Lecture by Marta Figlerowicz (Yale): Auerbach’s Mimesis as an anthropology of violence

14 November 2022, 16:00 (CET), Online (Zoom) In this lecture, Marta Figlerowicz (Yale University) approaches Auerbach’s Mimesis through a new lens: She argues Auerbach’s text depicts figural thinking and ritual violence perpetuated against vulnerable populations as inextricable from each other. To an extent that has been underappreciated, she proposes, Mimesis also reflects on Auerbach’s own complicity with anti-Semitic Western ethnocentrism. To make this point, Figlerowicz takes a closer look at the book’s second chapter, “Fortunata”.

Central to the lecture is the uncovering of an unexpected intertext of this chapter, in which Auerbach focusses on the birth of figural thinking. The intertext is a then-recent bestseller about Nero’s persecution of the Christian, Quo Vadis? (1896) by polish Nobel Prize winner Henryk Sienkiewicz. The novel features Peter and Petronius as major characters and as each other’s doubles. Reading the chapter alongside this novel helps one see that Mimesis constructs, around such spectacles of violence, a Vichian account of Western culture’s foundational, recurrent brutality.

SPEAKER
Marta Figlerowicz, Yale University

MODERATOR
Hanna Engelmeier, KWI

PARTICIPATION
Participation online via Zoom. Register with Emily Beyer via emily.beyer@kwi-nrw.de with subject line „Participation via Zoom – 14.11.2022“ by 13 November, 2022.

ORGANISATION
The event is organized by the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities Essen (KWI).

About the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI):
The Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) Essen, Germany, is an interdisciplinary research centre following the tradition of international Institutes for Advanced Study. In its role as an inter-university institution connecting the Ruhr-University Bochum, the Technological University Dortmund and the University of Duisburg-Essen, the institute works together with researchers and scientists from its neighbouring universities as well as other partners from the federal state NRW and places in- and outside of Germany. Within the Ruhr area, the KWI is a place to share and discuss the questions and results of ambitious research with interested parties from the city and the greater region. Currently, work at the KWI focusses on the following areas: “cultural studies of science and science policy making”, “sociology of literature and culture”, “science communication”, and a “teaching lab”. Projects in the established research field “culture of communication”, as well as individual projects, will be continued.
www.kulturwissenschaften.de

URL for press release:
Event on the KWI website