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Introduction: European Dialogues

Barbara Burns, University of Glasgow

Ernest Schonfield, University of Glasgow

Europe is a diverse continent, and the aim of this special issue of *Oxford German Studies* is to offer a small taste of that diversity. This issue focuses on cultural exchanges between German and European authors/auteurs. It examines a few episodes in literary and cultural history in order to shed light on Germany's changing relationships with some of its European neighbours including Britain, France, Poland, Spain and Switzerland. A number of these articles originated as research presentations at the School of Modern Language and Cultures (SMLC) at the University of Glasgow over the course of 2014–2015. The articles bear witness to just a few of the many dialogues which have shaped European culture.¹ Such dialogues are not only intercultural but also transcultural; indeed, Wolfgang Iser argues that we should prefer the latter term because it suggests that different cultures can coexist and overlap within the same community.²

Starting chronologically in the middle ages, James Simpson's article on Reinhart the fox (otherwise known as Renart, Reynard and Reineke Fuchs) reflects on an exemplary European dialogue, for the beast epic is a tradition shared between Germany and France. It is significant that Heinrich (sometimes known as 'der Glichezare'), the author of the oldest extant version, was a native of Alsace, a region which symbolizes the history shared between

¹ For a survey of modern intellectuals and their ideas of Europe, see Paul Michael Lützeler, *Die Schriftsteller und Europa. Von der Romantik bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Piper, 1992). For the mid-twentieth century, see *Europe in Crisis: Intellectuals and the European Idea, 1917–1957*, ed. by Mark Hewitson and Matthew Dauria (New York: Berghahn, 2012). For contemporary authors, see Lena Wetenkamp, *Europa erzählt, verortet, erinnert. Europa-Diskurse in der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2017).

² Wolfgang Iser, 'Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today', in *Spaces of Culture: City — Nation — World*, ed. by Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London: Sage, 1999), pp. 194–213.

France and Germany. Michael Wood considers Walter Scott's reception of Goethe in the 1790s, a key exchange between two national poets at a time when modern European nation states were still in the process of being formed.

Given the theme of European dialogues, Heine seems an obvious candidate for inclusion. In a letter to an unnamed friend in Hamburg, published in *Unser Planet* on 11 April 1833, Heine described himself as 'der inkarnirte Kosmopolitismus'.³ Heine's internationalism even led the British poet Tony Harrison (born 1937) to propose that a statue of Heine should 'preside' over meetings of European heads of state 'to keep new Europe open eyed'.⁴ There are plenty of reasons to reject this proposal, for example, Heine's admiration for Napoleon and his attachment to national stereotypes.⁵ Yet he remains a key witness from a time when the project of a united Europe was still in its infancy. The article here considers Heine's interest in Muslim Spain, making the point that Muslims and Jews have also contributed to European culture.

Moving into the twentieth century, Paul Bishop investigates dialogues between C. G. Jung and Swiss intellectuals, considering Jung as a major thinker within a specific national context. Michael Syrotinski surveys some key interchanges between French and German intellectuals after 1945, with a particular focus on Derrida, translation, and Barbara Cassin's *Dictionary of Untranslatables* (2014). Cassin's dictionary is itself a good example of international dialogue, with separate co-authored entries on 'Europe' and all the major European languages.⁶ Mererid Pw Davies's article on the presence of Wales in W. G.

³ Heinrich Heine, letter to an unnamed friend in Hamburg, beginning of April 1833. See Heine, *Werke — Briefe — Lebenszeugnisse*, 27 vols, Säkularausgabe (Berlin: Akademie; Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1970–1984), XXI, p. 52.

⁴ Tony Harrison, 'The Gaze of the Gorgon: a film poem for BBC Television', in Tony Harrison, *The Gaze of the Gorgon* (Manchester: Bloodaxe Books, 1993), pp. 5–75 (p. 75).

⁵ Lützel, *Die Schriftsteller und Europa*, pp. 101, 107.

⁶ *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, ed. by Barbara Cassin, trans. by Steven Rendall et al, translation ed. by Emily Apter, Jacques Lezra and Michael Wood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

Sebald's *Austerlitz* makes a case for non-metropolitan readings of literary works, reminding us that the British Isles themselves comprise many different cultures and traditions. The volume concludes with an article by Paul Vickers comparing (West) German and Polish memory cultures as represented by Edgar Reitz's *Heimat* trilogy and the Polish director Jan Łomnicki's *Dom*.

Most of the contributions for this volume were planned in 2014, and although many already existed in draft form before the UK's EU referendum took place on 23 June 2016, the Brexit process makes the theme of European Dialogues more relevant than ever. In response to the referendum result, we invited two new contributions from colleagues beyond Glasgow, in order to include examples of cultural dialogue between Britain and Germany: Michael Wood (Edinburgh) on Scott and Goethe, and Mererid Puw Davies (London) on Sebald and Wales. Although the outcome of the Brexit process is still uncertain at the time of writing (1 November 2017, in the midst of a political crisis in Catalonia), historically and culturally Britain has always been part of Europe. No matter what happens next, the UK's relationships with its European neighbours will continue to have great political and cultural significance.

An analysis of Brexit would go far beyond the scope of this volume.⁷ However, given that the theme of this issue is 'European Dialogues', it seems appropriate to make a point or two about Brexit. In an essay published in the year 2000, Günter Minnerup reflected on the ideological tensions between Anglo-Saxon liberalism as founded by Adam Smith and the German historical school of economics as formulated by Friedrich List (1789–1846). List was a leading advocate of the Prussian *Zollverein*, which presents remarkable parallels with

⁷ For recent studies, see Alexander Niedermeier and Wolfram Ridder, *Das Brexit-Referendum: Hintergründe, Streitthemen, Perspektiven* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2017), Harold D. Clarke, Matthew Goodwin, Paul Whiteley, *Brexit: Why Britain Voted to Leave the European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

the European Union today.⁸ However, List also argued, in contrast to Smith, that German ‘infant industries’ required a degree of protectionism under a strong (Prussian) state.⁹ Minnerup concludes that: ‘The Cold War may be over, but the real struggle between politics and economics, the state and the market, Friedrich List and Adam Smith, democracy and liberalism continues unabated.’¹⁰ Remarkably, the Brexit process could be interpreted — on one level at least — as an attempt by the democratic state to reassert control over certain aspects of the free market, such as the movement of people.

In 2012, when Boris Johnson was still the mayor of London, he declared in an interview with *Die Weltwoche* that he wanted to form a new partnership between Britain and Switzerland called ‘Britzerland’. This was to be a group of countries, including Britain, Switzerland, and possibly Norway, which would be outside the EU politically, but which would still benefit from free trade with the Eurozone.¹¹ Johnson maintained a similar position in a subsequent interview in May 2016 during the EU referendum campaign. He was quoted as stating: ‘Ich denke in der Tat, nach dem Brexit folgt Britzerland’.¹² If the current Foreign

⁸ On this point, see Bertrand Hemmerdinger, ‘Vers l’Union Européenne: le parallèle du “Zollverein”’, *Belfagor*, 48 (1993), 89–90. It is regrettable that nineteenth-century European history is rarely taught in British schools, since a knowledge of nineteenth-century European history would provide an excellent framework for understanding the EU today.

⁹ Günter Minnerup, ‘Reflections on German History and Anglo-Saxon Liberalism’, in *The Challenge of German Culture: Essays Presented to Wilfried van der Will*, ed. by Michael Butler and Robert Evans (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp 175–86 (p. 178). For a recent biography of List, see Eugen Wendler, *Friedrich List (1789–1846): A Visionary Economist with Social Responsibility* (Berlin: Springer, 2014).

¹⁰ Minnerup, ‘Reflections on German History’, p. 186.

¹¹ Andrew Gimson, ‘Ich will ein “Britzerland” schaffen’, interview with Boris Johnson, *Die Weltwoche*, no 51, 20 December 2012.

<http://www.weltwoche.ch/ausgaben/2012-51/artikel/ich-will-ein-britzerland-schaffen-die-weltwoche-ausgabe-512012.html> (accessed 28 October 2017).

See also Andrew Gimson, ‘Boris Johnson in Britzerland’, *The Guardian*, 21 December 2012: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/dec/21/boris-johnson-in-britzerland> (accessed 28 October 2017).

¹² Nicholas Farrell and Urs Gehri, ‘Das Ding ist ausser Kontrolle geraten’, *Die Weltwoche*, no 20, 19 May 2016.

<http://www.weltwoche.ch/ausgaben/2016-20/artikel/das-ding-ist-ausser-kontrolle-geraten-die-weltwoche-ausgabe-202016.html> (accessed 28 October 2017)

Secretary really does have Switzerland in mind as a preferred partner for the UK, then it follows that Swiss politics, history and culture might be particularly deserving of our attention. Paul Bishop's study of dialogues among Swiss-German intellectuals included here makes a small contribution to this topic.

In the immediate run-up to the EU referendum of June 2016, the result was successfully predicted by the conservative German intellectual Karl Heinz Bohrer (born 1932), who has lived in London for many years, having been London correspondent for the *FAZ* in the late seventies.¹³ Bohrer observed that English common law is viewed as 'unantastbar', and therefore the English will always be likely to reject EU integration.¹⁴ The consequences of Brexit are unknown, but the UK will always need to work very closely with its continental neighbours. Democracy in Europe and in the wider world will continue to require intercultural (and transcultural) dialogue and reciprocity, as well as political negotiation and partnership. As teachers, students and researchers of modern languages, we are very lucky to be in a position to promote dialogues between countries, regions and cultures across the world.

Barbara Burns is Reader in German at the University of Glasgow. Her primary research focus is on nineteenth-century Germanic literature, in particular non-canonical women's writing. She also has an interest in producing critical editions, for example of works by Louise von François and Wilhelm Meinhold (London: MHRA, 2008 and 2016).

Ernest Schonfield is Lecturer in German at the University of Glasgow. His research interests include Vormärz literature (Heine, Büchner) and modern German novels (Fontane, Thomas

¹³ Bohrer's reports for the *FAZ* are collected in *Ein bißchen Lust am Untergang. Englische Ansichten* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1982).

¹⁴ Karl Heinz Bohrer, 'Elektrisierend unverschämt', *Die Zeit*, no 26, 16 June 2016, p. 38.

Mann, Bachmann, Özdamar). His most recent publication, co-edited with Robert Gillett and Daniel Steuer, is *Georg Büchner: Contemporary Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).