The Postgraduate Forum of the German Association for American Studies met at the Bayerische Amerika Akademie im Amerikahaus München for this year's annual conference, 9-11 November 2001. The general purpose of the conference is to provide a forum for young scholars working on their doctoral theses or habilitations in the field of American studies. The papers given at the conference covered a wide spectrum of topics within the field.

Roxana Preda (Berlin) opened the conference with an analysis of concepts of looking in Disney's *Hunchback of Notre Dame*. She contextualized her remarks within current discourses on power and gender. In her paper "Ethics of Media Representation in the English and American Novel", Antje Kley (Kiel) discussed the relation between representation and moral questions exemplified in 'the rise of the novel'. Gordon Bölling (Köln) argued in his presentation on "Metafiction in Contemporary American and Anglo-Canadian Novels" that the 80's concept of 'historiographic metafiction' can no longer be applied to these texts. Steffi Zieher (Mannheim) presented a paper on "Futile Label or Meaningful Mode of Interpretation? The Concept of Genre and its Relevance in Postmodern Literature". Eva-Sabine Zehelein (Frankfurt/M.) provided a reading of Updike's the Rabbit series focusing on 'a country of ideas' as textual strategy. Steffi Dippold's (Berlin) stimulating presentation "All Minds Quote – Textkonstruktion und –rezeption bei Ralph Waldo Emerson" argued that in Emerson's aesthetic practice his autopoetic reflections are translated into the narrative performance of his texts. Thus his technique of quotation questions transcendental concepts of originality. Alexander Meier-Dörzenbach (Hamburg) provided an iconographic reading of Gertrude Stein's rose poems. Barbara Straumann (Zürich) in her paper "Hitchcock's and Nabokov's Dislocations Or Ironic Self-Reflexivity and Traumatic Facticity in Lolita" argued that traumatic knowledge is warded off by a focus on language thus forcing it to refer back to itself. Therefore self-reflexivity becomes the flipside of traumatic referentiality. In her presentation Iris Schmeisser (München) discussed whether the concept of Ethiopianism rather than Egyptianism serves to fashion an African-American cultural non-hegemonic identity in the art of the Harlem Renaissance. Heike Schäfer (Hamburg) explored and problematized the subject-object dichotomy using Merleau-Ponty's notion of the flesh. In his paper Detlef Klein (Berlin) provided a reading of Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* drawing on Heidegger's idea of the *aletheia*. Kirsten Raupach's paper "With Indolence to Fierceness Joined – Codes of Feminity in British Abolitionist Women Writing" discussed how the construction of Creole women served to establish a conservative code of behaviour for women against the background of Jacobean terror in France. In his analysis of Gorillaz' music video "Clint Eastwood" Gunter Süß (Chemnitz) showed how the transposition of one of Gorillaz' tunes into a commercial effects a postfordist resignification celebrating the ideals of today's globalized society. In a reading of John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces* Helga Beste (Heidelberg) discussed madness as a social construct functioning through 'separation' and 'confinement'. Katja Sarkowsky's (Frankfurt/M.) presentation "Constructions of 'Space' in Tomson Highway's Kiss of the Fur Queen" argued that 'space' is a multidimensional construct which can be traced at various levels of the literary text thus enabling an inspiring reading of Highway's novel. Juliane Bierschenk (Regensburg) in her paper "Monument Alley? Sites of Memory in the Southwest" claimed with respect to ethnic identities that monuments are contested objects fusing time and space. They are therefore more apt to preserve a specific memory than render a historical representation in a tri-ethnic region.

The conference was characterized by interesting presentations and lively discussions. The basic function of the Postgraduate Forum, namely to support young scholars and their current research, was thus successfully achieved, in particular by the many constructive comments and questions of the participants. The conference included a discussion of various issues concerning the Postgraduate Forum such as further projects and the organization of next year's conference as well as a brief tour through the city of Munich on the second evening. In addition to the speakers, the meeting was attended by several postgraduates from both Munich and other German universities.

We are grateful to the sponsors of the event: the German Association for American Studies (DGfA) and the Bavarian American Academy. In addition we wish to thank the members of the Amerika Institut at LMU for their support.

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