



ENFREAKMENT IN (TRANSNATIONAL) NORTH AMERICAN CULTURE

CONFERENCE AT LEIPZIG UNIVERSITY, GERMANY

The conference will examine the underlying dynamics of constructing somebody as a “freak” in depictions of non-normativity, deviance, or extraordinariness — the highly complex, dynamic, and contradictory processes that have been described as “enfreakment.”

ORGANIZED BY: KATJA KANZLER, ELLA ERNST, LAURA PRÖGER, ANNA GAIDASH, ANNIKA SCHADEWALDT, STEFAN SCHUBERT

Conference Program

“Enfreakment in (Transnational) North American Culture”

Thursday, May 22, 2025

**9:30AM - 2PM | INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN STUDIES,
BIBLIOTHECA ALBERTINA**

**9:30–
9:50am**

Conference Opening

**9:50–
10:40am**

Ulla Krieburnegg (Graz)

“A Sideshow of Frailty: Enfreakment, Aging, and Disability in North American Care Home Narratives”

**10:40–
11am**

Break

11am–1pm

Ella Ernst (Leipzig)

“Blood, Guts, and Gore in *Invincible* (2021) — Enfreakment and Genre Subversion in Superhero Animation”

Małgorzata Olsza (Poznań)

“The Enfreakment of the Reproductive Body in Beth Hetland’s *Tender* (2024)”

Alena Cicholewski & Krutika Patri (Bremen)

“‘Primitive, Drug-Loving Freaks’ — Enfreakment and Anti-Colonial Resistance in R. F. Kuang’s *The Poppy War Trilogy* (2018–2020)”

1–2pm

Lunch (Catered)

Albertina Lecture Hall, Bibliotheca Albertina,
Beethovenstraße 6, 04107 Leipzig

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**2PM - 6PM | INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN STUDIES,
BIBLIOTHECA ALBERTINA**

**2-
2:50pm**

Jessica Williams (SUNY Old Westbury / via Zoom)

“Decoding Enfreakment: The Intersection of Disability and Morality in Visual Media Portrayals of the Freak Show”

**2:50-
3:10pm**

Break

**3:10-
5:10pm**

Laura Pröger (Leipzig)

“Staging Survival, Performing the American Dream: Enfreakment, Melodrama, and the Affective Spectacle of Class in *Hillbilly Elegy*”

Milo Miller (Leipzig)

“Deviance and Modes of Self-Enfreakment in Reader Self-Insert Creepypasta Fanfiction”

Stefan Schubert (Leipzig)

“Monster, Alien, Animal? Spectacular Bodies and ‘Freakish’ Cinematography in Jordan Peele’s *Nope* (2022)”

6pm

Dinner (Self-Pay)

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**9:30AM - 1:40PM | INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN STUDIES,
BIBLIOTHECA ALBERTINA**

**9:30–
10:20am**

Heike Steinhoff (Bochum)

“(Dis-)Enfreakment and the Body Politics of Popular Feminisms”

**10:20–
10:40am**

Break

**10:40am–
12:40pm**

Anna Gaidash (Kyiv/Leipzig)

“Emotional Abuse in Beth Henley’s Drama: The Secret Self of *Control Freaks*”

Natalia Vysotska (Kyiv)

“‘She Is Almost a Freak’: De/Resacralizing the Big Female Body in Eugene O’Neill’s *A Moon for the Misbegotten*”

Elisa Heuser (Tübingen)

“Mollie Fancher and Josephine Marie Bedard — The Enfreakment of (Show)Fasting Women in North America in the Late 19th Century”

12:40–1:40pm

Lunch (Catered)

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**1:40PM - 5PM | INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN STUDIES,
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Katja Kanzler (Leipzig)

“Enfreakable Bodies and the Global Dynamics of the 19th Century Freak Show”

**1:40–
3:40pm**

Gabriele Pisarz–Ramirez (Leipzig)

“‘Fresh From the Bush Country’: Antillean Women in US Popular Writings on the Panama Canal Zone”

Annika Schadewaldt (Leipzig)

“The Scales of Enfreakment in Eudora Welty’s Short Fiction”

**3:40–
4pm**

Break

**4–
4:50pm**

Evangelia Kindinger (Berlin)

“‘She Was Large Beyond Any Woman Most Had Ever Seen’: Mountain Womanhood and Appalachian Otherness in US Literature”

–5pm

Farewell

Albertina Lecture Hall, Bibliotheca Albertina,
Beethovenstraße 6, 04107 Leipzig