**Simposio Internacional: Cultura y ciencia nacionales en el primer franquismo (1939-1959)**

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**Culture, Nation, Science: Changing Meanings**

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**Abstract**

All of the terms in this title, and in the title of this conference, are what social scientists like to call moving targets: the content and meanings of the terms science, culture, and nation have all changed fundamentally in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The aim of this talk is to explore these changes historically, focusing particularly on the fundamental issues posed for all three of these concepts, or entities, by dictatorial regimes. The theses to be expressed and supported here are: (1) that culture, nation, and science cannot be limited either to their intellectual “contents” or to their institutional embodiments, because ALL of them are BOTH institutions AND assemblages of ideas and (institutionalized) practices; (2) that culture, nation and science cannot be distinguished from one another in any absolute manner ( for example: science as the realm of truth versus politics as the realm of power), because interactions among them are ubiquitous, continuous, and fundamentally necessary.

Working from this complex, interactive conceptualization, the talk will argue (3) that changing relationships of science, culture and (here: national) politics taking place during, or resulting from radical regime changes (here: from democracies to dictatorships) should therefore be understood as reconfigurations of resource constellations resulting from complex negotiations amongst multiple historical actors. How such reconfigurations actually take place is a question that can only be answered empirically. However, it is important to emphasize (4) that in such circumstances historians’ views about the relationship of continuity and change must be reversed: NOT continuity, but rather radical change is “normal” here. Continuity – if it is achieved at all in such cases – requires intellectual, institutional and political work. That labour, and not the determination of end results and the assessment of value or the devaluation of those results according to some abstract standard of “good” or “bad” science, is the properly historical task.

**Nota biográfica**

Mitchell G. Ash (PhD Harvard University 1982) is Professor Emeritus of Modern History and Speaker of the PhD programme „The Sciences in Historical, Philosophical and Cultural Contexts“ at the University of Vienna, Austria. He is Full Member of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities and of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts.

He was professor of history at the University of Iowa (USA) from 1984 to 1997 and in Vienna from 1997 to 2016. He has held fellowships inter alia at the Wissenschaftskolleg / Institute for Advanced Study Berlin and the Max-Planck-Institute for History of Science Berlin, as well as visiting professorships or fellowships in Göttingen, Jerusalem, Berkeley, and Princeton.

Prof. Ash is author or editor of 16 books and more than 150 articles and chapters focusing on the relations of science, society and culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (including the political history of universities and sciences), the history of animal-human relations and the history of the human sciences.