



## **“The Emergence of the New” Symposium in Honor of Heinz Ickstadt**

The cultural dictionary of modernity has long cross-referenced the United States as „the New World“ where (European) history would take a new start. As a place of eschatological hope for Puritan dissenters, or as a place with the potential of social mobility for immigrants, the newness of America was predicated on the dismissal of Europe as corrupt or mired in outworn traditions and on the construction of a historical telos to whose achievement America was to take the lead. At the same time, American agents of the new had to come to terms with resistances at home. Emerson and Whitman demanded a constant renewal of efforts of their fellow Americans to overcome the retrospection of their age to explore the countless possibilities for growth both in everyday life as well as in the world at large. Modernist writers such as Pound turned such admonition into a battle-cry, attacking what they regarded as a stale conservatism or a meek spirit of reform. With postmodernism however, the literary rhetoric of the new at least may have entered a twilight phase, due to its appropriation by the fashion industry as the latest retro style, and by the media as the latest format of entertainment. The oppositions appear clear-cut: the old vs the new, tradition vs innovation, continuity vs rupture, for the proponents of the new declare what must count as old, and have to muster support for their proposition in order to turn it into a performative speech act. Yet there have always been strong counter-currents in American

literary and cultural history as well as in American pragmatist philosophy which have all deplored the disregard, neglect or destruction of (certain) American traditions. How is „the new“ envisioned, conjured up, legitimized and, above all, explained? How is „the old“ identified, disparaged, annihilated? What were such constructions “good for” in retrospect, and what counter-movements and dissenting voices challenged them? Which role do technological innovations and political confrontations play in the discourses of the new? Is there a rhetoric of utopia based on the idea of the old? To what extent can literary texts be described as hybrid forms that resist their authors’ rhetoric of the new? How does contemporary literature reflect and respond to the aging of the medium of the text? And is there perhaps a new sense of the world-making power of language? The conference will take place on October 28th-29th, 2016.

## **Venue**

John F. Kennedy Institute, Department of Literature, October 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Room 340

## **Conference Program**

### **Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

9:00–9:15 Ulla Haselstein (FU), Opening Remarks

#### 9:15–10:45    Beginnings

Panel Chair: Ulla Haselstein (FU)

Marc Chénétier (Paris-Diderot), The challenge of 'purely original' American poetry

Christa Buschendorf (Frankfurt), The Power of Janus: Work on Myth in American Literature

Werner Sollors (Harvard), The Same New Same New: Myths of a New Beginning

10:45–11:15 Coffee Break

#### 11:15–12:45    Returns

Panel Chair: Birte Wege (FU)

Sabine Sielke (Bonn), Nostalgia for the New

Peter Schneck (Osnabrück), The Past and the Curious: On Reading the New (Again)

Susanne Rohr (Hamburg), Making it New? Recent Developments in American Camp Comedies

12:45–14:15 Lunch

14:15–15:45 Reductions

Panel Chair: James Dorson (FU)

Astrid Franke (Tübingen), It's a Gift to Be Simple: Make It New

Andrew Gross (Göttingen), The Encumbrance of the New: Debt, Innovation, and the Aesthetics of Austerity

Bettina Friedl (Hamburg), "The future's a blank page": Agnes Martin's empty paintings

15:45–16:15 Coffee Break

16:15–17:45 Differences

Panel Chair: Martin Klepper (HU Berlin)

Jupp Schöpp (Hamburg), "We are now in a transition state": Margaret Fuller and the Emergence of a New Woman

Rob Kroes (Utrecht), Buffalo Bill and King Leopold's Ghost

Alfred Hornung (Mainz), Chinese Sources of the Emergence of the New

**Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

9:30–11:00 Abstractions

Panel Chair: Kornelia Freitag (RU Bochum)

Berndt Ostendorf (München), The Emergence of the New: Jazz as Liberating Modernism

Herwig Friedl (Düsseldorf), American Ontologies of the New

Jerzy Kutnik (Lublin), Mark Rothko, Robert Motherwell and Ad Reinhardt and the Question of Poetry

11:00–11:30 Coffee Break

11:30–13:00 Repetitions

Panel Chair: MaryAnn Snyder-Körber, (FU)

Ruth Mayer (Hannover), The Newness of the Ever-Same: Mass Culture, Modernity, and the Pleasures of Recycling

Hanjo Berressem, (Köln) "The Air-Borne Particles of the New:" Henry James and 'the aerosol of thought' "...

Evelyne Keitel (Chemnitz), Fargo & Fargo

13:00–14:00 Lunch

14:00–15:30 Collectivities

Panel Chair: Florian Sedlmeier (FU)

Frank Kelleter (FU), New(s) Media and the American Enlightenment: Theories of Political Communication around 1800

Winfried Fluck (FU), "Of the people, by the people, for the people"—Narratives About Democratic Culture

Ulfried Reichardt (Mannheim), Innovation and Tradition: Scale and Emergence in Richard Powers's *The Gold Bug Variations*

15:30 Heinz Ickstadt (FU), Closing Remarks

## **John F. Kennedy-Institute for North American Studies**

Registration  
Lansstr. 7-9  
14195 Berlin

The closest U-Bahn station is "Dahlem Dorf".

Link: <http://www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/en/index.html>

How to get there: <http://www.jfki.fu-berlin.de/en/information/visitingjfk/index.html>

## **Free University of Berlin**

The Free University has a helpful website with information on how to get to Dahlem and a downloadable PDF map of the campus.

Link: <http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/redaktion/orientierung/dahlem/index.html>

## **Seminaris Campus Hotel**

The hotel is right across the street from the JFK Institute.

Address:

Takustr. 39

14195 Berlin

Link: <http://www.seminaris.de/en/hotels/seminaris-campus-hotel-berlin.html>