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Wiener Str. 48, 01219 Dresden

MICHELLE M. WRIGHT (Emory University) BLACKNESS & TIME

What is Blackness? Despite some 53 years of Black Studies, few scholars have ventured to actually define Blackness. Because race is not a biological category—there is no such thing as a ‘Black gene’, and each nation defines race differently—exactly “what” makes Blackness becomes more and more elusive the deeper we search.

In this talk, Michelle M. Wright argues that in order to answer this question we must change its premise. Blackness, she argues, is not so much a ‘what’ as a ‘when’ and ‘where’. By going back to modern Europe’s original notions of time, derived from Newton, Wright shows how spacetime itself is warped around race, and how putting contemporary African diasporic writing in conversation with theoretical particle physics, we can arrive at definitions of Blackness that are more accurate and inclusive—and constantly updating themselves.

Michelle M. Wright is the Emory University College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor of English in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. She is an expert and prolific scholar in the field of American Studies, with specializations in African American and Black Diaspora Studies, Black Queer, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, as well as Science Studies. Wright’s book publications include *Becoming Black: Creating an Identity in the African Diaspora* (Duke University Press, 2004) and *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

This lecture is part of the *Lecturer on Tour* format, which also includes stopovers at the universities of Leipzig, Jena, Halle and Erfurt. It is organized by the Chair of American Studies with a Focus on Diversity Studies at the Institute of English and American Studies, TU Dresden, and generously funded by the U.S. Consulate General Leipzig.