

AAAS Conference 2020

American Studies as Vulnerability Studies?

(Austrian Association for American Studies)

Organized and hosted by American Studies Graz, University of Graz, Austria

October 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Keynote speaker: Rebecca Wanzo, Washington University St. Louis

We are thrilled to invite you to join us for an exciting workshop and roundtable discussion on the cutting-edge yet under-theorized topic of vulnerability in American Studies. We understand 'vulnerability' as both a shared condition of oppression and as emerging resistance and solidarity. As a critical intervention in American Studies, we ask: which themes, theories, and disciplinary directions in American studies can productively engage with questions of vulnerability, and to what extent does current critical work against racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism cohere around a shared sense of vulnerability? What are the prevalent idioms of vulnerability in American Studies, and how have they shaped critical practices in areas such as Affect Theory, Queer Theory, Transnational Feminism, Critical Race Theory, Trans Studies, among others? How can we theorize vulnerability within the context of the United States' own history of internal and international colonization? How is vulnerability culturally produced and what are the ethics of mediating vulnerability?

We are adopting a workshop format in order to facilitate space for intensive discussions about the possibility of re-framing critical traditions in American Studies as vulnerability studies. To this end, we invite original position papers (including working bibliographies) which extend our proposed research questions (or others of similar intent) into the various critical traditions and current debates within American Studies. In order to assist us in coordinating a series of round-table discussions, please submit an extended abstract (of about 1000 words) and working bibliography which specify which notions of vulnerability you will draw on and how you situate your paper within American Studies. We especially invite submissions from early-career scholars.

Please send your extended abstracts and working bibliographies to [aaas2020@uni-graz.at](mailto:aaas2020@uni-graz.at) by 15 June 2020. Upon acceptance, we will ask for your permission to distribute your extended abstracts to your fellow panel members.

Thank you and we look forward to welcoming you to Graz!

Silvia Schiltermandl (AAAS President) and Jennifer Reimer (AAAS Secretary)