



VOLUME 19
2012

*F*OCUS
ON GERMAN STUDIES
a journal on and beyond
German-language literature

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Edited by
Wes Jackson
Vanessa Plumly

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COVER: The images used for this year's cover design come from the laboratory research of Gabriel Benjamin Wickizer, former graduate student in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Cincinnati. His experiments, from which these images are derived, concern the nature of bubbles in various fluids. Wickizer incorporated a polymer technology that is used in a multitude of *pharmaceutical* applications and renders the liquid system much like a biological fluid system (shear-thinning rheology, mucus-like, water binding, excipient in nature). The images here are of a magnified syringe injecting various fluids with miniscule air bubbles.

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Special thanks to all members of our EDITORIAL BOARD, BOARD OF REVIEWERS and BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDENT REVIEWERS.

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17TH ANNUAL *Focus on German Studies* Conference

FROM THE EDITOR

The journalist and satirist P.J. O'Rourke once advised that one should "Always read something that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it."

For nineteen years, the German Department at the University of Cincinnati has aimed at publishing a journal on German literature and culture that, we hope, would meet with such a standard.

Focus on German Studies began as a biannual journal called, *Focus on Literatur*. Once the new millennium came along, we changed the journal to its current title and are proud to have the volume coupled with a yearly conference—now going on its seventeenth year.

The journal is representative of the current themes within the discipline of German studies and also of the changing methods of approaching cultural studies among a new generation of scholars. Given the diversity of the subject matter and the willingness of several of the contributors of this volume to integrate a cross-disciplinary perspective, I am very happy to present the following series of eleven articles in this year's *Focus on German Studies*, Volume 19, 2012.

In light of the topic of this past conference—the intersection of medicine and German culture—several of the articles have to do with literature, film, politics, and art that dealt with some aspect of the medical field.

Olivetta Gentilin, in her article, chose to explore the medical training of Georg Büchner and to show the influence of this educational background in his dramas. Not only does she compare and contrast some of the original medical reports that Büchner used as inspiration for his novella, *Lenz*, and his drama, *Woyzeck*, but she also problematizes the theological and religious perspectives that colored the medical lenses of Büchner's day.

Eric Johnson's article likewise deals with representations of medical training and the economic underpinnings of Germany's contemporary medical industry in his examination of Stefan Ruzowitzky's film, *Anatomie*.

Anna-Lisa Menck, approaching the psychoanalytic field, chose to problematize traditional Freudian interpretations of Arthur Schnitzler's works in her reading of *Fräulein Else*. Her article turns into an interesting, and even scathing, analysis of literary critics who would limit the interpretation of Schnitzler's character of Else to a mere Freudian example of female psychosis.

Given ETA Hoffmann's known interest in medicine, Giulia Ferro Milone chose to write about his integration of the subject into literature. She specifically focuses on Hoffmann's interest in magnetism and psychology in his story, "Das Gelübde."

Knut Langewand's article ventures into the political rhetoric of the Weimar Republic. He writes how both conservative and liberal parties were highly influenced by medical metaphors and consistently diagnosed the social problems of their day as a kind of medical "crisis."

Continuing in the theme of politics, Nathan Magnusson reexamines Heinrich Heine's *Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen*. Magnusson pays particular attention to Heine's descriptions of food and drink in the poem and draws attention to Heine's not-so-subtle observations regarding the "indigestible nature" of German culture and the lacking sense of hospitality he felt in his own home land.

Branching into other areas of cultural discourse, a few of our contributors dealt with German themes of identity and the power of transgressing social or cultural expectations in order to create a new sense of belonging.

Jara Schmidt examined two novels by Emine Sevgi Özdamar: *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei* and *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*. Regarding these two works, Schmidt shows how Özdamar uses the metaphor of international border crossing, as well as the transgression of cultural and familial norms, to describe the theme of self-created identities, particularly in Özdamar's female protagonists.

Ljudmila Bilkic discusses two films by Rosa von Praunheim: the 1971 film *Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt*, and his 1992 film, *Ich bin meine eigene Frau*. In this paper, Bilkic not only explores how the LGBT community has sought to navigate the prejudices against them in Germany over the past few decades, but also argues that von Praunheim has worked to create a kind of "third cinema" that bridges the gap between categorical documentary films and the conventions of narrative cinema.

Benjamin Nickl likewise ventures into a discussion of film and the problematic representations of Afro-Germans in cinema. Nickl's main subject is the adaptation of Michael Ende's children's book, *Momo*. Nickl provides a fascinating overview of racial stereotyping of non-white communities, and particularly of Afro-Germans, in white German cinema.

Treating the themes of memory and the cultural history of the GDR, Nadine Nowroth explored two works: Hans Joachim Schädlich's *Die Sache mit B.* and the work of his daughter, Susanne Schädlich, *Immer wieder Dezember*. Both of these books have to do with memories of the GDR—but from the perspectives of two different generations. Nowroth's article is a unique study of the connection between coming to terms with the past and the importance of familial reconciliation.

Sylvia Fischer's article, "Das Leben auf dem Lande in der Dramatik der DDR der Fünfzigerjahre" specifically examines Erwin Strittmatter's drama, *Katzgraben*, Bertolt Brecht's *Katzgraben-Notaten*, and Heiner Müllers *Die Umsiedlerin*. Her article is a compelling study of the creative "cross-pollination" that occurred between these writers as they sought to forge their own styles and beliefs concerning revolutionary theater.

This nineteenth edition also features an impressive twenty-four book reviews, spanning both primary and secondary literature, as well as a broad array of topics. Primary texts hail from well-established authors such as Angela Krauss, Tanja Dücker, Barbara Honigmann, and Michael Degen to successful newcomers to the literary scene, including Julya Rabinowich, who dissects the psyche of her characters in *Herznovelle*, Karl Markus-Gauß, whose work until recently has mainly been comprised of essays, and Eugen Ruge, who of late was the recipient of the German Book Prize for his *Im Zeiten des abnehmenden Lichts*. Julia Albrecht and Corinna Ponto's documentation of their entanglement/involvement in the RAF murder of Jürgen Ponto, and Gert Schramm's autobiography detailing his internment in Buchenwald and life thereafter, present personal accounts and lived narratives of these respective historical occurrences. These authors and texts are representative of the numerous pieces of primary literature evaluated herein.

Integral fields of study in today's academic landscape come to the fore in the secondary literature examined. These include, but are not limited to the fin-de-siècle; women's and gender studies; postcolonial studies; and film studies. Herzog and Lemon present new takes on the critique of

Austria-Hungary and its own ambivalence with regards to its identity and the cultural producers thereof, while Pailer and Schlöber's and Fronius and Richards' edited volumes seek to queer not only the realm of German theater through the theoretical lens of performativity, but also the composition of the German literary canon by diverging from the patriarchal literature that all too often pervades it. Filmic analyses are prominent in the works of both Brady and Leal and Nick Hodgkin who zoom in on the collaborative efforts of Wim Wenders and Peter Handke, and the East German conception of *Heimat* in contemporary German cinema. Ciarlo's focus is also on the visual, but diverges somewhat, to investigate the realm of consumerism and its utilization in constructing images of the 'perceived Other.' Ethics and politics are also prominent in many of the selected texts, demonstrating the breadth of the interdisciplinary research presented. We would like to thank all contributors of reviews for their acute assessment and unrelenting cooperation in introducing contemporary research and literature in the field to inquisitive peers.

Three scholars at various stages in their academic careers are introduced in the interviews that were conducted for this volume of *Focus on German Studies*. The institution of a DAAD visiting professorship to the Department of German Studies here at UC provided an opportunity to question Dr. Tanja Nusser on the constant (re) positioning of humans within an evolving and increasingly technologically constituted world.

Along similar lines, a project completed in the context of a Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies course afforded an exchange between doctoral students Vanessa Plumly and Anna-Lin Karl (Humboldt University in Berlin) on the existing status of the interdisciplinary field of Gender Studies in Germany and its anticipated future.

In the spring of 2012, our department had the satisfaction of welcoming Dr. Tanja van Hoorn from the University of Hannover. A generalist with expert knowledge of eighteenth-century as well as contemporary literature, Dr. van Hoorn conducted a truly enlightening Taft Lecture in May entitled, "Lyrische Leichen-Sichtungen, poetische Schädel-Dichtungen," on the influence of medical perspectives and poetry. Her interview was completed by Matthew Bauman.

Editing a journal comes with many different kinds of responsibilities, and sometimes it seems easy to get lost in the details of copy-editing, e-

mailing, creating spreadsheets, getting printing estimates, conferring with peer reviewers, and making sure the layout and design of the journal are prepared.

None of these things would have been possible without my fellow graduate students in the department nor without the wisdom and guidance of our advisors.

My thanks chiefly goes to Vanessa Plumly, my co-editor as well as this year's book review editor. I have met few scholars who approach their own research, as well as the research of others, with more joy and enthusiasm than Vanessa. Her natural buoyancy of spirit, patience, as well as her disciplined and dedicated attitude towards the completion of this volume of *Focus on German Studies* has provided the journal with a caffeine-jolt of creative energy, tenacity and vision. I could not have completed this volume without her brilliance. Thank you, Vanessa!

It is rare to have an endeavor like *Focus on German Studies* continue without the support and encouragement of the faculty, and none has been better at doing that than the professors here in the Department of German Studies.

This year we had to say goodbye to our former Department Head, Katharina Gerstenberger, as she left Cincinnati and moved onward and upward to the mountains in Salt Lake City, Utah. Though she is no longer technically a part of the department, the ripple-effect of her belief in me and Vanessa as editors of this journal are still being felt. It was her insight, encouragement, and guidance that kept Vanessa and I afloat at different times in the midst of a sea of details over this past year. We are so sad to see her go, but so incredibly thankful to have been under her leadership.

I would also like to thank this year's new Department Head, Todd Herzog, for his continued support and steady hand of affirmation on the graduate students as we worked on this journal and on the conference. Todd's openness and enthusiasm for such a graduate student undertaking continues to fuel the vision for us as innovative contributors to the field.

Tanja Nusser has, likewise, proved an invaluable counselor, contributor, and aid during this past year as our graduate advisor. She has been a phenomenal intellectual resource and a dynamic new force for change and renewed engagement in the field of German Studies as well as media studies in the department. Not only that, she has again and again offered a listening ear and a timely word as to how to balance the

responsibilities of teaching, research, as well as carrying out the duties of a conference and a journal to completion.

The Graduate Student Governance Association of the University of Cincinnati also more than deserves our thanks for their continued financial support, as well as the personal encouragement that has come from their leadership—they know the value of these publications to us as graduate students, and they show it.

From the beginning of the journal, we have received assistance from the Graduate School here at the University of Cincinnati. We are incredibly appreciative for their multi-generational vision of encouragement to us as developing scholars.

We would also like to thank Robert Zierolf, our Graduate School Dean for his support and dedication to this project and to our department.

Neither this journal, nor the conference, would be possible were it not for the generous financial support of The Charles Phelps Taft Research Center and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). For their continued support we are truly thankful.

Sarah Porterfield's patience and brilliance lies behind the design work and the layout of this volume—she made an amazing volume of scholarship actually *look* amazing. Thank you, Sarah!

I would also like to say an additional special thanks to the graduate students of this department, for their willingness to volunteer their time and energy to handle the small devils in the details as they crop up. I would especially like to thank next year's co-editor, Alexandra Parks, and Matthew Bauman for their cool heads and tireless efforts. Their willing service to the department, their good humor, and hard work helps keep the rest of us calm when we are stressed, and their focus helps keeps the rest of us on schedule. You are both a true grace to this department indeed.

Thank you all, again, for your amazing support this year!

WES JACKSON
