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**NEW DIRECTIONS
IN GERMAN STUDIES**
A Context of Interdisciplinarity

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EDITED BY
ANDREA BANDHAUER, BETTINA BOSS, KERRY DUNNE,
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Preface

In July 2003 the German Studies Association of Australia (GSAA) held its inaugural conference. The theme of the conference was the future of German Studies.

The decision to form an association of university teachers of German in Australia was made against the backdrop of rising challenges to the discipline over many years. Earlier associations, such as the society of Australian and New Zealand tertiary teachers of German in the 1970s and 1980s, had developed in an era of optimism about the future of German Studies. Alongside French and Russian, German at that time was considered a language of significance in the world, just as the export-driven German economy was understood as the motor of an emerging community of European nations. Most larger tertiary institutions in Australia and New Zealand had marked that significance by according departmental status to studies in German and full professorial status to the heads of these German departments. German was accordingly recognised as a valid academic discipline.

It cannot be said that a single event brought the era of optimism about studies in German to an end. Rather, a number of changes affecting German throughout the world occurred more or less simultaneously. One of these changes in Australia and New Zealand was the awareness that German was but one of many languages in the world that deserved attention. What began to bulk larger in the imagination in these countries was the new importance of the Asian region in view of Great Britain's decision to join the European Economy Community in January 1973. This decision underscored the physical separation of Australia and New Zealand from the British and European cultures from which in large measure they had sprung. The decision of Britain to look to its own region to secure its economic future meant that it was imperative for Australia and New Zealand to do the same in their part of the world. From the late 1970s, therefore, a new focus emerged in Australia and New Zealand on

the countries and cultures of the Asian region, beginning with Japan, by now the second largest economy in the world after the United States. Interest in the Japanese language, and then other Asian languages such as Indonesian (in Australia) and Chinese (in both Australia and New Zealand), soon followed.

With new language kids on the block, the situation for the study of foreign languages became more complex. It was clear, for one thing, that languages could not continue to be administered in former ways, since there were many more languages now to be considered. French and German could no longer rely simply on their being the traditional modern languages that undergraduates chose to study. For another thing, dramatic growth in the size of universities began to occur from the mid to late 1980s as governments throughout the world responded to intimations of a new world order and a new age of information that would make this order transparent. As the new era of information led to new areas of specialty within the university, foreign languages had to find a place among many new challenging areas of specialty. As systems theorists of all persuasions have well understood, modernity is premised, more than anything, on proliferating complexity and the concomitant need to manage it through systemic forms of complexity reduction.¹ The proliferation of diverse types of knowledge and ways in which they are organised leads to the institutional complexity with which the modern university must now contend.

From the early 1990s the need was felt to reduce the administrative complexity by re-examining the divide between European and Asian languages, despite the different demands they faced. Character-based Asian languages appeared to require a different pedagogy from European languages (and even from the Cyrillic-based Russian language) and could not be assumed to bring about equivalent levels of mastery for Anglophone speakers within the constrained university curriculum. Content studies in Asian and European languages pursued, in any case, quite dif-

ferent goals: scholars of Indonesian, for example, tended to be focused on political issues relating to the circumstances of post-Sukarno Indonesia, whereas students of French, German and Russian were educated in the traditional way through an exposure to, and grounding in, the "high" literature of these countries. As a result, a German language scholar, after three or four years of study, looked much like her counterpart in a literature department, and not at all like a graduate of similar standing from an Asian language section. Assumptions about commonalities between European and Asian languages therefore had to take account of this fundamentally dissimilar pedagogical reality. Given these differences, it is fair to say that only limited progress has been made in forging links between Asian and European languages.

The challenges confronting the study and teaching of German in the twenty-first century are therefore formidable. On the one hand, there is the question of institutional context that is answered differently depending on the institution. While German in Australia and New Zealand is subsumed in some institutions under schools of language, acknowledging no formal difference between the study of European and Asian languages, it is separated from Asian languages in other institutions under the banner of a department of European languages. Still other institutions put foreign languages into groupings alongside applied linguistics, while it is common in American institutions to forge links between foreign languages such as German and departments of literature at the graduate and post-graduate level. Since each institutional arrangement requires adaptation to the particular exigencies of local circumstances where a common institutional experience can no longer be assumed, it is inevitable that the study of German becomes more and more diverse.

The increasing diversity of German as an academic discipline is further influenced by changes within the discipline itself. With the emergence of new philosophies and methodologies throughout the humanities, new theories of culture have flooded across the university, profoundly altering the approach to the study of literature long considered the mainstay of scholarship in German. These new notions of culture have made literary study, especially the study of "high" literature, appear a marginal

¹ See, for example, Niklas Luhmann: *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, Vol. 1, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1997, 134-144.

undertaking in the foreign language curriculum where the need to equip students with a functional skills competence seems the overwhelming priority. Where contextual studies are offered in German, the movement away from literature into film and media studies, as well as studies of popular culture connecting with the vernacular language, has been palpable. Since scholarship is informed, and in some cases determined, by the requirements of teaching, there is no longer any certainty that scholars of German Studies will be able to take for granted the literary interests that once connected them. Rather, German scholars, particularly those who teach in institutions outside Germany, will increasingly have very different academic profiles, with areas of specialty ranging from foreign language pedagogy, which seeks to optimise the results of the language classroom, through to film and media studies and literature, which arise out of the contextual content studies now pursued in the diverse German Studies programmes across the world. Literary scholars in German Studies, while perhaps still focused on contributing to the understanding of a national literary culture in the same manner as their colleagues in departments of German in Germany, also find themselves cultivating a broader understanding of literature in view of the arrival of a more democratised, less hierarchical notion of "cultural studies" in the modern university.

For these reasons, the present volume explores possibilities for a new context for German Studies, and also a new future. It features a selection of presentations to the inaugural conference of the German Studies Association of Australia, reworked and blind peer-reviewed for the purposes of publication. The papers are grouped into thematic sections; introductory essays by the editors summarise and appraise the main arguments the papers put forward. Papers in the volume's first section reflect on what has been proclaimed throughout the world as a crisis of German Studies. The contributions of Patricia Herminghouse, Tim Mehigan and Thomas Pekar consider the situation of German Studies in the United States, Australia, Germany and Japan and make suggestions about how the present crisis might be addressed. As these authors argue, to some extent addressing the crisis will involve reconsidering the canon of literary studies and widening the remit of traditionally understood German Studies.

One result of such reconsideration - the emergence of a feminist German Studies - is appraised in the volume's second section. Three advocates of this area of study, Sara Lennox, Alison Lewis and Ortrud Gutjahr, consider recent developments that have occurred in German-focused feminist scholarship in the United States, Australia and Germany.

The third section of the volume considers the situation of the German language classroom in this complex and changing environment. The contributions of Bettina Boss, Erika Diehl, Britta Schneider and Louise Jansen demonstrate the high level of critical attention now directed toward the problem of imparting language and communicative skills in the foreign language class, where teaching is no longer content-driven, but increasingly learner-sensitive and learner-aware.

Uschi Felix's contribution rounds out the volume. That she highlights the importance of understanding the opportunities attaching to the new multi-media learning environment again underscores how profoundly the contemporary practice of German Studies differs from the practice of the past.

The contributions to this volume therefore make clear that the future of German Studies will have none of the certainty underpinning the institutional context of European languages in the university of the past. Rather, the future will require the flexibility of scholars in responding to the new situation of German in the world. It will also require the flexibility of both scholars and administrators in meeting those organisational exigencies in particular institutions that now govern the way German is offered to its student clientele. The present volume sets out to illuminate this new context of "interdisciplinarity," just as it aims to highlight the opportunities that flow from the new situation at a moment when the need to forge connections in the face of the complexity of diversity is perhaps greater than it has ever been.

Tim Mehigan (President, GSAA; University of Otago)
and Barry Empson (University of Otago)

Note on References

The articles in Sections I and II are referenced by way of footnotes. The articles in Sections III and IV follow the referencing conventions for language and linguistic papers, that is to say, Chicago style. Lists of references for these two sections appear on pages 167 and 186 respectively.

1. The New Context of German Studies

Overview

Tim Mehigan (Orago)

The authors of the three essays in this section describe a crisis afflicting the practice of German Studies in today's universities. While each author is mainly concerned to discuss their own national context - Patricia Herminhouse focuses on the situation in the United States, Tim Mehigan discusses the Australian situation, while Thomas Pekar offers a comparative discussion of German and Japanese universities - the emergence of a general crisis affecting German Studies throughout the world must now be taken as given.

The authors divine various reasons for this global crisis of German Studies. For Herminhouse, who begins by considering the impact of legislation affecting the teaching of languages after the Second World War at the beginning of the "post-Sputnik era," German Studies in the United States has been forced to meet the challenge of one set of exigencies after another over a long period. If the need to advance the speaking ability of Americans by making use of new technology arose in response to political imperatives in the Cold War environment of the sixties, it was economic imperatives that were dominant from the 1970s on. These imperatives required universities to equip graduates with concrete skills that would serve them in the market place. Indeed, the rise of a multi-disciplinary model of "German Studies" in the United States at this time was a direct response to the need to contribute an economically competitive advantage to "the national interest." Herminhouse makes clear that traditional departments of German had to find adequate responses to this so-called national interest, or go under. In the 1980s and 1990s, a more sophisticated understanding of the factors underpinning market competitiveness has emerged. This more culturally informed idea of what makes for competitiveness in the market place is the new "ghost in the machine" that underlies the situation in all the countries under discussion.

As the three contributors in this section point out, the arrival of "cultural studies" in the university has fundamentally changed the situation of language teaching and learning. Yet whether cultural studies can lay claim to a real content, and whether it is anything more than a methodology, a new way of approaching the study of literature and texts, remains unclear. At any rate, a reflection on the significance of its incursion into the foreign language curriculum appears paramount. As the three authors in this section indicate, the rise of the Anglophone notion of cultural studies from the 1950s can be variously explained. One explanation for the success of a more class-sensitive notion of cultural awareness - the Lynchpin of the English model of cultural studies - appears to lie with recent answers to the question of what makes for successful selling in the international market place. As Pekar notes about Japan, a country that rebuilt itself in the postwar era on the back of international trade, both a general sensitivity to the notion of culture as such and a specific understanding of the foreign culture of the trading partner are considered important. In the globally focused world of the 1990s and 2000s, then, notions of culture both high and low, elite and popular have not only become firmly established, they are now also entrenched. As a result, the teaching and learning of foreign languages in our universities cannot but take account of old and new ideas of culture and the need to make curricula and programmes respond to them. Therefore, however this interest in the importance of culture has come about, and notwithstanding the cost to the sovereignty of older ideas that used to govern foreign language offerings in the university setting, practitioners of German Studies across the world, including those who teach literature and culture in Germany, have had to address the challenge of cultural studies as a phenomenon. This, then, is the underlying situation of "interdisciplinarity" on which the three authors in this section reflect from their varying standpoints.

For Mehigan, this new situation would appear to make the case for a refocused German Studies that highlights the German contribution to the compendium of dominant cultural ideas in the world today, as well as a general upskilling of teachers to meet the demands of a revitalised, culturally more rigorous, language curriculum. Such a change suggests that

German departments should pursue a more expansive notion of their discipline in order to regain territory ceded to other departments in the wake of the emergence of cultural studies. Concomitantly, the need to counteract the perception that language departments lack intellectuality with respect to other areas of the university has, he believes, become urgent. This perception has arisen where language departments expend most of their energy on imparting language instruction. The sense of diminished intellectuality is the political factor in many universities underlying the erosion of disciplinary identity in German Studies.

Pekar goes further by offering intellectual models that would serve the goal of the refocusing and upskilling that Mehigan argues for. He refers to the linguistically based cultural theories of *Els Oksaar* and the *semiotics* of *Roland Barthes* in suggesting ways in which the communicative situation in foreign language learning could be enhanced and the cultural dimensions of communication better understood. *Herminghouse*, for her part, points out the dangers of overcompensation, as language scholars, following new notions of interdisciplinarity, attempt to return to long abandoned cognate areas of history, politics, media studies, and literature. *Diletantism* is no solution where real expertise is called for. Accordingly, she urges that such a return not take place willy-nilly, but only on the basis of what is academically justifiable.

Pekar's discussion of an enriched notion of communication owes much to the methodological discussion about the literary tradition of "Germanistik" currently taking place in Germany. While it is common to separate the study of German culture and language outside Germany - "Auslandsgermanistik" (or what Pekar and others capitalise as *German Studies*) - from this same study within Germany, which is thought to pursue different ends, such a distinction is not easily maintained. In part, this may be read into the difficulties attending the canonising of the texts and text types held to evince cultural content as the move in Germany toward a new culturally based German studies is negotiated. These difficulties have been reproduced, perhaps on a smaller scale, in discussions outside Germany about the merits of "nationally" focused German Studies. A line of separation between "German Studies" and "Germanistik"

would also appear to be questionable in view of the entry into Germany of the Anglophone version of cultural studies with its attendant presuppositions. How far this model of cultural studies can be applied to the German situation is one of the many issues that await resolution in the debate in Germany. Moreover, as Pekar argues, it is not yet clear if this debate represents anything more than a rehearsal of the older civilisation-culture debate of the early part of the twentieth century. In this older debate, the socially progressive dimensions of culture as an idea were considered separate from the ideological commitments of the Western model of civilisation. Clearly the debate about cultural studies, along with many others like it, is far from settled.

German Studies in the USA: A History of Crises

Patricia Herrminghouse (Rochester)

For most of the twentieth century, the story of German Studies in the United States can be written as a history of crises. The trajectory of developments that seemed to threaten the teaching of German language and culture can be traced from the anti-German sentiments of the World War I era through contemporary corporate models that view humanistic study in terms of market value. One exception to this story might have been the post-Sputnik Cold War era of the late 1950s, which witnessed the promulgation of the National Defense Education Act. Among the implications of that legislation for language programmes, including departments of German, was the challenge of providing more and better language training utilising the new technology of language laboratories and a host of innovative teaching methods, most of which nonetheless failed to increase language proficiency or to communicate cultural knowledge in meaningful ways. By the end of the 1960s, this government funding, which had also led to a bonanza of college teaching jobs in German, had all but dried up. To stem this loss of funding and jobs, many language departments saw in the multi-disciplinary "area studies" programmes that had been developed in response to presumed "American national and economic interests" a way to ally themselves with other disciplines that seemed to offer access to jobs in fields more promising than teaching German.

Responding to the crisis of these years, several colleagues and I drafted a proposal for just such a German Area Studies programme in German. At that time we observed that

[b]oth traditional scholarship and traditional ways of education are being challenged by a new generation of students who feel that conventional departmental programs do not recognize the heart of the problems with which our society is faced. Modern language programs [...] have emphasised a highly specialized training in the language and literature of a foreign culture, neglecting more or less

German Studies in Australia: A Question of Interdisciplinarity

Tim Mehigan (Orago)

"Interdisciplinary" is now almost an old term. When we thought we knew what disciplines were, that is, more or less clearly defined fields of specialty marking off one scholarly domain from another, the adjective "interdisciplinary" was invoked to describe what we thought we did when we moved between them. For a long time, it was neither fashionable nor advisable to do so. Methodological principles borrowed from outside a discipline area were not readily understood within it, nor were they readily commanded. Using them meant not only complicating the approach to a text, but also, perhaps, mixing up genres and text types, with the attendant risk of conferring on the practice of scholarship an unscientific appearance.

That science was important in an age of disciplines is a nineteenth century idea,¹ and arose after the decline of a still older idea, that of humanism.² Scientific principles in the arts and humanities entered the mainstream, along with the concept of the expert,³ around the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, when a new revolution in science began to revise the understanding of Newton's fixed time-space continuum, and neo-Kantianism became established in European universities. Where, in the age of humanism, we had once read literature for instruction about our moral selves (an idea closely associated with the name

¹ One of the first promoters of the value of science for a study of humanity was Auguste Comte in the early to mid nineteenth century. Comte put forward the idea of a new social science in response to the political turmoil of Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century. Cf. Nasser Behnegar: *Leo Strauss, Max Weber, and the Scientific Study of Politics*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 2003, 9-10.

² Under the humanist paradigm, literary criticism represented a foundational discourse that sought to set parameters for the process of interpretation from a metaphysical standpoint: cf. Gerald Graff: *Professing Literature. An Institutional History*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1987, 252-4.

³ Cf. Jürgen Habermas: "Die Moderne: Ein unvollendetes Projekt." In: J. H.: *Die Moderne. Ein Unvollendetes Projekt. Philosophisch-politische Aufsätze*. Leipzig: Reclam 1994 (first published 1981), 51.

of Matthew Arnold in English-speaking countries⁴), we soon came to read literature for knowledge of discrete and concrete "things": things like how our society came into being, how our institutions were constructed, and what assumptions had shaped our thought. At this time, the humanities underwent a mini-revolution: sociology, issuing from Comte's positivism in the mid nineteenth century and the upsurge of interest in questions of social evolution, industrialisation and population in the late nineteenth century, was developed to understand our social selves and literature was studied as "Geistesgeschichte" in pursuit of an understanding of our mental selves.⁵ It was typical that linguistics was born at this time, de Saussure's science of signs, semiotics, discovered, and Darwinian biology propagated as the ultimate material statement about our social origins.

Somewhere in the middle of this period another discrete academic "thing" arose and began to flourish: the languages of the societies we especially wished to relate to.⁶ One of these languages was German, a language we read principally for knowledge of the German nation and the German people, and not because we fervently desired to speak it. Under the regime that held sway in the academy of this intermediate period, it

⁴ See, e.g., his *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*. London: Smith, Elder and Co. 1875 (second edition). Achaz von Müller traces the moral idea of the humanities back to notions of a sacro egoismo expounded by the Scottish philosopher Adam Smith in the eighteenth century. The moral function of the humanities was both to enhance and to delimit possibilities associated with the breakthrough to a new idea of economic and social competitiveness based on the "Gesetz des Egoismus." Cf. "Selbige Apathie: Welchen Nutzen haben Germanistik, Philosophie oder Kunstgeschichte? Die Geschichte einer falschen gestellten Frage." *Die Zeit*, 18 (22 April 2004), 47.

⁵ Philosophy, by this time, however, was moving in a different direction. At the start of the twentieth century, ideas advanced by Georg Simmel - though they were to meet opposition from Ernst Bloch and others - already indicated "eine Rückwendung der Philosophie auf konkrete Gegenstände." Cf. Theodor Adorno: "Henkel, Krieg und frühe Erfahrung." Th. A.: *Noten zur Literatur IV*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1974, 93, 103.

⁶ Cf. Claire J. Kramsch: "Language Acquisition and Language Learning." *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*. Edited by Joseph Gibaldi. New York: The Modern Language Association of America 1992, 53-76. Kramsch observes: "At a time when language study was closely linked to philology and phonetics, European scholars such as Henry Sweet, Harold Palmer, Otto Jespersen, and Wilhelm Vietor attempted to apply the findings of the linguistic sciences to language teaching. Despite developments in linguistic thought in the 1920s and 1930s, however, no theoretical foundation was established for language teaching before 1940, and questions about what it means to acquire, learn, and know a language did not get addressed before the 1960s" (55).

was sufficient to command a few phrases in German (no matter the accent we used in reproducing it), since it was the written form of the German language we were mainly interested in. Our - not yet wholly scientific, but no longer wholly moral - notion was to "read through" the literature of language to the society that lay behind it. Small wonder, therefore, that this increasingly social and sociological approach to reading literature became grist to the mill of Marxists, who, by the mid to late sixties were beginning to rise to prominence in universities around the world after the complete failure of the humanist idea by the end of the Second World War.⁷ As new discipline areas were marked out, so were the methods that underlay them. This was the period when literature was either "aesthetically compromised" and "bourgeois" or "dogmatically compromised" and "ideological." The Lukács-Adorno debate of the 1950s about modernist European literature,⁸ in which these terms were deployed, was felt here in Australia as well, albeit with different players and with somewhat of a time lag. In Australian universities in the late sixties and early seventies, these debates led to a massive schism between the Sydney and Melbourne English departments, which gave the lead in those days in questions of the theory of literature.⁹

Yet the idea of the new humanities that became associated with "Geistesgeschichte" feeding in the sixties on existentialist hermeneutics in the West and historical materialism in the East, declined just as swiftly as it arose. A factor contributing to this decline was a problem with the idea of science on which "Geistesgeschichte" rested. According to this idea of science, a literary work of art could be known and made utterly known to

⁷ Karl Popper refers to the importance of this failure in his volume of essays *The Myth of the Framework: In Defence of Science and Rationality*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1994 and his more programmatic work *The Open Society and its Enemies*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1962.

⁸ See Georg Lukács: "Die Gegenwartsbedeutung des kritischen Realismus." G. L.: *Probleme des Realismus I: Essays über Realismus*. Neuwied/Bern: Luchterhand 1971, first published 1958, 457-603, and, for Adorno's reaction, Theodor W. Adorno: "Ergebnisse Versöhnung. Zu Georg Lukács 'Wider den mißverständlichen Realismus,'" in Th. A.: *Noten zur Literatur II*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1979, first published 1958, 152-187. For an assessment of the importance of this debate for modernist literature, cf. Stephen D. Dowden: *Kafka's Castle and the Critical Imagination*. Columbia, SC: Camden House 1995, p. 55f.

⁹ Cf. Andrew Riemer: *Sandstone Gothic*. St Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen and Unwin 1998.

others by a complete familiarity with its context. Under such "positivistic" notions of literary history, the context of a particular work of art could be drawn out and made intelligible by understanding the historical, biographical and aesthetic circumstances that had informed it. The question of whether the context of a work of art can be utterly known, as we now appreciate with the benefit of hindsight, has been revealed as one of the many blind-alleys characterizing the literary enterprise. When Gero von Wilpert came to the University of Sydney in the early 1980s to take up a Chair of German, he already talked scathingly - and, as I now see, correctly - of "Geistesgeschichte" as a "Geistergeschichte," for indeed by then, for all those who had eyes to see it, "Geistesgeschichte" was already only a ghost of an idea. It had stolen away from under our noses sometime over the previous twenty years. If the rise of social criticism and then cultural critique in European and American literary studies were signs of an imminent departure,¹⁰ the first stirrings of "postmodernism" in the early seventies already signified that "Geistesgeschichte" had indeed gone all metaphysical on us and "transubstantiated" - very much its agenda from the beginning.¹¹

With it went, in Australia at least, the consciousness of what the discipline of German Studies could reliably be taken to mean. In fact, nowadays we can no longer speak of German Studies in Australia as a discipline at all in the traditional sense of the word, even if it still has a practice that is debated at conferences. A measure of this change is the fact that chairs of German, once established in every mainland state of

¹⁰ Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin's 1973 study of the philosophical-cultural significance of Vienna at the turn to the twentieth century remains a classic example of cultural critique. Cf. Allan Janik, Stephen Toulmin: *Witgenstein's Vienna*. New York: Touchstone 1973.

¹¹ That the adherence to notions of "Geistesgeschichte" is still strong can be read into Martin Seel's recent article in *Die Zeit*. The humanities, Seel argues, are concerned with a type of understanding that helps us understand. In doing so, the humanities plug gaps in other branches of knowledge that only offer particular perspectives about the world. Accordingly: "Ein Vorrat an Verständnis und die Bemühung um Verstehen sind das Normalste von der Welt, weil aus ihnen die menschliche Welt besteht. Wer die Fähigkeit der verstehenden Orientierung hat, ist konventionell gesprochen in der Welt des Geistes zu Hause." Martin Seel: "Welverstrickt: Das Verstehen verstehen. Über den Sinn der Geisteswissenschaften." *Die Zeit* 18 (22 April 2004) 48.

Australia and in Tasmania and in every larger university, have all but vanished. The rise of schools of languages within the university and other groupings that subsume the old discipline of German Studies within it represents another measure. My argument, therefore, is not only that the discipline of German Studies no longer exists in Australia in any accepted sense of the world, but also that everything we do in German Studies in this most recent phase of our scholarly development can lay some claim to being interdisciplinary. Roland Barthes addressed a similar question when he sought to define the term "interdisciplinary" in his *From Work to Text*:

Interdisciplinary work is not a peaceful operation: it begins effectively when the solidarity of the old discipline breaks down - a process made violent, perhaps, by the jolts of fashion - to the benefit of a new object and a new language [i.e. discourse], neither of which is in the domain of those branches of knowledge that one calmly sought to confront [...] [T]here now arises a need for a new object, one attained by the displacement or overturning of previous categories.¹²

I endorse this view of the term "interdisciplinary," but with this rider: no new "solidarity" actually emerges. For in the most recent phase of institutional development, at least in Australia, the link between discipline and department - once an unbreakable alliance - has been severed, and not just once, but repeatedly. Thus it has been the fate of virtually every academic unit in Australia where German has been taught to have been absorbed into departments with allegedly kindred, but, in fact, often strikingly inappropriate, companion languages (for example, "Germanic Studies and Russian"), then into still larger language groupings (e.g. "School of European, Asian and Middle Eastern Languages"), and latterly into larger groupings again, this time with the optional addition of linguistics and applied linguistics (e.g. "School of Languages"). Each new

¹² Quoted in: Giles Gunn: "Interdisciplinary Studies." *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*. Edited by Joseph Gibaldi. New York: The Modern Language Association of America 1992. 244.

iteration in the structure within which German Studies is administered has diluted the financial circumstances underpinning German Studies, interpolated more and more layers of bureaucracy, and alienated the logistical support the discipline of German Studies receives for its activities to the point where there is no longer any sense of certainty that the local administrative assistant commands any knowledge of the German language. The situation that still obtains in German universities - that at least one secretary is assigned to discharge the administrative activity of a chair of German, with several chairs in one department - is as remote to life here as one solar system is from another. In this sense, we are indeed entitled to speak, as is now de rigueur, of an "Auslandsgermanistik."¹³

This already suggests that we in Australia are in the grip of a serious and protracted crisis affecting what we do, and, indeed, this is so obviously the case that repeating this here will serve no useful purpose. More productive is a new and urgent question already alluded to, namely, that in this brave new world of German Studies in Australia - caught between the decline of the scientific idea of the discipline, on the one hand, and the emergence of a new notion of "interdisciplinarity" reaching across all parts of modern faculties of arts, on the other - we not only have to alter our teaching and research practice, but, curiously and disturbingly, we have neither training nor competence to do so. Julia Kristeva reminds us of this when she said in a recent interview:

Interdisciplinarity is always a site where expressions of resistance are latent. Many academics are locked within the specificity of their field; that is a fact. Even if they demonstrate or manifest a desire to work with other disciplines, more often than not it turns out that, in fact, the work undertaken fails to break new ground.

Thus, the first obstacle is often linked to individual competences coupled with a tendency to jealously protect one's own domain.¹⁴

I would go further than Kristeva and say that "jealously protecting our domain" in this country has corrupted what we do to the point of extinction. Very few German Studies sections in Australia, for example, now mention Goethe and Schiller and Weimar Classicism to their students, let alone teach them. Indeed, it is rare to engage in German literature of any type antecedent to the twentieth century, and even discussing themes of the period before the fall of the Berlin wall can, from a student's point of view, raise a sceptical eyebrow. Our response to these emerging pedagogical issues in the intermediate phase, I have argued, was to turn to the "disciplinarity" of the age of science and make German linguistics and second language acquisition on one side, and variant forms of social criticism, including cultural critique and feminist studies, on the other, the main occupation. Film studies in German - as a type of transposed literary studies - became another substitute, but only in a very small number of universities in Australia.¹⁵ And as we practise the new German Studies within strategic political groupings we do not desire, much less love, the uneasy feeling arises that even these new alliances in "schools of languages" or "languages, linguistics and cultures" may soon be overtaken by stranger and more wonderful administrative partnerships that may plunge us into renewed crisis. It behoves us, in the middle of this institutional change, to develop our professional ethic, and to reestablish our professional association with one another.

So the problem, as I see it, is that we have retooled to meet the challenges of the age of disciplines, and now must retool to meet the challenge of the age of interdisciplinarity. Foreign language is no longer pursued for knowledge of society, or of language "as such," and if we only do foreign language acquisition we will become not just "schools of

¹³ For a recent use of this term, see *Linguistik im DaF-Unterricht: Beiträge zur Auslandsgermanistik*. Edited by Peter Collander. Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2001.

¹⁴ Julia Kristeva: "Institutional Interdisciplinarity in Theory and Practice. An Interview." *The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity: De-, dis-, ex-*. Edited by Alex Coles and Alexia Defert. Volume 2. London: BAC/Kless Books 1998, 6.

¹⁵ Film studies feature as an important adjunct part of the German Studies curriculum at the Australian National University, Canberra and Newcastle University in New South Wales.

languages," but Berlitz schools of language, just as we were beginning to lay the bogey of the functional "service" requirement for other areas of the arts faculty to rest.¹⁶ Since language is now culture, and culture is by definition "interdisciplinary" (even as "interdisciplinary studies is not a field", as Giles Gunn has said in a recent essay on this theme¹⁷), the practice of foreign language sections in general and German Studies sections in particular must change, and in some areas, fundamentally.

But change to what? What I am suggesting is that we have to reconceive the German Studies curriculum. I quote Julia Kristeva again:

One cannot be an amateur, or decide one day 'Let's be interdisciplinary.' A university may decide to develop in that direction.

¹⁶ This service function argument about foreign languages implies that the study of languages is a purely formal undertaking with a low intellectual content. Yet it is incontrovertibly the case that many of the greatest philosophical minds were and are also great linguists. Foreign language faculty and intellectual endeavour, in other words, have always gone hand in hand. The philosophy of, say, Jacques Derrida and Martin Heidegger, would not have been possible without a profound knowledge of Latin and ancient Greek, and the Algerian-born Frenchman Derrida, like Barthes and Foucault before him, displays a deeply nuanced understanding of German that has brought alive for him German thought with a complexity few have ever commanded before him. This is by no means an isolated example. What has come down to us as French post-structuralism, largely through the work of Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, but also Lacan, Lyotard, Greimas and Kristeva, took root in scholarship that is strikingly multi-lingual in outlook. And the French have been acute readers of the work of their neighbours, particularly the Germans. Where others neglected the German tradition of ideas in the politically charged early postwar period and failed to read those philosophers like Heidegger and Nietzsche considered politically suspect, these French scholars began to interpret a tradition of ideas that even most Germans themselves neglected in the politically charged environment of the immediate postwar world. Not for the first time, therefore, it was the foreigner who was to bring a nuanced understanding of indigenous culture to a wider audience. My "take" on the question of the intellectual aspects of language study in a university setting, then, is that it is mainly a non-issue for the insider, who is always already cognisant of the profound emotional and intellectual boundaries to be crossed in language study and skills transfer at the higher and highest levels, but who, nevertheless, must never shrink from the task of convincing outsiders that such is the case. At a time of peer-reviewed quality assessment, such as that prescribed under the performance based review process currently underway in countries like New Zealand, it is now incumbent upon language scholars of every kind to demonstrate the rich intellectual nature of language scholarship, be it by empirical studies in linguistics, foreign language pedagogy and computer assisted language learning, or conceptually-based or author-based interpretations in cultural and literary studies. Today, more than ever, intellectual content, as well as utility and relevance, must be demonstrated within a wider institutional framework.

¹⁷ Gunn (1992) 239.

but what matters is that each researcher finds and establishes some complicities with other researchers so that interdisciplinarity comes from the base of the pyramid and works its way up. [...] One can only benefit from interdisciplinary practices if researchers meet other researchers whilst learning how to discuss their competences and the outcome of their interaction; therefore contributing to the exposure of the risks inherent in an interdisciplinary practice.¹⁸

Interdisciplinarity does not just occur on our side of the fence; it has become a fact of life for our students, who recognise no loyalty to a discipline area, only a self-imposed duty to acquire enough marketable skills to earn a living. Our enrolment practices already suggest this. Students enrolled in pure arts degrees now make up less than fifty per cent of our clientele.¹⁹ More and more students do combined degrees - arts and engineering, arts and science, arts and law, but also music-science (i.e. not "arts" at all!) - and an increasing number come to us from different universities down the road where they might be studying tourism or journalism. The "diploma in modern languages"²⁰ at the University of Melbourne is about seven or eight years old, and now indicates that we often do not teach degree students of German at all. For these students, German is a subsidiary skill they connect, often wondrously, with their main speciality. This means that when they enter our courses, they are not seeking to hear about the literary debates within our old discipline, nor even the linguistic ones. They want to know about what German culture is, how they can access it better, how they can speak German well, as quickly as possible. Most have no interest in taking more than three years of German, and even third year numbers in post-matriculation streams have sunk to dangerously low levels across Australian universities. Moreover, less than five, and frequently no more than two, percent of students

¹⁸ Kristeva (1998) 6.

¹⁹ This is the figure at the University of Melbourne. It is part of similar trends around Australia.

²⁰ The diploma in modern language allows students to complete a course of study in a language that is less than the requirement for a major. The diploma constitutes roughly four-fifths of the normal coursework requirement for a major.

beginning a course of study in German will progress to complete an honours year of study in German (those who take a fourth year of German and write a thesis on a German topic).

The situation facing Australian German Studies sections and the nature of its student clientele is therefore this: students must be offered as many points of connection with their specialties as possible, and students must be invited to consider the benefits of in-depth knowledge of the German language and culture at every level of our offerings. This may tax our conviction about the old discipline of German Studies, which was based on a wholly different set of "scientific" assumptions, yet, I believe and hope, it doesn't exhaust them - indeed it must not. I am talking about a new theory and practice of German Studies. From my own angle as an only partly reconstructed student of literature, it means discovering the interdisciplinary quality of a broadly understood "linguistic culture" in German Studies. It means returning to an understanding of the values of German culture that made and still makes that culture distinctive in global terms. One of many highpoints was the experiment in German thought in the eighteenth century that ended in the achievement of Weimar Classicism. So we should start to talk to our students again about Schiller and Goethe, not in literary-aesthetic, but in linguistically informed cultural terms. It means telling the students about the way the ideas of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud - the names they have all heard about - established modern life through a process of revolt against aspects of this same cultural tradition. It means talking about Romanticism not as a rather remote aestheticism, but, as Hemingway said in a different context, as "a theory, like another," albeit a holistic theory that lives on in debates about global culture, ethics and ecology.²¹ It means casting aside the fashionable denigration of European theories, and, against the trend towards the Asia-

²¹ This also appears to be what Andrew Bowie has in mind when he observes: "There are signs that the long-term decline of German studies might be partly arrested if a Romantic combination of different literary, cultural, historical and philosophical approaches became the norm." Cf. Andrew Bowie: *Aesthetics and Subjectivity. From Kant to Nietzsche*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press 2003, vii-viii.

Pacific in our own region,²² of rediscovering an interest in Europe (which is, after all, Australia's largest single trading partner). It means spreading both Europhilia²³ as well as Germanophilia. It means crossing discipline boundaries to remind students that Germany gave the world not just the "Copernican revolution" in thought through Kantian philosophy, but a second "Copernican revolution" in the form of Einstein's theory of relativity and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. Another discipline boundary we must cross leads in the direction of psychology, not only because the unconscious is a German invention (invented by German Romanticism a hundred years before Freud), but also because the German mind gave the world "Gestalt" theory, which has been influential in a range of disciplines from psychology through to architecture. If "culture" was a notion that widened ideas to the point where - under modern notions of cultural studies - they could be robbed of their linguistic-cultural roots, we must rob them back into a reconceived German Studies curriculum that discusses the German contribution to thought within a wider historical, anthropological and language-related cultural framework that is much more than the disembodied and linguistically de-contextualised cultural studies taught in today's English departments. One such framework could be European studies, so long as this is taken to mean an inventory of social, political and economic ideas that have come to shape the shared cultural heritage of Europe, rather than just a dialogue about treaties and institutions from Maastricht to the present day.

The new way of interdisciplinarity, therefore, will throw up enormous intellectual challenges for German Studies in the future. It will require German Studies sections to be more outwardly focused than they have been hitherto, more sensitive to the vocational needs of student-clients,

²² One of the key proponents of the orientation towards Asia in Australia was the former Prime Minister of Australia, Paul Keating, who argued that when Britain chose not to send reinforcements to support the defense of Singapore in 1942 - this was a formidable force of 90,000 British, Australian and Indian troops defending it against the advancing Japanese - it had also chosen to abandon the region. Australia had had no choice but to cultivate an alliance with the United States and begin to develop its own understanding of his place in the Asia-Pacific. The final moment when the umbilical cord was cut occurred when Britain joined the European Economic Community in January 1973.

²³ A term also used by Kristeva: (1998) 14.

more strategic in the establishment of alliances within faculties of arts and humanities. Reflection on the value and utility of linguistically founded cultural theory and practice will become a mainstay of this approach to German Studies. Failure to build such outward focus, however, will result in the increasing insularity of narrowly defined German Studies programmes and their progressive marginalisation as specialist language training centres within the academy. The intellectual work, in that case, will be left to others. Yet it is precisely in the crossover between sophisticated cultural understanding and the special quality of language proficiency that language departments of all persuasions can maintain not only their relevance within the modern university, but also their importance in the global community of the future. As Andrew Bowie notes in the specific case of German culture: "Germany is, after all - even though the contemporary state of the humanities would not suggest it - the main source of nearly all the major recent theoretical directions in the humanities."²⁴ Language faculty, in other words, is still the sine qua non of cultural understanding about our world, today more than ever.

Cultural Studies als Fundierungsmöglichkeit von German Studies

Thomas Pekar (Gakushuin)

Die in diesem Aufsatz diskutierte These lautet: Die Kulturwissenschaft, ¹so wie sie im deutschen Sprachbereich in den letzten Jahren entwickelt worden ist, bietet m. E. keine oder nur eine unzureichende Grundlage für das auslandsgermanistische Fach *German Studies*. Die im deutschen Sprachbereich geführten Diskussionen um die Neuentdeckung der Germanistik als Kulturwissenschaft ignorieren weitgehend die Anforderungen, die die Auslandsgermanistik (als *German Studies*) an dieses Fach stellen. Demgegenüber wäre vielmehr eine Orientierung der *German Studies* an den *Cultural Studies* notwendig.

Ich erläutere meine These in drei Argumentationsschritten: Ich skizziere zunächst die inlandsgermanistischen Diskussionen um die Kulturwissenschaft in Abhängigkeit von einem spezifisch "deutschen" Kulturbegriff. Ich versuche zweitens Grundzüge eines auslandsgermanistischen Anforderungsprofils an das Fach *German Studies* zu formulieren, wobei ich mich an Japan in der Hoffnung orientiere, daß meine Erfahrungen dort auch auf andere Länder übertragbar sein mögen. Ich vergleiche dabei die Skizzierung der "deutschen" Kulturwissenschaft mit einem auslandsgermanistischen Anforderungsprofil, um ihre Inkompatibilität aufzuweisen. Abschließlich weise ich drittens auf *Cultural Studies* als eine Fundierungsmöglichkeit für das auslandsgermanistische Fach *German Studies* hin.

Die inlandsgermanistischen Diskussionen um die Kulturwissenschaft lassen sich m. E. unter dem Gesichtspunkt der Fixierung auf einen an der

¹Der Begriff 'Kulturwissenschaft', wie er [...] seit Mitte der achtziger Jahre zu einer Schlüsselkategorie der publizistischen und akademischen Debatten über den Zustand und die Zukunft vor allem der historisch-philologischen Disziplinen avancierte, rückte die 'Kulturwissenschaften' in den Status einer fächerübergreifenden Orientierungskategorie, die das Erbe der 'Geisteswissenschaften' zugleich antreten und einer kritischen Revision unterziehen soll. [...] Demgegenüber zieht die Begriffsverwendung im Singular in der Regel auf die Etablierung der 'Kulturwissenschaft' als inter- bzw. transdisziplinär angelegtes Einzelfach." Hartmut Böhme, Peter Maussek, Lothar Müller: *Orientierung Kulturwissenschaft. Was sie kann, was sie will*. Reinbek b. Hamburg: Rowohlt 2000, 9f.

²⁴ Bowie (2003) viii.