

ASCA

Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis
University of Amsterdam

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Nieuwsbrief 286

July 2025

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a focused and friendly environment away. | Organized by Shekoufeh Behbehani, Luc Marraffa, and Joe van der Eerden. Whether you are drafting chapters, revising sections, or simply looking for accountability, this space offers encouragement, motivation, and a sense of community. Each session held weekly on Wednesdays from 9:00 to 17:00, begins with a brief check-in and ends with time to discuss writing challenges and share strategies. Let's make dissertation writing less solitary and more productive together.

YET ANOTHER WAR: UNPACKING ISRAEL'S ATTACK ON IRAN

Teach-in on the recent Israel's war on Iran, organised by the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis together with the Amsterdam Centre for Middle Eastern Studies (ACMES). Speakers: Leila Faghfoury Azar, Ladan Rahbari, Shahin Nasiri. Moderator: Ali Hamdan | 30 June 2025, 15:00, [Roeterseilandcampus - building A Room A 1.02](#)

On June 13th, Israel instigated an unprovoked military offensive against Iran. This act of aggression was portrayed as a pre-emptive strike to destroy Iran's nuclear enrichment facilities and potentially toppling the Islamic Republic. And yet, experts suggest there was no imminent danger, nor reason to expect major hostilities from Iran. Israel's military campaigns have involved widespread attacks on the civilian population, residential neighbourhoods, hospitals, and critical economic infrastructure. The attack has unfolded under support from the US and the EU, amid the broader context of Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. It carries the risk of triggering another large-scale humanitarian and environmental catastrophe. In this teach-in, speakers will critically examine the underlying dimensions of this war through sociological, political, and legal-theoretical perspectives, offering a critical analysis of neocolonial violence, religious dictatorship, resistance and liberation.

For registration, please send an e-mail to

s.t.hamer@uva.nl

ASCA PHD WRITING CAFÉ

You are all welcome to the ASCA PhD Writing Café on 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 July, 09:00 - 17:00, PCH 210-211. An informal and supportive space dedicated to advancing your dissertation progress. Work alongside fellow PhD researchers, share insights, and pursue your writing goals in

A POLYPHONY OF EMOTIONS

Thinking Affect in Heritage, Memory and Material Culture AHM Conference 2025, 2-4 July 2025, [P.C. Hoofthuis](#)

The program includes keynote lectures by Prof. Dan Hicks (Oxford University), Dr. Eva van Roekel (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), Prof. Ernst van Alphen (Leiden university) and curator and visual artist Marjan Teeuwen, and twenty-six thematic sessions engaging with emotions and affect in the fields of heritage, memory and material culture. Additionally, the organising committee is hosting a public lecture by Miranda Lakerveld of the World Opera Lab, on the evening of 4 July.

The conference is free and open to attend for anyone interested. Please register your attendance for the conference [here](#). [Conference program](#)

DEFENDING CRITICAL EDUCATION IN AUTHORITARIAN TIMES

July 3rd, 10:30 -16:15, Theaterzaal, University of Amsterdam | Organized by the Philosophy and Public Affairs Capacity Group and the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA)

With fascist and authoritarian movements on the rise worldwide, education is increasingly under attack. From the US-American vice president JD Vance openly proclaiming that "universities are the enemy", to ideologically-motivated budget cuts to education in the Netherlands, there is increasing pressure on institutions to disavow the important role of universities as sites for critical scholarship. Throughout modern history, universities have been a rallying point for social and political—often student-led—movements that have pushed the political agenda beyond the prevailing 'common sense'. With this symposium, we wish to connect to this radical history of the university,

and express our solidarity with people in other places where higher education is under attack.

We bring together contributions that speak to the value of a 'critical education' beyond neoliberal imperatives of addressing 'labour market shortages', and against the authoritarian attack on critical scholarship—especially feminist, queer, trans and critical race theory. The interventions can be based on a reading of, or engagement with, a classical or contemporary philosopher, demonstrating the ongoing importance of philosophical inquiry for reflecting on the role (and limits) of education. Rather than merely anticipating and preparing for future cuts, we wish to create space for an open conversation about the value of what we do, as teachers and students, and about our ongoing commitment to the 'critical university' in authoritarian times.

Program

10.30-12.00 Critical Education under Attack

Marjolein Lanzing: *Authoritarian Intelligence*

Shahin Nasiri: *Are Universities Still Bastions of Freedom? Which Freedom—and Whose?*

Yolande Jansen: *Elite Capture of Social Safety Regulations at the Universities: The Case of 'Combating Antisemitism'*

Stefan Niklas: *On the Imaginary Institution of the University*

13.00-14.30 The Unconditional University

Yonathan Listik: *University Without Conditions: The Relevance of Derrida's Text Today*

Daniel Loick: *The Conflict of the Faculties*

N.N.: *Kant and the Public Use of Reason*

Thomas Nys: *"The 'Bildung' is on Fire!" On the Intrinsic Value of Higher Education*

15.00-16.15 Defending Critical Education

Yorgos Karagiannopoulos: *Critical Education within the University Means Empowering the Social Movements in the Vicinity*

Michael Thomas: *"Living Thought in Trying Times": Reflections in Black Thought*

Jana Cattien: *Why Gender & Critical Race Theory?*

Contribution by Research Master Students

Organized by the Philosophy and Public Affairs Capacity Group and the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA)

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENAI & CREATIVITY

Workshop at the Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS), UvA, in collaboration with the University of Toronto & ASCA | Date & Location: July 7, 2025 | Contact person: Thomas Poell (Poell@uva.nl)

This one-day workshop explores how the uptake of generative AI is changing cultural production and consumption around the globe, reigniting and also changing debates on the nature of creativity and its evolving trajectory. What is often forgotten in these

debates are the wider social and cultural conditions these debates take place in. Through lightning talks, plenary discussions, and a fishbowl, participants discuss how issues pertaining to GenAI and job displacement, labor inequities, and the reorganization of creative processes play out in different parts of the world. A central question is how we can multiply our frames of reference in thinking through key concepts, such as creativity and its relations to equity and precarity, in this field of study. Addressing this question, participants will pay special attention to the ethical dilemmas in global collaborative research projects.

Participants: *Thomas Poell, Claudio Celis Bueno, Paula Helm, Nuoyi Wang, Delfina Sol Martinez Pandiani, Tobias Blanke, Houda Lamqaddam, Gabriel Pereira, Bokar N'Diaye, Louis) Ravn, Lorena Rubia Pereira Caminhas, Rafael Grohmann, Zhen Ye, Smith Mehta, David Nieborg, Arturo Arriagada, Jeroen Werner, Sanne Bloemink*

REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE'S ARTIST, POET, ANTI-CASTE ACTIVIST FROM INDIA

You are warmly invited to a lecture-performance with Sambhaji Bhagat | July 9, 2025, 16:00–18:00 | University Theatre, Nieuwe Doelenstraat 16, 1012 CP Amsterdam.

Bhagat's work has long given voice to the struggles of India's oppressed castes and classes. Through songs forged in the fire of everyday injustice, Bhagat channels the rage, hope, and resilience of the marginalized. His music dismantles Brahmanical supremacy and capitalist violence, not as metaphor, but as lived critique, invoking the political ideas of the radical anti-caste thinker B.R. Ambedkar as well as folk traditions to carve out spaces for resistance, dignity, and collective dreaming.

Please help us in making arrangements by signing up through this

link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1nJOuaKvcLu8In3QpMi9ZEsB4OGQCxLdRjYKLkmOF67E/viewform?edit_requested=true

WHATSAPP IN THE WORLD: DISINFORMATION, ENCRYPTION AND EXTREME SPEECH

Everyone is warmly invited to a special book launch event: WhatsApp in the World: Disinformation, Encryption and Extreme Speech A global analysis of the vastly popular instant messaging service | Monday, September 1, Room 0.03 in building BG1, 14:00-16:00 pm. <https://nyupress.org/9781479833276/whatsapp-in-the-world/>

Featuring the editors:

Sahana Udupa, Professor of Media Anthropology LMU Munich; Berkman Klein Fellow, Harvard University; Francqui Chair and Herman Wasserman, Professor and

Chair Department of Journalism; Director: Centre for Information Integrity in Africa (CIIA)

The session involves a presentation of the book and open discussion.

From the publisher:

Known by the popular nickname “ZapZap” in Brazil and synonymous with the Internet across Africa and South Asia, WhatsApp has emerged as a major means of communication for millions of people around the world. Unlike social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, WhatsApp offers a closed, encrypted communication architecture that ostensibly limits the reach and exposure of shared content.

While recent scholarship has drawn attention to the risks it poses to democratic systems and marginalized communities, *WhatsApp in the World* is the first study to offer a systematic global view of an encrypted instant messaging service. Rather than taking the technical feature of “encryption” at face value, the volume proposes the conceptual framework of “lived encryptions” to highlight the different, often contradictory, formations around encrypted messaging, as evidenced in the way the promised confidentiality of encrypted messaging is upturned completely when surveilling states seize the phones from suspected dissenters to download the data, or how seemingly closed group communication is channeled to “broadcast” top-down political messages. *WhatsApp in the World* features field-based and multidisciplinary research, including contributions from practitioners at leading fact-checking institutions on how encrypted instant messaging services play a critical role in shaping extreme speech and disinformation ecosystems in different regions of the world. From election manipulations in South Africa and Nigeria to Russian diaspora activism in Europe to WhatsApp use as an everyday infrastructure in Brazilian favelas and among nationalists in India, this volume demonstrates how many core features of WhatsApp—from disappearing messages and quick forwards to group chats and calls—allow for the amplification of disinformation and extreme speech. Highlighting complex political dynamics on the ground, it also introduces the significant methodological challenges of studying encrypted messaging services, providing critical pathways to address issues around ethical and technical issues of data protection, privacy, and confidentiality.

SAVE THE DATE ASCA PHD MEETING

2 October, 15.00 – 17.00 hrs. OMHP room C 2.17

All ASCA PhD candidates are invited to the general ASCA PhD meeting to discuss everything that is important to the PhD community. Please save the date

en suggest topics if you have them. It is not necessary to register.

NEW BOOK: MOMENTS OF MEANING-MAKING

On Anachronism, Becoming, and Conceptualizing

This is the 50th book authored by Mieke Bal, and her most personal one. A personal yet analytical ABC of terms, memories and concepts. With visual contributions by photographer Lena Verhoeff and graphic design by Lotte Lara Schröder. On September 9th 2025 ASCA in collaboration with Valiz will organize a festive book launch at 17:00 hrs. in Spui25. Save the Date!

Moments of Meaning-Making is both an analysis of memories and an aesthetic experience. Mieke Bal (1946) is a Dutch theorist, video artist, and a well-known writer and feminist. Now that Mieke Bal is getting older—being remarkably active and involved in many art and research projects—she has been ruminating on how to reflect on a full life shaped by different roles, ideas and experiences. She did not want to write a conventional autobiography, nor a scholarly retrospective, but instead conceived an ABC of Memories: an abecedarium that collects key terms of personal and conceptual significance.

Moments of Meaning-Making presents this collection of entries—Anachronism, Becoming, Criticism, Details, Envy, Friendship, Generosity, and many others—as a mesh of meaning. These terms are not ordered by narrative logic, but by affect, thought, and association. Together, they weave a layered and unique reflection on a life lived in and through ideas, teaching, art-making, and writing. Rather than isolating personal memories from intellectual work, Bal allows the two to meet and merge. The result is an intimate yet precise account of a way of thinking—a form of life writing that remains open, analytical, and exploratory.

Mieke Bal has been a Professor in Literary Theory (University of Amsterdam). In 1994 she was a co-founder of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA). Bal has been teaching at many institutes and universities in Europe, US, and beyond. She is known for her specific ways of ‘deep-reading’ artworks (e.g. Caravaggio, Rembrandt, Louise Bourgeois, Nalini Malani), and intertwining her research with various disciplines, such as contemporary and nineteenth-century literature, psycho-analysis, gender studies, philosophy, bible studies. Bal also works as a video artist, which she approaches as a specific form of cultural analysis.

CALL FOR PHD PARTICIPATION AND ANNOUNCEMENT

October 24, 2025: SCCS-ASCA Workshop

With a Keynote by Ben Highmore: "Cultural Analysis in the Wild" (Time and place to be announced)

It's a truism that cultural studies is different wherever it's practiced. In this workshop, two institutions come together to compare notes on how the field may respond to current challenges: the Sussex Centre for Cultural Studies (SCCS) and the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA). The workshop is informed by the SCCS seminars on the "state of cultural analysis" (which explore the most contemporary approaches to culture and cultural analysis) and the recent volume [The Future of Cultural Analysis: A Critical Inquiry](#) (edited by Murat Aydemir, Aylin Kuryel, and Noa Roei) on the pasts, presents, and futures of cultural analysis.

Keynote lecture by Ben Highmore: **"Cultural Analysis in the Wild."**

The history of cultural analysis can't be separated from its institutional settings, whether these are the adult education classes that Raymond Williams taught in the 1960s or the postgraduate opportunities for interdisciplinary close reading of more recent years. This talk shifts away from the question of how to undertake cultural analysis to the question of asking where cultural analysis is performed and pursued. What happens when we shift our purview to take in not just universities and adult education but art galleries, political collectives, TV documentaries, and so on? Perhaps we can think of a vernacular humanities, which has a rough and ready relationship to the established professional humanities ensconced in universities, and within this vernacular humanities perhaps we can see versions of a "wild" cultural analysis.

Ben Highmore is a professor of cultural studies at the University of Sussex, United Kingdom. He has published extensively on everyday life, lifestyle, domestic interiors, British art, and playgrounds.

Call for Participation PhD Panel:

This panel invites four to five postgraduate researchers from both ASCA and SCCS to collaborate on a response to the workshop theme. Participants will meet twice online, in September and early October 2025, to discuss a selection of readings and decide what form their response will take. This might involve co-writing short provocations or papers to be presented at the workshop or collaborating on visual, sonic, poetic, or creative responses. Suggested outputs may include a zine for wider consumption or a special issue. If you're interested in taking part, please contact Charlotte Fraser at charlotte.fraser@sussex.ac.uk.

CALL FOR PAPERS: MOVING IMAGE REMAINS: ON THE REFUSAL TO DISAPPEAR

January 29–31, 2026 at Goethe University Frankfurt.

What remains when images vanish? And what forms of resistance are articulated by archival absences, cinematic fragments, and afterimages? The international conference *Moving Image Remains: On the Refusal to Disappear* explores how material and immaterial remnants of film and media challenge dominant narratives and temporalities. Engaging with ghosted histories, unfinished projects, and marginal perspectives, the event invites contributions from scholars, artists, curators, and activists. Together, we will examine the politics of remaining across archival, cinematic, and aesthetic practices. Hosted by the DFG Research Training Group *Configurations of Film* in collaboration with partner institutions.

The Call for Papers is open until July 27, 2025. Abstracts can be submitted here: remains.conf@gmail.com

You can find more details in the attached PDF and on our website: <https://konfigurationen-des-films.de/en/call-for-papers-moving-image-remains-conference/>

THE LAURA BASSI SCHOLARSHIP

The Laura Bassi Scholarship was established in 2018 with the aim of providing editorial assistance to postgraduates and junior academics whose research focuses on neglected topics of study, broadly construed. The scholarships are open to every discipline and the next round of funding will be awarded in Summer 2025: Application deadline: 31 July 2025 | Results: 10 August 2025.

All currently enrolled master's and doctoral candidates are eligible to apply, as are academics in the first five years of full-time employment. Applicants are required to submit a completed application form along with their CV through the application portal by the relevant deadline. Further details, including previous winners, and the application portal can be found at: <https://editing.press/bassi>