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What is Asian German Studies?

Edited by Chunjie Zhang; with contributions by Chunjie Zhang, Doug McGetchin, Stefan Keppler-Tasaki, Thomas Pekar, Caroline Rupprecht, Bettina Brandt, Johanna Schuster-Craig, Joanne Miyang Cho, Qinna Shen, and Veronika Fuechtner.

Introduction

The question "What is Asian German studies?" has been a disciplinary chimera whose *gestalt* calls for definition. If we ask what Asian German studies does, we find numerous related publications, conference panels, and seminars, in particular in the last decade of American German studies. These vibrant and diverse efforts in the research, publishing, and teaching of Asian German Studies are what instigated this forum that wants to reflect on the state of this new field, its research scopes, methodologies, and future perspectives.

In North American German studies, the term "Asian German studies" has become more solidly established during the last decade. With the East and South Asian economic boom of the last fifteen years, a new wave of research interest connecting Asia to the rest of the world has become more pronounced. In 2009, ten panels on Asian German studies were organized at the annual conference of the German Studies Association. Since then, Asian German studies panels have remained a constant presence at the GSA each year. Edited volumes surveying the relationship between German-language culture and East Asia have given the small field of Asian German studies a new impulse and fresh energy (see Fuechtner/Rhiel; Shen/Rosenstock; Cho/Roberts/Spang; Brandt/Purdy; Zhang). These books discuss various aspects of Asian German encounters from the eighteenth century to the present, exploring literary, philosophical, cultural, and political entanglements in crucial historical eras such as the colonial, imperialist, and Nazi periods. Many of these connections had received little notice before. These volumes contribute to the diversity existing in the United States within German studies and the pluralization of research perspectives that have connected German-language cultures with Asia in recent years. In addition, it is worth mentioning that scholars in Europe, Asia, and North America have been researching German, Germanic, and Asian connections for a long time, reaching far back at least to the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's *Novissima Sinica* (1697). Yet, as a collective phenomenon with a concentrated presence, Asian German studies is now a more or less established field in North America with contacts in other countries.

Undoubtedly, this productive scholarly trend has enriched German studies. At the same time, it is indispensable to reflect on some disciplinary questions that meaningfully shape this new field and help retain its lasting impact. Again, what

is Asian German studies? Aren't the "German" and "Asian" parts so different in size, history, and their internal diversity that a comparison can only be out of balance? What methodologies or research trends have been informing Asian German studies? How can research connections made between Asian- and German-language literatures and cultures yield insights that can be useful for related fields? What is the relationship of Asian German studies to Asian American studies, Turkish German studies, Arab German studies, Afro-German studies, multicultural German studies, or global German studies?

Historically and theoretically speaking, Asian German studies benefits from area studies and postcolonial studies. Area studies, which emerged during the Cold War and made geography into its organizing principle, effected a move beyond disciplinary boundaries—for instance by connecting the social sciences and the humanities in order to understand Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas as areas much larger than a single nation-state. Multiple disciplines also became involved: political science, history, geography, economics, religious studies, linguistics, and literary and cultural studies all started to work together in creating an interdisciplinary synergy that turned out to be useful to understand cultural and political commonalities and differences beyond national borders.

Edward Said's field-defining *Orientalism* (1978) and its reception in postcolonial studies drew scholars' attention to hybrid cultural experiences and uneven power balances in former European colonies. Unlike area studies, the cultures examined by postcolonial studies, such as India and Britain, are not necessarily geographically adjacent to each other, but they are historically and linguistically connected through centuries-long colonial encounters and their postcolonial repercussions. Key concepts such as hybridity, cultural difference, mimicry, and subalternity have had an impact on literary and cultural studies across disciplines. Yet, while Anglophone, Francophone, Latin American studies, and Asian American studies are directly associated with European settlements, colonial encounters, slave trade, economic exploitation, warfare, and migration, Asian German studies, quantitively speaking, could claim few direct colonial entanglements as its subject matter. While Wilhelmine Germany had comparatively short-lived and small-scale colonial settlements in Africa, Asia, and on the Pacific Islands, the lack of a "Germanophone" literature in Asia—and this is probably a good thing—does not provide Asian German studies with the kind of historical foundation that informs Anglophone, Francophone, Latin American studies, or Asian American studies. Hence, the theoretical concepts gained from postcolonial studies based on different historical circumstances may be of limited use for Asian German studies. At the same time, while area studies usually focuses on one extensive and connected geographical and cultural landscape in Asia, Africa, or America, in the case of Asian German studies, a different paradigm is needed. Transnational or transcultural studies could offer an alternative for Asian German studies. Yet these disciplines also borrow from area studies and postcolonial theory, and that limits their scope as well.

All this poses challenges for the methodology of Asian German studies. How can Asian German studies productively borrow methodologies developed in area studies and, especially, postcolonial studies that critique Eurocentrism, colonial exploitation, and racial and ethnic discrimination, and promote more justice and equality in understanding and representing the past and present? Of course, the lack of a longstanding colonial history in German culture does not mean that racial discriminations or colonial fantasies do not exist in German literature and culture. But what is the specific Asian German contribution to the larger field of cultural and literary studies? One possibility is to link the emergence of Asian German studies as an academic phenomenon to the age of "Empire," as defined by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri.

Hardt and Negri analyze the development of global capitalism in the latter half of the twentieth century and argue that the new paradigm of the world market after the wave of decolonization and the Cold War is defined by informatization and the postmodern condition. Hardt and Negri call this dominant, all-encompassing capitalist global system "Empire": "In Empire, no subjectivity is outside, and all places have been subsumed in a general 'non-place'" (353). The term "non-place" refers to postmodern power relations without an epicenter. Empire regulates its power through fluid, remote, digitized, and mobile measures: "Empire constitutes the ontological fabric in which all the relations of power are woven together—political and economic relations as well as social and personal relations" (354). Despite the all-encompassing quality of Empire, Hardt and Negri, following Marxist dialectical historicism, argue that every theory and analysis of Empire needs to account for its decline. New forces will eventually emerge to subvert Empire. For example, the pessimism about the crisis and decline of European civilization, as it was evident after World War One, is "in some way a symptom of the new vital force of the masses, or […] of the desire of the multitude" (377). An existing order contains the seeds of a new force that will subvert the old order in a dialectical development of history. Hence Empire also contains the impulse to move beyond Eurocentrism. The anticipation of the deterritorialization of Empire in postmodernity has the force of breaking the very boundaries set by twentieth-century imperialism, either geographically or ideologically. The Eurocentric hierarchy of imperialist centers and their peripheries will be dissolved by the development of Empire itself. The fluidity of boundaries and the mobility of identity and belonging within Empire make political blocs and power centers more elusive and obsolete than ever before. Hardt and Negri, however, do not show concrete examples of how to move beyond Eurocentrism in the age of Empire.

Asian German studies can function as a model and contribute to the decline of Eurocentrism and Empire's immanent practice of politics. Within the paradigm of Empire, Asian German studies can contribute to the debates about world literature and the research in global history. Asian German studies can enrich world literature from a specific perspective. It not only reminds scholars of the connec-

tions between canonical writers but also makes non-canonical writers and thinkers more visible. It showcases and conceptualizes intertextual and transcultural connections between Asia and German-speaking Europe that were discussed less frequently in traditional German studies. It expands and diversifies the paradigm of German national literature in a meaningful way. Similarly, global history—unlike international history or universal history that are based on national histories—describes historical processes from a comparative perspective and strives to overcome Eurocentrism, nationalism, or any forms of exclusionism. Sebastian Conrad argues, "the modern disciplines are deeply Eurocentric. They placed European developments in the foreground and saw Europe as the central driving force of world history. Even more fundamentally, the conceptual toolbox of the social sciences and humanities abstracted European history to create a model of universal development" (4). Asian German studies can change this and enrich German studies with more meaningful connections and research opportunities.

While it is common to argue that German and European culture has influenced other parts of the world, Asian German studies can excavate Asian cultures' impact on Germany and Europe and, ultimately, prove the inextricable entanglements between different Asian cultures, Germany, Europe, and other places. Asian German studies has the potential to demonstrate an alternative paradigm for comparative literature and history and show the world's network in different historical manifestations and geographical interactions. Of course, given the highly diverse cultures in Asia, I don't mean to claim that, for example, Chinese German studies and South Asian German studies use the same procedures and objectives and produce the same results. Yet, the exciting new trend called Asian German studies, maybe due to the lack of a better term for now, has taken shape, connected a group of prolific scholars, and produced a number of highly original publications. Hence, the term Asian German studies is to be taken not as the end but as the beginning of an ever-evolving expansion of German studies, world literature, and global history.

The contributions to this forum offer a variety of current perspectives on research and teaching in Asian German studies covering topics as diverse as South Asian German studies, the study of German transpacific relations (*transpacifica*), exile studies, Asian German studies, Vietnamese German studies, Muslim German studies, East Asian German studies, cinema studies, and global German studies. We think that these new impulses will expand the field of German studies in a meaningful way and shape research and teaching interests that will benefit the future of our field.

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South Asian Connections to Germany as a Part of Asian German Studies

Besides Aryans, the swastika, and Romantic poets, Indo-German contacts tend not to be well known in public discourse, but it turns out that the cultural and other connections run surprisingly deep in global encounters. The links between Europe and Asia are ancient, although it is the past four centuries of contact through trading with East India companies that have burgeoned the bonds of globalization. While South Asia (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, etc.) have had extensive connections to major trading nations in Europe like Britain, France, Portugal, and the Netherlands, German contacts with South Asia have been more recent and in smaller numbers with only minor commercial impact. German connections to the subcontinent, however, have been pronounced, in particular intellectually and culturally.

Indo-German studies emerged out of linguistic interests within religious studies from the Renaissance and Enlightenment eras. Foundational texts for Indo-German studies include overviews of larger Indo-European contacts (Schwab, Marchand) as well as intellectual (Rothermund, Clark) and philosophical connections (Halbfass). There are also comprehensive overviews that include diplomatic and economic networks (Leifer).

Translations by Sir William Jones, the President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and other East India Company officials in South Asia fueled German Romantic interest (Willson) at the end of the eighteenth century and led to a sustained scholarly linguistic study of South Asian languages, histories, and literatures. This was an important era, with Friedrich Schlegel's influential call in 1808 for an "Oriental Renaissance" in Europe based largely on the study of Sanskrit. The influx of Indian ideas stirred the philosophical interest of Kant, the fascination of Schopenhauer, and the hostility of Hegel. Schopenhauer incorporated Indian philosophy and developed an affinity for Buddhism (Bhatawadekar, Droit). In the 1820s, Wilhelm von Humboldt was very interested in Sanskrit and the Indian *Bhagavadgita*, but Hegel was determined to build an intellectual wall excluding India from the discipline of philosophy, relegating Indian thought and culture despite its sophistication to the category of religion and to a lower, childlike status in the development of world historical *Geist* (Herling, *The German Gita*; Cowan). Eurocentric racism and religious bigotry played a role in this exclusion, which had a profound impact for at least a century, and it continues to foster misunderstandings and disparities (Park, Chakrabarty).

In 1786, Jones announced that Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit had common roots, starting a whole new intellectual movement, as Germans contributed to examining these linguistic connections, called Aryan and eventually proto-Indo-European (Benes). Scholarship in Sanskrit as a related tongue to German in an "Indogermanisch" family developed in the nineteenth century as part of a search for the origins of human religion, particularly in religious texts like the *Rig Veda* and the *Bhagavadgita* (Adluri / Bagchee). The dozens of German academic scholars who studied Indian languages and literature have been the subject of in-

dividual biographical summaries (Stache-Rosen), histories of their social and cultural contexts (Sengupta; McGetchin, *Indology, Indomania, Orientalism*; Germana), and studies about their relations with other disciplines such as anthropology (Rabault-Feuerhahn). Religious connections are an important part of Indo-German relationships, including Buddhism and Theosophy, as well as Christian missionaries to India (Musch, Myers, Panayi). The identities of both Germans and Indians have been an important trope to examine (Figueira). There are several studies of literary connections both more recent (Murti) and across many centuries (Kontje).

The role Germans played within a global European imperial project shifted. In the nineteenth century, Germans traveling in India like Georg Bühler and Richard Garbe fit comfortably into the larger British pan-European colonial world (Bagchi). From the 1890s, as waxing imperial German industrial, naval, and commercial strength arose to challenge the British, a tension emerged between the British "handler" (shopkeepers) and German "Helden" (heroes). A German sense of cultural superiority regarding India had been present as far back as 1819 when August Wilhelm von Schlegel remarked that the British could have India's "cinnamon and the cloves," while Germans were instead interested in "intellectual treasures" for the benefit of "all the educated world" (McGetchin, *Indology, Indomania, Orientalism* 116). By the early twentieth century, the political rift widened, as Indian independence figures developed "entangled" anti-imperial *realpolitik* interests with Germans during the First and Second World Wars, each sharing a common British enemy (Manjapra). The connections under Nazism have been studied to some extent, but are still waiting for an extensive, scholarly exploration (Pollock).

Edward Said's *Orientalism* has sustained a profound impact on Indian German studies. Said advocated a critical approach to Western engagement with an Eastern "other." He has focused on France and England's engagement with the Middle East, largely ignoring both Germany and India (Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered"). Yet, many others have applied at least aspects of Said's approach to Indian German interactions. One theoretical dynamic in cultural interaction that has emerged is a dichotomy between hermeneutic and critical consciousness, and an effort to transcend the dialectic between them (Herling, "Either"). The hermeneutic approach of endeavoring to engage in the difficult task of bridging differences with an "other" emerged from Gadamer, amplified through the philosophical parallels that Halbfass illuminated in his philosophy.

Asian German Studies owes its roots to studies of trade, culture, and empires—including area studies, subaltern studies, and postcolonial studies. Asian German studies benefits from wider examinations of Asia and other locations including France, Britain, and Russia, providing useful parallels and overviews. Regarding broader trends at work in scholarship, there have been several edited volumes on Indo-German connections (Fuechtner / Rhiel; Cho / Kurlander / McGetchin; Esleben / Kraenzle / Kulkarni; McGetchin / Park / SarDesai).

Regarding future methodological priorities for Asian German studies, there could be a better interface with more established sub-fields such as Ottoman scholarship and that of Southwest Asia and the Middle East (Berman, *German Literature*). With more of an overlap, a more insightful cross-fertilization of ideas would be possible. Furthermore, the various travelers, missionaries, scholars, merchants, and diplomats often traveled through these neighboring areas, providing an already existing bridge to link these geographic areas. Thematic parallels are another angle to pursue, including that of gender (Murti / Cho / McGetchin). New approaches will emerge from interdisciplinary work within German studies, as well as with other fields already well established in looking at transnational connections. The South Asia Institute at Heidelberg has pursued a focus on modern India instead of the linguistic philological approach established in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Adluri). There are many exciting possibilities ahead.

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Transpacifica. Quellen zum deutschen Doppeldiskurs über Amerika und Ostasien

Eines der produktivsten kulturwissenschaftlichen Arbeitsfelder der 1990er Jahre bis heute sind zweifellos die transatlantischen Studien. Zu ihren Hauptthemen gehört der komplexe deutsche Diskurs über Amerika, den Goethes Altersroman *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (1829) für die bürgerliche Fantasie weit geöffnet, aber noch nicht erschlossen hat. Steht der europäische Kulturmensch Wilhelm auf der Schwelle zu einem gewissermaßen transzendentalen Amerika, das die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit menschlicher Entfaltung zu reflektieren erlaubt, sind es vor allem die Wilhelminer der späten Kaiserzeit, die in den USA das Maß der Moderne erblickten. Die Modernisierung, sprich Amerikanisierung jenes traditionsschweren Europas, das unter dem Namen des „Abendlandes" antimodernistisch verteidigt wurde, bedeutete besonders in der Weimarer Republik zugleich „Traum und Albtraum" (Lüdtke et. al. 7). Um die deutschen Exilkreise in den USA der 1930er bis 1950er Jahre, namentlich um das „Weimar on the Pacific" (Bahr 1), entwickelte sich dann eine dynamische Drehscheibe der transatlantischen Verständigung, deren Impuls seit 1995 von den Residenzprogrammen des Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House e.V. in Los Angeles weitergetragen wird.

Eben das „Weimar on the Pacific" steht aber in einem Kontext, der über die transatlantischen Studien hinaus auf die transpazifischen Studien verweist. Wie man vom „emerging field of Asian-German studies" gesprochen hat (Fuechtner/Rhiel 1), so waren in den letzten Jahren wortgleiche Ansprüche auf ein „emerging field" von „Transpacific studies" zu vernehmen, in dessen Rahmen „the traffic in peoples, cultures, capitals, and ideas between ‚America' und ‚Asia'" un-

tersucht werden soll (Nguyen/Hoskins 1). Die amerikanistische Literaturwissenschaft hat sich bereits erfolgreich den „transpacific imaginations" gewidmet, die aus einem „tremendous geopolicital pressure of Pacific encounters" hervorgegangen sind (Huang 2). Themen und Perspektiven der Asian German Studies mit solchen der Transpacific Studies zusammenzuführen, hat nun einen entscheidenden Vorteil. Denn in diesem Rahmen können die Asian German Studies nicht allein die lange Zeit eher verstreuten Forschungen zu den europäisch-asiatischen Kulturbeziehungen bündeln und durch ein gemeinsames Fundament stärken, sondern auch die traditionell starke Forschung zum deutschen Amerika-Diskurs wesentlich ergänzen.

Der transatlantische Blick auf die deutsch-amerikanischen Kulturbeziehungen ist *per se* nicht in der Lage, das ganze Bild der USA einzufangen, seitdem diese faktisch und programmatisch zu einer Union an zwei Ozeanen geworden sind. Allerdings lässt sich zeigen, dass der deutsche Amerika-Diskurs in wichtigen Teilen auch der deutsche Ostasien-Diskurs ist. Die Programmatik der „Two Ocean policy" wurde insbesondere von Alfred Thayer Mahan und Theodore Roosevelt formuliert. Ihr Diskursecho im Kaiserreich, das seinerseits erst 1898 in China Fuß gefasst hatte, war von Beginn an intensiv. Die Übersetzung von Mahans *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (1890) lag seit 1896/99 vor und gab einen Vorgeschmack auf die „political importance", die die USA der konzeptionellen Einheit ihrer beiden Küsten, „her Atlantic and Pacific seaboards", zuschreiben sollten (325). Mehr noch verfehlte die glänzende expansionistische Rhetorik Roosevelts ihre Wirkung auf die deutsche Öffentlichkeit nicht. Der 1901 inaugurierte Präsident erklärte in einer 1903 in San Francisco gehaltenen Rede:

> Before I came to the Pacific Slope I was an expansionist, and after having been here I fail to understand how any man, convinced of his country's greatness and glad that his country should challenge with proud confidence its mighty future, can be anything but an expansionist. In the century that is opening the commerce and the command of the Pacific will be factors of incalculable moment in the world's history. (390-91)

Dass Roosevelt 1905 Japan und Russland zum Friedensschluss auf amerikanischen Boden einlud und 1906 – in direkter Nachfolge der österreichischen Publizistin Bertha von Suttner – den Friedensnobelpreis erhielt, hat das mitteleuropäische Weltbild der Zeit gesprengt und erweitert. Nicht einmal die für das „Abendland"-Denken grundlegende Unterscheidung zwischen „West" und „Ost" sollte Roosevelt zufolge am „mighty ocean, where east and west finally become one" (395) noch gelten. Für die „Abendländer" besonders besorgniserregend hat der amerikanische Friedenspräsident zum Jahrhundertauftakt ein Narrativ vertreten, wonach es eine Mitte der Welt gibt, die sich historisch vom Mittelmeer zum Atlantik und schließlich zum Pazifik verschiebt. Die damit ausgerufene Moderne war eine amerikanisch-asiatische, und so trug die pazifische Wende der amerikanischen Politik nicht wenig zu deutschen Ängsten einer Marginalisierung und Provinzialisierung bei. Die „Abendländer" vertraten eine eigene

„Mitte"-Ideologie mit dem Reich als vielbeschworenem „Herz der Völker" (Hölderlin 224). Neben anderen monierte daher Max Scheler an der „Mittelmeer"-These, dass die „großen Traditionen der alten Mittelmeerkultur" als solche, die „Kultur der Freiheit, des Geistes und der Individualität", keineswegs der neuen Mitte folgten, sondern hinter „Barbarei" und „puritanischer Verödung" zurückblieben (248–49). „Einstweilen", so Oswald Spengler, „ist die Macht in die Randgebiete verlegt, nach Asien und Amerika", „scheint [es], daß Westeuropa seine maßgebende Bedeutung verloren hat", hier aber habe die „Idee der faustischen Kultur […] ihre Wurzeln" und hier werde sie „den letzten Sieg ihrer Geschichte erfechten oder rasch dahinsterben" (Spengler 42). Die deutsche Reichsidee mit ihren welthistorisch-eschatologischen Auspizien scheint mithin ein wesentlicher Antrieb dafür gewesen zu sein, dass sich zahlreiche deutschsprachige Autorinnen und Autoren für die Beobachtung und Bewertung des transpazifischen Geschehens zuständig fühlten.

Diese kampflustigen Bildungsbürger sahen sich damit konfrontiert, dass der amerikanische Expansionismus eine Prognose aus dem ungeliebteren, marxistischen Zweig der deutschen Geschichtsphilosophie zu bestätigen schien. Nur zwanzig Jahre nach Goethes *Wanderjahren* hat Karl Marx angesichts des beginnenden Booms von Kalifornien „beide Küsten des Stillen Meers" als neuen Motor der Geschichte identifiziert und dabei bereits auch die „Mittelmeer"-These formuliert: In naher Zukunft werde „der Stille Ozean dieselbe Rolle spielen wie jetzt das Atlantische und im Altertum und Mittelalter das Mittelländische Meer" (220–21). Die herausragende KPD-Programmatikerin Clara Zetkin konnte die Verschiebung des welthistorischen Schwerpunkts auf das Gebiet der amerikanisch-asiatischen Beziehungen 1922 bestätigen. Dabei führte sie auch den zweiten eminenten Topos des deutschen Doppelbildes von Amerika und Asien neben dem „Mittelmeer"-Topos an, nämlich die Aussicht auf einen Pazifikkrieg. Die USA seien „bestrebt, Ausbeutungsgewalt über die Arbeitskraft des chinesischen Volkes […] zu erhalten", während gleichzeitig „Japan erobernd die Hand auf große und wichtige Teile Chinas gelegt" habe: „Der Konfliktstoff zwischen der nordamerikanischen Union und Japan" wachse „mit der Entwicklung beider Staaten" (Zetkin 11–12). Drastische Szenarien eines amerikanisch-asiatischen Krieges hatten bereits seit 1905 viele so beschäftigt wie den Linksintellektuellen Alfred Döblin, den Pionier des deutschen China-Romans, der die Bilder eines transpazifischen Großkonflikts auf der Breitwand seines Zukunftsromans *Berge Meere und Giganten* (1924) abrollen ließ. Döblin gehörte auch zum eingangs zitierten „Weimar on the Pacific" und nahm von einem Besuch in San Francisco 1945 die Hoffnung mit, dass amerikanische Jugendlichkeit und asiatische Weisheit die goldene Brücke zu einer „transpazifischen Zukunft" (Keppler-Tasaki 263) der Menschheit schlagen könnten.

Was hier mit Scheler und Spengler, Zetkin und Döblin angedeutet wurde, sind Positionen eines umfangreichen Doppeldiskurses über Amerika und Asien, den die Sammlung *Transpacifica. Quellen zum deutschsprachigen Diskurs über die USA*

und Ostasien 1900–1945 dokumentieren möchte. Diese an der Friedrich Schlegel Graduiertenschule der Freien Universität Berlin entstandene Quellenedition (www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/friedrichschlegel/assoziierte_projekte/Transpacifica-Keppler-Tasaki) soll ab 2020 öffentlich zur Verfügung stehen und den zukunftsträchtigen Brückenschlag zwischen Asian German Studies und Transpacific Studies unterstützen.

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Asian German Studies and Exile Research

If one compares exile studies (*Exilforschung*) and Asian German Studies, immediately some differences can be observed. Exile research can look back on a relatively long history, which began in the 1930s in the USA and focused, for example, on the expulsion and flight from National Socialist rule (when immigrants from Germany reported on their fate or even called for a fight against National Socialism). Asian German Studies, in contrast, has only established itself as a new interdisciplinary mode of research roughly since 2006. In Germany itself, exile studies began in the 1960s and focused on North and South America and the European countries that served as destinations for more than 500,000 emigrants fleeing Germany and Austria. Since many intellectuals, artists, and scientists, the so-to-speak intellectual and cultural elite, were among these refugees, exile studies initially paid attention to both the biographies of these people and their books, films, and musical compositions. An essential part of exile research today is still the study of exile literature.

Research on emigration to Asia began only slowly and relatively late in the 1960s and 1970s. It highlights the Chinese port city of Shanghai, the most important Asian destination due to its special political constellation, where around 20,000 Jewish and political emigrants from all over Europe were able to survive the war and the Holocaust. The reason for the belatedness of the research into Asian exile lies in the view that this emigration was regarded as "marginal" because it did not involve any elites. It can therefore be said that initially exile research was mostly biographically oriented, preferred research on elite cultural products, and was also strongly oriented towards Western (Euro-American) centers of exile (such as New York, California, or London). The question of cultural contacts was only raised in the 1970s, but from the perspective of acculturation theory. The central question was to what extent emigrants were prepared to adapt to the culture in which they had arrived and which possible conflicts they would face.

Asian German Studies, in contrast, enables a completely different research perspective. It is particularly interested in Asian influence on literary and cultural

developments in German-speaking countries, the representations of Asia (especially East Asia) in German society and culture, and the reciprocal transnational and transcultural contacts and interactions in a global context. Asian German studies, however, could find common ground with a modified model of exile research, as it is currently emerging: exile research today has shifted away from its biographical-literary roots towards interdisciplinary cultural studies, which not only investigates exile as a historical phenomenon but also works with foundational concepts such as homeland, identity, mobility, cultural and linguistic changes, and it offers points of departure for current migration research. The spatial focus has also expanded to a global context. Such a change will undoubtedly help connect exile studies with Asian German Studies.

Let me briefly illustrate my point by using the research about Shanghai's exile as an example: during the war years, and even before, this city was without doubt a special cultural contact zone, a transnational and transcultural scene, where Chinese, Europeans, Americans, Russians, Japanese and others met, forging mutual connections, entanglements, and cooperation, but, of course, also holding on to their mutual aversions and prejudices. Given the background of their displacement, their loss of relatives, profession, property, and home, the stressful hygienic and climatic conditions in Shanghai (apart from the fact that the city had been largely destroyed by the Japanese army in the Battle of Shanghai in 1937), and the catastrophic housing situation, the life of most European emigrants in Shanghai was extremely agonizing, just like that for most Chinese, too. There was a great alienation between the emigrants and the local Chinese population, and there were few attempts at rapprochement, assimilation, or integration. The German and Austrian *emigrés* tried to create their own area of residence in the northern Shanghai district of Hongkou, called "Little Berlin" or "Little Vienna," as separate as possible from their Chinese environment, with their own restaurants, cafés, and shops. Shanghai also had a dense network of German-language theatres, cabarets, and other entertainment venues as well as around thirty exile newspapers and magazines published by emigrants in German, English, Polish, and Yiddish, such as *8-Uhr Abendblatt*, *Gelbe Post*, *Shanghai Jewish Chronicle*, and *Shanghai Week*. Nevertheless, there were many and varied interdependencies and communications between the European Jewish emigrants and their Chinese contemporaries or, by necessity, with the Japanese military authorities who were increasingly controlling and restricting them. In 1943, approximately 20,000 emigrants lived in a kind of ghetto of only about 2,5 square kilometers.

Research into Shanghai's exile has increasingly started to focus on these mutual perceptions, contacts, and conflicts between the emigrants, Japanese, and Chinese against the background of the anti-Semitic efforts of Nazi Germany, which had an impact on their Japanese allies. *The Japanese, the Nazis, and the Jews*, a book by the American Holocaust researcher David Kranzler, first published in 1976, lists at least a few important groups of actors in its title. Current exile research, which resonates with Asian German Studies, as mentioned above, concentrates on the

interactions (or coexistence) between European Jews and Chinese and also on the Chinese perception of Jews, to which especially Chinese research contributes. The *Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai* was founded in 1988 and the director of this center, Professor Pan Guang, published a foundational study on the history of Jews in China. This clearly shows that exile research is turning towards a multidimensional history, which is also characteristic of Asian German Studies.

In addition to Shanghai, this new scholarly approach also focuses on Asia-specific issues, for instance Japan's role in relation to emigration and Jews in general. During the war years, Japan was not only the dominant power in Shanghai, but also controlled parts of China (such as the Japanese vassal state of Manchukuo, where, for example, around 25,000 Russian Jews lived in the city of Harbin). Despite its alliance with Nazi Germany, Japan was a destination of emigration. Prominent emigrants such as the architect Bruno Taut, the philosopher Karl Löwith, or the conductor and composer Klaus Pringsheim lived in Japan for at least a few years during the war. Last but not least, research into emigration to other Asian countries and regions, such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Indochina and, above all, India, has also started to come into focus. The outlines of a multimedial and transnational or transcultural memory space are beginning to emerge. This has the potential to become a future joint research topic both for Asian German Studies scholars interested in exile topics as well as for those interested in extending exile research to include Asian German connections.

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Teaching and Researching Vietnamese German Studies

Vietnamese-German Studies can be imagined as a viable subfield of Asian-German Studies especially in the United States, where Vietnam is associated with the so-called "American War." As a comparatist interested in "World Literature," I was introduced to Vietnam through Francophone Studies, which focuses on colonialism. I was curious about Vietnam's history with East Germany: Ho Chi Minh visited the GDR in 1957, and the GDR subsequently provided *Entwicklungshilfe*. Textile production support began in 1973; and since the war had destroyed rice production, starving workers were sent to East Germany. Honecker visited Vietnam in 1977 and found it lucrative to bring in Vietnamese workers, who in turn sent home bicycles and sewing machines. The maximum time these guest workers (euphemistically called "Facharbeiter") were envisioned to spend in the GDR was four years. To avoid the complications of citizenship, pregnant women were promptly sent back to Vietnam. Marriage between Vietnamese and Germans were prohibited, a regulation eerily reminiscent of Nazi prohibition of

the "Mischehe" (miscegenation). East Germans were resentful because they were forced to make donations to the construction of infrastructure in Vietnam and most workers returned to Vietnam after the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Those who remained fared poorly: the local German population was xenophobic, and in 1992 neo-Nazis invoked the specter of anti-Semitic pogroms by setting fire in Rostock to Vietnamese barracks. Due to the bureaucratic complexities of unified Germany's new "Bleiberecht," many former East German Vietnamese were forced into criminality, leading to the stereotype of black marketeers whose main activity was to sell cigarettes. Today, between 40,000 and 50,000 Vietnamese Germans reside in Berlin-Brandenburg primarily in the quasi-ghetto of Lichtenberg around the Dong Xuan shopping mall.

An additional 40,000 to 50,000 formerly West German Vietnamese fall under the rubric of "Boat People," who fled Vietnam after the Fall of Saigon in 1975. Whereas former East German workers retained ties with their homeland, this latter group was integrated into German society, losing its connections to Vietnamese culture. As "Boat People," they were traumatized by the experience of war, having arrived in the West as refugees. When the conflict between the communists in the North and the U.S. government escalated, thousands of anti-communists fled to the South. With the American loss of the war, internal migration culminated in massive flight from approaching communist troops. "Boat People" represented the wealthier class of South Vietnamese. They boarded rickety vessels for refugee camps in Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia, with their ultimate destinations being the United States and France. Of the more than one million refugees, between 300,000 and 400,000 died at sea from starvation, disease, and pirate attacks. Many drowned due to an excessive amount of cargo on overloaded boats. This fate, reminiscent of what migrants experience today while attempting to reach Europe by boat (e.g., the recent drownings near the coast of Lampedusa, Italy), led to a war trauma described, for example, by Trinh T. Min-ha in *Elsewhere, within here: Immigration, Refugeeism and the Boundary Event* (2010) and by the recent Pulitzer Prize-winning American novel *The Sympathizer* (2015). Other descriptions include *The Boat* (2008) by Vietnamese-American Nam Le, and French author Linda Lê's novel *The three Fates* (1997), in which a little girl hides in a foxhole and witnesses the slaughter committed by American troops. These non-German texts, written in English and French, provide glimpses into the wartime experience of overseas Vietnamese that also apply to Vietnamese-Germans, but have not (yet) been written about in German—they might thus be helpful additions to the potential Vietnamese-German syllabi I focus on here.

Teaching Vietnam in German Studies, as opposed to American or French Studies, is important because in Germany the Vietnamese diaspora is often overlooked. Compared to the Chinese and Koreans, few Vietnamese artists, authors, and filmmakers are visible in the West. The most public Vietnamese-German figure is the politician Philipp Rösler—a lone figure, considering Germany's sizeable Vietnamese-German demographic. A must-include for Vietnamese-Ger-

man syllabi is the poster child of Asian-German literature, Japanese-German Yoko Tawada, whose novel *Das nackte Auge* (2004) features a Vietnamese protagonist who visits East Berlin and becomes an illegal immigrant. Tawada also published "In Front of Tran Tien Bridge" (2000), about the Cu Chi Tunnels dug by the Vietcong during the Vietnam War. Lesser known are two Vietnamese-German authors from former East Germany: The Dung, whose Socialist Realist novel *Der Traum von Orly* (2016) is about a man who wants to escape the poverty of postwar Vietnam by applying to go to the GDR; and Pham Thi Hoài, an established Hanoi author who came to study at Humboldt University, published on *Doi Moi* (the 1986 economic reforms), and writes in a style reminiscent of Brecht and Kafka. Pham's novel, *Die Kristallbotin* (1997), which won the Frankfurt *LiBeraturpreis*, and her collection of stories, *Sonntagsmenü* (1995), lend themselves for inclusion in Vietnamese-German syllabi. Pham portrays the gritty reality of everyday life, and her work—as well as she in person—are banned from the People's Republic of Vietnam. Her Australian translator, Ton-that Quynh-Du, explains that "Vietnam's cultural bureaucrats […] have charged her with holding an 'excessively pessimistic view' of Vietnam" (104).

When it comes to introducing Vietnamese German culture to the English-language classroom, I recommend Petra Fachinger's essay, which provides an overview of cinematic and literary representations. For readers of German in graduate seminars, sociologist Kien Nghi Ha's edited volume *Asiatische Deutsche* offers interviews, photographs, and demographics, for a sense of what it's like to be Vietnamese in Germany. Historical studies pertaining to the Vietnam War's effect on both Germanies are equally pertinent: I here recommend Richard Wolin's *The Wind from the East*, a must-read book analyzing the influence of the French student movements' Maoism on the German '68ers' anti-Vietnam War protesters, which adds perspective on the relationship between China and Vietnam—a factor that has shaped European politics and yet remains largely unrecognized. Quinn Slobodian's book also discusses international solidarity in both East and West Germany, and in relation to U.S. Cold War policies. Researchers should further consult sources on Vietnamese workers in the former GDR (e.g., Weiss; van Huong) to understand the difference between the Vietnamese diaspora in Germany vis-à-vis France and the U.S. (countries whose relationship to Vietnam was not shaped through communism).

And, Vietnam should be studied on its own terms: e.g. Vietnamese folk culture, introduced in English by Keith Weller Taylor; and Vietnamese classic literature, such as Nguyen Du's *Tale of Kieu*, a national allegory for Vietnam's resistance struggles against invading powers. Kieu, its female heroine, is victimized but empowered through her endurance, as she overcomes her self-sacrifice as a prostitute in order to survive. Given the current economic situation of Vietnam, where sex trafficking continues to be an issue, this reading is enhanced by Nguyen-vo's book *Ironies of Freedom*, an excellent study of contemporary Vietnam. Furthermore, information on women in Vietnam can be found in the edited volume by Atsufumi

and in a monograph by Lan P. Duong.

These sources are meant to encourage Vietnamese-German Studies as a potential sub-field of Asian German Studies. Over the past decade, the latter has emerged as a new field within German Studies, and yet it needs to differentiate itself further from the more established discipline, Asian American Studies. In spite of over-arching theoretical paradigms, the history of the Vietnamese diaspora in Germany differs from the United States and France, and thus should be addressed separately. This would also seem timely, considering that Vietnam—with renewed foreign currency investments—increasingly welcomes the return of overseas Vietnamese, including from Germany. This positive development should lead to further academic exchanges, making Vietnamese German Studies an exciting new prospect.

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Asia, Fantasia, Germasia

Like Turkish German or Black German Studies, Asian German has been actively promoted as a field of scholarship in the United States by the German Studies Association (GSA) since 2009. Ten years later, Asian German Studies was prominently present at the GSA conference in Portland, Oregon. At its best, this field has helped to redefine and fine-tune complex global relations, intersecting with other subfields (including Jewish Studies and Comparative Literature) and the theoretical insights they offer, but without reaffirming established identities.

In Germany, the budding field of Asian German Studies arose from the historical presence of Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, and Japanese minorities in the Federal Republic and the former German Democratic Republic. Mita Banjeree (Mainz) was the first to push for Asian German as a field of research in Germany. She recommended creating a new field of study modeled after the already existing "Asian American" and "Asian Canadian Studies." In Germany Asian German Studies thus examines questions of identity of the "Asian diasporic national," racism, and discrimination in an activist mode.

As a disciplinary designation, Asian German Studies has been in use in the United States at least since 2006. Scholars (Shen and Rosenstock) see the organizational value in supporting labels such as Asian German Studies because they "matter" and "promote recognition and public awareness" (11). Their definition of the field of Asian German Studies is as follows: "Asian German Studies differs from fields defined by subject, such as gender, diaspora, or globalization. Asian German Studies is delineated by geography. A subject can become relevant to the field if this subject bears on a trajectory between a German-speaking country

and Asia" (11). Others are concerned that labels that stress origins (or in German *Herkunft*) run the risk of a "Schubladendenken" or preconceived and often stereotyped and clichéd thought patterns about "Germans" and "Non-Germans."

We all also recognize, of course, that one major problem, when we apply a geographical label to specific authors, is that it all too easily burdens them with the obligations of representation, autobiography, and ethnography—a problem that initially plagued scholarly writings about Turkish German Studies as well. One effective strategy would be to expand the many different Asias and Germanies under study and to give greater emphasis to previously neglected countries like Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, and the Koreas, thereby breaking up all sense of cohesive identity. Likewise, a greater attentiveness to the long and vexing history of borderlands and frontier Orientalism can challenge firmly entrenched identities. Russian and Turkish authors can be included with the express intention of making answers to the question where one continent begins and the other ends more complex.

Since its inception, the Asian German seminar, panels, and roundtables at the annual GSA conference have transformed from a collection of disparate scholars, working in isolation, to a congenial group that knows how to address each other's research. We have heard talks centered on India, China, Afghanistan, Korea, Indonesia, Japan, and Southeast Asia generally with participants hailing from the United States, Germany, Japan, and China. Generally, they engaged with the current or the previous century, covering many different genres of expression, from scientific and technical papers, to film, biography, memoirs, poetry, philosophy, journalism, civil rights, left-wing politics, and refugee aid work. Our meetings of the Asian German network have shown that these intercultural connections can never be taken for granted; there is always some particular, often unexpected and unrecognized historical circumstance that establishes a channel between cultures. A connection may emerge from an independent writer's travels, the establishment of academic or economic exchanges, a sudden crisis that drives refugees to seek shelter in places they never knew before, or from brief alliances between nation-states and political parties. These connections thrive in the short term, often to be forgotten later. Asian German research can uncover linkages that subsequently disappear from sight when ideologies shift. The accumulation of these Asian German channels has created a new impulse to draw these disparate moments together, to examine the history of Asian German linkages as sharing similar concerns, accomplishments, and aspirations.

The writings of Yoko Tawada have been central to our understanding of the emerging field of Asian German Studies theoretical difficulties. Her groundbreaking publications in German (twenty-four titles) and Japanese (thirty titles) have had a global and still growing resonance precisely perhaps because these works engage with some of the challenges and opportunities central to Asian German Studies in particular as well as more broadly German Studies in general.

While Yoko Tawada (born 1960 in Tokyo) has written a Japanese essay stating that "Tawada Yoko doesn't exist" (published in English translation in the first Slay-

maker volume) it would not be an exaggeration to say that Asian German literature would not exist without the writings of Berlin-based Tawada. She has, in fact, given an astonishing 1133 talks on four of the five continents since her first book was published in 1987. In the last decade alone, more than a handful of edited volumes about Tawada have appeared; most German, Japanese, or Comparative Literature Ph.D. programs in the United States (and increasingly so in Europe as well) can claim at least one dissertation in which the writings of Tawada play a prominent role. One of my colleagues in Asian Studies likes to call Tawada with the hyperbolical epithet: "the one who launched a thousand dissertations," which vividly describes her impact on current and emerging scholarship.

What do Tawada's writings tell us about the current state and the future of Asian German Studies? Many of the notions important to an understanding of Tawada's literary and essayistic work resonate with Asian German Studies. Most closely perhaps the ideas of triangulation, a term from the field of geography where it was historically used in surveilling and mapmaking, and translation, a term used in translation studies and, at least since Freud's postulations about dreams as translation work and Benjamin's essay on the "Task of the Translator," in cultural and literary studies as well.

Tawada's geopolitical triangulated, multilingual narratives—such as we see, for instance, in *Bioskoop der Nacht (Überseezungen,* 2002), set in post-Apartheid South Africa, or in her theater play *Dejima* (*Theaterstücke*, 2013), set in early modern Japan—can add up to larger-scale networks that both fragment and transform straightforward narratives about nation-states and ethnic or racial identities, while, for instance, bringing into view trade and slave routes. In the process these new narratives dissolve both sides of the "Asian German" moniker, often by placing them in specific revolutionary historical settings, to address differences within "Asian" and "German" speaking worlds.

Tawada's writings (notably the *Hamburger Poetikvorlesungen* published as *Fremde Wasser*) are also useful for understanding that Asian German Studies in the United States did not originate here and has a much longer history in several other countries. In Japan, for instance, the early modern history of science is still known as *rangaku* which, when translated literally, means "Dutch learning" (and by extension "Western Science"), indexing the fact that during the late Tokugawa period while Japan was cut off from most other countries Japan nevertheless received "Dutch books" through "Dutch" employees of the country's trading post in the harbor of Nagasaki. Many of these "Dutch" were in fact Germans working for the VOC, the Dutch East India Company, a multi-ethnic and colonial corporation that would be too simple to discuss only in terms of Dutch-Japanese relations. All foreigners who came to Japan under the protection of the VOC had to pass as Dutch, including prominent German doctors such as Franz von Siebold. His willingness to "pass as Dutch" shows the lengths to which, in certain historical periods, Germans would go to eradicate their national identity—all in the name of science.

Tawada's writings also offer glimpses of what Asian German Studies looks like when it intersects with subfields such as, for instance, Black German Studies. Her Japanese narrative "Shadow Man" (included in *Facing the Bridge*) in which Tawada triangulated and transformed the historical biography of Amo—a man from Ghana, enslaved by the Dutch, and initially brought to the Netherlands, but later ending up as a philosopher in Wolfenbüttel, where he interacts with a twenty-first century student from Japan—is a case in point.

If Yoko Tawada's most recent writings are indicative of future contributions to the field of Asian German Studies—a plausible scenario given that academic publications always lag a few years behind the prolific writer—we might speculate that these publications will address: dystopian futures brought about by environmental crises and global catastrophes; human and non-human relations; geopolitical triangulations before the creation of nation states as well as when nation states cease to exist, and, finally, topics such as LGBTQ sexualities and where these intersect with questions of race and nation. The theme of translation—translators feature prominently in almost all of Tawada's works—will continue to play a critical role in Tawada's writings as well as in the Asian German context more generally where it has been significant since the beginning. Not only has, for instance, the (historical) role of translators and interpreters yet to be closely examined in an Asian German context, but translation is also an important form of triangulation which both acknowledges but also leads away from the confinements of "identity" and "roots." As Tawada's works and their impact have shown, we can confidently say that Asian German Studies exists and its future looks bright.

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Asian German Studies, Muslim German Studies, and Critical Whiteness Studies

Just like Muslim German immigrants, Asian immigrants also entered Germany through the two major immigration pathways of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: as guest workers and refugees. I will focus my analysis on these pathways because guest worker and refugee histories have received persistent media attention and been the object of political sensationalism over many decades. As someone who researches integration debates, these two categories also provide the basic similarity required for comparison between Asian German Studies and Muslim German Studies and highlight areas about which I know enough to comment. Despite substantial migration to Germany from Asia, Asian Germans are less visible in prominent media debates about immigration, integration politics, or refugee policies in Germany than Muslim Germans are. The invisibility of Asian Germans (or their elevation to the status of model minority) contrasts

strongly with the overwhelming preponderance of Muslim immigrants as objects of social and political concern.

Chancellor Merkel's historic decision to open Germany to large numbers of people fleeing on foot in 2015 intensified the attention paid to Muslim asylum seekers from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran. The German federal government's growing reliance on deportation, especially of Afghans, shows how populist pressure can prompt inhumane policies. Asian immigrants, however, rarely feature in journalism about German national identity, immigration, or political debates about refugees. They are largely absent from the best-known literature about guest workers. And yet, the number of skilled workers immigrating to Germany currently includes a large proportion of immigrants from China, India, and South Korea. The role Asian immigrants play in German national life will only grow, which requires that political and media representation begin to reflect demographic realities. Without adequate representation in political and cultural positions of power, minority groups will remain excluded from claiming a German national identity.

One of the salient features of media coverage of immigration is the portrayal of "Turks" and "Arabs" as groups predisposed to social problems. Much of this coverage builds on racializing tropes and strengthens the populist appeal of the right-wing *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) or the conservative CSU. Recent renewed interest in "Arab clans," due partially to the publication of Michael Behrendt's book *Die arabische Gefahr* and the recent BILD documentary *Clans von Berlin*, have revived decades-old tropes that racialize organized crime, a process to which the Vietnamese immigrant community has been subjected since the 1990s. But there are ways to critique such racializing practices, as the journalist organization *Neue Deutsche Medienmacher* illustrates by linking to examples of racist language in the media on their Facebook page. Their glossary of racist language (which they also link to such posts) offers alternative rhetoric for journalists. Without mentioning ethnicity, the entry on the word "clan" explains its implicit racial stereotypes and offers *kriminelle Bande* as a possible rephrasing, especially since not all members of families are criminal. Changing how the press comments on organized crime would positively affect the portrayal of Germans of Arab or Vietnamese descent in the media.

In the early 2000s, a lot of press attention focused on questions of Muslim assimilation to German norms, and the War on Terror and War in Iraq brought long-standing Orientalist and colonial arguments about women's oppression into media coverage that proliferated exponentially after 2001. As a graduate student at that time, it seemed clear to me that exploring these questions would lead to a specialization in Turkish-German Studies. The association of Turkish with Muslim, as well as attendant questions of race and racialization, played a role in this assessment, which was—as is evident to many readers—rife with theoretical gaps and slippages. As a professor, I have thus come to think of these nation-specific subdisciplines of German Studies as a relic of the nationalism inherent

to the Area Studies model institutionalized at U.S. universities during the Cold War. It is important to weigh the benefits of areas of study bounded by nationality or ethnicity against the possible negative consequences of such categorization.

In my research, I have found it more productive to incorporate theoretical insights from postcolonial, decolonial, feminist, queer, and critical race theories rather than relying on paradigms which separate individual groups out. I can thus start from a position of viewing Germany as a diverse nation, which in and of itself accounts for non-white German citizens, rather than starting from the moment of migration and continuing to divide Germans into various ethnic groups. The division of minority German communities into categories based on ethnic origins is ripe for perpetuating ethnic and racial stereotypes. Critical whiteness studies in particular offers a rich apparatus of theoretical work in which the assumption that European identity means a white identity can be critiqued in historical context. Analyzing contemporary discourses about immigration requires us to accept contemporary realities, and the reality is that almost a fourth of the German population has a so-called "migration background." Nearly half of those who have experienced migration are also not ethnically German.

Starting from a place of diversity is also more productive because policies and discourses are notoriously unspecific: German integration policy subjects a variety of national and ethnic groups to the same demands. Media discourses that demonize Muslims do the same thing: people of Turkish, Kurdish, Arab, and African descent are often reduced to their Muslim identity, if they have one (and often even if they don't!). These reductive approaches to difference serve a specific purpose: they exclude ethnic others from claiming German or European identities as well as from visible participation in party politics or participatory citizenship. This process of exclusion, which places obstacles in the paths of minorities trying to participate in civic and national life, may be slightly different for different groups. Third-generation Germans of Turkish descent, for instance, will be treated differently today than a newly arrived asylum-seeker from Burma. However, the existence of a racial hierarchy works to exclude everyone who is not viewed as German. All minorities, including Asian Germans, are excluded in some way from claiming a German national identity—and generally because of a simple, banal logic that Fatima El-Tayeb illuminated in *European Others* with incredible theoretical acuity. Germans who lack the twin qualities of ethnic German belonging and whiteness are often not permitted to stake a claim to national or transnational (European) belonging.

I do not wish to imply that scholars should flatten a rich palette of experiences into research that simply compares minorities to a mythical, homogenous majority. Hardly: there is a strong argument to be made for rigorous case studies that focus on the historical differences and specificities for different national groups and their historical immigration to Germany. What the scandal surrounding Sarrazin's *Deutschland schafft sich ab* showed us in great detail in 2010 and

2011 was not only the uninterrogated white supremacy of Sarrazin and his sympathizers, but also that racialized hierarchies are based on the colonial logic of divide and conquer. Model minority discourses which disrupt a black / white or German / Muslim binary often strengthen racial hierarchies by elevating East and South Asian minority groups. Sarrazin, for instance, praised Vietnamese immigrants to Germany with as much passion as he denigrated Muslims. After the book's publication, Germans debated for weeks about whether or not Sarrazin's pseudoscientific theories about the inheritability of intelligence were racist. Even a polemicist like Sarrazin, however, had to acknowledge the complex diversity of the German population in his work, which sought to strengthen German class identities by mobilizing racial animosity towards Muslims in the crassest of terms. As certain immigrant groups are elevated to the status of a model minority, what is of primary importance is that scholars both attend rigorously to difference and the legacies of history, and also reject white Germanness as the contemporary norm. Any attempts at political solidarity require an understanding that integration debates implicate far more than just those groups portrayed as problems—when groups are praised, they are still singled out for their difference.

Asian German Studies can play an important role in analyzing exactly how colonial histories and racializing rhetoric work against people who are hailed by these acts—and also what that means for a transethnic politics of solidarity. Indeed, German cultural theorist Kien Nghi Ha has done excellent work in analyzing the coloniality embedded within integration discourses. Studies of guest workers which explore the differences between how Italian, Turkish, Moroccan, Greek, South Korean, and Vietnamese guest workers were treated can also be very useful in understanding how national narratives either mythologize or render invisible the contributions to society made by foreign workers as a whole. Ultimately, research which finds itself at the conjunction of Asian German Studies and Critical Whiteness Studies can be strongly positioned to offer us opportunities to strengthen and expand our understanding of how power moves and changes shape, especially in highly diverse societies in which social hierarchies frequently shift.

To take such an approach in the classroom will require three things: first, attendance to representation (queer family structures; texts by artists and scholars of color; using a variety of filmic and media images) is always primary. Second, I think it is important to engage with citizenship in the classroom through role play tasks about bystander intervention and civil courage. These are transferable skills, and critical ones for civic democracy. They are also skills that readily train students in the humanizing behaviors required to resist the dehumanizing pull of racism and ethnocentric nationalism. Third, I would make more effort to recruit a diverse pool of students for German studies, especially at the undergraduate level. Successes in recruitment are region-dependent, and can be hampered by institutional structures that prevent intentional efforts due to strict interpretations of FERPA guidelines, which can prohibit faculty from being able to com-

municate with students who had previous experience with German before college. In the Midwest where I teach, I see our primary obstacle to a strong and multivocal scholarly future for German Studies as partially rooted in Americans' broad lack of understanding as to how diverse contemporary Germany is.

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A Transnational Approach and Recent Publications in Asian German Studies

German historians came to transnational history later than historians in Great Britain and France due to their preoccupation with the legacies of the Bismarckian nation-state and Nazi Germany. Yet that began to change in the 1990s, as a younger generation of German historians began challenging social historians, particularly Hans-Ulrich Wehler, and their *Sonderweg* thesis. They detected strong global and transnational themes not just in the twentieth century, but even in the nineteenth century, the so-called age of nationalism. Similarly, their American counterparts have increasingly adopted a transnational approach. Scholars in Asian German studies have been at the forefront in this new development, which is partly reflected in the year 2018 marking the tenth anniversary of Asian-German Studies panels at the German Studies Association conference. This essay will briefly characterize the field's transnational approach and its publication trends in English in the last decade.

First, in my understanding, scholars in Asian German studies prefer a transnational framework, which is indispensable for studying the period from 1750 to the present. Scholars who follow a transnational approach emphasize mutuality, hybridity, entanglements, cross-cultural encounters, and exchange. They explore contacts, circulation, and interdependences, as well as tensions, disputes, and interferences. Moreover, their transnational approach challenges other approaches. It is highly critical of a comparative approach to focus on difference rather than connectedness. It rejects area studies for its tendency toward isolation. It criticizes social history's strong nation-centered focus and *Alltagsgeschichte*'s (every-day history) narrow local focus. It questions international historians, for even though they study other countries, their goal is to advance their national interest only. From my perspective, a colonial framework is somewhat limiting for Asian German studies. For example, unlike British Indologists, the question of colonialism plays a lesser role for German Indologists. In fact, in the wake of World War One, India and Germany shared their resentment against British powers. German Indologists' focus on India's culture and religions reveal influences from German Romantics' Indo-German identification. Yet German Indologists were not free from racial thinking, as exemplified by the invention of the "Aryan" race, which

had fatal consequences in the twentieth century. Similarly, the colonial framework is limiting for German-East Asian relations. After a brief German colonial rule in China (Qingdao)—during which Germany acted, by the way, not just along with other Western powers, but also with Japan—Germany and China started to cooperate closely from their peace treaty in 1921 to 1938. Similarly, Japan became a colonial power and colonized Korea. Hence German-Japanese relations can hardly be studied from the perspective of colonialism. For post-World War Two German-Asian relations, the colonial framework is not feasible either, as these Asian countries have advanced economically and technologically. In the present, their relations are more or less on an equal footing.

Second, this brief overview of publication trends in Asian German studies is limited to works in the English language that have appeared in the last ten years. These works show a strong interdisciplinary trend, as can be observed from the authors' topics and their disciplinary affiliations (history, German studies, comparative literature, sociology, Japanology, Sinology, anthropology, and political science). In addition, the contributors from three different continents provide multiple perspectives and diverse interpretations. In terms of scope, some works cover German connections to Asia broadly. A monograph by Marchand (2009) contains chapters on German relations to East Asia and South Asia in the nineteenth century, whereas a monograph by Grimmer-Solem (2019) includes chapters on German-East Asian relations during the Kaiserreich. Edited volumes by Fuechtner/Rhiel (2013) and Cho/McGetchin (2017) cover German connections to both South Asia and East Asia, whereas edited volumes by Shen/Rosenstock (2014) and Cho (2018) focus only on German–East Asian relations.

However, most works in Asian German studies focus on single nations. Two Asian nations that have received the most attention are Japan and India. In German-Indian relations, recent works build upon the pioneering transcultural work of Wilhelm Halbfass. They include monographs by McGetchin (2009), Germana (2009), Cowan (2010), Park (2013), Alduri/Bagchee (2014), and Musch (2019) and edited volumes by Esleben/Kraenzel/Kulkarni (2008) and Cho/Kurlander/ McGetchin (2014). Scholarship in German-Japanese relations has been also quite active. English publications include monographs by Roberts (2010), Dobson/Saaler (2011), Chapman (2011), Kim (2014), and Law (2019) and edited volumes by Akira/Tajima/Pauer (2009), Cho/Roberts/Spang (2016), and Saaler/Akira/Nobuo (2017). They show several commonalities between these countries, which are separated by huge geographical distance.

In German Chinese studies, there are several exciting monographs that appeared in the last ten years. They include Steinmetz (2007), Lutz (2008), Stone (2013), and Wu (2016), all of which deal with German colonialism and Christian mission. In terms of edited volumes, there is, however, only one by Cho/Crowe (2015), which is rather surprising, given China's historical and geo-political significance. Thus, more diverse topics for monographs and more edited volumes are desired. In German-Korean relations, one finds the fewest works in English.

It reflects the unfortunate reality of Korea having been overshadowed by China and Japan for a long time. It is important to correct it, since German-Korean relations have been vibrant especially since the 1960s through the West German *Gastarbeiter* program, their active cultural and intellectual exchange, and their shared Cold-War division. English publications include a monograph by Roberts (2012) and an edited volume by Cho/Roberts (2018), which is the first comprehensive examination of German-Korean relations.

To accommodate the growing scholarly demands in Asian German studies, a new book series, *Palgrave Series in Asian German Studies*, was launched in 2016. So far, four edited volumes and a monograph have been published in it. The edited volumes examine German relations to China, Japan, and Korea, as well as gendered encounters between Germany and Asia from transnational perspectives. The monograph probes German-Jewish intellectuals' encounters with Buddhism. These volumes and other aforementioned works powerfully testify to the fact that the last decade was a very exciting period for Asian German studies. As the field will grow even further in the next decade, it is important to identify some future challenges. It would be desirable to study areas that have received scant attention so far in the English language. There is a dearth of publications (other than a few articles and book chapters) in German-Southeast Asian relations. This is a critical gap, since Southeast Asians, especially Thais and Vietnamese, have maintained a strong presence in contemporary German society. In the case of Germany-South Asia, while India has received much attention, other South Asian countries, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, have received little attention.

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Film and Asian German Studies

I vividly remember the moment when I saw in my inbox a call for papers from Sara Lennox: "For the past few years the German Studies Association (GSA) has been an important forum for scholarly efforts to transnationalize German Studies and place German history in a global perspective. Those of us who have been active in this area would like to organize a series of panels on the topic of 'Asian German Studies' at the 2009 conference of the GSA (October 8–11, Washington DC)." It was the first time I realized that Asian German Studies could be a viable specialization. Later I learned that a series of email exchanges between Lennox and Mita Banerjee, an American Studies professor in Germany, first got the panel series on Asian German Studies moving. Lennox, who was president of the GSA at the time, had been active in "getting Black German Studies established as a *Schwerpunkt*," as she wrote in an email to Banerjee (24 June 2008), and she im-

mediately liked Banerjee's idea "of also trying to create the Schwerpunkt Asian German Studies." In fact, back in 2006, Banerjee had already published an article entitled "Bollywood meets the Beatles: Towards an Asian German Studies of German Popular Culture," but it was not until the panel series at the GSA that Asian German Studies was defined as a subfield within German Studies.

Back in 2009, I was asked by a skeptical job interviewer: "What is Asian German Studies?" Although the term seems self-explanatory, a definition that avoids cliché, blandness, or elusiveness is indeed not easy. Part of the difficulty stems from the all-inclusiveness and interdisciplinarity of Asian German Studies, which welcomes research from all disciplines and periods, as long as the topics address the connection between Asia and German-speaking countries. What makes it unique are, however, the topics it generates and the new knowledge that scholars in Asian German studies produce. Asia has long been the exoticized other and subjugated to Western discourses, but Asian German Studies reveals the critical importance of Asia in the intellectual and academic landscape of German Studies, which by tradition has been Eurocentric. Asian German Studies thus defines a field, or many fields, of inquiry and invites scholars to explore them using the intellectual tools at their disposal. How it has developed in the United States is different from what Mita Banerjee initially envisioned—namely, to study the Asian diaspora in Germany.

I consider myself a Sino-German Studies scholar with a special interest in film and media. My current book project is tentatively titled "Raising the 'Bamboo Curtain': Sino-German Mediascapes from Mao to Tiananmen." This book will be the culmination of my research on Sino-German relations and textual and visual representations of China in divided Germany and will fill the many gaps in our knowledge of the history of political and cultural exchanges between China and the two Germanies. The project itself has an inescapable political dimension because it ranges from Mao's era to Tiananmen, both long-time taboo topics that must be addressed in an urgently needed *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* within China itself. Given China's critical geopolitical importance in the twenty-first century, this line of research presents a number of attractive topics for public lectures. I believe practitioners of Asian German Studies should engage in outreach by incorporating their research into their teaching and by giving and hosting public lectures. I have taught transnational cinema courses on German encounters with Japan and China, and students not only found the material highly interesting and refreshing in itself but they were also able to relate it to discourses of critical importance such as orientalism, race, gender, class, and identity, as well as postcolonialism, nationalism, travel, exile, translation, multiculturalism, and globalization—all aspects of study in which literary and cultural critics have been heavily involved.

German films that focus on China such as *Piccadilly* (1929), *Shanghai Express* (1932), *Shanghai Ghetto* (2002), *Losers and Winners* (2006), *Shanghai Fiction* (2009), and *John Rabe* (2009), and Chinese films focusing on Germany such as *Red Cherry* (1995), *Shanghai Baby* (2007), *Nanjing! Nanjing!* (2009), and *I phone*

y(o)u (2011) manifest an ongoing interest in making Sino-German films. At the same time, I find myself increasingly clamoring for more primary works to study. Here I see a need for more collaboration and dialogue between producers and recipients of Asian German works. I believe that awareness of an audience hungry for original Asian German works may encourage more filmmakers, writers, and artists to explore Asian-German themes and interconnections. Thus, wider publicity for Asian German Studies will hopefully function as an incentive for more creative energy to be poured into Asian German works, and for more resources to be allotted to their creators.

Now that Asian German Studies has achieved recognition as an academic specialization, I think that its next task should be to expand its horizons and cultivate a broader network of affiliates, including not only creators of Asian German works, but also fellow scholars in German-speaking countries and in Asia, as well as students and future scholars. The United States is not the obvious *Standort* for Asian German Studies, being neither an Asian nor a German speaking country. If Asian German Studies deterritorializes German Studies, in the sense that it challenges its conventions and canonization, Asian German Studies itself is literally deterritorialized, as long as it remains centered in the U.S. One of the reasons that it has flourished in this country is the current emphasis in academia on globalization and transnational concerns. But German-speaking countries and Asia have the advantage of location and accessibility to resources such as human subjects and archives. Indeed, much research that can be classified under the heading of Asian German Studies has been done by Asian and German-speaking scholars, although they themselves do not position their work in that field (e.g., books by Mecheril and Teo, Saechtig, and Sierek). A greater degree of academic collaboration would be welcome across the Atlantic and across the Pacific.

I am also personally aware of a growing *Nachwuchs* of Asian German Studies scholars, due to the requests I receive to serve as a reader of Asian German theses and journal submissions and to recommend Asian German works. I'm thrilled that this area of study is providing a framework for research that reflects a crucial dimension of geopolitical development in the twenty-first century. There are many indications that the field of Asian German Studies has arrived.

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From Asian German Studies to Global German Studies?

Asian German Studies was an emerging field within German Studies almost ten years ago, when Mary Rhiel and I started planning the edited volume *Imagining Germany Imagining Asia* (2013). There were pathbreaking works that had ad-

dressed either representations of Asia as signs of difference in German-language culture or the influence of Asian cultures and histories onto German-language cultures and histories. But these works were not situated as contributions to this particular field, which was just starting to be delineated—not only in German Studies scholarship in the US, but especially in scholarship, art, and activism in Germany that centered on those who were part of the Asian diaspora. Our volume aimed to create scholarly "models for understanding Asian-German transnational spaces, in which philosophical ideas and cultural representations circulate continuously and in which established hierarchies of influence are undermined" (1). With our title *Imagining Germany Imagining Asia*, we wanted to capture the circulation of this cultural material and the mutually constitutive relationships of cultural production in Germany and Asia. Its contributions raised crucial questions and developed a theoretical vocabulary for this new field of inquiry: Why is Asia such "a privileged and loaded object of German texts" (2)? How can scholarship decenter the European in the analysis of a transnational "culture of linkages" (4)? Can the idea of "transcultural symbiosis" add to the framework of "cultural encounters," and capture their complexities and simultaneous possibilities (206)? How is the transnational subject positioned at the center of debates on the nation? How do translations participate in constructing a global modernity via the category of world literature that homogenizes "cultural difference, historical particularity, and linguistic affiliation in the age of globalization" (235)? And finally, how can Asian German Studies not only engage with the place of Asia but also of Germany for a multitude of different Asian societies and cultures?

In a concurrent landmark volume with the title *Beyond Alterity: German Encounters with Modern East Asia* (2014), editors Qinna Shen and Martin Rosenstock envisioned Asian German Studies as a field delineated by a particular geography and as an intellectual enterprise, in which the "artist's ethnicity is not of major importance" and in which a transnational analytical framework transcends a nationally circumscribed form of minority studies (9). They argued that a "tipping point has been reached in the accumulation of knowledge" in this particular subfield of German Studies and that grouping further scholarship under this label was to promote and legitimize this new field (12). Subsequently, Palgrave inaugurated a whole book series in Asian German Studies, edited by Joanne Miyang Cho and Lee Roberts, in which so far five volumes have been published. They focus on encounters between Germany and Japan, China, and Korea, and also include volumes on gendered encounters and on Jewish-Buddhist encounters. Another volume—on encounters with India—is in the works.

There are by now many other monographs or edited publications that have shaped the field, such as *Transcultural Encounters between Germany and India* (2013), *Age of Entanglement* (2014), *China in the German Enlightenment* (2016), and *Composing Modernist Connections in China and Europe* (2018). Given this intense research activity, as well as the regular interdisciplinary panel series in Asian German Studies at the annual conference of the German Studies Association, the field has

indeed developed into a robust subfield and is likely to stay that way. Anecdotally, one can add to this that the establishment of the field has also gone hand in hand with a slight increase in diversity of German Studies faculty in the US, although much work remains to be done. As Vance Byrd and others have pointed out recently in these pages, the field of German Studies is still overwhelmingly "a white space," which now stands in stark contrast to the diversity of its classrooms (448).

Despite the gains I outlined, Asian German Studies can certainly evolve further. It currently has realized its potential, institutionally and intellectually, only in the US and in Germany. A genuine dialogue among scholars in Asian American Studies or Asian Studies, nationally and internationally, is still nascent. For the field to truly fulfill its promise and remain a site of theoretical innovation, dialogues need to become an integral part of the discipline, also to counter the trend that privileges the German gaze onto Asia and in order to include not only scholars in German but also in Asian Studies as David Kim has argued (223). Furthermore, not only the weight of "German" in Asian German Studies needs to be interrogated, but also the category of "Asian." Germany cannot be truly decentered if the cultural and historical connections between, for example, Germany and China, on the one hand, and Germany and India, on the other, are unproblematically presented as part of the same field. Given the broad range of methodologies and research questions, which each of these relationships opens up, adhering to the category "Asia" could run the risk of reinscribing Orientalist geographies.

Despite these caveats, I found it productive to think of Asian German Studies as part of a broader development towards what could be described as Global German Studies. As a result of my work in Asian German Studies, I became involved in co-editing a volume on the global history of sexual science together with two historians, one of them working on India and the other on Mexico. Co-writing the introduction to this volume forced me to position my work in German Studies within global history. Collectively, we saw global history as a field that illuminates and theorizes the world-wide circulation of ideas and narratives and is interested in the networks that facilitate this circulation. Given this focus on multi-directional flows of ideas and people, we understood global history as related to but also distinct from transnational history as well as from comparative world history, a discipline that typically does not examine the ways in which international connections contribute to the constitution of phenomena that are then inscribed as national.

Working on this volume led me to wonder whether Asian German Studies could be conceptualized as a subfield of Global German Studies. In *Germans Going Global* (2012), Anke Biendarra states that the topic of globalization "came rather slowly to German Studies," as Germanists held on to the framework of a linguistically homogenous national literature and left the topic to be addressed in the realm of the social sciences (7). In British and French Studies, historical processes of globalization have long been part of the study of culture. While this is often explained through the fact that their respective colonial histories led to significant migrations and cultural exchanges, this explanation doesn't seem sufficient. Ger-

man colonialism was comparatively short-lived, but intensely violent and ideologically pervasive. And it took much longer for scholarship in German Studies to acknowledge and analyze colonialism's fundamental impact not just on German colonial territories, but also globally. As Bradley Naranch articulates in *German Colonialism in a Global Age*: "When it comes to German colonialism in a global age, there is no clear necessity to choose. All paths lead somewhere worthwhile, even if the final destinations are not the same, nor are they likely to converge in the near future" (9). At this point, it is clear that the global flow of ideas and people, and the imagined and very real hierarchies of these flows, significantly constituted German political, scientific, and cultural discourses long before and after the state colonialism of the Wilhelmine era. Global German Studies addresses these flows, and it might already have been constituted as a field by a wide variety of scholarly classics such as Susanne Zantop's *Colonial Fantasies* (1997) which broke new ground by arguing that gendered and racialized fantasies of colonial superiority were constitutive to German national identity well before the actual existence of German colonies, or Sander Gilman's *Difference and Pathology* (1985) which traced the traffic of racist images of others such as the "Hottentot Venus" and their import into Western European art and scientific literature.

Recent monographs deploy the theoretical vocabulary of contemporary globalization processes more self-consciously, such as Nina Berman's *Germans on the Kenyan Coast: Land, Charity, and Romance* (2017), a study of the town of Diani as an example of a "transnational" space, which rapidly gentrified as a result of German "lifestyle" migration, or Venkat Mani's *Recoding World Literature: Libraries, Print Culture, and Germany's Pact with Books* (2016), which tracks various "bibliomigrancies," global movements of books, and the ways in which they constitute not only libraries, but the genre of world literature itself. It is telling that both of these examples are in different ways indebted to the theoretical vocabulary and scholarship on globalization developed in history, the social sciences, and comparative literature. There has been relatively little discussion in German Studies on multilingualism, translation, and germanophone culture outside of Central Europe. The field-defining debates on postcolonial anglophone literature or *francophonie* and its contestations such as *littérature-monde* (Kadir 303) had no equivalent in German Studies. Conversely, while Goethe's *Weltliteratur* has been foundational to both the textual corpus and critical discourse of world literature, the last decade of heated debates around this term have not drawn much from scholarship in German Studies, despite the fact that much of the innovative, recent work in Asian German or Turkish German Studies potentially could have contributed to them in significant ways. Recently edited volumes such as *Kulturconfusão—on German-Brazilian Interculturalities* (2015), or *Rethinking Black German Studies* (2018) further push questions of identity politics, multilingual and extraterritorial German culture, and the global production sites and flows of German-language culture. In *Eastern Europe Unmapped* (2017), Yuliya Komska argues for shifting the analytic "borderland" and "neighbor" paradigm for Eastern

and Central Europe by undermining and reconstructing its "spatial codes": "For this reason, this book does not open with a token map. If anything, we could begin with a map of the world, dotted with interconnected points" (7).

What unites these projects is the underlying assumption that constructions of the national are based on experiences and imaginaries of other places and peoples. Global German Studies might mobilize different and at times competing theoretical tools to articulate this form of global traffic, be it "contact zones," "encounters," "hybridity," "friction," "dubbing," or "ethnoscapes." Global German Studies could be more than an umbrella term for the study of identity formations, as it shares common ground with Asian German Studies, but also allows for a broader range of scholarly interventions as it explicitly focuses on the traffic and co-constitution of thought and culture. As many terms that signal a sense of universality such as "world" or "transnational," the term "global," too, comes with its scholarly baggage. It could signal a link to a particular discipline—as the term has long been associated with political science, in particular security studies, or to a particular political critique concerning the commodification and homogenization of culture in the most recent wave of globalization. "Global" certainly also raises the question whether agency in the global traffic of ideas and culture is identified and studied with equal priority in different geographical contexts. But the term also has the potential to radically open up the field of German Studies to multi-lingual explorations, different types of archives, and new forms of scholarly collaborations.

It is thus telling that one of the scholars who is most closely identified with inaugurating and defining the field of Asian German Studies within German academia, Mita Banerjee, has moved away from producing scholarship defined by the politics of recognition of the migrant experience in Germany. Banerjee's most recent work analyzes the contemporary practice of biopiracy and biopatenting of seeds in light of "colonial legacies, which systematically disregard 'native' knowledge or seek to appropriate it for their own purposes" ("Biopiracy"). In this new scholarship, today's laboratories become the contested sites of hierarchical encounters which are remapping and re-inscribing colonialism's racist structures onto the global rush for commodification of life sources. Banerjee's work is now positioned at the intersection of Asian German Studies, Science and Technology Studies, and Environmental Humanities. It thus intervenes in the scholarship of globalization, and reflects its recent trend to uncover its own deep histories. It is in these alliances and junctures between the humanities and other scholarly divisions and their methodologies, where a Global German Studies in the future might truly break new ground.

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