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International Conference

**EVIL EYES. ON ENVY**

Abstracts and CV's

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**Aleida Assmann**

Professor of English Literature and Literary Theory, University of Konstanz

**In the Beginning was Envy:  
Metaphysical and Social Aspects of a Strong Emotion**

According to John Milton, the history of envy does not begin on earth but in heaven above, before the creation of man. The Satan of Paradise Lost not only embodies one of the seven deadly sins; his strong sense of envy triggers a dynamic with cosmogonic and philosophical consequences. The talk will address the psychological and sociological aspects of envy and will try to understand which cultural characteristics prevent envy and which promote it.

**Aleida Assmann** studied English Literature and Egyptology at the universities of Heidelberg and Tübingen. She has taught English literature and literary theory at the University of Konstanz since 1993. In 1998/99, she was a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. Since 2001 she has had regular appointments as visiting professor at Yale University. Her books include *Die Legitimität der Fiktion: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der literarischen Kommunikation* (1980), *Arbeit am nationalen Gedächtnis: Eine kurze Geschichte der deutschen Bildungsidee* (1993), *Zeit und Tradition: Kulturelle Strategien der Dauer* (1999), *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (1999), *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis an der Millenniumsschwelle: Krise und Zukunft der Bildung* (2004), and *Die Unverzichtbarkeit der Kulturwissenschaften mit einem nachfolgenden Briefwechsel* (2004). In addition, she edited the ten-volume series *Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation* (1983-2003).

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**Daniel Brudney**

Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Chicago

**Envy, Grudgingness and Political Philosophy**

Envy is traditionally thought to pose a problem for all but the most rigorously egalitarian conceptions of justice. So does "grudgingness," the reluctance of those with more to help those with less. Aquinas defines envy as sadness at another's happiness. The opposite of envy, then, is happiness at another's happiness. Both the envious person and the grudging person seem incapable of this emotion. Now, envy and grudgingness are tied to an ongoing debate in political philosophy about how much equality justice requires: if everyone has enough, is it still wrong for some to have a lot more? If the answer is Yes, then we must ask (i) whether some human beings (those with more) can in fact be motivated to redistribute further and (ii) whether other human beings (those with less) can be motivated to accept some remaining inequality. I examine these questions via discussion of two major strains of political philosophy.

I begin with the treatment of envy in John Rawls's important book, *A Theory of Justice*. Rawls sees envy as arising from the agent's low self-esteem. Rawls then argues that a society regulated by his principles of distributive justice will support agents' self-esteem and so not give rise to envy. Similarly, agents with adequate self-esteem will not be grudging about helping others. For several reasons, Rawls's strategy is misguided. Most important, envy and grudgingness should be seen as vices, as things the individual is responsible for resisting. They are specifically vices of focusing too much on the self. The response should not be to minister to the self by attempting to boost the agent's self-esteem.

In the paper's second half, I examine an alternative approach, John Stuart Mill's stress on sympathy and

fellow-feeling. This has taken extravagant forms, particularly with Mill, himself, who espoused a "religion of humanity" whose ideal devotees would strongly respond to all human beings' pains and pleasures. These days, our hopes for fellow-feeling are much more frugal. My concern is how far we can plausibly move in the direction of Mill's vision. Here, I note Butler's and Schopenhauer's insight that we are more easily motivated by compassion for others' suffering than by pleasure at their happiness. This raises a question about the likely efficacy of the Millian strategy. Can we successfully cultivate that happiness at others' happiness that would both motivate further redistribution and make acceptable to the worst off whatever inequalities remain? In the final part of the paper, I consider this "cultivate our sympathy" strategy. My conclusion is that its possibilities, though limited, are worth pursuing.

**Daniel Brudney** received the Ph.D. from Harvard in 1985. He works and teaches principally in Marxism, philosophy of law, political philosophy, and in the relationship between philosophy and literature. His publications include: "Knowledge and Silence: *The Golden Bowl* and Moral Philosophy", in: *Critical Inquiry* (1990); "Hypothetical Consent and Moral Force", in: *Law and Philosophy* (1991); "Two Links of Law and Morality", in: *Ethics* (1993); "Community and Completion", in: *Reclaiming the History of Ethics: Essays for John Rawls* (1997); and *Marx's Attempt to Leave Philosophy* (1998).

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## Raimond Gaita

**Professor of Moral Philosophy, King's College London and Foundation Professor of Philosophy at Australian Catholic University**

### Hope, Envy and Love of the World

Events of recent years have made many people – especially those of liberal and leftist persuasions – to lose hope in politics, or, at any rate, in democratic politics. To turn away from politics is, as Hannah Arendt observed, to turn away from the human world. 'World' is a word with many meanings, but in her use of the word, to turn away from the human world was to turn away from the world. Although hope is obviously an orientation to the future, I take it less as an assessment of how things will turn out than as a refusal to turn away from the world. More positively, hope can be a form of the love of the world. Or, so I shall argue. Envy erodes it in ways whose distinctiveness I hope to reveal.

**Raimond Gaita**, born 1946; studied psychology and philosophy in Melbourne; MA University of Melbourne; Ph.D. University of Leeds. Each year he is in Australia from April until the beginning of the academic year at King's College, University of London. Gaita's main research interests and publications have been in ethics. He has also worked and written on scepticism (moral, of other minds and of the external world), on the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of psychology, on aspects of political philosophy (collective responsibility, the role of moral considerations in politics, genocide and the alleged uniqueness of the Holocaust), on education (the nature of teaching as a vocation, the role of love in learning and the plight of the universities) and on Wittgenstein's philosophy of mind and language. Selected Publications: Selected Publications: *Romulus, My Father* (1988); *The Philosopher's Dog* (2002); *Good and Evil: An Absolute Conception* (1991); *A Common Humanity: Thinking about Love & Truth & Justice* (1999)

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## Thomas Hauschild

**Professor for Cultural Anthropology, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen**

### Invidia - Kultur und Raum. Praktiken des (bösen) Blicks

We are living in a period of time when one thinks of culture, especially "pop" culture, as flexible, fluctuating, and always new. Behind this idea lies a concept of culture which, seen through historical and philological perspective, produces what might be called a "textual culture," one filled with fictions and fantasies or, in more radical terms, "dispositives of power." Against this time- and text-fixated concept the talk will propose a theory of culture oriented toward space, body, and practices. The popular culture of in-vidia (envy, overlooking, evil eye) in Mediterranean society has taken very different paths-those found in face-to-face societies in the country and those found in the anonymous world of the cities. In the city one observes both paranoid fear of charismatic eyes and provincial attempts at harmonizing envious glances and pride of ownership. Yet even in the laboratory setting humans play the game of envious and desirous glances. While one is tempted to understand the practices of the (evil) eye as an anthropological universal, apparent variations suggest that it is historically and culturally relative. How should modern-day cultural theory confront this problem-one which the enlightenment movements of antiquity and the 18th century failed to solve?

**Thomas Hauschild**, born in 1955, studied cultural anthropology, German archaeology and folklore, and religion at the Universität Hamburg. From 1984 to 1989, he was an Assistant Professor at the Institute for Cultural Anthropology at the Universität Köln. Since 1992, he has been Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen. Thomas Hauschild has held visiting professorships at universities in

Hamburg, Heidelberg, Naples, Rome, New York, and Aix-en-Provence. His field research has taken him to Andalusia and southern Italy. Some of his works are *Der böse Blick: Ideengeschichtliche und sozialpsychologische Untersuchungen* (1979), *Hexen. Katalog zur Sonderausstellung im Hamburgischen Museum für Völkerkunde* (1979; co-author), *Die alten und die neuen Hexen: Die Geschichte der Frauen auf der Grenze* (1987; co-author), *Lebenslust und Fremdenfurcht: Ethnologie im Dritten Reich* (1995; editor), and *Magie und Macht in Italien* (2002).

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## Amir Kassaei,

Chief creative officer, dbb group germany

### Neid und Missgunst für 49 Euro. Neid als großer Verführer

**Amir Kassaei** was born in Iran with an upbringing in Austria and higher education in France. At 37, he is one of the youngest chief creative officers in Europe. After working as copywriter at TBWA and Barci & Partner, he worked as creative director and executive creative director at Springer & Jacoby. Since 2003 he has been the chief creative officer and associate partner of the DDB Group in Germany. He developed campaigns for companies such as Mercedes-Benz, smart, Volkswagen, Coca Cola, Allianz, Apple, Adidas, and Spiegel. Amir Kassaei has received over 500 national and international awards (Cannes, Clio, London International Advertising Award, Epica, Art Directors Club Deutschland, Art Directors Club New York, Eurobest, Cresta, Golden Award of Montreux, One Show, CCA, and Epica), making him one of the most awarded creative minds in Europe.

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## Nils Minkmar

Author and Editor, Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, Berlin

### Der geilste Stoff. Neid und die Medien

The city of Marseille has a single luxury hotel, the somewhat up-in-the-years "Paris-Nice." Directly under the windows of its restaurant lies a small public beach, where students come to sunbathe. As the writer Michéa Jacobi explained to Nils Minkmar, the arrangement is very simple: The ones sunbathing below envy the ones dining above-and vice versa. This is the same eternal mechanism that drives and fuels the media. Whether envy leads to advance or explosive excess, however, is a question of dosage.

**Nils Minkmar** studied history in Paris and Saarbrücken, writing his dissertation on historical anthropological subject in the early modern era. From 1997 to 1999 he worked as editor for the ZDF program *Willemssens Woche*. Subsequently, he worked as a freelance journalist and editor for *Die Zeit* where he helped develop the media section. Since the summer of 2001 he has been Feuilleton editor for the *Frankfurter Allgemeinen Sonntagszeitung*. His publications include *Ausgegossene Worte: Stadtbürgerlicher Ehrbegriff, Ehrenkonflikte und Habitus im Colmar des 16. Jahrhunderts in historisch-anthropologischer Perspektive* (1996), *Das Schwein des Häuptlings: Sechs Aufsätze zur Historischen Anthropologie* (1992; co-editor), and *Hier spricht Berlin - Geschichten aus einer barbarischen Stadt* (2003; co-author).

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## Glenn Most

Professor of Ancient Greek, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa  
Professor at the Committee on Social Thought, University of Chicago

## Envy and Jealousy

**Glenn Most** studied at Harvard College and Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and completed one doctorate in comparative literature at Yale University and another doctorate in ancient Greek at the Universität Tübingen (both 1980). From 1979 to 1980 he was wissenschaftlicher Assistent at the Universität Heidelberg, between 1980 and 1985 he was Andrew W. Mellon Assistant Professor of Classics at Princeton University, from 1987 to 1991 he was Professor of Classics and Ancient History at the Universität Innsbruck, and between 1991 and 2001 he was Professor of Ancient Greek at the Universität Heidelberg. In 1997 he was appointed to the Committee on Social Thought in Chicago and, since 2001 he has been Professor for Ancient Greek in Pisa. Glenn Most has held visiting professorships at various institutions, including the Università degli Studi in Siena, the University of Michigan, and the Collège de France. In 1988/89 he was a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. Some of his recent works include *Collecting Fragments* (1997; editor), *Raffael, Die Schule von Athen: Über das Lesen der Bilder* (1999), *Editing Texts* (1998), *Commentaries* (1999), *Historicization* (2001), *Disciplining Classics* (2002), *Ancient Anger* (with S.M. Braund, 2003), *Doubting Thomas* (2005), and an edition and translation of Sebastiano Timpanaro's *Genesis of Lachmann's Method* (2005).

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## Susan Neiman

**Professor of Philosophy; Director, Einstein Forum**

### Evil as Envy. Ayn Rand or How a Russian Emigré Shaped the American Consciousness

According to a 1994 Library of Congress survey, the only book Americans hold to be more influential than Ayn Rand's final novel *Atlas Shrugged* is the Bible. Rand's Social Darwinism played a major role in forming the views of neo-conservative intellectuals, including her friend Alan Greenspan, but her novels are read by a far broader spectrum. Even for those who reject her unqualified defense of pure capitalism, her analysis of the phenomenology of envy is compelling. In her three main novels, whose backgrounds extend from the early Soviet system of her youth to the vision of a failing America, she succeeds in describing characters deformed by envy who are, in her view, the source of evil. This talk will examine those descriptions; what, exactly, is being envied? Human achievement? Love of living? Is there a way to acknowledge the truth in those descriptions without drawing Rand's political conclusions?

**Susan Neiman** is Director of the Einstein Forum. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, Neiman studied philosophy at Harvard and the Freie Universität Berlin, and taught philosophy at Yale and Tel Aviv University. Selected Publications: *Slow Fire: Jewish Notes from Berlin* (1992); *The Unity of Reason: Rereading Kant* (1994); *Evil in Modern Thought. An Alternative History of Philosophy* (2002); *Fremde sehen anders. Zur Lage der Bundesrepublik* (2005).

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## Rainer Paris

**Professor of Sociology, Hochschule Magdeburg-Stendal**

### Neid. Inspektion eines Gefühls

The talk attempts to analyze the character and function of envy. In doing so, Rainer Paris will identify and discuss some structural traits that typify this emotion and distinguish it from related dispositions such as hate and resentment. His hypothesis is that there is no such thing as social envy. By its very nature envy is directed toward individuals with a certain possession, talent, or success. As such it is an isolated emotion and not transferable to groups. Unlike hate-with which it is often confused-envy does not build groups. Accusations of envy can, however. They raise the believed legitimacy of the privileged and increase the resentment of other groups.

**Rainer Paris**, born in 1948, studied sociology, psychology, and German literature at the Freie Universität Berlin. Between 1973 and 1974 he was an Assistant Professor in German literature, from 1977 to 1981 he worked at the Institute for Sociology at the Freie Universität Berlin, and from 1985 to 1987 he held an appointment at the Sociology department at the Universität Göttingen. Since 1994, he has been Professor of Sociology at the Fachhochschule Magdeburg. Outside his university appointments, he has also collaborated on

a project of the German Research Foundation studying organizations and power. His works include *Soziologie und Linguistik: Die schlechte Aufhebung sozialer Ungleichheit durch Sprache* (1973; co-author), *Klassenbewußtsein und Intersubjektivität* (1983), *Figurationen sozialer Macht: Autorität - Stellvertretung - Koalition* (1994; co-author), *Stachel und Speer: Machtstudien* (1998), *Normale Macht: Soziologische Essays* (2005).

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## Hartwig Schmidt

**Instructor of Philosophy, General Studies Program at the Dresden Fine Art Academies**

### **Der Neid unter den Angeglichenen. Vom Schicksal einer "Todsünde" in der DDR-Gesellschaft**

One could easily think that the prevalence of envy would have declined in the GDR, a society in which the opposition of rich and poor was reduced, the social conditions were on a whole more unified, and a spirit of collectivity was widespread. In truth, however, envy experienced a revival. Compared to after the fall of the Berlin Wall, envy, even societal envy, took on strange forms in East Germany: it was far more personal and far less concealed. How can this be explained? The talk will try to address this question by considering the results of a mid-80s study of industrial firms.

**Hartwig Schmidt** studied philosophy, history, and art education. He completed his habilitation in 1987, writing on conflict in socialism. He is the editor of the *Berliner Debatte* and teaches philosophy at fine art academies in Dresden. His works include *Das unterwürfige Selbst* (1995), *Grausamkeit und andere Lüste* (1999), and *Figuren der Dialektik* (2004; editor).

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## Elke Schmitter

**Author, Berlin**

### **Der Neid und ich, wir zwei. Ein Erfahrungsbericht**

Elke Schmitter thought that a conference about a feeling everyone is familiar with would be better if at least one of its participants spoke frankly from personal experience. So as preparation for her talk, Schmitter decided to think about the effects of envy in her life. What she found was sometimes painful--and sometimes amusing.

**Elke Schmitter**, born in 1961, studied philosophy in Munich. From 1992-94 she was the editor-in-chief at the *taz*. Afterwards she worked for *Die Zeit* and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. She has been on the editorial staff at *Der Spiegel* since 2001. Her publications include *Windschatten im Konjunktiv: Gedichte* (1981), *Und grüß' mich nicht unter den Linden: Essays* (1998), *Frau Sartoris: Roman* (2000), *Leichte Verfehlungen: Roman* (2002), and *Kein Spaniel: Gedichte* (2005).

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## Peter Schneider

**Psychoanalyst, Zurich**

### **Ich sehe was, was ich nicht hab', und das ist ... Sexual- und**

## Penisneid, psychoanalytische Anthropologie und der Mythos vom Neidgesellschaftsvertrag

According to Helmut Schoeck, envy is not only one of the strongest emotions; it is also the one we try most thoroughly to conceal. While one must reckon on envy being a ubiquitous and not-to-be-eliminated phenomenon, it must also be contained, because a society dominated by envy inevitably destroys itself. Schoeck's book *Envy: A Theory of Social Behavior* makes extensive use of psychoanalysis, especially Freud's idea that the demand for justice is a modification of sexual and sibling jealousy. But Schoeck mistakenly interprets psychoanalytic theory as developmental psychology with sociological implications. Freud's idea that civilization originates from a primal horde in which sons become sexually jealous of their father-as well as its continuation in the Oedipus complex and its constitutive emotions, fear of castration and penis envy-are in need of just as much interpretation as what they were intended to explain.

**Peter Schneider**, born in 1957, studied philosophy and psychology before becoming a psychoanalyst in Zurich in 1988. He has given instruction in psychotherapy at the Universität Zürich and has taught psychoanalysis at the Psychological Institute of the Universität Bremen. His publications include *Alltag und Exotik: Aspekte einer Psychoanalyse der Ästhetik* (1988), *Die Psychoanalyse ist kritisch, aber nicht Ernst: Zur Psychoanalyse der Politik der Psychoanalyse* (1988), *Freud, der Wunsch, der Mord, die Wissenschaft und die Psychoanalyse* (1991), *Wahrheit und Verdrängung: Eine Einführung in die Eigenart der psychoanalytischen Erkenntnis* (1995), *Darf man am Sabbat psychoanalysieren? oder Die Ironie der Aufklärung* (1996), *Sigmund Freud* (1999), *Erfliegen und Erhinken: Psychoanalytische Zweifel an der Vernunft* (2001), *Das Deuten der Psychoanalyse* (2003; co-author).

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## Daniel Zizzo

Senior Lecturer in Economics at the University of East Anglia, Norwich

### Shadows in the Dark. An Economist's View on Envy and Situational Aggression

Economists model choice as the maximisation of a stable utility function. Envy can be modelled as a negative weight assigned to the consumption or payoffs of other agents: an agent is envious if her or his utility decreases in the utility of the other agent. We shall briefly discuss some of the implications of envy for issues such as happiness, firm structure, growth, taxation and bargaining. What drives apparently envious behaviour, however, may often be the perception of decision problems as calling for situational aggression relative to what a purely self-interested agent would do: a perception that is driven, among other factors, by socially embedded deservingness and justifiability. Examples of this will be made with reference to economic experiments on money burning and on inter-group transactions. Much still needs to be learnt about the cognitive underpinnings of this dark or not-so-dark side of human nature.

**Daniel Zizzo** (DPhil MPhil MA Oxford; Laurea Palermo) is a Senior Lecturer in Economics at the University of East Anglia. He is an experimental and behavioural economist, and much of his research is motivated by the search for more realistic empirical and theoretical foundations of economic decision-making. Since 2000 he has published in leading economics and psychology journals, including among others *Social Choice and Welfare*, *Economics Letters*, the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, *Theory and Decision*, the *International Journal of Industrial Organization*, the *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, the *American Journal of Psychology* and *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. His work on envy in money burning settings has received wide coverage in the international press (including among others *The Economist* and *Der Spiegel*). More details can be found on his webpage (<http://www.uea.ac.uk/~ec601/>).

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