**Enlightenment Fictions – Fictions of Enlightenment**

The enlightenment is often regarded as a formative period for key concepts of modernity: its emphasis on critical reasoning, freethinking, unbiased observation of nature, experiment, or epistemology bearing witness to this. The revolution in the media (cf. Clifford Siskin and William Warner, *This is Enlightenment*, Chicago 2010), techniques of visual representation (John Bender and Michael Marrinan, *The Culture of Diagram*, Stanford 2010), Spinoza’s philosophy (Jonathan Israel, *Racial Enlightenment*, Oxford 2001), new departures in (political) economy, or universal human rights, to name only a few, have been selected as starting points from which to explore the significance of the period. On the other hand, in the wake of Adorno/Horkheimer's and Foucault's respective approaches towards the enligh­ten­ment, each scathingly critical of its dialectics in the masking and abuse of power, it became fashionable, particularly for postmodernist theorists, to set up (and fight for) very different epistemological (and political) standards and agendas. The debate about the legacy of the enlightenment is very much alive, explicitly in the scholarly community, and implicitly in English departments, in our choice of the texts, authors, and periods we teach. The time seems to have to come for an attempt to encourage a discussion on the direction British Eighteenth-Century Studies in Germany have taken in the last decades, and in which way they want to engage with them in the future.

The aim of this session is twofold. Under the heading of "enlightenment fictions" we shall discuss aspects of 18th century British literature that are epoch-making in every sense of the word (including phenomena illustrating the multiple cultural transfers of the age, both national and international, e.g. in translations, global mercenary relations, or in the development of a domestic publication industry, etc.). Another focus may be on works of 20th/21st century fiction which represent images of 18th century lives, society and culture.

Under the reverse heading of "fictions of enlighten­ment" we want to encourage a discussion of those narratives in criticism which develop, challenge, refute or confirm specific views of what the Enlightenment is and how we can relate to it. All these aspects work together in that they depend on, or illuminate each other.

Topics could include, but are not limited to:

* “Enlightenment” or “the Long Eighteenth Century”? Problems of conceptualization and periodization
* Making it new: innovative fiction in the 18th century
* Modern fiction/poetry/plays and/as images of the enlightenment
* Lives and opinions in the enlightenment
* The rise of the critic
* Books, periodicals, pamphlets, and the literary market place
* Money and trade: values and evaluation
* Essays, ethics and enlightenment
* Cultural transfer and enlightenment ideas
* English Studies and the resistance to/of the eighteenth century

Please send proposals for papers before 31 August 2013 to:

**Prof. Dr. Sabine Volk-Birke**

**Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik**

**Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg**

**06099 Halle**

**volk-birke@anglistik.uni-halle.de**