



FOCUS
ON GERMAN STUDIES
VOLUME 17 - 2010

Edited by

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Published by the German Graduate Student Governance
Association of the University of Cincinnati

Focus on German Studies is published annually by the
German Graduate Student Governance Association of the University of Cincinnati

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Council of Editors of Learned Journals

ISSN 1076-5697

COVER

“The Book Fool” from Sebastian Brant’s *Ship of Fools*, London, 1570. Courtesy of the Archives and Rare Books Department, University of Cincinnati Libraries.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The seventeenth volume of Focus on German Studies was made possible only with the continued support the University of Cincinnati Graduate Student Governance Association. We are deeply indebted to them for the ongoing support. Department Head **Professor Katharina Gerstenberger** and the Faculty Advisor **Professor Richard E. Schade** deserve our sincere gratitude for helping in so many ways to keep Focus in operation. Many graduate students volunteered their time to help with this volume.

Special thanks to all members of our EDITORIAL BOARD, BOARD OF REVIEWERS and BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDENT REVIEWERS. Each article considered for this volume was refereed by two or more of the following professors:

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FROM THE EDITOR

For seventeen years, the German Department at the University of Cincinnati has been fortunate enough to publish a successful graduate student journal. What began with a biannual edition of *Focus on Literatur* changed into an annual publication entitled *Focus on German Studies* with the new millennium. When I arrived at the University of Cincinnati four years ago, *Focus* had already been a well-established tradition not only within the department but also within the German Studies community at large. I knew quickly that I wanted to be involved with this extraordinary project further down the road in my academic career, and it was one of the reasons I stayed at the University of Cincinnati. The chance to become editor-in-chief came rather sooner than expected, and it has been a busy year with many surprises, challenges and rewards. The biggest reward of our work is the one you are holding in your hands: *Focus on German Studies*, Volume 17, 2010.

This year has brought a couple of changes for *Focus*. For the first time in *Focus* history, Joshua Arnold, the book review editor of this issue, was able to secure two films for the review section, a tradition we hope to maintain in subsequent volumes. Furthermore, *Focus on German Studies* has taken a rather big step into the academic future and has begun to digitalize past volumes as well as put the 2008 issue online at a University of Cincinnati data space accessible to the World Wide Web. The coming year is going to further this process, with the goal to upload all previous volumes from 1994 to 2009. The seventeenth volume (2010) and all future volumes, will be digitally available one year from the original publication date. We hope that by making *Focus* widely available, we will both further the publication's excellent reputation as a research journal and introduce it to more German Studies professionals.

There is no doubt that *Focus on German Studies* has been for the past fifteen years and will continue to be an important publication opportunity for graduate students all over the world. To illustrate that point, more than thirty articles were sent to *Focus on German Studies* leading up to the deadline and even after the deadline had passed, we still received submissions which will be part of the next volume's selection process. Contributions from New Zealand, Germany, the US and Canada illustrate the global reach *Focus* has by now. The six articles published in this volume span from sixteenth-century fugitive sheets to post-millennium texts, films and memorials. They cover current topics

like fundamentalism, memory culture and language or identity crises. You will find a brief synopsis of all six articles in this introduction to *Focus on German Studies* 2010.

In his article “Faithful Bodies: Anatomy and Emblematic Fugitive Sheets in Late Sixteenth-Century Wittenberg,” Jameson Kısmet Bell takes us into the sixteenth-century world of Philipp Melanchthon at the University of Wittenberg who employed, among other things, fugitive sheets of anatomy to educate students. It further teaches us, yet again, the importance of emblems and anatomy in the Early Modern Period and the strong belief of anatomy as an organizing and controlling tool for the ‘mass of flesh’ that the body would otherwise be.

The second article, entitled “Von Spanien bis nach Damaskus: Über fundamentalistische Verhaltensweisen in Heinrich Heines *Almansor*,” deals with the Jewish poet’s drama about the conflict between Christians and Muslims in Granada of the sixteenth century. Constantin Sonkwé Tayim writes about a highly relevant topic, arguing that Heine tried to search for, if not offer, a less militant way to coexist and tolerate each other’s religions and cultures by portraying a rather violent and tragic love story between a converted Christian, a refugee Muslim and their respective families. Sonkwé Tayim works with Edward Said’s influential monograph *Orientalism* to illustrate nineteenth-century approaches to the Orient but also focuses on the history of fundamentalism and its relationship to Christianity.

Immanuel Nover’s article “„Das klingt zwar sehr klar. [...] Ist es aber durchaus nicht.“ – Arthur Schnitzers *Anatol* als Schnittstelle von Psychoanalyse, Empiriekritizismus und Sprachkritik“ brings together Schnitzler’s play, Hofmannsthal’s crisis of language and the practice of hypnosis. Nover argues convincingly that previous interpretations of the play have neglected to emphasize the importance of philosophical and psychological theories of the *fin de siècle* era and he familiarizes the reader with the identity deconstruction and fragmentation of Schnitzler’s characters.

Interestingly enough, films made a hundred years after Schnitzler are still discussing identity crises, and they are the topic of Katrin Polak-Springer’s article. Her article, “Eine Qualität, von der man weiß, dass es sie schon einmal gegeben hat.” Young Berlin filmmakers on the trail of *New German Cinema*” connects Alexander Kluge’s *Abschied von Gestern* from the 1960s to Sören Voigt’s *Identity Kills* from 2003 in the tradition of the *Autorenkino*, focusing on identity issues, the role of women and the position of the author / director and the audience.

The fifth article in this edition deals with the short-lived *Freedom Memorial* by Alexandra Hildebrandt in Berlin as part of an ever more

complicated memory discourse in Germany in general and in the capital specifically. Katrin Mascha argues in her article “A Vanished Site: The *Freedom Memorial* at Checkpoint Charlie and the Discourse about Cold War Legacies in Contemporary Berlin” that Hildebrandt and her group erected the memorial dedicated to the victims of the Wall without following the established protocols and thus failed with their controversial endeavor.

In his article on Turkish-German nationalism in relation to the world of soccer, Gavin Hicks introduces us to Turkish-German radio and internet personality Tiger, who is a commentator for soccer matches. Hicks concerns himself with the problems of nationalism in Germany’s multi-cultural society in his article “Sporting Nationalism and Turkish-German Ethno-Comedy: Tiger’s ‘Süper EM-Stüdyo.’” Quite fittingly, while editing this journal the German national team placed third in the 2010 Soccer World Cup in South Africa, and the flag-waving, face-colored crowds all over German cities proved once more the enthusiasm as well as the diversity of German fandom as discussed by Hicks and personified by Tiger.

I trust that you will find the articles interesting, thought-provoking and informative. Additionally, the book review section will hopefully stir your curiosity about several new publications in both the primary as well as the secondary literature field.

This year we have an exciting complement of nineteen book reviews, edited by Joshua Arnold. Among the works of primary literature are an impressive array of diverse texts from both established authors like Maxim Biller as well as relative newcomers and rising stars in the literary world. Though each work is itself unique, they are often surprisingly complementary. The polyphony of Reinhard Jirgl’s *Die Stille* is echoed in Angelika Ovrath’s *Flughafenfische*, which follows three characters whose paths cross in the unexpectedly vivid environment within an airport. The so-called Germanness of Terezia Mora’s *Der einzige Mann auf dem Kontinent* is contrasted by the questions of German-Jewish identity present in Maxim Biller’s *Der gebrauchte Jude*. The inclusion of Heinrich Detering’s *Wrist* offers a glimpse of German poetry, which too often is given too short a shrift. Works by Daniel Kehlmann, Juli Zeh and Judith Hermann round out the list of primary literature. These young, prolific authors have had quite an impact on German literature in recent years and will likely continue to do so. Bridging the gap between primary and secondary works are two documentary films, *Bloodlines* and *Sinking the Gustloff*. This is the first time

films have been reviewed in *Focus*, but we will certainly continue to embrace diverse media into the future.

The selection of secondary literature is no less diverse, covering topics such as digital media, transcultural literature and crime literature. These books were selected to provide a small, yet potent survey of current American and European German Studies scholarship. The work of these great scholars offers a look at bigger pictures like Germany's socialist modernity and questions of generational conflict. Several anthologies offer variegated perspectives on multiple topics, such as the demise of European communism, the controversial author Günter Grass, the fascinating body of post war German films and the works of Walter Kempowski, Bernhard Schlink and Martin Walser. We would like to thank the reviewers for their time and effort and hope to have awakened the desire in the reader to peruse the fruits of their labor.

2009 / 2010 proved to be a turbulent and especially prolific year for the interview section of *Focus on German Studies*. Guest lecturers, visiting professors and conference keynote speakers agreed to be interviewed by graduate students from the University of Cincinnati.

This year's *Max Kade Distinguished Visiting Professor*, Dr. Doris Bachmann-Medick, had an interesting and informative conversation with Graham Hentschel about (spacial) turns, post-modernism and intercultural approaches to literature. Her husband, renowned Early Modern specialist Dr. Hans Medick, held a fascinating speech as Taft guest lecturer at UC, entitled "The Thirty Years' War as Experience and Memory: Contemporary Perceptions of a Macro-Historical Even," and was consequently interviewed by Wesley Jackson on his experience and observations in Cincinnati with its rich German culture from the previous centuries.

The third interview was conducted by Alexandra Parks and Tobias Grünthal with *Visiting Faculty Member* and poet Hans-Michael Speier, who not only had a reading at the University of Cincinnati in the Fall of 2009 but was also invited to talk about an earlier interview in *Focus* 1999 / 2000. He gives valuable insight into the life, inspiration and mind of a poet, editor, translator and professor of German.

Our department head, Katharina Gerstenberger, was co-organizer of the big *Wall Conference* at the University of Cincinnati, which took place in November 2009. Among the well-known keynote speakers was historian John Sheehan, whom Nicole Lyon, PhD student in the History Department of the University of Cincinnati, interviewed about his experience in Berlin 1989 when the *Wall* fell, about the challenges of teaching (German) history and about research projects past and present.

We conclude our interview section with Alexandra Hagen's interview with Sabine Wilke, Department Chair and Faculty Member at the University of Washington, Seattle. Professor Wilke was the keynote speaker at the 2009 *Focus on German Studies Conference*, entitled "Morphing Identities and the Merging of Cultures in German Language, Literature and Film," where she held a talk about Werner Herzog's *Herz aus Glas*. Alexandra Hagen asked her about the difficulties of combining research, teaching and administrative duties as well as about the challenges and difficulties German Studies as a discipline encounters and increasingly will have to face in the future and how Professor Wilke and her faculty are trying to deal with these developments.

The next *Focus on German Studies Conference* is coming up in October 2010. Joshua Arnold, who is the editor-in-chief for the eighteenth volume of *Focus on German Studies* (2010 / 2011) is currently reading abstracts on the topic of "(Not) Talking about My Generation: Conflict, Competition and Criticism Within and Between Generations in German Literature and Film." Monika Shafi from the University of Delaware is going to give her keynote lecture in the *Kade Center* at UC on October 16, 2010. Shafi will be talking about "Generational Bonds in Günter Grass's Autobiographical Work." I am very much looking forward to the conference, the keynote address and what promises to be a diverse collection of presentations.

Like anybody who organizes a big enterprise, I had a lot of help not only from fellow graduate students in the Department of German Studies, but also from professors at UC. I would like to use this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to Alexandra Hagen, the editor-in-chief of Volume 16, who was always at my side with advice and expertise. Furthermore, I would like to thank Professor Katharina Gerstenberger and Professor Richard E. Schade who not only each evaluated an article for this edition, but also offered invaluable guidance and listened to my occasional frustration with the editing process.

This enterprise of a graduate student journal would not be possible without the help of experts in the field. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the evaluators all over the world, from Australia, Africa, Europe and the US, for their volunteered time and detailed comments on all articles, which undoubtedly furthered the education of every author who submitted to *Focus*, published and unpublished ones alike. The *Focus on German Studies* copy-editor team deserves special mention, as I have relied on their time, energy and expertise quite a lot. I would especially like to thank Alexandra Parks and Graham Hentschel

for their never-failing willingness to make *Focus* a priority in their lives with a day's notice.

It has been an unbelievably enlightening year for me, both personally and academically. It is with pride and joy that I step down now as editor-in-chief. I look forward to the future of *Focus on German Studies* in the capable hands of Joshua Arnold and Wesley Jackson.

Marie Büsch
