

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

MAY, 2020

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The Waterloo Centre for German Studies has just completed another busy year of activities, and I'd like to take a moment to bring you up to date on them.

Our lives and routines have been disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, and I first want to express my sincere hope that you are well and managing as best you can under these strange and unusual circumstances. The University of Waterloo campus closed in the middle of March, and since then both Misty Matthews-Roper, the WCGS Administrative Assistant, and I have been working from home - Misty in Dundas with her two cats, Noam Chompsky and Flour, and I in Uptown Waterloo with my two imaginary cats, Goethe and Schiller.

The University shut down operations the very week we were to hold our annual **Grimm Lecture**, the flagship event at the Centre. Ticket reservations were very strong, and we were at capacity: over 250 people had registered to hear Dr. **Samantha Rose Hill**, the Assistant Director of the Hannah Arendt Center for Politics and Humanities at Bard College, present a lecture entitled *Thinking Itself Is Dangerous: Reading Hannah Arendt Now*. We had just enough lead time to switch gears and arrange for Samantha to livestream her lecture from the safety of her home in New York.

At the time Misty and I were a bit overwhelmed by the logistics involved, but we were lucky enough to have Davian Hart from Sherwood Systems provide the necessary technical assistance. In the end, our

perseverance paid off: over 400 people tuned in at some point during the livestream, and the YouTube video of the event has had hundreds of views. Many of those who attended got in touch after the event to express their gratitude to WCGS for broadcasting such an engaging and thought-provoking lecture at a time when everything seemed to be falling apart.



The Grimm Lecture concluded a very strong year of lectures at WCGS. We connected with the Stratford Festival where German-Canadian director and dramaturg Dr. **Birgit Schreyer-Duarte** was mounting a new production of Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*. Birgit spoke to an audience of drama and German students, as well as profs and community members, in September about how she interpreted this classic of German theatre for a 21st-century audience. Earlier in the summer Professor **Andrea Speltz** from the University of Waterloo gave a talk at Stratford about the play, and we used that as an occasion to provide WCGS members with a very reasonable "lecture, dinner, and a show" package. Members who attended let us know how much they enjoyed the play, Andrea's lecture, and conversations during the light meal.

Other lectures this past year highlighted the strength of German studies research at the University of



EVENTS

7 IN-PERSON EVENTS WITH 250 ATTENDEES TOTAL

Grimm Lecture - in-person event that shifted online when the University of Waterloo shut down campus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The lecture was streamed - 400 people watched online that evening and over 1000 have seen the [YouTube video](#).

STORK AND WEIGEL STUDY ABROAD SCHOLARSHIPS

— 2019 —

56 applicants from 16 different Canadian universities to participate in 7 study abroad programs

— 2020 —

81 applicants from 21 different Canadian universities to participate in 11 study abroad programs

↑ 45%

BOOK PRIZE



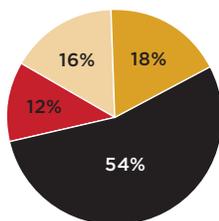
For BOOKS
PUBLISHED in 2018
24 nominations
8 shortlisted books

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

- ↑ 10% WCGS.CA: WEBSITE TRAFFIC
- ↑ 30% FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS: 301
- ↑ 46% TWITTER FOLLOWERS: 408
- ↑ 22% NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS: 726

EXPENDITURES

TOTAL
\$73,904.05



- EVENTS
- ADMINISTRATION
Salaries, publicity, and office expenses
- SCHOLARSHIPS
- RESEARCH SPONSORSHIP

Waterloo. Professor **James Diamond**, Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies at the University of Waterloo, spoke on the sermons of Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira in the Warsaw Ghetto during the German occupation of Poland during World War Two, and Professor **Lynne Taylor** from the Department of History gave a lecture on the challenges faced by unaccompanied children in Germany in the aftermath of the war. We were also



fortunate to have some guests from other institutions share their ideas with us, most notably Dr. **Silke Reineke** of the Leibniz Institute for the German Language who spoke on corpora (depositories of recordings and transcripts) of spoken German, and Dr. **Elizabeth Nijdam** from the University of British Columbia, an expert on German comics.

The Centre was very pleased to assist the Goethe-Institut, the language departments at the University of Waterloo, and Waterloo International in their programming for Career Booster Day during International Education Week. The Centre provided half of the funding to bring in the keynote speaker, filmmaker and writer **Alexandre Trudeau**, who addressed an audience of 300 high school and university students about the ways in which being multilingual have made his life richer and more meaningful.



We also had a pleasant surprise and huge disappointment all rolled into one this year. In a normal year, thanks to the generous donations of the **Stork Family** and **Marga Weigel**, we're able to offer

\$500-1,000 scholarships annually to approximately 40 students participating in Canadian-organized summer study abroad programs in Germany. But this was not a normal year. We were surprised by the record number of applications - 81 students from 21 different Canadian universities participating in 11 different programs approached us for funding. The disappointment was - you guessed it - that all of these programs had to be canceled due to the pandemic. There was nothing to be done about it, but we were nevertheless very sad to see such a large number of university students denied the opportunity of experiencing Germany first-hand.

Likewise, our last bit of news was affected by the pandemic as well. The **WCGS Book Prize** this year went to **Michael O'Sullivan**, a professor of history at Marist College, New York, for his book *Disruptive Power: Catholic Women, Miracles, and Politics in Modern Germany, 1918-1965*, an absorbing study of the Catholic mystic Therese Neumann of Konnersreuth and the circle of theologians, politicians, journalists and others who followed her. We had planned to make the official presentation of the award at the annual convention of the Canadian Association of University Teachers of German in May, 2020, but that event, like so many others, had to be cancelled. This was the second time we've awarded the WCGS Book Prize, and we think it is becoming an important feature on the German studies landscape in North America.

Let me close by reminding you that we are always happy to hear from you. You can connect with us by Facebook, Twitter, and email - our various handles and addresses are below. We appreciate very much your support and interest.

Sincerely,

James M. Skidmore, Director

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