



**DEPARTMENT OF
GERMANIC LANGUAGES
AND LITERATURES**

**NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 2021**



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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Dear friends,

A few days ago my mailbox contained a welcome surprise: the 2021-22 season program of the University Musical

Society. There will once again be symphony concerts, piano recitals, jazz music, and theater performances on campus! This is just one of many signs that life is returning to Ann Arbor. All over downtown, sidewalks are bustling with people drinking coffee or dining at outside tables; the Michigan Theater is screening movies; and on State Street students pass by with ice cream cones in their hands or yoga mats under their arms. With a bit of luck, this trend will continue. COVID-19 rates permitting, our university will return to “mostly in-person instruction” after the summer, with dorms, libraries, and dining halls opening up again, albeit at reduced capacities and reconfigured according to three-foot distancing rules.

We are excited to see our students—and each other—again in real life. It’s been a long and taxing year. New technologies had to be learnt, syllabi restructured, exercises re-invented. More than ever, our classes served a vital social and emotional function, providing structure, stimulation, and camaraderie to students who, cut off from campus life, often felt at sea. Creating a sense of community has never been more important, and doing so in the absence of a shared physical space required patience and inventiveness. I’m proud of the work my colleagues have done to support our students over the past 15 months. Our efforts culminated in a marvelous (virtual) graduation ceremony that

attracted 200 students and parents, providing them with a public forum to celebrate this important day in their lives.

We were busy in other ways as well. Together with Assistant Professor Kristin Dickison, two of our graduate students worked on expanding the department’s research and teaching database devoted to the work of under-represented writers and film makers. The archive, the first of its kind in the U.S., brings together rarely taught and hard to find primary material, complete with basic lesson plans that instructors can adapt to their own courses. Questions of diversity were also at the heart of a series of departmental workshops in the fall, devoted to the role of racism and colonialism in German, Dutch, and Scandinavian culture. These discussions laid the ground for our two public Grilk conversations in the Winter term that were a huge success and attracted hundreds of participants from all over the world (page 3).

Research continues to flourish as well. Our graduate students won coveted awards for their dissertations, articles, and teaching (pages 8-10), and Pavel Brunssen, a third-year graduate student, even published a monograph. Fred Amrine, Silke Weineck, and I published new books, and Silke was awarded a Collegiate Professorship, one of the University’s highest honors. While there isn’t enough space to feature the varied contributions of our faculty, which range from scholarly articles to newspaper essays, and from radio interviews to exhibition work, have a look at the short piece by Kira Thurman (pages 6-7) for a particularly impressive example of how

scholarship and academic learning can enrich public life.

This would not be a glance back at a COVID-19 year without some bad news. Perhaps most sadly, we had to suspend all study abroad activities for the 2020-21 academic year. While we tried our best to make up for this loss with a series of exciting undergraduate courses, there is really nothing that can replace the experience of living abroad. Zoom isn’t the world, even though it sometimes felt like that over the last 15 months. Let’s hope we’ll get to rediscover the difference between the two over the next few months. Here’s to a relaxing, yet exciting, “in-person” summer, away from the screen and in the presence of friends and family.

Best Wishes,

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HIGHLIGHTS

Grilk Conversations

By Johannes von Moltke, Professor

Friends of the department will be familiar with our annual Grilk Lecture in German Studies, which honors our late colleague Werner Grilk by inviting leading scholars in our field to present their work at this marquee event. In planning for this past COVID-19 year, we were eager to maintain the momentum of this lecture series, which has been unbroken since it was first endowed by an anonymous donor in 2002. At the same time, given the changed dynamics for the production and sharing of scholarship during the pandemic, we thought it would be wise to modify the format somewhat and replace the traditional, hour-long academic lecture with a more conversational approach, pairing two scholars for discussion and an ensuing Q&A. And so we reconceived the annual lecture, taking advantage of the Zoom platform to bring together an exciting set of interlocutors for not one, but two “Grilk Conversations.” Both events were generously co-sponsored by the Center for European Studies.

The first of these took place during Black History Month and was dedicated to the work of Tiffany Florvil (University of New Mexico), who had just recently published her important new book, *Mobilizing Black Germany*. Based on research in an array of fascinating archives, some of them private and accessed here for the first time, the book offers the first full-length study of the history of the Black German movement of the 1980s to the 2000s. Florvil was joined in conversation by our own Kira Thurman, herself the author of the eagerly awaited *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms*, forthcoming this fall from Cornell University Press. Florvil and Thurman engaged the audience in a lively and captivating discussion of Florvil’s findings in *Mobilizing Black Germany*. They examined the role of queer and straight women in shaping the contours of the modern Black German movement as part of the Black internationalist opposition to racial and gender oppression, and allowed the conversation to range from there to other Black internationalist themes in German studies.



Both Grilk Conversations were recorded and are available for (re)viewing on the CES YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/umeurope>.

Even though we regretted not being able to host our guests in-person and continue these conversations across seminar tables and in more informal settings, we did benefit from the reduced logistical, financial (and carbon!) footprint that Zoom

affords. Having “brought” Tiffany Florvil from Albuquerque, we subsequently were able to connect our other two Grilk conversationalists in a trans-Atlantic event that featured Susan Neimann, director of the Einstein Forum, speaking to us from Berlin; and Michael Rothberg from Los Angeles, where he teaches at UCLA. Both Rothberg and Neiman have been enormously influential and deeply engaged in ongoing debates about German and transnational memory cultures—Neiman with her influential book, *Learning from the Germans*, which looks to the latter’s *Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit* (coming to terms with the past) to ask how the United States might face up differently to the legacies of slavery and Jim Crow; and Rothberg with his work on what he calls “multidirectional memory” and the ways in which we can remain implicated in the past, for example by benefiting from past injustices that we did not commit. The discussion that developed between these two influential thinkers was as wide-ranging as it was memorable—and well-attended.

Thanks to Zoom, we were able to welcome viewers from no fewer than 29 different countries, ranging from Norway to Nigeria, from Belarus to Brazil, and from India to England.

What form the Grilk lectures will take in the future remains to be seen. While we certainly look forward to resuming scholarly exchange with our colleagues in person, the conversations that we piloted this past term also offered more than just a pandemic stopgap. They turned out to be exciting and vital events in their own right, and we were happy to be able to integrate them as a new format into the long-standing tradition of the annual Werner Grilk event.

FACULTY FOCUS

The Conquest of Ruins

University of Chicago Press Books



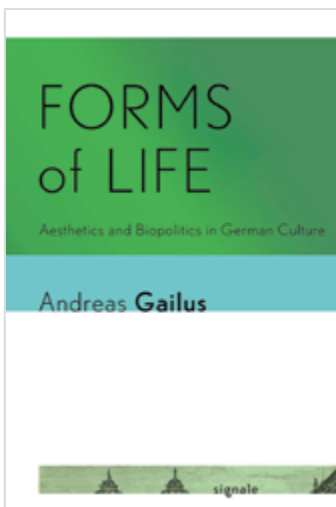
In 2019, we saw the release of Professor Hell's book *The Conquest of Ruins* from the University of Chicago Press. The Roman Empire has been a source of inspiration and a model for imitation for Western empires practically since the moment Rome fell. Yet, as **Julia Hell** shows in *The Conquest of Ruins*, what has had the strongest grip on aspiring imperial imaginations isn't that empire's glory but its fall—and the haunting monuments left in its wake.

Hell examines centuries of European empire-building—from Charles V in the sixteenth century and Napoleon's campaigns of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to the atrocities of Mussolini and the Third Reich

in the 1930s and '40s—and sees a similar fascination with recreating the Roman past in the contemporary image. In every case—particularly that of the Nazi regime—the ruins of Rome seem to represent a mystery to be solved: how could an empire so powerful be brought so low? Hell argues that this fascination with the ruins of greatness expresses a need on the part of would-be conquerors to find something to ward off a similar demise for their particular empire.

Forms of Life: Aesthetics and Biopolitics in German Culture

Cornell University Press



In 2020, Professor **Andreas Gailus** released his book titled *Forms of Life: Aesthetics and Biopolitics in German Culture* from Cornell University Press. In *Forms of Life*, Gailus argues that the neglect of aesthetics in most contemporary theories of biopolitics has resulted in an overly restricted conception of life. He insists we need a more flexible notion of life: one attuned to the interplay and conflict between its many dimensions and forms. *Forms of Life* develops such a notion through the meticulous study of works by Kant, Goethe, Kleist, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Benn, Musil, and others.

Gailus shows that the modern conception of "life" as a generative, organizing force internal to living beings emerged in the last decades of

the eighteenth century in biological thought. At the core of this vitalist strand of thought, Gailus maintains, lies a persistent emphasis on the dynamics of formation and deformation, and thus on an intrinsically aesthetic dimension of life.

Forms of Life brings this older discourse into critical conversation with contemporary discussions of biopolitics and vitalism, while also developing a rich conception of life that highlights, rather than suppresses, its protean character. Gailus demonstrates that life unfolds in the open-ended interweaving of the myriad forms and modalities of biological, ethical, political, psychical, aesthetic, and biographical systems.

Goethe and the Myth of the Bildungsroman—Rethinking the Wilhelm Meister Novels

Cambridge University Press

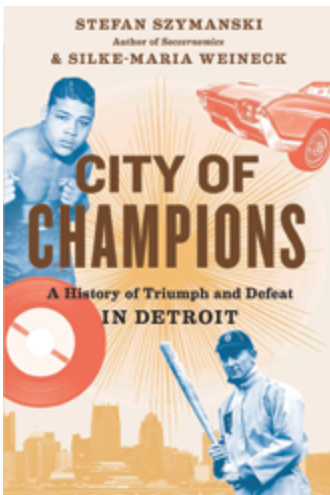


Professor **Frederick Amrine** released *Goethe and the Myth of the Bildungsroman* (Cambridge University Press) in April 2020. Goethe's Wilhelm Meister novels, widely held to be the most significant and influential in all of German literature, have traditionally been classed as Bildungsroman, or 'novels of formation'. In *Goethe and the Myth of Bildungsroman*, Amrine offers a unique reading of Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre and Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre, which posits the second novel as a sequel to the first. Deconstructing and jettisoning the notion of the Bildungsroman, the features of the novels which have historically proved

problematic for critics, seeming to testify to the novels' disunity, become instead the articulation points of a subtle concord between thematic and formal elements. Reading the novels in light of the eminent criticism of Northrop Frye, this book productively shifts away from social commentary towards the archetypal and symbolic, showing Goethe not to be an exception within world literature; rather, that he participates deeply in its overarching structures.

City of Champions—A History of Triumph and Defeat in Detroit

The New Press



In October 2020, Professors **Silke-Marie Weineck** and **Stefan Szymanski** released *City of Champions* from The New Press. From Ty Cobb and Hank Greenberg to the Bad Boys, from Joe Louis and Gordie Howe to the Malice at the Palace, *City of Champions* explores the history of Detroit through the stories of its most gifted athletes and most celebrated teams, linking iconic events in the history of Motown sports to the city's shifting fortunes.

In an era when many teams have left rustbelt cities to relocate elsewhere, Detroit has held on to its franchises, and there is currently great hope in the revival of the city focused on its downtown sports complexes—but to whose benefit? Szymanski and Weineck show how the fate of the teams in Detroit's stadiums, gyms, and fields is echoed in the rise and fall of the car industry, political upheavals ushered in by the depression, World War II, the 1967 uprising, and its recent bankruptcy and renewal.

Driven by the conviction that sports not only mirror society but also have a special power to create both community and enduring narratives that help define a city's sense of self, *City of Champions* is a unique history of the most American of cities.

Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs (SACUA) has identified Silke Weineck as the 2021 recipient of the Distinguished Faculty Governance Award. Congratulations Silke on this well-deserved award!

Congratulations Professor Weineck!

LSA's Dean Anne Curzan has recommended to the Provost and the Board of Regents that Professor Silke Weineck, jointly appointed in the Germanic languages and literatures and comparative literature departments, be awarded a Collegiate Professorship effective September 1, 2021. Regents approval is expected this summer.

Professor Weineck chose to honor Grace Lee Boggs for her named professorship. While she never held an official appointment at U-M, she did receive an honorary doctorate and she lectured at U-M every year for decades.

Bringing The Music of Black Composers to a German Audience

By Kira Thurman, Assistant Professor

Ph.D. students Domenic DeSocio and Özlem Karuç put their brilliant skills of translation, project management, and training in Black German studies to the test in a project overseen by Kira Thurman for the Elbphilharmonie this June. Offering some of their first live concerts since the pandemic began, the Elbphilharmonie put together a three-day music festival celebrating the music of Black composers. The purpose of the festival was to bring African American art music to an international stage, performing music by historical composers such as William Grant Still and Florence Price while also showcasing the exciting, dynamic, and vibrant scene of young Black composers

today—including Macarthur “genius grant” winner Tyshawn Sorey, whose song “Cycles of My Being” (co-written with poet Terrance Hayes) explores the realities of being a Black man in America in the age of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and George Floyd. The three-day music festival featured many of the most renowned musicians in the classical music world today, including Thomas Hampson, Lawrence Brownlee, Michigan’s very own Louise Toppin, and conductor Roderick Cox.

The task for Kira, Domenic, and Özlem was both simple and challenging: provide the publicity materials for this festival, the concert program notes, and the texts

to all of the art songs—in English and in German. Kira was responsible for writing all of the content for the Elbphilharmonie’s website and programming. For this, she used her knowledge of African American artists, poets, musicians, and intellectuals who traveled to Germany to tell a transatlantic tale of musical creativity over time. For example, the first concert featured musical settings of Langston Hughes’s poetry, so Kira examined the first generation of Germans to translate Hughes’s poetry into German in the early 1920s. For the second concert, which explored the theme, “I know why the caged bird sings,” Kira revisited Maya Angelou’s memoirs describing what it was like being raised by a

German-speaking mother, and detailing her time in Germany in the 1960s. The last concert focused on the history of spirituals being performed in Germany, dating back to the 1870s, when the African American choir called the Fisk Jubilee Singers sang before the royal family in Potsdam.

But the sheer volume of texts that needed to be translated quickly for the Elbphilharmonie was astounding: concert program notes, PR materials, and over 80 art songs by African American composers. Domenic and Özlem came to the rescue! Domenic took the helm as project manager, overseeing what needed to be translated into which language, in addition to translating German interviews into English for the Elbphilharmonie’s publicity materials. He also visited Michigan’s special collections to track down one of the earliest editions of Langston Hughes’s poetry that had been translated into German and transcribed it for the program notes. Özlem set to work translating all of the English materials into German, including dozens of art songs and Kira’s lengthy concert program notes.



Elbphilharmonie in the Bringing the Music of Black Composers



Elbphilharmonie in the Bringing the Music of Black Composers

This was a huge undertaking. And it was also complicated. Both Domenic and Özlem used their linguistic and anti-racist training to translate the materials thoughtfully and carefully. The conversation over how, or if to, translate the word “Negro” offers one example of why their expertise as scholars in German studies was essential to this project. While “Negro” in an African American context—used by Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, and others—has no derogatory inflection, the German translation of that term does not have the same affirming context. Contemporary conversations in Germany illustrate a sea of change, in which many white Germans are recognizing how harmful most words attributed to people of African descent have been in German history.

Domenic and Özlem’s solution was to keep the original English word while translating the rest: Hughes’s 1920s poem “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” became “Der Negro* spricht von Strömen,” with an asterisk offered to explain to the concert-goer why the term appeared in the English original.

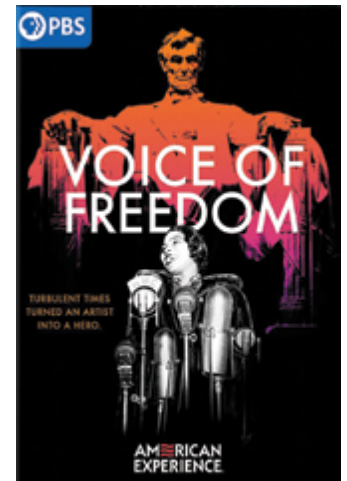
The Elbphilharmonie’s three-day music festival was a huge success, and it is already getting international media coverage by newspapers such as *Deutsche Welle* and *The New York Times*. It also highlighted why having trained scholars in German studies is essential to building a more just, vibrant, and harmonious world.

The German Origins of Marian Anderson’s Career

By Kira Thurman, Assistant Professor

In February, Kira Thurman appeared on the *American Experience* PBS documentary, “The Voice of Freedom,” which detailed the life and career of famed African American contralto and civil rights icon Marian Anderson (1897-1993). Anderson spent much of the 1930s living in German-speaking Europe, where she studied and performed the music of German composers such as Franz Schubert, Johannes Brahms, and Hugo Wolf. Although many people associate Marian Anderson’s fame with her legendary performance on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1939, Kira pointed out that she had actually become an international sensation much earlier: in 1935 at the Salzburg Festival in Austria. There, the conductor Arturo Toscanini told Anderson that she had a voice “heard once every hundred years.”

As Kira explained in the PBS interview and also in an article she wrote for *The New Yorker* in July 2020, Anderson consistently used her musical performances to protest against racism—first, in Germany and Austria against the rising tide of Nazism, and later in America facing white supremacy and institutional racism. Marian Anderson’s life in Germany and Austria is one of the topics that appears in Kira’s forthcoming book, *Singing like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms* (Cornell University Press), which debuts this fall.



GRADUATE STUDENT FOCUS

Welcome New Graduate Student!



Martin Amesquita

Martin Amesquita joined our department in Fall 2020. His research interests include the discourses of Jewish assimilation and antisemitism in German-speaking Europe, the impact of globalization on German and Austrian migration literature, and antiracist performance art and pedagogy.

Martin is a two time graduate of Northwestern University (A.B. in German and M.S. in Education). As an undergraduate, he focused on Holocaust representation in German-language media and the impact of global political institutions on migrant identity as expressed in literature. As a masters student, he worked as an educational intern at the German International School of Chicago, a full-time dual-language school in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood. His Masters Project investigated the identities and metalinguistic resources of German-learning students in a suburban high school. Before coming to U-M, he taught high school German in Oswego, IL for four years.

Graduate Student publishes monograph

By Pavel Brunssen, Current Ph.D. Student



Graduate Student Pavel Brunssen published a monograph entitled *Antisemitismus in Fußball-Fankulturen: Der Fall RB Leipzig* (Beltz Juventa) with a preface by Prof. Andrei S. Markovits. The book analyzes the singular hatred directed against the German soccer club RB Leipzig by an entire country. Brunssen's innovative and thought-provoking study of antisemitism and fan cultures in contemporary Germany shows that although RB Leipzig is not seen as explicitly "Jewish", the incessantly hostile bombardment of the club by the German soccer public is full of antisemitic

stereotypes centered on the hatred of modernity and globalization which, in and of themselves, bespeak a disdained inauthenticity. The book contributes to the academic discourse on contemporary antisemitism by showing how antisemitic ways of thinking and feeling are ingrained into German society. While many of the fan groups position themselves as anti-antisemites, they nonetheless express antisemitic tropes in their enmity towards RB Leipzig. By using hundreds of primary sources, the study focuses on antisemitism in textual, visual, and performative

expressions. Brunssen's book is an important contribution to the study of fan cultures by elucidating the dangers and pitfalls of fan culture's localism, traditionalism, and tribalism. Brunssen elucidates many key resentments and ugly sides of the so-called "Beautiful Game" that pertain well beyond the particular case at hand. By applying an interdisciplinary and intersectional perspective, the study provides an important contribution to the fields of German studies, popular culture, the study of antisemitism, the history of emotions, and gender studies.

Congratulations!

Congratulations Katy Holihan!

Katy Holihan graduated in Summer 2020. Her dissertation is titled, *Staging the Somatic: The Popular Hygiene Exhibition in Germany, 1882-1931*. Katy accepted a 3-year position as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee.

Ph.D. Alumni Awards



Emma Thomas,
Ph.D. Summer 2019



Katy Holihan,
Ph.D. Summer 2020



Mary Hennessy, Ph.D.
Forthcoming
Summer 2021



Andrea Rottmann,
Ph.D. Fall 2019

U-M History Dept.'s Dissertation Prize and Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize for her dissertation, *Contested Labors: New Guinean Women and the German Colonial Indenture, 1884-1914*.

ProQuest Dissertation Award (see highlighted box for Katy's dissertation title)

Berlin Program for Advanced German & European Studies Postdoctoral Fellowship 2021-22

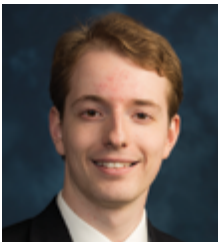
Women in German (wiG) Dissertation Prize and Arbeitskreis Historische Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung (working group for historical women's and gender research) Dissertation Prize for her dissertation, *Queer Home Berlin? Making Queer Selves and Spaces in the Divided City, 1945-1970*.

Graduate Student Awards



Domenic DeSocio

Rackham's Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award



Todd Maslyk

Cottrell Prize
Best Paper Written in a German Studies Seminar



Erin Johnston-Weiss

Frank X Braun Graduate Student Instructor Award



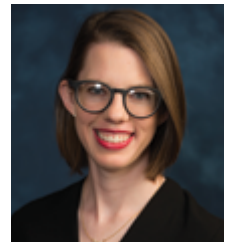
Onyx Henry

Berlin Program for Advanced German & European Studies Fellowship 2021-22 and Frank X Braun Graduate Student Instructor Award



Lauren Beck

Freie Universität Berlin Exchange Student 2021-22



Elizabeth McNeill

Institute for Humanities Fellowship 2021-22

Alamanya Events

By Özlem Karuç, Current Ph.D. Student

The 2020-21 academic year was a very productive year for *Alamanya Transnational German Studies Workshop Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop (RIW)*, despite pandemic-related restrictions and budget cuts. Following are highlights from three Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)-related events that were particularly successful.

Alamanya: Transnational German Studies is a Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop that emphasizes the diversity of artistic expressions in communities marked by migration and calls for interdisciplinary collaboration at the nexus of nation, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and religion in the German sphere. During the academic year of 2020-2021, graduate students Özlem Karuç (German) and Rhiannon Muncaster (German) served as co-coordinators and Kristin Dickinson (Assistant Professor of German) was the faculty sponsor.

In Fall 2020, *Alamanya* hosted two department-wide virtual workshops with about 30 attendees each. These teaching-oriented workshops were designed to help people facilitate diversifying course content and to expand the resources on the *German Studies DEI Research and*



Teaching Database that was created by Domenic DeSocio in 2019. Professors, lecturers, and graduate students of our department first explored in group work either a song, a piece of literature, a film scene, or an excerpt of an essay produced by traditionally underrepresented communities in the German-language sphere. Then, by filling out the worksheets they received, they developed teacher's manuals for these materials that consisted of keywords pertaining to each material, a summary of the given material, and some discussion questions that would help students anticipate, understand, analyze, and interpret the materials, as well as possible answers to these questions to help teachers prepare their

lessons more easily. During a second round of group work, experts from previous groups met to present their outcomes to each other. This way, all participants were able to learn about various DEI-related materials within a short period of time and develop several teacher's manuals for future use. All outcomes were later added to our *German Studies DEI Research and Teaching Database* on Canvas. Since then, we have received ample feedback about the success of these materials in our undergraduate and graduate classes.

On May 5, 2021, we hosted our culminating event on "German Transnationalism and Issues of Racism in Germany," which attracted attention beyond our anticipation with twelve

presenters and about 40 attendees from various universities, both from the U.S. and abroad. The event was divided into three interrelated panels, during which graduate students and professors presented 5-minute flashtalks followed by 10-minute Q&As.

Thank you to all participants who attended the DEI-related events that were organized by *Alamanya*, for their ongoing handling of the distinguished task of showing how power operates, helping us understand oppression in its multifaceted ways, and giving us clues about the ways in which we need to rethink how our institutions function, what they value, and what they should value to make more equitable institutional practices.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Through a Glass Darkly: German Science Fiction and Fantasy

By Mary Rodena-Krasan, Lecturer and Undergraduate Advisor

The addition of my German 325 Science Fiction and Fantasy course to the undergraduate curriculum addresses the growing interest these genres have had in Germany since the turn of the 20th century. Despite that steady audience, there is not an immediate association between science fiction/fantasy genres and Germany even amidst avid science fiction/fantasy fans. Nevertheless, in terms of intercultural inspiration, Fassbinder portrayed the mind-bending possibility of a computer-generated world in his 1973 film *Welt am Draht* well

before Keanu Reeves was aware of his simulated world in the Wachowskis' 1999 film *The Matrix*. In addition to the cross-pollination of ideas, the impact the German imagination has had on our reality is indelible. For example, the "countdown", as we know it, originated from

Fritz Lang's 1929 film *Die Frau im Mond*. It is even rumored that film inspired the making of the V2 rocket.¹

In short, never underestimate the influence of imagination upon reality. As Kodwo Eshun states: "[T]he powerful employ futurists and draw power from the future they endorse, thereby condemning the disempowered to live in the past. The present moment is stretching, slipping for some into yesterday, reaching for others into tomorrow."² Who gets a seat at the proverbial table in future iterations of our society is just as much a result of our collective imagination as it is

the result of circumstance; and the push-pull of the powerful versus the powerless has long been a topic of speculation in German science fiction and fantasy.

From such films as Fritz Lang's canonical *Metropolis* (1927), and the lesser known Damir Lukacevic's film *Transfer* (2010), questions of class disparities, conflicting ideologies, and issues of race addressed in such films afford platforms upon which difficult discussion can be built. The filter

"[T]he powerful employ futurists and draw power from the future they endorse, thereby condemning the disempowered to live in the past. The present moment is stretching, slipping for some into yesterday, reaching for others into tomorrow."²

of the fantastical or extrapolated futurism allows an analysis of socio-cultural norms that takes the imagined vistas and applies them to contemporary landscapes. In so doing, hard questions—such as, "How can society reconcile opposing ideological forces? How will

we negotiate the relationship between hierarchically structured Eurocentrism and the rest of the world?"—can be posited through a less "high stakes" and contentious framework. Those discussions are essential, especially now as world demographics shift and the consequences of our assorted global troubles of everything from intertwined economies to climate change are felt. Imagining possible futures can help steer us away from the more deadly results of our continued fractious interrelationships and formulate potential solutions by which a more equitable and inclusive future can be created—in Germany and beyond.



¹ Horeis, Heinz: *Rolf Engel - Raketenbauer der ersten Stunde*. Hrsg.: TU München. München, pgs. 14, 19, 26.

² Eshun, Kodwo. "Further Considerations of Afro-Futurism." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 2 (2003), p. 289.

STAYING CONNECTED

Coming Full Circle

By Sarah Lime, Incoming Ph.D. Student, A.B. German Honors, International Studies, and Women's Studies, 2019

As an incoming freshman, I remember feeling eager, yet overwhelmed, by the wealth of opportunities available at the University of Michigan. As I created my first-semester schedule at new student orientation, I decided to enroll in a German language course, having studied it abroad in Austria for a semester in high school.

A few months later, I timidly made my way to my very first German class, a course taught in the Burton Memorial Tower by Dr. Helmut Puff entitled "Mozart's Magic Flute." The class, taking place from 5-7 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays, consisted of only five students. Despite the lack of our musical talent and background, my peers and I sang along to "Der Vogelfänger bin ich ja" as Professor Puff played the piano and directed us with a jolly demeanor. Needless to say, this was not the German course I had anticipated. I had rather expected a formal classroom setting directed by a strict, humorless professor with a harsh insistence on proper German grammar. But to my pleasant surprise, Professor Puff encouraged us to practice freely our German and examine the complex historical narratives embedded in German Studies. This would be the case with other professors I experienced during my undergraduate career as a German major. It quickly became apparent that U-M's German department encouraged interdisciplinary exploration and a nontraditional approach to German language learning, while still maintaining a commitment to excellence.

Despite being a painfully indecisive person, I felt confident in my decision to declare a German major following my first weeks at U-M. I continued to be impressed by the level of support the department provided its students, as well as the opportunities offered. Following my sophomore year, I took advantage of the department's study abroad offerings and made my way to Dresden for an intensive language course Goethe Institute followed by another intensive course

at the Goethe Institut at Schwäbisch Hall; both of which were supported by a Sturm Family Scholarship. Throughout these stints abroad, I experienced the unwavering support of the department, whose investment in both my academic and personal well-being was apparent.

As a senior, I was fortunate to work with Dr. Peter McIsaac and Dr. Julia Hell to craft an honors thesis. Throughout this experience, I was encouraged to combine my interests in German Studies with other academic areas that excited me.



Upon graduating, I felt a sense of gratitude for my professors, peers, and advisers in the German department, who had helped cultivate my interest in the field and instill a sense of curiosity within me.

When it came time to apply to doctoral programs, I was admittedly hesitant to apply to U-M. Though undoubtedly a highly esteemed program with an innovative approach to the field, I questioned if I wanted to return to Ann Arbor. Ultimately, it felt silly to pass up the opportunity to apply, as I knew of the exceptional nature of U-M's German department from my experience as a junior scholar. Additionally, I was

aware of the wide network of scholars in the department with which I had yet to engage. Now, I could not be more excited to return to Ann Arbor. As with any new experience, I feel some nerves for this upcoming fall. However, I feel so welcomed by the community, whose commitment to both my personal and intellectual growth is palpable.

Additionally, I look forward to collaborating with the ambitious students which constitute one of the nation's largest undergraduate German departments to cultivate an environment of support, passion, and inquiry similar to the one I experienced as an aspiring academic. I am delighted to return to this community, this time as a doctoral student.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Introducing *Schriftlich*

By Martina Villalobos (A.B. French and German, 2021) and Laura Stahl (A.B. German, History, and International Studies, 2021)



Schriftlich is an undergraduate magazine founded in 2021 and housed in U-M's Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures. The aim of this platform is to provide a space where students can publish their work related to the field of German Studies in a semi-professional manner. In particular, we are dedicated to highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of the humanities. Thematically we accept content from a wide range of genres, including literature, poetry, translated excerpts, theory, history, etc. We will publish bi-annually at the end of each term. This coming semester we hope to recruit new members interested in social media, design, editing, and writing. We look forward to accepting submissions and publishing our first edition at the end of the Fall 2021 semester!

Writing an Honors Thesis

Congratulations to our four honors thesis writers this past year, which we celebrated at our virtual graduation ceremony. They spent countless hours of research and writing to investigate contemporary and historical issues in German culture and society.



Martina Villalobos

Martina Villalobos was the winner of the best honors thesis in German Studies, the Martin Haller Prize, for her thesis on the *Theater of Crisis: Art, Politics, and the Production of Community in the Nazi Thingspiel (1933-1936)*. Her faculty advisor was Julia Hell. She plans to do research at the Goethe University in Frankfurt via a Fulbright grant and then will be pursuing her Ph.D. in German Studies at Cornell University.



Julia Marie Ebben

Julia Marie Ebben wrote her thesis on *Protesting (or not?) the Establishment: A comparative look at the founding, progression, and trajectory of Germany's Greens and AfD*. Her faculty advisor was Peter McIsaac. She will teach English in Austria for the U.S. Teaching Assistants at Austrian Secondary Schools (USTA). The program is organized through Fulbright Austria and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF).



Laura Stahl

Laura Stahl wrote her thesis on *Writing Identity: the Turkish German Female Protagonist from Özdamar to Aydemir*. Her faculty advisor was Kristin Dickinson. Laura will continue her studies at the University of Michigan in our Ph.D. German Studies program.

Carmen Rosa Rida

Carmen Rosa Rida's faculty advisor was Johannes von Moltke. Her thesis was titled *The Many Faces of Integration: Understanding the Role of Art and Community in the Creation of Refugee Identities*. She graduated in December.

Congrats Class of 2021

The department hosted a virtual graduation reception this April to celebrate our graduates and their achievements. We had close to 200 participants join us in our festivities! We even utilized the breakout room feature to provide a platform for students and their families to spend time with faculty members who impacted their educational experience. The video recording of our event can be viewed at <https://lsa.umich.edu/german/news-events/all-events/2021-graduation.html>

DUTCH AND FLEMISH STUDIES

Connecting during a pandemic

By Annemarie Toebosch, Director of Dutch and Flemish Studies



Tony Holten

Warning: Police violence

In mid-March 2020, Dutch and Flemish Studies went online in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, Tony Holten died after prolonged pressing on his face, neck and back by police officers and collaborating civilians in the Dutch town of Zwolle. He was unarmed, and video evidence showed him struggling to breathe. While Tony's death went almost entirely unreported, the Netherlands took to the streets to protest the killing of George Floyd a few months later. In March 2021, on the anniversary of Tony's death, with no police officers prosecuted, Tony's brother Mondy Holten made an appeal to students in our Anne Frank course to bear witness to his brother's death where the Netherlands was not.¹ For students, his Zoom visit created connections between worlds, teaching them the relevance of struggle against anti-Black racism beyond the U.S.

With students learning alone in their rooms this year, bringing the world to them

became a bigger priority than ever. We taught from three countries: Liesbeth Vicca in Belgium, Pavel Brunssen in Germany, and Hannah Boettcher, Daniel Guttenberg and Annemarie Toebosch in the U.S. Holocaust survivors visited via Zoom, and Anne Frank House researchers Gertjan Broek and Willem Wagenaar zoomed in from Amsterdam, with students receiving a virtual tour of the secret annex. In our language curriculum, we expanded our materials of Afrikaans, Sranan Tongo, and Papiamentu. We added many of our own translations of anti-colonial texts to the language and culture curriculums, one of them our translation of the investigative journalism by Leendert van der Valk about the 1619 "Dutch Man-of-War" that brought the first African people to Virginia. Students learned that U.S. slavery was founded in a network at the highest institutional levels that included the royal Dutch Orange family.

In all, we learned there was power in the silence of our Zoom-year. Nowhere did this become as clear as in our

Anne Frank course, where our normal instructor walkout to protest Holocaust denial became a virtual walkout. You can visit our website, <https://lsa.umich.edu/german/undergraduate-students/dutch-flemish-studies/yom-hashoah-address.html>, to see a detailed description of the Anne Frank course and walkout. Students reflected:

"Today in class we were protesting and the whole class was just sitting there in silence. This means a lot to me... [there's] been a lot of police brutality going on."

"Being left in silence was instrumental to the process of reflection..., being able to see other students' faces as they grappled with the confusion of the walkout and began to digest what was happening..."

"The silence acted as a symbol of our collective understanding..."

We wish all our Dutch and Flemish Studies friends a connected year.

¹ 3.5 per 1 million people die in police custody in the US versus 0.5 per million in the Netherlands. However, the disproportionality by race of such deaths is magnitudes higher in the Netherlands: Dutch people of color die at 11.6 times the rate of white Dutch people; in the US this number is 2.4. https://www.oneworld.nl/lezen/essay/nederlands-politieracisme-is-wel-te-vergelijken-met-de-vs/?fbclid=IwAR3z7xkgcLHPGinkxPIZZ5gChdmFW3iksfsSN_FyWuz5LUr4g0PhIL-buwM

SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES

Scandinavian Program Zoomester

By Johanna Eriksson, Director of Scandinavian Studies

The 2020-21 academic year was a challenge. We had to figure out ways of making the winter semester interesting since our classes were held online, and for the first time in twenty years, fourth-semester Swedish could not go to Sweden for spring break. In connection with the second-year students' group history projects, we met for weekly workshops with local artist Ann Asplund from Sweden. She taught us nålbindning (needlebinding), a Viking style knitting or crocheting. The only materials needed are a darning needle, which Ann



made for us out of lilac wood, and untreated wool yarn. After some initial frustration and struggles, everyone learned the basics of the technique. Textile-, wood- and metalwork are still compulsory at school in Sweden from grades 3 to 9, so it was great to add a "slöjd-"element to our Swedish language classes. It gave us a welcome break

from hours of staring at Zoom squares, while also giving us the ability to work with our hands. Passionate about traditional crafts and historical reenactment, Ann showed us examples of historical needlebinding from Scandinavia and other places around the world. Personally, I am proud to have needlebound a pair of mittens and a pair of socks.

Third-year Swedish made personal podcasts, where the scripts and pronunciation were workshoped carefully. The format was based on a popular Swedish public radio program, which since 1959 has given interesting and more or less famous Swedes one and a half hours of airtime to talk about anything they'd like. The students produced biographical pieces on struggles, as well as joys, in their lives and it turned out to be a very meaningful project.

Once small gatherings outside were allowed, I was very happy to celebrate the end of the term with an outdoor Swedish fika. All third-year students baked wonderful Swedish pastries, from cardamom buns to blueberry- and raspberry tarts. Second-year Swedish also bid farewell in-person, as we met on the diag to play the popular Swedish lawn game Kubb,



Third-Year Students: Asa Huffaker, Daniel Frechette, Malin Andersson, Rachel Kushner and Erin Andrews

right before the last snow of the year at the end of April. Emily Wogaman is graduating with a minor in Scandinavian Studies and major in Mathematics in August 2021. During her time at U-M, Emily was a very engaged student in the Scandinavian program. In addition to taking every Swedish class that was offered, she volunteered at other Swedish events, such as the Jenny Lind Club Lucia, and last year she studied at Uppsala University for a semester. Lycka till med allt i framtiden, Emily!

Two of our recent minors were accepted to Uppsala University for MA studies: Daniel Frechette and Kari Seres. They were both on exchange to Uppsala in the winter of 2020 and were

then forced to return early to Michigan due to the pandemic. They are eager to return to Uppsala again for studies in bio-chemistry and biology in the fall of 2021.

The Scandinavian Club stayed active all year with weekly Zoom meetings. At times they invited Zoom-guests from Scandinavia. In the spring, the club members also met for hikes and walks, and held small outdoor picnics in accordance with U-M and CDC guidelines for small gatherings. Karena Holmstrom is the elected president of the club for next academic year. Tack för ditt jobb, Karena!

Glad sommar! We are looking forward to a semester in person in the fall!

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CLASS OF 2021

In this unprecedented time, you have accomplished a truly remarkable feat. Congratulations, we are so proud of you! Please keep in touch. We would love to hear how you are doing and what steps you will take in your future endeavors. You can reach us at germandept@umich.edu or give us a shout-out on Facebook or Twitter. Best wishes to you!



This year's virtual **German Day**, "Grenzenlos Deutsch" (German without Borders), turned out to be a great success. German Day is an annual event of competitions and fun for middle and high school German students sponsored by U-M's Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures. This year's theme sought to exemplify not only the lack of geographical borders the German language has crossed over the course of history, but the technological ones as well. This theme was more than appropriate given our current global situation and that it was hosted via Zoom. Stacy Swennes and Silvia Grzeskowiak, the coordinators, are proud of all this year's participants and submissions, deeply appreciate everyone's continued support of this special annual event, and are very much looking forward to next year's —hopefully—in-person German Day 2022.