
German Studies Association

Newsletter

**Volume XXXII
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The German Studies Association sends its condolences to all those who were injured and expresses its grief for all those who lost their lives as a result of the terrible events at Virginia Tech. This event has especially touched us as members of the larger community of German Studies, and we extend our heartfelt sympathies to the family and friends of Jamie Bishop and to the families and friends of his students.

German Studies Association

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Members and Friends of the GSA,

Typically, the spring issue of the *GSA Newsletter* is less extensive than the winter issue; but that does not mean that our articles and reports are less significant. Among other things, we are continuing new features that we recently introduced, and are adding some new(er) ones to this one.

We begin, as usual, with a letter from our new President, Sara Lennox. Her letter is really an extended essay on recent developments of relevance to German Studies (e.g., in the *MLA*). We continue with GSA-related announcements, including material relevant to the forthcoming thirty-first annual conference in San Diego.

We follow with a new section on “The GSA and Affiliated/Related Organizations.” The German Studies Association is affiliated or engaged with a variety of organizations in North America and Europe, and we think it important for our members to be aware of these important connections. Thus we are asking these organizations to introduce themselves to our members in these pages. It is entirely appropriate that we begin this feature—which will be a regular part of the *Newsletter*—with descriptions of two especially important organizations, the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

Our now-regular section on “Issues and Discussions in German Studies” takes up the next part of the *Newsletter*, with an extremely interesting set of responses, gathered by Frank Trommler (University of Pennsylvania) to last issue’s Open Letter from our member Hans-Peter Söder (Wayne State University/Universität München).

With this issue we are (re)launching a regular series of “Reports and Announcements.” These will include not only detailed descriptions of research projects that may be of interest to our members but also time-sensitive announcements of programs and activities germane to the GSA. We launch this section with a description of the long-term research project on “Preußen als Kulturstaat” at the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften.

As always, we welcome your ideas, suggestions, criticisms, and contributions. **We are especially interested in learning if you would be interested in replacing this printed Newsletter with an updatable electronic version that would only be accessible to paid-up members.** Please let us know what you think!

Alles Gute,

David

David E. Barclay
Executive Director
German Studies Association

Letter from the President

Dear GSA Colleagues,

In her presidential address at the 2006 GSA conference, published in the Winter 2006 *GSA Newsletter*, Kathy Roper provided a valuable overview of GSA-related interdisciplinary initiatives to date and pointed GSA members in the direction of further interdisciplinary efforts. Perhaps because I direct an interdisciplinary program in the social sciences (the Social Thought and Political Economy Program, STPEC) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst as well as holding a professorship there in German and Scandinavian Studies, I often find myself contending with scholarship that relies on disciplinary assumptions far different than the ones in which I was trained. As Kathy and David Barclay outlined in the Winter *Newsletter*, the GSA will continue to promote interdisciplinary encounters, at our conferences, in *GSR*, in the newsletters, and we hope in other venues too. Here I would like to use my presidential letter to you to advance those discussions. In my view, one of the biggest barriers impeding interdisciplinary cooperation is our failure to engage in ongoing conversations across interdisciplinary boundaries. I cannot speak for other fields, but I know very well that many members of my own discipline of German literary and cultural studies do not stay abreast of the appearance of current publications in German history, anthropology, political science, etc.—let alone *read* those new studies. Even more crucially, scholars in German Studies often seem to be wearing blinders that keep them from attending to debates raging in a neighboring field. In the rest of this letter I would like to talk about some of those debates from my own disciplinary vantage point. My interest here is to move beyond that frequent quip about our conferences, that GSA interdisciplinarity consists of Germanists, historians, and political scientists meeting in separate sessions in adjacent rooms. I would like to encourage us to conduct our inter-, trans-, and multi-disciplinary arguments in the *same* room, and I hope that out of such contentious interchanges something new and productive for all of German Studies may emerge.

Certainly one of the “hottest” topics in the field of German history is transnationalism. Michael Geyer told us in his luncheon talk at the 2006 conference, published in the Winter 2006 *Newsletter*, that “the current excitement about transnational history . . . has effectively led to a reorientation of scholarly perspective and an emergent new consensus” (29). That this excitement is widely shared within the discipline of history is indicated by the publication of a “Conversation On Transnational History,” featuring six scholars who focus variously on social and economic, diplomatic, gender, and literary history of the British empire, South Asia, the nineteenth-century U.S., Africa, Latin America, and the globe, among other places, published in the *American Historical Review* in December 2006.¹ (On the other hand, not all German historians may be entirely enthralled by the new approach. Though a recent collection in honor of the eminent historian Jürgen Kocka was entitled *Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien*. Kocka himself responded at a February 2007 conference with a talk entitled “Geschichtswissenschaft im Umbruch? Transnationalisierung als Trend und Fiktion,”

in which, according to H-Soz-u-Kult, “[er] das Primat der Nationalgeschichte herausstrich”!) As Geyer emphasized, how transnational approaches are to be defined remains highly contested, but all rest, he tells us, on the “wager . . . that even the most parochial and inward-turned are imbricated in other worlds of action and imagination that range beyond parish or nation” (30). I understand his assertion to mean that at least in the modern period the nations of the world are inextricably entangled, so that (almost?) all human experiences about which historians might want to write also have a transnational dimension.

Young-Sun Hong formulates the project of transnational history differently; for her, “doing transnational history means deconstructing the nation-state as one of the fundamental categories through which Western modernity has long been narrated and doing so by showing how the national intersects with or is imbricated in sub- and supra-national phenomena whose repression or forgetting first makes possible the political and cultural construction of the nation.” Thus for Hong transnationality is not just about hitherto-neglected interconnections, but instead demands a more emphatic change in optic that allows the historian to construct narratives that the primacy of the nation state obscured. Even as they believe they are transnationalizing, German historians in Hong’s view confront the danger of remaining enmired in Eurocentric assumptions if they limit their new adventuresomeness merely to investigating the relationship of Germany to other parts of Europe, the peril of “European transnationalism” to which, she argues, Habermas and Derrida fall prey in their 2003 manifesto declaring “the birth of a new European public sphere” (Levy et al. 8 cited in Hong). Evidently very serious political questions also underwrite efforts to elaborate the method of transnational history.

But what is relevant for my argument here is that this exciting debate in the discipline of history is, in the sense that Geyer and Hong have defined it, almost entirely not at issue in the field of German literary and cultural studies. (Yes, I am prepared to be bombarded with objections to this claim, and the GSA can provide a forum to continue the debate!) A glance through the 2006 MLA convention program (always a good measure of what is “in”) shows numerous sessions with the term “transnational” in their title—but none on German topics. (Of course, it is not at all clear what “transnational” in those titles means, and the one transnational panel I was able to squeeze in between job candidates was very disappointing.) The September 2006 issue of the journal *Modernism/Modernity* was focused on “Modernism and Transnationalisms”—without German topics. To be sure, several decades of German Studies scholarship has addressed migrants’ literature, and more recently colonial and postcolonial topics have received much attention. Globalization has been the focus of much attention, among other places in successive forums in *German Quarterly*. Our colleague Nina Berman is one strong exception to my general complaint, since she is the one literary scholar to contribute to the H-German forum on transnationalism and also wrote “On the Relevance of Comparative Cultural Knowledge for German Literary Studies” for a *German Quarterly* forum. Doubtless other scholars in my field whose work I simply do not know address transnational topics. It may be that German-Jewish studies, a field I do not know well, has elaborated transnational methods, and I know that Black German studies

is beginning to do so. Certainly German literary and cultural studies now address many cultural topics that are situated in transnational spaces and draw on transnational impulses. But in my observation German literary studies has given little thought to what it would mean for a national literature department to undertake the almost inconceivable project of changing the optic with which we examine our field to repudiate the primacy of the national culture. We are, after all, the *German Department*, and we teach our students the German language. Exploring the relationships of two or more literatures is not our province, but that of Comparative Literature. Much less than German historians, who know that they will be expected to teach at least about all of European history, we don't know very much about the cultures of countries other than those of German-speaking ones, so that we are not at all prepared to undertake transnational scholarship, and in my view, we, like every other national literature, have not thought at all about how we might provide graduate students and undergraduates with the information and language skills to observe, and write, from the perspective of the new transnational optic. This worries me very much, and I am wondering how as literary and cultural studies scholars can also learn to talk about "things German" in a transnational way. If scholarship on German cultural studies continues to be founded on assumptions that historians question, we will encounter increasingly more difficulty in working together across disciplines. And I am concerned as well that the stubborn resistance of German Departments (much more constrained than English, French, and Spanish Departments because German-language texts are produced almost entirely in three countries of Europe) to reconceive themselves as post-national may also be damaging to their long-term survival.

On the other hand, developments are underway in German Departments of which scholars in other German Studies fields may be unaware. Two initiatives reflective of a longer-term change recently sought public expression quite independently of each other. At the 2006 MLA convention, the MLA's Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages sponsored a panel in which they announced far-reaching recommendations for foreign language departments. An article in the on-line journal *insidehighered.com* reported on January 2, 2007: "The panel, organized by the Modern Language Association, wants to jettison the traditional model in which language instruction is followed primarily by literary study. In its place, the panel would like to see departments merge study of language and literature while adding more study of history, culture, economics, and society—in some respects turning language programs into area studies programs." In its report, the committee calls for "a reevaluation of the entire content of undergraduate and graduate departments of foreign languages and literatures with a view to bringing them in line with the real educational needs of a global society and economy" and argues that the goal of such changes is "transcultural understanding," defined as "the ability to comprehend and analyze the *cultural narratives* that appear in every kind of expressive form, from political rhetoric, essays, journalism, humor, advertising, legal documents, to visual forms and music" (Geisler).² Our colleague Michael Geisler, a member of the committee, stressed "that the panel was not against the study of literature, but against a 'literature-centered model.' He said that the panel wants literature to

be seen as ‘one of many forms of narrative to help us understand a given culture’” (Jaschik). According to Geisler: “Proficiency needs to be demonstrated, he said, not only in language, literature and art, but in the mass media, society, history, economics, social welfare, religion, government and other aspects of society. A true ‘transcultural understanding’ of a place is needed that cannot be achieved with a literary-dominated program, he said” (Jaschik). Certainly many members of foreign language departments will find these proposals “revolutionary” and “potentially quite controversial,” as *insidehighered.com* noted (Jaschik). However, the proposals seem very much to move in the direction of the kind of interdisciplinary study that the German Studies Association is proposing—with some caveats, as I will outline below. According to the MLA, the final report has not yet been published and will not be for a while, though a roundtable exchange among members of the committee on the topic will be published in the next *ADFL Bulletin*.

Also in January 2007, *German Quarterly* posted a forum on the *GQ* Web site entitled “Is Literature Still Central to German Studies?” It is inaugurated by a short essay by Frank Trommler to which fifteen other colleagues from U.S. German literary studies (full disclosure: including me) responded. Thoughtful as always, Trommler suggests that literature (in German as in other national literature departments) has lost credibility and relevance because it can no longer be understood either to represent universal values or offer “the intellectual (spiritual) key to the understanding of other nations.” Instead, “literature which once represented universal values is now seen as representing values that are more local, historical, connected to particular times and places, to particular groups and their interests” (Trommler citing Scholes 21). Yet, though Trommler observes that now many cultural products besides literature contend for the attention of German Departments, he also maintains that “only literary works consistently engender both critical distance to and emotional identification with alterity where lapses of logic and the experience of ambiguities are recognized parts of the process of intercultural understanding.” A former president of the GSA himself (indeed, whose own presidential address, as Kathy Roper reminded us, was entitled “History, Germanistik, Political Science: Is There an Association or Just a Meeting?” [Roper 22]), Trommler notes that “we can account for the challenge to [literature’s] centrality in the discipline of German through the promotion of cultural studies in general and German Studies as an interdisciplinary venture in particular.” Not surprisingly, the responses to Trommler’s piece span quite a wide spectrum of opinion on the status of literature today. Though almost all respondents seem to agree that German Departments confront different circumstances than even a few decades ago and that literature is properly read within its historical and cultural context, not a few colleagues defend, if not literature’s universal value, at least its special status vis-à-vis other varieties of cultural production (not, as I understand it, strictly speaking a cultural studies position). Trommler ends his short essay by maintaining: “My own conclusion is that the more debate it draws in the discipline, the more authority the aesthetic genre maintains (or regains) amidst the plethora of visual, scientific, and communication enterprises.” To that end, a roundtable on this question has been organized for the 2007 GSA conference.

From the perspective of the interdisciplinary German Studies on which this letter focuses, I have two concerns with these developments in German literary and cultural studies. First, I think the title of the *GQ* forum still manifests the confusion between the two concepts of “German Studies” on which the “GSA Guidelines” comment and to which Kathy Roper alluded in her presidential address: the one, “the idea at the heart of the GSA’s mission,” as she put it, “inter- or multidisciplinary scholarship on the German-speaking world”; the other “‘a shift from the philological focus of German *Germanistik* to a broader concentration on culture studies’ in academic departments” (23). It seems that the initiators of the *GQ* forum have opted for the second meaning (though it is not entirely clear what position all the respondents take), but, as I observed in my own response: “If [German Studies] means the interdisciplinary study of “things German,” which is the GSA definition, then a lot of people would agree that literature is not central and maybe never even was.” As president of this interdisciplinary organization, I am committed to a more inclusive definition of the field, and I would like to hear from historians, political scientists, anthropologists, and others before we reach any conclusive definitions about literature’s centrality. Secondly and somewhat obversely, I think that the participants in the MLA panel and the *GQ* discussions both utilize the term “culture” (“one of the two or three most complete in the English language,” as Raymond Williams told us long ago [87]) with a good deal of fuzziness, and that has significant implications for a German Department’s competence to deal with culture. If the shift from a literature to a broader culture focus continues to mean an emphasis on semiotic or symbolic systems, training in literary studies may well provide Germanists with the skills to broaden their scope, though they will of course also have to attend to generic specificities. But if “culture” is used in the anthropological sense to mean “a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general” (Williams 90), as is implied when German Departments are called upon to become area studies programs, then I think we Germanists are out of our league. As I wrote in the *GQ* forum: “Some people feel quite strongly that language departments should take on the task of representing an entire national culture. I myself am concerned that people trained in literature and/or cultural studies do not always have the skills and knowledge to teach students the history, sociology, anthropology, and economics of Germany. My position would be that, if this really is the direction language departments choose to go, they either have to hire scholars within their own departments with other kinds of disciplinary expertise (the German Department at the University of Massachusetts recently hired a historian) or reconceptualize their project by establishing permanent links to scholars in other departments (which is what the “GSA Guidelines” propose)—otherwise the knowledge about the German-speaking countries we provide for undergraduate and graduate students will be superficial and dilettantish.” To be sure, the MLA Committee proposes: “We will need to develop (and secure funding for) workshops on how to teach the different modules of the new curriculum for those of us who have been trained exclusively in the analysis of literary texts” (Geisler). But, were I a historian or a political scientist, I would be somewhat aghast at the notion that a

“workshop” could adequately prepare a Germanist to teach materials from my own discipline even to undergraduates. Here again I propose that we conduct contentious disciplinary and interdisciplinary debates on these issues—and use the GSA as a forum to do so.

I wish I could also comment on recent developments have taken place in other German Studies disciplines like political science, anthropology, art and architectural history, music history, etc. that might be relevant for all of interdisciplinary German Studies, But I am not competent to do so. I suspect the addition of each new discipline would confront interdisciplinary German Studies with new conundrums. It would be useful if other GSA members could also use the pages of the *GSA Newsletter* to discuss new tendencies in their fields.

Finally, while we are talking across many boundaries, I think all North American GSA members also need to attend to Hans-Peter Söder’s observations on the *Zweigleisigkeit* of current GSA metacultures, consisting of “German *Germans*” and “American Germanists who pursue German studies . . .—and never the twain shall meet” (38). It is true that we (and I feel myself *ertappt* as well) sometimes seem smugly convinced of the superiority of our scholarly methods over those practiced in Germany, and Söder cautions “that there are certain political and even hegemonic trends at the GSA that ought to be checked before we become a society that should more aptly be called ‘Studies on a Germany: How We Americans Would Like To See It’” (43). At a conference on Black European Studies last summer in Berlin, I was chastened to discover that even U.S. scholars who consider themselves utterly “on the right side” (like me!) can be regarded by non-Americans as arrogant purveyors of a cultural imperialism enabled by superior access to academic resources. We may indeed need to check our conception of ourselves as the German scholarly vanguard, with the German cultural *Bummelzug* following somewhere far behind, as Söder suggests. It can only be to everyone’s benefit “to increase the number of participants from Germany, Austria and Switzerland” and from other countries of the world—as David Barclay is intending to encourage with the creation of an international GSA *Beirat*. Certainly Söder is right that we need to talk to our counterparts elsewhere as well as GSA members in other disciplines: “Instead of independence, we need more dialogue with our German colleagues” (43).

As David Barclay told us in the last newsletter, the GSA’s thirtieth conference was the largest ever. It appears that our thirty-first will be larger still—the German Studies Association is alive and well! As those of you who attended our last San Diego conference remember, the venue is wonderful, very conducive to spirited debates alongside swimming pools. We look forward to seeing you again in California to continue these ongoing discussions across many boundaries this fall—and at many subsequent conferences for many years to come.

Sara Lennox

GSA President

Notes

¹ I thank Young-sun Hong for this and other references on transnationalism.

² I thank Michael Geisler for sharing his MLA paper with me.

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The Thirty-First Annual Conference of the GSA Town and Country Resort and Convention Center, San Diego October 4–7, 2007

The Thirty-First Annual Conference of the German Studies Association will take place from October 4 to October 7, 2007, at the Town and Country Resort and Convention Center in San Diego, California (www.towncountry.com).

This year's conference promises to break all records. At the time that this newsletter went to press, the Program Committee, chaired by Professor Andrew Lees (Rutgers University) had approved over 280 sessions. Given the vast diversity of themes, specific *Schwerpunkte* are difficult to identify. Ten sessions will be devoted to "The Holy Roman Empire Reconsidered"; in addition, the director of last year's very successful Magdeburg exhibition on the Holy Roman Empire will provide a virtual tour of that exhibition. The conference will include six sessions on "Rethinking Histories of Sexuality" and four on "Germany-Poland: Border Studies." As usual, many organizations and publishers will be represented at the conference, and we are especially pleased this year to welcome the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). We are also pleased that our participants this year include the President of the Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Professor Christoph Marksches, and the Provost of Cornell University, Professor Carolyn (Biddy) Martin.

Our luncheon and banquet speakers this year are especially exciting, and we urge our members and visitors to register online for these events (see below) as quickly as possible. They are:

FRIDAY, 5 OCTOBER, LUNCHEON: We are pleased that the luncheon speaker on Friday will be **YOKO TAWADA**, prominent writer now resident in Berlin. Ms. Tawada will be reading from and discussing her latest book, *Sprachpolizei und Spielpolyglotte*, which is also the title of her talk. Born in Tokyo and educated there, in Hamburg, and in Zurich, Ms. Tawada has written more than 16 books in German and more than 16 in Japanese. Among many prizes and awards, she has been writer in residence at MIT, has received the Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Preis, and in 2005 was awarded the Goethe Medal. More information about Ms. Tawada can be found at her Web site (www.tawada.de).

FRIDAY, 5 OCTOBER, BANQUET: Our banquet speaker, Professor **PETER GAY**, is one of the world's most distinguished scholars, and hardly needs a detailed introduction. The title of his address is "**Why?**" Born in Berlin, Professor Gay received his PhD from Columbia and taught at Columbia and Yale before his retirement. He also directed The New York Public Library's Center for Scholars and Writers. He is the author of more than two dozen books. His prizes and awards are simply too numerous to mention here. Interested readers should look at his 2004 Charles Homer Haskins Lecture, "A Life of Learning," for more information (www.acls.org/op58.pdf)

SATURDAY, 6 OCTOBER, LUNCHEON: Our Saturday luncheon speaker is Professor **CHARLIE JEFFERY**, Professor of Politics at the University of Edinburgh. He will speak on "**Germany and Europe: A Shifting Vocation?**"

Professor Jeffery is Chair of the Association for the Study of German Politics, which brings together UK and US political scientists working on Germany. Until 2004 he was Deputy Director of the Institute for German Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK.

As in previous years, it will be necessary to register for the conference online this year. Please go to our Web site (www.thegsa.org) to do this. **THE ONLINE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AND HOTEL RESERVATION LINK WILL BE AVAILABLE UNTIL 10 SEPTEMBER OR UNTIL ROOMS AT THE HOTEL SELL OUT.** A confirmed conference registration will lead you to a link that will enable you to make a reservation at the conference hotel, the Town & Country Resort, at the special conference rate. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE HOTEL DIRECTLY OR THE GSA TO ASK FOR THE RATE. YOU MUST FIRST REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THAT RATE.**

Conference rates are:

MEMBERS:

\$ 85.00 BEFORE SEPTEMBER 10

\$ 95.00 AFTER SEPTEMBER 10

NON-MEMBERS:

\$ 150.00 BEFORE SEPTEMBER 10

\$ 160.00 AFTER SEPTEMBER 10

INDEPENDENT SCHOLARS/NO INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION:

\$ 35.00

GRADUATE STUDENTS:

\$ 20.00 (GSA MEMBERS)

\$ 45.00 (NON-MEMBERS OF GSA)

LUNCHEON RESERVATION: \$25 for each luncheon

FRIDAY BANQUET RESERVATION: \$35

AUDIOVISUAL EXPENSES (PLEASE PAY ONLY IF YOU HAVE BEEN APPROVED FOR USE OF AN LCD PROJECTOR):

\$ 35.00

EXHIBITORS: \$ 150 per table, plus conference registration

HOTEL RATES:

Garden Rooms: \$119/night single or double

Regency Towers/Courtyard Rooms: \$129/night single or double

Royal Palm Tower Rooms: \$139/night single or double

The Program Committee

This year's conference promises not only to be our biggest but also one of our very best. We owe a special debt of gratitude to the members of the Program Committee for their indefatigable efforts. They are:

Andrew Lees (Rutgers University, Camden Campus), chair
 Benjamin Marschke (Humboldt State University), Medieval, Early Modern, Eighteenth Century
 Katherine Aaslestad (West Virginia University), Nineteenth Century
 Katharina Gerstenberger (University of Cincinnati), Twentieth/Twenty-First-Century Literature and Cultural Studies
 Young-Sun Hong (State University of New York, Stony Brook), Twentieth/Twenty-First-Century History
 Gunther M. Hega (Western Michigan University), Political Science

For registration, hotel reservations, and for a preliminary draft of the online program, please go to the Web site at www.thehsa.org. We look forward to seeing you in San Diego!

Election Results Announced

Elections recently took place for two positions on the GSA Executive Committee. These are two-year terms, to begin on 1 January 2008. The results are:

German Literature and Culture: Patricia Simpson, Montana State University
Political Science: David Patton, Connecticut College

As always, the GSA is hugely grateful to all members who volunteer to be candidates for elective office and who volunteer or agree to serve on our various committees. We are a member-based and member-driven organization, and we appreciate your active and engaged support!

The GSA and Related/Affiliated Organizations

[With this issue, the GSA Newsletter will include regular features on associations and societies with which it is officially affiliated or informally engaged. It is especially appropriate that we begin this feature with articles on the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), of which the GSA is a member organization, and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), with which the GSA is closely connected. The ACLS and the DFG represent vital aspects of our associational life. We are grateful to ACLS Vice President Steven C. Wheatley and to Marion Müller, Director of the DFG Washington office, for submitting these most informative pieces.]

The American Council of Learned Societies and Its Member Societies.

Steven C. Wheatley
Vice President, ACLS

The ACLS constitution defines our mission as pursuing “the advancement of humanistic studies in all fields of learning in the humanities and the social sciences and the maintenance and strengthening of relations among the national societies devoted to such studies.” So, “learned societies” is not only our last name, as it were, but an object of our work. As the constitutional formulation implies, much of that work is a collective activity that is collegial in character. It must be stressed, however, that while ACLS is a federation, it is most certainly not the federal government of our societies.

If one were founding an institution in 2007, it is unlikely that one would choose a name as seemingly rarefied as “the American Council of Learned Societies,” but that name made sense when we were founded 88 years ago in 1919, and it made sense for very practical reasons. After World War I, the British Academy sought to build a new international union of national academies, in the wake of the failure of the politicians to create a League of Nations. But who should represent the U.S. in this new union? Lord Bryce, the distinguished scholar and former British ambassador to the U.S., posed that question to his friend, J. Franklin Jameson of The Library of Congress. Should we invite the American Academy of Arts and Sciences or the American Philosophical Society? No, replied Jameson, those selective organizations were “aristocratic,” and not in keeping with the democratic ethos of our nation. Better, Jameson advised, to form a new federation of professional scholarly societies, organizations dedicated to the advancement of learning but open and inclusive in their membership. ACLS began with 13 societies and now proudly counts 68 members, including the German Studies Association, which became a member in 1995.

Jameson’s response highlights key characteristics of the modern American learned society. It is voluntary in its membership and leadership; it is open and inclusive. It is dedicated above all to knowledge *qua* knowledge in research, teaching, and practice. This formula has proven remarkably durable and scalable, that is, capable

of growth. As the higher education enterprise grew in the U.S. and especially as doctoral and professional education spread beyond a few elite institutions, the learned societies were a critical means of establishing standards and of creating truly national professional disciplines.

The phenomena of learned societies are deeply enmeshed in the history of American higher education. Historians such as Barton Bernstein and Roger Geiger identify them as the frappings of professional standards that bound together the American research university both at its beginnings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and in the period of its epoch expansion in the mid-1900s. Learned societies are, with a few notable exceptions, creatures of 19th and 20th centuries. Will they endure in the 21st? That question helps concentrate our minds.

Every fall the ACLS Conference of Administrative Officers (CAO), composed of the Executive Directors of our member societies, meets in a different city to discuss the very important issues of society management and operation: membership, publications, meeting organization, insurance, finance, technology, etc. (These meetings themselves illustrate the power of collective membership: their costs are fully paid by different municipal convention bureaus that hope to inspire societies to hold annual meetings in their cities. Our Administrative Officers take on a certain amount of enforced tourism in order to evaluate the possible meeting sites.) Some members of the CAO refer to these sets of practical issues as “tradedcraft,” a term that is perhaps unconsciously apt. I first encountered it in John Le Carre’s novels where it denotes the techniques of spies and secret agents that allow them carry out their objectives undetected. In some ways, that is what the management of learned societies aims for: it is an important element of the infrastructure of knowledge, but like all good infrastructure—transportation, buildings, communications—one hopes that it is serviceable, usable, and even transparent to the user. Each of our 68 member societies is distinctive in its structure and academic focus, but when compared with other sorts of non-profit organizations, but as a group, our societies are more alike than different. ACLS, we hope, provides a space for the sharing of experience and expertise that can help strengthen each society in their distinctiveness.

But as important as the practical discussions are, they are intended—much as the learned societies as organizations are intended—to serve a higher purpose. In the case of ACLS, we hope that we can represent the collective interests of our societies and of their members. (It is worth remembering that most of the members of our societies are members of several societies, so ACLS represents both societies and scholars *as scholars*, not just as specialists in one field.) Meetings of the CAO include discussion of these larger questions, and periodic “retreats” of the group—the next is planned for this fall in Salt Lake City—discuss such “meta-questions” as how societies share scholarship and are shaped in turn by scholarship’s changing patterns.

ACLS also focuses on the role of learned societies presidents. For the past several years, we have convened an annual “leadership seminar” for newly elected society presidents and their partners in leadership, the society’s administrative officer. Led by a researcher in non-profit management, this seminar provides a day-long op-

portunity or the leadership teams to consider the operational and strategic situation of their society and to share their concerns with colleagues from other societies.

What of the other half of the ACLS mission: “advancing humanistic studies in all fields of the humanities and social sciences”? There is an active synergy between this work and our character as a federation. ACLS plays a distinctive role in the complex ecology of American academia. The U.S. system of higher education and research is characterized by a high degree of institutional diversity but also a commonality of values and ideals. As a federation, ACLS represents the breadth and variety of the academic humanities: it is both prestigious and “democratic.” As an operating organization it is small, flexible, and nimble. One principle activity is providing fellowship support for high quality scholarship through careful selection according to the most rigorous standards. Our dual character of being both highly selective and broadly representative is particularly important to the humanities, which are characterized by methodological variety, conceptual pluralism, and institutional dispersion.

The fact that ACLS represents a broad range of scholars gives us the ability to help focus the attention of not only the scholarly community, but also of the institutional leadership of colleges and universities. ACLS can exercise the leadership expected of it if it is both representative and responsible. We must be responsible to that community and responsible for the conservation of its best ideals. Those qualities are going to be only more necessary in the coming years as American higher education will be challenged and stressed by economic, demographic and technological changes. ACLS should be an important participant in addressing those challenges.

Another example of the synergy between ACLS’ programmatic and federative work is in the area of scholarly publishing and communication. This is an important and dynamic realm, and many of our societies have active publishing programs, buffeted by the economic, technological and organizational problems in this realm. ACLS tries to address these issues by combining high level discussions at our Annual Meeting and elsewhere with focused experimentation such as in our History E-Book project which is becoming Humanities E-Book <<http://www.humanitiesebook.org/hebnews.html>>. Our Commission on Cyberinfrastructure issued a report in 2006 on what new intellectual strategies, critical methods, and creative practices are emerging in response to technical applications in the humanities and what new structures might accelerate positive change <<http://www.acls.org/cyberinfrastructure/OurCulturalCommonwealth.pdf>>. Change in this realm is gathering force, so it is hard to predict what will be the future shapes of our system of scholarly communication. But I will predict this: the future will not be congenial if learned societies are not prominent among the forces shaping it.

The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft in North America

Marion Müller
Director, Washington Office, DFG

Within the last few years, the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG), Germany's central, self-governing research funding organization that serves all branches of science and the humanities by funding research projects and facilitating collaboration among researchers, has considerably broadened the scope of its international activities. In addition to internationalizing its funding programs and its peer review, the DFG also maintains branch offices in selected strategically important countries around the world. In North America, the DFG currently has an office in Washington DC. To strengthen ties with DAAD, GAIN and the consortia of German universities it will open a New York office early this summer. The DFG's mission in North America is:

- to maintain and extend contacts with current and former German DFG award holders in the United States and Canada. The goal is both to facilitate the return of young researchers to Germany and to establish networks with researchers who choose to stay in the United States and Canada, and also to motivate them for lasting collaboration with Germany.
- to expand and support cooperation with partner organizations in the USA and Canada working in the field of science and research policy, especially the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).
- to provide US and Canadian universities and research institutions with information on Germany as a location of science and research and on opportunities for research cooperation, especially within the scope of DFG-funded projects and programs.
- to expand and foster contacts with US and Canadian DFG alumni, such as Mercator visiting professors and researchers who worked on DFG-funded projects in Germany.
- to follow science and research policy developments in the United States and Canada and identify and assess the fields relevant to the DFG with respect to basic research.

The DFG is particularly pleased to be able to attend for the first time the GSA's annual meeting 2007—a year that in Germany has been officially declared the “Year of the Humanities.”

We very much look forward to a continuous and fruitful cooperation with the GSA and wish David and his team all the best in the run-up to what promises a great conference in October!

Issues and Discussions in German Studies

[As noted in the last Newsletter, the GSA is providing a forum for continuing discussions of issues and topics in German Studies. We are continuing the forum with a series of responses—gathered by Frank Trommler—to the open letter published in the December 2006 newsletter by Hans-Peter Söder. We welcome your own responses to this exchange, just as we urge you to write about any German Studies-related issue that is important to you.]

Two Cultures at the GSA?

Responses to Hans-Peter Söder's Open Letter in the Newsletter

Frank Trommler

University of Pennsylvania

In his open letter to Katherine Roper and David Barclay in the last GSA Newsletter ("From 1776 to 2006: Another Declaration of Independence? Some Remarks on the Two Cultures at the GSA," Winter 2006, p. 38–39), Hans-Peter Söder raised a topic that has been around since the inception of the organization, though usually more within the informal than the official exchange. Normally we don't pay too much attention whether sessions or contributions are in English or German yet this fact can influence the atmosphere of the dialogue, the (size and) involvement of the audience, and our reaction in general. Söder, highly sensitized to the implications of language use in transcultural exchange as the successful director of one of the best American Junior Year programs at a German university (Wayne State Program at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich), finds it disturbing that the German language seems to be increasingly marginalized at GSA conferences. He adds that even more disturbing is the trend towards marginalizing the work and perspective of the colleagues in Germany, in fact German *Wissenschaft* in general. In Söder's words: "The two metacultures at the GSA are not increasing with the increase in membership. On the contrary, they are moving apart at an alarming rate. There are German *Germans* who stoically present their *Wissenschaft* (with very few Americans in attendance), and there are American Germanists who pursue German studies that have no counterpart in what is happening now in Germany—and never the twain shall meet." (p.38)

Is there a kernel of truth in Söder's observations? Several colleagues said "yes, but" when I explored their reactions. Their fast and passionate response lets me believe that this topic, though recurrent during the thirty years of the organization's existence, deserves the attention that Söder attributes to it, especially with his emphasis on a generational change. I thought it would be helpful to quote their spontaneous e-mail reactions, and as Söder himself chose an informal tone, I find the informality of the responses most appropriate for an organization whose unquestionable success rests with its collegial and personal style. I also thought it helpful to turn to members who, with the exception of former GSA President Ronald Smelser, belong to the younger generation or to those who came from Germany

and made their name at American universities. I will add some remarks that might fill the gaps and address the current situation with the benefit of some institutional memory.

Stephen Brockmann (Carnegie Mellon University):

We American German Studies folks shouldn't be too hasty to dismiss [Söder's article] out of hand defensively. While it is true that German Studies in the United States is different (and SHOULD be different) from Germanistik in Germany, it is also true that we do ourselves, and German Studies, a disservice if we ignore developments in Germany and the German context. And I think that Söder is right that this does sometimes (or all too frequently) happen. What Söder may not take into account sufficiently is that in our work at American universities we also have to engage in dialogue with folks in other departments. That almost of necessity means that we are somewhat distant from Germanistik in Germany.

Vera Stegmann (Lehigh University)

It is true that there are differences between German Germanistik and American approaches to German Studies. But I have not found them to be so alarming that "never the twain shall meet," as Söder states. Admittedly, at the 2001 GSA in Washington I volunteered to be moderator for a session on "Welfare in Conflict: Church and State, 1933–1960" in which all presenters were German academics; and true, not a single soul showed up in the audience, so we ended up holding the session in a café. There were other empty sessions, though, I saw—it may just be an issue of too many panels held at the same time.

Still, I think that Söder is exaggerating. Not all American academics are doing trendy new subjects, and not all of German academia is a bastion of traditionalism either. And some of the changes at the GSA that Söder criticizes are developments that I perceive going on in Germany as well. Germany is hugely influenced by globalization. When Söder states that the German university system "is undergoing the most sweeping changes since Humboldt," this may be true, but many of the changes, as I understand them, are Americanizing the system. New private universities are springing up, such as the International University of Bremen, in which the language of instruction is primarily English to attract international students. Some German universities like Hamburg or Hamburg-Harburg are now teaching many science courses directly in English, even for German students (where German used to be the international language of science!). Furthermore, German universities are now frequently adopting the MA system, and they do not even bother to translate their degrees into "Magister," they call them straightforward "Masters" to show the model that they are emulating. These changes within Germany are of much greater concern to me than the fact that talks at the GSA are held primarily in English. For that matter, I think that the "Anglisten" or "Romanisten," when they meet for conferences in Germany, mostly speak German as well and not English, Spanish, or French (I was told).

So, while I definitely perceive differences between American and German "Ger-

man Studies” and while I still find myself often on the German side of the debate, even after decades in the US, I see these differences as constructive and not at all unbridgeable. The GSA is based in the US, after all, so it is natural that this would shape the perspective of many participants.

Sabine von Dirke (University of Pittsburgh)

In general, I agree that a split between scholars working within the German academic tradition and those working within a cultural studies tradition as it developed in the US exists and can perhaps also be seen at the GSA-conference. However, I do not see this as a major problem. For one, the research of both traditions is typically reflected in publications here in the US and also at the GSA conference. (I do not think that this holds true in the same way for *Germanistik* in the FRG, i.e. US research on German literature is not as much reflected in the scholarship over there.) Secondly, the two academic environments are interested in different aspects of and have developed different approaches to studying all things German. As a result and for a variety of reasons, scholars might indeed gravitate towards their own national disciplinary confines at the GSA conference. (These reasons might sometimes be as banal as reconnecting with former fellow students or networking.) In addition, the feeling that it is easier to get a panel accepted than an individual paper might have contributed to people submitting panels along national lines so-to-speak. Still, I got the feeling at the last GSA that “cross-overs” take place even though not on a mass scale as Hans-Peter Söder would like to see it. (I remember that on the RAF-related panels I was involved in, there were always a couple of German scholars who got involved in the discussion.)

At the same time, I also agree that more interaction between the two national academic environments should be supported since I firmly believe that any “über den Tellerrand hinausblicken” can only be beneficial for both parties. I want to emphasize that both parties should open up towards more communication and interaction. However, it seems to me that the suggestions our colleague makes put the burden a little bit too squarely on the shoulders of the US scholars.

Also, he seems to imply that the US scholars’ emancipation from the methodologies practiced in *Germanistik*, *Wissenschaft*, and *Kultur* has created a myopic view on the part of US scholarship which hampers a true understanding of the target culture, i.e. we fail to see all the great changes happening in Germany today. In between the lines of this argument lurks the notion of authenticity that those living in a particular culture are in a more privileged position to explain it. In my opinion, the perspective from the outside can very well illuminate aspects of a culture to which the home-grown scholars are blind. At the same time, I want to concede that I too have been bothered (on occasion) by the recycling of clichés about aspects of German culture in US academia. However, only permanent critical engagement with those clichés can overcome them. This leads me to my other point which troubles me in Hans-Peter Söder’s argument.

He seems to bemoan that an “amorous state toward German life and letters” has been replaced with an overly critical attitude towards the “Germanness” of German

culture and ascribes the latter to the younger generation. Yes, I believe that this is true to a certain extent. However, if I may still count myself among the younger scholars, I believe that this is a good sign for several reasons. For one, I believe in criticism as something positive and critical-analytical approaches as the most important aspect of scholarship because it allows us to comprehend our object of study in its complexity and thus counteract the formation of clichés. While I am not sure what Hans-Peter Söder means by “Germanness,” for me, it is a category which is today very contested and historically-speaking highly problematic. It is precisely the “Germanness” of the Holocaust that does not permit us to be “unreconstructed” scholars of Germany, i.e. uphold an “amorous state” with our object of study. Recognizing the conflicted nature of the field of German should thus in my opinion inflect our research and teaching and will inevitably yield a critical perspective on Germany. I know that this does not always sit well with Germans and might not make German as easily attractive for our students as perhaps another culture. At the same time, this recognition does not preclude highlighting progressive or positive aspects and developments in Germany past or present.

Another factor which might contribute to this split—and one which is hard to pin down or prove—might have to do with the demographics in the two cultures, more specifically the fact that German Studies in the US has a much better gender balance than academia in Germany. In my opinion, US German cultural studies has broadened its research topics but also has developed a different academic discourse which I found more intellectually engaging.

Finally, we need to face the fact that academia here and there is a market place and especially younger scholars who need to establish themselves need to comply with the rules of the national market. In other words, in order to peddle their intellectual ware, the young scholars in the US and those in Germany have to comply with the market demands in their respective countries. And as always, when markets are contracting as has been the case on both sides of the Atlantic, we see less willingness for “crossovers” because it means taking a risk.

Ronald Smelser (University of Utah)

Very briefly, I think [Söder] is wildly exaggerating the extent to which the “founding generation” existed in an amorous state toward Germany. To generalize from Gerry [Kleinfeld] to a whole generation is inaccurate and unfair. Even Gerry has shown himself quite able to be critical of the Germans. Where I do see a generation gap is between the older generation, which often made sacrifices of time and energy for the profession and for the GSA and the younger generation, which I have called the “entitlement generation,” which all too often have a self-serving agenda and only ask in a given situation: what is in it for me? Maybe that is also an exaggeration, but I have observed it too often to be able to deny its existence.

Agnes C. Mueller (University of South Carolina)

What strikes me is the negativity that resonates from Söder’s findings. I do think that his observations are a bit exaggerated, but the conclusions he draws worry me

more. I know what he means, and, yes, there is a tendency of German scholars to be on separate only-German speaking panels together (this may simply be because of the Germans' discomfort of the pressure to be fluent in a language and discourse that is unfamiliar, not so much because of mutual avoidance, what Söder seems to suggest). But there are often Americans in attendance at those panels who are probably there to learn precisely things that may get neglected in an only-American setting.

Also, I think that Söder neglects the fact that there really are not that many German scholars who are involved in culture studies and interdisciplinary projects in Germany, for all the well-known reasons that have to do with the separate settings and histories of German Studies vs. Germanistik. I remember well the IVG conference in 2000, where we (those engaging in cultural studies and not so much in traditional Germanistik) were regarded, with some pity, as doing "Auslandsgermanistik." Of course, this was meant in opposition to the "real" Germanistik so that he is not, I think, entirely correct in his assumption that we only need to look towards Germany, and voila, there are our wonderfully engaged cultural-studies-minded conversation partners!

There is, in my mind, absolutely no good reason to either try and emulate German-based scholarship (it is already there, in Germany, so why reproduce it?), or, worse still, to retreat to an uncritical admiration of all things German. Söder's description of the Kleinfeld residence actually sounds quite frightening to me. As German program director, I make a point of telling my native German colleagues that we must communicate professional and organizational matters (i.e. meetings, correspondence, etc.) in English, even if we teach in German, since we live and work in an environment where we need to be heard and understood. I also make my native German graduate students do part of their work in English, for those same reasons. To me, the emancipation of American German Studies is *ONLY* a good thing, and the German Germanisten colleagues I know and talk to actually appreciate this, and also come to the GSA to learn from our way of thinking.

Neil H. Donahue (Hofstra University)

As a comparatist, I have come year after year to the GSA conference specifically for the German content and the opportunity to find out what other scholars of German (literature and history, and other fields) are thinking, saying, writing and reading, drawn by the concentration of scholars in the field(s) and the concentrated focus on issues and artifacts relating to German history, culture and literature. What I have learned each year has been of great interest to me as a scholar and of value to me as a teacher. I think Hans-Peter Söder performs here a considerable service in calling attention to that important function of the conference, a continuation perhaps of what we do in the classroom, as "the unglamorous project of translation" (43), which stays necessarily, though not solely, linked to artifacts, primary texts of whatever kind. As a scholar who has worked on German poetry, I have had an ancillary concern in the past as German poetry began to go the same way in German Studies programs or at conferences as German language instruction in

high schools (n.b.: the way was away), but as a comparatist, I also recognize that the text, the artifact, needs both its German and international contexts to define, expand and sustain its significance

In reading through Michael Geyer's Pittsburgh GSA address "Where Germans Dwell," to which Söder responds, I enjoy once again the breadth and lucidity of his argument about "Transnationalism in Theory and Practice," whose goals I share, but then as now, as a scholar trained and based in both Comparative Literature and German Studies, I have the impression that his description of "Approaches to Transnational History" as a "reorientation [...] towards a new consensus" (29) puts the discipline of history at a point in its development where the field of Comparative Literature has been for many decades, if not since its very inception. Of course, Geyer's approach does not directly address literature, and what remains underlying socio-historical background for comparative literary analyses, moves into the foreground in Geyer's transnational (or comparative) history, with ever greater urgency, one might add, as the network of international and multinational relations gains density and tightens, especially as this "accelerated interconnectivity" (32) complicates (and perhaps undermines) the traditional Nation/State as an agent in the world and as an object of study. I applaud Geyer's articulation of the fact that the nation "only makes sense in its entanglements" (36) and that transnational historiography finds its very substance in "crosscutting disturbances" (36). Geyer's talk both addressed a present tendency and advocated a new direction for the field of German Studies, and in doing so created its own "crosscutting disturbance."

Hans-Peter Söder's response, with a touch of rather gentle polemicism, raises the concern of an "opposite extreme" to the nationalistic approach to *Germanistik*; though Söder does not advocate any sort of nostalgic return, if such were even possible, to the *status quo ante*; he perceives the transnational approach, or Geyer's "revolutionary lecture" (43) to be exact, as "another declaration of independence from German culture" (43) that runs the risk of ignoring or underplaying the "exciting things happening" in Germany in all sorts of areas, both despite and because of European integration. He advocates a greater effort to recruit practicing *Wissenschaftler* (in history and literature) from Germany for "more dialogue" (43) at the conference. Both Geyer and Söder seem to want the same thing: more dialogue on the specific German place in the world, albeit with a different emphasis and a different perspective, both of which are necessary. As Geyer notes: "National and global history intersect, but they are not the same" (36), yet I would add, neither one can or should do without the other. For my part, even. Geyer's view on transnationalism and Söder's view on translation as *Über-setzen* (between Germany and the U.S.) are, to my mind, two sides of the same project, with different points of departure and the same destination. If the GSA maintains this type of dialogue, and remains the site of such instructive exchanges, even without full agreement in all points, then we have arrived where we want to be.

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As Neil Donahue reminds us, Hans-Peter Söder's letter grew out of a response to Michael Geyer's luncheon talk at the Pittsburgh conference ("Where Germans Dwell:

Transnationalism in Theory and Practice,” *Newsletter*, Winter 2006, 29–37). It was written without the benefit of Geyer’s text and specific wording at hand, therefore needs to be seen as what it was: a spontaneous comment that reflects a larger context. Aside from the worries concerning the language use, its warning of the widening gap between German and American scholarship about Germany was triggered by what Söder calls Geyer’s “revolutionary lecture.” Indeed, Geyer’s global visions rarely have an equivalent in the more nationally oriented discourses of historians in Germany, yet by no means do they separate themselves from the work of those German colleagues whom one could rightly call cutting-edge or agenda-setting like Jürgen Osterhammel. Osterhammel’s plea for a transnational historiography in the late 1990s was itself a reflection of new perspectives in Anglo-Saxon historiography and became a strong impulse for new projects and discourses that are slowly—some think too slowly—penetrating German *Geschichtswissenschaft*. Geyer’s agenda surely goes beyond a mere comparative project but provides enough details for practical application within a concept of German Studies that draws on the outside-inside dialectic—a constant border-crossing—against any essentialist definition of culture and even *Wissenschaft*.

The experience of marginalization that Söder formulates is nothing new for American scholars of German language and culture. As a matter of fact, it has been the prime mover behind the Americanization of *Germanistik* since the eighties when the outlook of German Departments, based on their teaching of language and literature, was rapidly darkening. German Studies, conceptualized within the broad current of cultural studies that energized much of the humanities at that time, offered a way of opening up the encounter with the other culture with and beyond the mastery of language and literary texts, thereby saving numerous smaller German departments from extinction. Of course, Söder’s focus is on the specifically German contingent of our enterprise while the American Germanists felt the marginalization of our whole enterprise in the academy. Yet it is accurate to say that the only constructive way to renew this very enterprise was by parting from the disciplinary *Selbstverständnis* of *Germanistik* in the German university and establishing an “American Agenda of German Studies,” as a panel was called at the GSA meeting in Milwaukee in 1989 (*German Studies Review* 13, 1990, 111–38), thereby anchoring the discipline fully within the educational and scholarly agenda of the American university.

Söder’s reaction is, I think, a confirmation of the transformation in the last two decades, especially when he points to the generational change that has taken place. As seen in the responses above, this generational change has sealed the Americanization but has opened—and here his warning is equally appropriate—new sources of concern. While Geyer’s plea for a new transnationalism might have more relevance for historians than comparatists, as Neil Donahue remarks, it lays out a broad and intellectually exciting agenda that confirms the belief of the reformers that German Studies does not just mark a creative and forward-looking turn for American academic disciplines but also for the understanding of the German-speaking world in general. However, it does not imply that transnationalism should be practiced by disowning the national sources of language and culture, i.e. a search for the

Other that presupposes its critical embrace, usually in the mastery of its language and familiarity with its current reality.

The speeches at last year's anniversary conference in Pittsburgh were a timely reminder that the German Studies Association, through its various constituencies, should keep its services to the professions up to date and interwoven: that of the exemplary linguistic and interpretive mastery of the other culture—mainly by Germanists—and that of accessing its history through clear evidence of sources and documents—mostly by historians and political scientists. These services are based in the individual disciplines but should be interwoven to guarantee the scholarly practice of German Studies. The GSA conferences are crucial for this interweaving. Every year they should reconfirm the dedication to interdisciplinarity and provide transnationalism in form of hospitality, exchange, and friendship.

Reports and Announcements

[The GSA Newsletter is resuming the practice of publishing accounts of current research projects that will be of interest to our members. We begin with a report on an important, ongoing research project at the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, and continue with announcements that will also interest our members.]

„Preußen als Kulturstaat“—Die Fortsetzung der Acta Borussica, Neue Folge, als Projekt der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften

Bärbel Holtz

Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften

Die Beschäftigung mit preußischer Geschichte an der Akademie in Berlin entspricht sowohl ihrem kulturpolitischen Selbstverständnis aus der Tradition der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften heraus als auch dem anhaltenden Interesse der Forschung an Preußen als historisches Phänomen. Wie kein anderer deutscher Territorialstaat hat Preußen die moderne Geschichte Deutschlands geprägt und in ambivalenter Weise nachhaltig auf Europa ausgestrahlt. Umso bedauerlicher ist die derzeitig deutschlandweit geringe institutionelle Einbindung der Erforschung preußischer Geschichte, die dem hier vorzustellenden Projekt „Preußen als Kulturstaat“, in dem fünf wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter und eine wissenschaftlich-technische Mitarbeiterin tätig sind, ein Alleinstellungsmerkmal zukommen lässt.

Kulturgut zu sichern, zu bewahren und zu erschließen ist der vornehmliche Auftrag des den Geisteswissenschaften vorbehaltenen bundesweiten Akademienprogramms. Auch das durch Jürgen Kocka und Wolfgang Neugebauer initiierte Berliner Akademienvorhaben geht diesen Aufgaben nach und erforscht zugleich, unter welchen staatlichen und gesellschaftlichen Wirkungsfaktoren seit 1815 derartiges materielles und immaterielles Kulturgut in Preußen geschaffen und tradiert werden konnte.

Das Vorhaben widmet sich dem vieldeutigen Bild Preußens in der Geschichte des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts, wie es als ein vornehmlicher Militär- und Obrigkeitsstaat immer wieder gezeichnet wird, aber ebenso als toleranter Aufklärungsstaat oder multi-ethnischer Integrationsstaat zu sehen ist. Seine Integrationskraft bezog Preußen, das stets ein nicht-nationaler Staat war, auch aus seiner kulturellen Vielfalt, seine Integrationsleistung machte es zu einem europäischen Staat, der vor allem in Wissenschaft und Bildung modellbildend wirkte. Der Anerkennung seiner wirtschaftlichen, sozialpolitischen und kulturellen Leistungen steht die Verdammung seiner Macht- und Eroberungspolitik entgegen. Innerhalb des Konzerts der europäischen Großmächte war Preußen anerkannter und gefürchteter Solist zugleich. Man sieht es ebenfalls als markantes Beispiel für rückständige Sozialordnung und vordemokratische politische Mentalität. Macht und Geist trafen in Preußen stilbildend aufeinander—sein schon sprichwörtlich gewordenes Janusgesicht offenbart die ihm innewohnende Ambivalenz von „Sparta“ und „Athen“, von Machtstaat und Kulturstaat.

Ist vom „Kulturstaat“ Preußen die Rede, wird oft schon an den so genannten „aufgeklärten Absolutismus“ Friedrichs II. gedacht. Aber der Staat des 18. Jahrhunderts wirkte auf kulturpolitischem Felde noch nicht im Sinne umfassender Daseinsvorsorge für die Bevölkerungsmehrheit. Hofkultur blieb residenzzentriert. Man denkt an den „Philosophen von Sanssouci“ und an das Forum Fridericianum (Unter den Linden) und zweifelsohne waren für das kulturelle Leben in Preußen die Hohenzollernkönige stets zentrale Figuren. Aber das friderizianische Preußen, in dem aufgrund der Persönlichkeit des Monarchen intellektuelle Hofkultur eine ihrer Blütezeiten erlebte und das öffentliche Geistesleben unter dem Klima der Aufklärung nur sehr allmählich zu bürgerlicher Emanzipation gelangte, vermag den wissenschaftlichen Kriterien für kulturstaatliche Entwicklung—ein Begriff, der auf Johann Gottlieb Fichte zurückgeführt wird—nicht standzuhalten.

Wichtige Grundlagen für die Entwicklung des preußischen Kulturstaats wurden im frühen 19. Jahrhundert—nicht nur durch Wilhelm von Humboldt—geschaffen. In diesen Jahrzehnten gewann die Verwaltung an Gewicht. Blickt man heute auf diese Zeit, denkt man an Humboldt und die Bildungsreform, an Hegel und den deutschen Idealismus, an Schinkel und den Klassizismus. Monarch und Staat blieben auch nach 1800 eng miteinander verschränkt; immer weniger aber nimmt man sie als etwas Identisches wahr. Kultur wird nun zunehmend zu einer Angelegenheit von Staat und Gesellschaft. Jetzt erst kann sich Kulturstaatlichkeit entwickeln, kann kulturpolitische Programmatik konzipiert und vielfache Wirkung erzielt werden. Zunächst hatte der Staat bei kulturellen Belangen lediglich ordnend eingegriffen. Der Kulturstaat indes, wie er sich im weiteren 19. Jahrhundert ausprägt, schafft Strukturen und Mechanismen, mit denen die staatliche Verwaltung, oftmals gesellschaftliche Innovationen aufgreifend, nun gezielte und zunehmend kulturpolitische Daseinsvorsorge betreibt—eine Leistung, die heute, denkt man allein an den großen Bereich der schulischen Bildung, als eine genuine Aufgabe des Staates verstanden wird, es aber nicht immer war.

Mit der Fokussierung auf die Kulturstaatsproblematik wendet sich das Akademienvorhaben „Preußen als Kulturstaat“ einem wissenschaftlich noch nicht aus-

geleuchteten und dennoch zentralen Aspekt der preußischen Geschichte zu. Ganz allgemein gesehen geht es um das Verhältnis von innerer Staatsbildung, Kultur und Zivilgesellschaft im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert. Für den Untersuchungszeitraum verbindet sich dieses Verhältnis mit den Begriffen von zentralstaatlich gelenkter Integrationspolitik und vorhandener Pluralität an Kulturen, Ethnien, Regionen und Religionen, von „Staatskultur“ und „Gegenkulturen“, von kultureller, bildungsgeschichtlicher und wissenschaftlicher Leistungskraft, von leistungsstaatlicher Daseinsfürsorge und gesellschaftlicher Wirkungsmacht, von Kultur- und Wissenstransfer sowie von international zu erkennender Exemplarität.

Warum betätigte sich der preußische Staat auf dem Gebiete der „Kultur“ und in welchem Ausmaß musste er sie fördern, um sich in einer Epoche dramatischer Veränderungen, von Krisen und Kriegen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts als ein modernes Staatswesen erweisen zu können? Wie gestaltete und veränderte sich das Spannungs- und Wechselverhältnis zwischen der staatlichen Integrationspolitik und der signifikanten Vielfalt der in Preußen vorhandenen Regionen, Religionen und Kulturen? Woraus bezog Preußen seine so beeindruckende kulturelle, bildungsgeschichtliche und wissenschaftspolitische Leistungskraft? Wie ordnet sich diese Erfolgsbilanz den Problemfeldern preußischer Geschichte zu, die gemeinhin mit Demokratiedefizit, sozialer Ungleichheit und militärischer Aggression assoziiert werden? In welchem verwaltungsgeschichtlichen und kulturpolitisch-programmatischen Kontext stand die Gründung des preußischen Kultusministeriums als eines der ersten seiner Art in der Welt? Wer waren in Preußen die Träger und Protagonisten staatlicher und gesellschaftlicher Reformvorstellungen auf dem Gebiete der Kultur? Wie griffen diese ineinander und wo bedienten sie sich gesellschaftlicher Netzwerke, um in der kulturellen Praxis Interessenkoordination zu erreichen? Dies sind einige der übergreifenden Fragestellungen des Projekts, um Persönlichkeiten, Strukturen und Verfahren preußischer Kulturpolitik aufeinander zu beziehen und das gesellschaftliche Beziehungsgeflecht der Träger preußischer Kulturstaatpolitik zu erforschen. Antworten darauf werden dazu beitragen, jenes Verhältnis von innerer Staatsbildung, Kultur und Zivilgesellschaft im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert näher auszuleuchten und das Bild von dem „Phänomen“ Preußen stärker zu grundieren. Und gewiss wird so eine weitere Antwort auf die oft gestellte Frage gegeben werden: Wozu noch Preußen? Seine Geschichte scheint angesichts der Herausforderungen des 21. Jahrhunderts aktueller denn je zu sein.

In editorischer und monographischer Form wird das mittelfristig angelegte Projekt ausgewählte Themen preußischer Kultur-, Religions-, Mentalitäts-, Wissenschafts- und Geschichtspolitik bearbeiten. Es bedient sich der für das Thema einzigartigen Berlin-Brandenburgischen Archivlandschaft und ist modulartig aufgebaut.

Zunächst steht die seit langem ausstehende Geschichte des 1817 gegründeten und mehr als 115 Jahre existenten preußischen Kultusministeriums im Mittelpunkt. Dieser für das Projektthema übergreifende Themenschwerpunkt untersucht und beschreibt jenes Ministerium als Staatsorgan und gesellschaftliche Agentur in mehreren Editions- wie monographischen Bänden. Dabei wird deutlich über eine herkömmliche Behördengeschichte hinausgegangen, denn neben Entstehung, Aufbau und Personalpolitik dieser Zentralinstitution geht es vor allem um deren

Stellung im gesellschaftlich-kulturellen Umfeld, um deren Wirken als Instrument des Kulturstaats. Das Hineinwirken dieses Staatsorgan in den gesellschaftlichen Raum und in die sozialen Strukturen wird ebenso erforscht wie die Einflussnahme der Gesellschaft auf die Kulturpolitik des Staates—es geht also um Interaktion von Staat und Gesellschaft auf dem weiten Feld der Kultur.

Für die quellengestützte Darstellung dieser komplexen Fragestellung werden neben der umfänglichen archivalischen Überlieferung des Kultusministeriums und anderer Zentralbehörden vor allem Nachlässe von Persönlichkeiten aus Staat und Gesellschaft auszuwerten sein. Anders als viele geschichtswissenschaftliche Akademienvorhaben, die meist ein von Beginn an chronologisch, personell oder sachlich abgegrenztes Quellenkorpus bearbeiten, muss sich das hier vorzustellende Projekt zunächst auf die wissenschaftliche Suche nach denjenigen Quellen begeben, die Preußens Entwicklung zum Kulturstaat in all ihren Facetten repräsentativ dokumentieren. Erster und wichtigster Recherche-Ort hierfür ist das Geheime Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin-Dahlem, das die Überlieferung der Zentralbehörden Preußens aufbewahrt. Dieses Archiv ist das kulturhistorische Gedächtnis des preußischen Staates. Es bewahrt etwa 35 laufende Kilometer Archivalien unterschiedlichster Herkunft auf: staatliche Akten, private Nachlässe und Sammlungen.

Im Mittelpunkt des Interesses steht zunächst der Bestand „Preußisches Kultusministerium“, der allein 2 440 laufende Aktenmeter umfasst und aus dem Schlüsseldokumente zur Kulturstaatlichkeit Preußens ebenso zu ermitteln sind wie exemplarische Aktenstücke zu regionalen oder lokalen Eigenentwicklungen, zu realisierten Reformprojekten und gescheiterten staatlichen wie gesellschaftlichen Initiativen, zum Kulturtransfer aus und nach Preußen. Hinzu treten weitere zentralstaatliche preußische Bestände (z. B. das Finanz-, das Innen- bzw. das Staatsministerium, das Geheime Zivilkabinett des Monarchen) sowie diverse Bestände von Provinzialarchiven, die es gleichsam auf die Fragestellungen des Projekts hin einzusehen und auszuwerten gilt.

Eine gesellschafts- wie kulturgeschichtlich fundierte Darstellung des preußischen Kultusministeriums aber bedarf ebenso einer Quellenbasis gesellschaftlicher Provenienz, um gesellschaftliche Innovationen aufzuspüren und die etatistisch geprägte Sicht der Ministerialakten gleichermaßen zu kontrastieren. Hier rücken die Nachlässe der Akteure preußischer Kulturpolitik, insbesondere deren Korrespondenzen, Tagebücher und Memoiren in das Blickfeld, so dass über die Quellengruppe „staatliche Akten“ hinaus auch in „privaten Hinterlassenschaften“ recherchiert wird, um beispielsweise die in gesellschaftlichen Netzwerken verankerten Ministerialbeamten in ihren tatsächlichen Diskussions- und Entscheidungszusammenhängen darstellen zu können. Neben dem schriftlichen Erbe von Ministern wie Karl von Altenstein, Friedrich Eichhorn, Adalbert Falk oder Carl Heinrich Becker sind hier die Korrespondenzen und Papiere von Johannes Schulze, Ludwig Wiese oder Friedrich Althoff genauso von Interesse wie die Alexander von Humboldts. Mancher Nachweis kann überhaupt nur aus dieser Quellengruppe heraus geführt werden. Schon die Gründung des Kultusministeriums sowie die Auswahl Altensteins als Minister geben hierfür ein treffliches Beispiel. Entschieden darüber hat letztendlich

König Friedrich Wilhelm III. mit seiner Kabinettsordre vom 3. November 1817. Aber weder in den Akten seines Büros, des Geheimen Zivilkabinetts, noch in den Akten seiner Regierung war hierzu ein schriftlicher Vorlauf zu ermitteln. Allein mit Hilfe eines Schriftstückes aus dem Nachlass des Staatskanzlers Hardenberg konnte die unmittelbare Vorgeschichte aufgespürt werden: der Entwurf zu einem Immediatbericht von Anfang Oktober 1817, worin der Staatskanzler genau mit diesen beiden Vorschlägen—ein Kultusministerium einzurichten und Altenstein zum Ressortchef zu berufen—an den König herangetreten war, belegt neben der vorherigen Kritik einiger Oberpräsidenten an der Arbeit mancher bereits bestehender Ministerien ebenso Hardenbergs persönlichen Ehrgeiz, über den eigenen Tod hinaus eine effiziente, moderne Zentralverwaltung installieren zu wollen.

Während der gesamten Zeit bis 1934, in der das preußische Kultusministerium existierte, findet sich nicht selten nur in nichtstaatlichen Quellen der Erklärungsschlüssel, um administrativ vorgenommene Entscheidungen auf ihren eigentlichen gesellschaftlichen Ursprung zurückführen zu können. Ob zur Einrichtung neuer Institutionen, zu Personalbesetzungen im Bildungs-, Kunst- bzw. Kirchenbereich oder zur Begründung, Erweiterung und Präsentation verschiedenster musealer, wissenschaftlicher oder Kunstsammlungen—Anregungen, Empfehlungen und richtungsweisende Vorabsprachen zu kulturstaatlichen Aktivitäten erfolgten oftmals außerhalb des Dienstweges in Salons, Abendgesellschaften, Vereinen sowie bei Kuraufenthalten oder anderen privaten Zusammenkünften und sind in solchen Fällen mit Dienstakten allein gar nicht nachweisbar. Für das Projektthema erweisen sich deshalb entsprechende Erinnerungen, Briefwechsel und Tagebucheinträgen in ihrem Quellenwert genauso grundlegend wie ministerielle Voten, Denkschriften oder Immediatberichte an den Monarchen.

Derartige Dokumente werden in die vom Vorhaben zu erarbeitende Edition aufgenommen, die, nach sachthematischem Aspekt geordnet, Schriftstücke unterschiedlichster Provenienz enthalten werden. Das schließt Archivalien aus den zentralstaatlichen und den Provinzialüberlieferungen genauso ein wie die bereits angeführten Quellengruppen gesellschaftlicher Herkunft. Aus diesem breit gefächerten archivalischen Fundus erarbeitet das Vorhaben Editions- wie auch Darstellungsbände.

Mit dem Agieren des Kultusministeriums waren kulturstaatliche Entwicklung und Intervention sowie Interaktion des preußischen Staates mit der Gesellschaft aufs engste verknüpft. Diese Behörde bildete gewissermaßen das Scharnier jener Prozesse. Als Motoren erwiesen sich in unterschiedlichen Epochen vor allem solche Räte, Direktoren und Minister wie ein Johannes Schulze, ein Friedrich Althoff oder auch ein Carl Heinrich Becker, deren archivalisch überlieferte Nachlässe den Blick aus den Ministerialstuben heraus in die persönlichen Beziehungskreise lenken, wo nicht selten wichtige Anregungen, Vorabsprachen und Fürsprachen erfolgten, die dann wiederum in die ministerialen Entscheidungen einfließen. Solche Schlüsselfiguren und deren schriftliche Hinterlassenschaften sind für die Erforschung der Kulturstaatlichkeit Preußens unverzichtbar; die vom Projekt für eine spätere Arbeitsphase erwogene editorische Erschließung ihrer Nachlässe verspricht tiefe Einblicke und vielfältige Anregung für spezielle bildungs- und wissenschaftspoli-

tische Forschungen zum Vormärz, zur Kaiserzeit sowie zur Weimarer Republik.

Nachdem das Akademienvorhaben sich zunächst mit dem Kultusministerium als der staatlichen Schaltstelle für die kulturstaatliche Entwicklung Preußens befasst hat, widmet es sich in einer zweiten Arbeitsphase mehreren forschungsrelevanten Einzelthemen Unter dem Generalaspekt, auch kulturelle Wurzeln wie kulturpolitische Mechanismen der Integration im multi-ethnischen und durch verschiedene Regionen und Konfessionen geprägten Preußen näher beleuchten zu wollen, stehen gegenwärtig folgende Einzelthemen auf der Agenda des Akademienvorhabens: „Öffentlichkeit und Zensur als Herausforderungen an den frühen Kulturstaat“, „Der preußische Staat und die katholische Kirche zwischen 1817 und 1870“, „Monarchische Repräsentation und königliches Mäzenatentum in Preußen in der Zeit von 1840 bis 1914“ sowie „Die Finanzierung des Kulturstaates Preußen 1817 bis 1934“. Alle diese Themen stehen in einem inneren Zusammenhang zueinander und ordnen sich der zentralen Fragestellung des Projekts zur Genese und Dimension preußischer Kulturstaatlichkeit zu. Entsprechend der Grundkonzeption von Akademienvorhaben werden auch diese Themen vor allem in editorischer Form zu bewältigen und darüber hinaus in monographischer Weise darzustellen sein.

Alle Publikationen des Vorhabens, ob Editionsbande oder monographische Teile, stehen unter dem Generalthema der kulturstaatlichen Entwicklung Preußens im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert und führen als 2. Reihe die „Acta Borussica, Neue Folge“ fort, die vor einigen Jahren mit der zwölfbändigen Edition der „Protokolle des Preußischen Staatsministeriums 1817–1934/38“ begonnen worden ist.

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Imagining Europe: Turning Points in the Evolution of a Continent **An International Symposium**

**Vanderbilt University, Max Kade Center for European & German Studies,
Nashville, Tennessee, November 1–4, 2007**

The year 2007 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, a turning point in more recent efforts to unify Europe. While the occasion can easily give rise to celebratory self congratulation on achievements since the European Economic Union, a common foreign and security policy, and a common currency, such festivities would be only part of the narrative. The imagining of a new Europe was by no means straightforward nor entirely natural. A fuller account has to consider such unnerving facts as the sound rejection of a common constitu-

tion, unease at the rapid enlargement of the EU, postponement of consideration of Turkey's request for membership until 2020, and the rise throughout Europe of bias against ethnic minorities.

The Nashville symposium will use the 50th anniversary to reflect critically on the sense of a looming crisis in achieving full integration. Pre-1957 events will be consulted as providing a possible guide to future action. What useful lessons can we draw from missed opportunities to advance the idea of an integrated Europe? Do past turning points (*Wendepunkte*) — whether successes or failures — offer insight into how best to utilize opportunities to promote economic, political, and cultural flourishing on the European continent? Hence, the Vanderbilt symposium will be structured along the dual axes of theme and history. The thematic axis is intended to emphasize the idea of Europe as a “flourishing total economy” that negotiates differences in national politics and religious beliefs while advancing overarching concerns such as energy and monetary policies, trade agreements, cultural development, and social services. The historical axis is intended to draw attention to pivotal events from medieval emperors to Enlightenment utopias, from Napoleonic “unification” to Hitler’s race-based agenda of a German Europe. Historical markers of different configurations of Europe and its shifting center abound.

Approximately thirty Europeanists from several disciplines will be invited to revisit such decisive moments and to ask what marks they left on the cultural, economic, and political footprint of Europe and are useful today. In keeping with the mission of the Max Kade Center for European and German Studies at Vanderbilt, we welcome papers with a focus on Germany within its European contexts. A two-page proposal for a 30-minute presentation should be sent (as an email attachment, if possible) by May 1, 2007, to the symposium organizers at: Max Kade Center for European & German Studies, Vanderbilt University, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, VU Station B #351567, Nashville, TN 37235-1567 USA. mkcegs@vanderbilt.edu.

Contact person: John A. McCarthy, Director

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