIDOSKOP DER ANGST**

12 video clips by Peter Schnappauf, Berlin

Accompanying the conference will be a series of short video clips portraying typical fear scenarios. They show both the paradigmatic scenes of fear and some reactions to them. One clip will be shown at the beginning of each lecture (though it may not thematically relate).

Special thanks to Anne Clara Schenderlein (“Woman in the park”) and to Berliner Unterwelten e.V. (scenes from the Berlin bunker, subway station “Gesundbrunnen”) <http://www.berliner-unterwelten.de/>



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