

Wat's In-Sight

News from

and the



Germanic and Slavic Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

WATERLOO CENTRE FOR
Germanstudies



Dear readers,

Greetings from the WCGS! We hope you are having an excellent winter term. Issue 8 of the joint newsletter is brimming full with stories from last semester. Together, the Waterloo Centre for German Studies and the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies hosted a total of nine special events at UW that treated attendees to a look at the wide variety of research and cultural projects currently being done in German Studies in Canada and around the world. We hope you will enjoy reminiscing over the articles and photographs that our contributors have put together for you, and we look forward to welcoming you at the events we are planning for 2013. Hope to see you there!

Allison G. Cattell, editor

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September

2012

Vortrag von Manfred Schröder (Verein Deutsche Sprache)

Auf Initiative von Beiratsmitglied Ernst Friedel, der auch an den Veranstaltungsvorbereitungen mitarbeitete, lud das WCGS am 10. September Manfred Schröder, den Außenbeauftragten des Vereins Deutsche Sprache, ein. Die Mitglieder des Vereins — Liebhaber der deutschen Sprache aus Deutschland und anderen Ländern — setzen sich für die Erhaltung und Verbreitung der deutschen Sprache ein, die sie gegenwärtig in Gefahr sehen. Deshalb wenden sie sich vorrangig gegen die unreflektierte und häufige Übernahme englischer Worte ins Deutsche. Herr Schröder erläuterte die Ziele des Vereins Deutsche Sprache, beschrieb einige seiner Aktivitäten und zeigte ein Video, das die Position und die Arbeit des Vereins in den vergangenen Jahren darstellt. In der abschließenden Diskussion wurden Fragen des Sprachwandels, der Übernahme fremdsprachigen Wortgutes und der Vitalität der deutschen Sprache besprochen.

Mat Schulze

Classicism, Secular Humanism, and *Kunstreligion*: Jane K. Brown on Mozart and Goethe

On Monday, September 17th, after attending a dissertation defense as an outside evaluator, Prof. Jane K. Brown from the University of Washington, Seattle, offered a complex and stimulating lecture to a filled room in Hagey Hall. "Classicism and Secular Humanism: The Sanctification of *Die Zauberflöte* in Goethe's 'Novelle'" argued that "the late Goethe" transformed Mozart's great opera from an example of "secular and disrespectful Enlightenment" into a "charming, respectable Biedermeier idyll" that signaled a "more mature, richer, indeed sanctified classicism." Brown crisscrossed a number of interpretive levels: She demonstrated that *Die Zauberflöte* accompanied Goethe throughout his lifetime in the form of rewritings and stagings at the Weimar theatre; in an innovative and counterintuitive reading, she demonstrated that Goethe's 1827 prose work, "Novelle," was itself a reception of Mozart; she made the case that the late Goethe should be read as a "Biedermeier" writer in a positive sense in so far as he re-evaluated the violence of the French Revolution; contributing to contemporary discussions of what has been called "post-secularism," she made the case that religion did not so much disappear in the 19th century but was transformed into a "sanctification" of the aesthetic; and, finally, she carried the argument into the 20th century to claim that for writers as diverse as Hofmannsthal, Spengler, Elias, and Arendt, Goethean *Kunstreligion* offered itself a new kind of sanctified humanism.

John H. Smith

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Salvaging History From (Really Bad) Oral History Interviews

On Friday, September 21, Alexander Freund, the Chair of German-Canadian Studies at the University of Winnipeg, presented “Salvaging History: Can We Learn Anything From (Really Bad) 1970s Oral History Interviews?” During his talk, Freund highlighted the challenges but also the advantages of conducting oral history, which included explaining why the oral history interviews conducted in the 1970s are considered “bad,” and how to make the best use of the material we have. Freund went on to make suggestions for future interviewers. In the end, his presentation made clear that, yes, one most certainly can learn something very valuable from these seemingly poor sources.

Freund’s focus in this presentation was on interviews that had been done with German-Canadian from 1977-80. When conducting his case study, Freund found that not only did these interviews lack overall research questions, they also did not follow good research standards that had been established in the field. As such, pre-interview research had often not been conducted, there were mere one page logs made instead of transcripts, and the interviews were not audio recorded in full. Freund categorized these interviews as “bad” because of their insufficient project documentation, poor audio which existed in heavily edited form, and most importantly, because the researchers appeared to pursue their own interests in asking the questions, rather than using proper research methods. Freund provided us with an audio snippet of one such “bad” interview, and this recording made his points abundantly clear. It was soon obvious to us that the interviewer had a poor technique that included asking closed or leading questions and had clearly not built up any previous rapport with the interviewee. In fact, the sample interviews left one with the feeling of the interviews having been an interrogation with the goal of obtaining mere factual pieces of information, rather than of finding out any personal story from the interviewee.

Overall, Freund placed oral history within the context of researching history itself, where he explained that although oral history may be a difficult resource to use, it is an invaluable and rich tool to find out about the everyday experiences of ordinary folk, experiences that cannot be found in the traditional history that focuses on the upper echelons of society. In the case of documenting immigrant experiences, oral history records are simply invaluable. Freund explained that while these oral interviews supplement archival material in general, they also create the potential for longitudinal studies through follow-ups with those interviewees who may still be alive or for inter- and trans-generational studies through interviews with the children and grandchildren of the interviewees. There is also potential for studies on narratives of war and flight, multiculturalism, and even for linguistic studies.

In the end, Freund made a clear case that these 1970s interviews, although in many ways poor, are an excellent source for investigating the motives immigrants had in coming to Canada. Without these oral history interviews, the voices of generations of eyewitnesses to the early immigrant experience would be lost forever. In the case of the immigrants who came to Canada prior the First World War, these interviews taken down in the 1970s are all we have left of many of these experiences, however problematic the interviews may be. Freund explained that the way forward is to get as much information from these interviews as possible, and to now ensure that future researchers are properly trained in the interviewing techniques for oral history.

Jennifer Redler



Dr. Freund delivered an engaging lecture to a group of students, faculty, staff, and members of the community. The event was co-sponsored by the University of Waterloo Library.

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Names instead of Numbers and Rabbi Erwin Schild's visit to UW

By Tanya Hagman and Hannah Oestreich



Erwin Schild

The international travelling exhibition *Namen statt Nummern: Gedächtnisbuch für die Häftlinge des KZ Dachau* features 22 biographies from the Remembrance Book Project.

Namen statt Nummern (Names instead of Numbers) was displayed from October 1st - 18th in the Modern Languages Building at the University of Waterloo. The exhibit is based on a project to create a remembrance book that depicts the life stories of "Zeitzeugen" – that is, individuals who witnessed and experienced an important event or time – in this case, the survivors of the German concentration camp Dachau during World War II.

Rabbi Erwin Schild's story is described on one of the exhibit's banners, including his diaspora from Germany to Great Britain and then further on to Canada. It also emphasizes his ability to build bridges and open doors for communication: "The tragedy of the past deprives us of the ability to speak. Nevertheless! Difficult as it may be for Germans and Jews to converse, Jews and Christians, even German Christians, share a common language."

On October 17, Rabbi Schild held a lecture at the University of Waterloo. He explained that the names of individuals and places in the exhibition are often "surrogates" for a deeper meaning. In particular, the names "Auschwitz" and "Dachau" represented a fear so deep in those who knew those places that they could not be spoken aloud. During the talk, Rabbi Schild shared his vast knowledge of the roots of German nationalism and anti-Semitism. He illustrated the historical origins and developments of Nazi Germany with stories from his own past. Before the war, he and his family identified as Germans and felt patriotic towards Germany. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, he increasingly identified as a Jew and less as a German. Rabbi Schild was a student when he was sent to Dachau after the "Kristallnacht" of November 9th to 10th, 1938. His experience in Dachau consisted of daily violence, starvation, and torture intended to dehumanize the prisoners. After this experience, he no longer had the same relationship to his German identity as he once had, and he began to hate Germany.

Today he has developed a reflected point of view and conveys his message to audiences by talking about his personal past and relating it to history, politics, and society on a more abstract level. Although the communication between Germans and German Jews is often still difficult, he emphasizes the "need to understand and build bridges ... hate does not cure hate." In his mission to foster understanding and communication across cultural and religious borders, Rabbi Schild has also traveled back to Germany to speak and teach as a "Zeitzeuge". He does not hold a grudge against England or Canada, because although they were initially unwelcoming and hostile toward him, they ultimately saved him and provided him a home. For most of us who attended his talk and visited the exhibition "*Namen statt Nummern*", Dachau belongs to ancient history, but for Rabbi Schild, it is a lived experience that will always be part of his life.

On the occasion of the third annual Grimm Lecture on October 23rd, the WCGS was pleased to welcome Professor Ruth Wodak, who delivered an engaging talk on “Recent Developments in Post-War Österreichisches Deutsch. A case study on genre-related language change in Austrian German”. With several chairs held in universities around the world, such as Vienna, Stanford, Uppsala, and Lanchester, and with a wide range of publications, Professor Wodak is one of the most prominent and prolific researchers in linguistics today. Her work is multidisciplinary and includes research in critical discourses analysis, gender studies, sociolinguistics, and identity politics.

In the first part of her lecture, she talked about the variety of new challenges linguists have to account for nowadays. These include the appearance of new social media, the growing tension between multilingualism and monolingualism, the confrontation with new visuals, and the emergence of new forms of language contact in a globalized world. Our understanding of language change has shifted significantly over the past hundred years. In the 19th century, linguists viewed and analyzed language as a mechanistic phenomenon in isolation from contextual factors. Today, they take a completely different approach by seeking to understand the complex conditions that influence language use and drive language change.

After providing this background information, Wodak delved into the topic of her current research: The changes that Austrian German has undergone over the last 40 years. Her findings demonstrate that this language variety is not only pluri-centric and pluri-national, but also that its use is often deeply rooted in the identities of those who speak it. For example, one participant in the study Wodak conducted referred to “my Mozart” and mentioned the personal significance of other particularities of Austrian German that distinguish it from “German German”. On the level of public discourse, Wodak’s study revealed that this distinctiveness of the Austrian variety can also be politically charged. Evidence for this can be seen in the “marmelade war” that recently raged through the Austrian press.

Wodak’s broad pilot study analyzed the features of interpersonal relations, text structure, lexis, syntax, and deviation from norms on the basis of data collected from newspaper articles, annual business reports, A-level German tests, and press agency news. The pilot study indicated several developments that were related to social contexts (school, media, business), as well as the genre in which various forms appeared. Wodak’s conclusion was that language change does not necessarily mean language decay, but rather indicates the flexibility of language and language users to adapt to new social conditions and genres of communication.

Tobias Sedlmaier

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Above: Ruth Wodak delivers her lecture to members of the WCGS at the University of Waterloo.

Left: Wodak's presentation included many examples of *Österreichisches Deutsch*.

• Appendix to Accession Treaty: Examples	
Beiried	Roastbeef
Eierschwammerl	Pfifferlinge
Erdäpfel	Kartoffeln
Faschiertes	Hackfleisch
Fisolen	Grüne Bohnen
Gammeln	Grieben
Hüferl	Hüfte
Karfiol	Blumenkohl
Kohlsprossen	Rosenkohl
Kren	Meerrettich
Lungenbraten	Filet

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WAPPLS talk on “Language Attitudes in Interaction”

In October, the *Waterloo Centre for German Studies* was happy to welcome visiting researcher Katharina König from the *Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität* in Münster. During her visit to Canada, Katharina chose to join the University of Edmonton and the University of Waterloo for a six-week research fellowship because of two researchers, Dr. Jennifer Dailey O’Cain (Edmonton) and Dr. Grit Liebscher (Waterloo), who have been highly influential in the pursuit of her own research on language attitudes of people of Vietnamese origin living in Germany. Dr. Liebscher and Dr. Dailey O’Cain’s approach to the study of *language attitudes-in-interaction*, which regards attitudes not as static but as constructed in interaction, has informed



Katharina’s data analysis process. In the talk she gave for the WCGS, as well as in subsequent data analysis sessions with members of the WAPPLS research group, Katharina shared and discussed the research findings of her doctoral project with students, faculty, and the general public. This provided all involved with the opportunity not only to witness but also to take part in the process of data analysis. Thank you, Katharina, for sharing this with us.

Gerlinde Weimer-Stuckmann

“After all, you’ve given me more pleasure
than annoyance.”

Voltaire & Frederick: A Life in Letters

On November 10th, the Waterloo Centre for German Studies had the pleasure to present the play “Voltaire & Frederick: A Life in Letters” at the University of Waterloo. The play is based on letters by Voltaire and Frederick II who had a 42 years long exchange on philosophy, art, and their personal lives. The play is directed by Guy Ben-Aharon and features Thomas Derrah and John Kuntz in the roles of the two most prominent figures of the period of enlightenment. The only props on stage were two chairs and the letters the two men exchanged.

Derrah and Kuntz read their letters with great empathy, and their acting perfectly illustrated the developing relationship between Voltaire and Frederick II, which began as a mutual adoration and fruitful exchange of ideas, then turned into to an emotional argument that caused a five year period of silence, and finally re-emerged as an exchange between two aged men who struggled with their still-present adoration for each other and the disillusioning realization that their ideals have been drifting apart over the years.

After the play the audience had the opportunity to engage in a discussion with the director and both actors, who answered questions about their experiences touring and staging the play, the research they conducted on Voltaire’s and Frederick’s lives, and about the ideas behind the stage production. The play is supported by the following sponsors: the Goethe Institut; the French Embassy in the United States; Higher Education, Arts, French Language; and the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Toronto.

Daniela Roth

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Interview with Gary Bruce

Chair, History Department, University of Waterloo

Member of the Executive Committee, WCGS

Greetings, Dr. Bruce!

On November 1st, 2012, you gave a talk entitled "Exhibiting Animals, Displaying Society: The Berlin Zoo in German History" at the University of Waterloo. What were the main points you addressed in that talk, and how do they fit in with your current research?

I attempted to convey that the Berlin Zoo is not some footnote of German history, but rather an important lens by which we might view German society through the ages. After all, it was founded by luminaries of the day, including the noted Egyptologist Richard Lepsius, Martin Lichtenstein, professor of zoology at the Friedrich Wilhelm University of Berlin, and most famous of all, Alexander von Humboldt, the great naturalist who was deeply concerned about the growing distance between city dwellers and nature. From the zoo's exhibits of 'exotic peoples' during the colonial period, to its bizarre breeding experiments during the Nazi era, to the battle for preeminence between the eastern and western zoo in post-war divided Berlin, the zoo reflected each German political era.

As a history professor at a Canadian university, what do you find most compelling about conducting research on the German context?

I consider the ability to study German history from a distance to be a distinct advantage. It allows for sober reflection and objectivity not easily obtained in the politically-charged atmosphere in which our German counterparts work. I'm often struck by how many of the world's leading experts on German history - such as David Blackbourn, Ian Kershaw, Christopher Browning - are from the English-speaking world. This is not to say, of course, that German historians are hamstrung by their own past, but rather that non-German scholars are not necessarily disadvantaged by their distance from the sources.

What do you hope your students will learn in the courses you teach on German history?

I would hope that they would appreciate that German history cannot be viewed in isolation. It has always been affected by, and acted upon, other countries. I would also wish for them to take away the working habits of historians - going directly to the original sources, contextualizing information, and presenting a preponderance of evidence.

How do you like to spend your time when you're not busy researching and teaching?

I'm an avid (note that this is not the same as 'good'!) cyclist, and try to get away for a cycling vacation every year. So far I've cycled in California, New York State, Mexico, Poland, and Germany.

Gary Bruce holds a PhD from McGill University in modern German History and is associate professor and Chair of the History Department at the University of Waterloo. His most recent book is *The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi*, which was published by Oxford University Press in 2010.



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Prof. Claire Kramersch receives honorary degree from UW



On October 20th, Professor Claire Kramersch (University of California at Berkeley) was conferred the degree Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*, by the University of Waterloo. Kramersch is one of the most prominent scholars in applied linguistics worldwide, whose work has greatly influenced second and foreign language research around the world. A professor of German at Berkeley, and director of the Berkeley Language Center, Kramersch has extensively researched the interrelationship of language and culture.

Born in France and educated as a French scholar of German, she immigrated to the US to become a professor of German. Her multilingual and pluricultural biography has shaped her research as well. Her many publications include books on culture and language teaching, discourse analysis, and the multilingual subject. Claire Kramersch addressed convocation, pointing out the value of having learned a language to the graduating class, and showcasing especially the personal dimension of language competence: Students who speak another language (or several other languages), Kramersch explained, have the privilege of being intercultural communicators.

Afterwards, Claire Kramersch gave a public lecture on invitation by the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, entitled “Symbolic Competence: New Goal for Global Times.” She highlighted the increasing importance of languages in our global times, arguing that language is not only a neutral means of communication, but a powerful symbolic system that is imposed on us, yet at the same time it allows us to put our world into words and thus give meaning to it. She took the audience on a journey through examples of multilingual speakers’ skilful and often artistic ways of mediating between languages and cultures. The lecture demonstrated how much of our understanding of the world around us is actually a matter of interpreting language in its specific context, and how we can often change our and others’ understanding of the world by reinterpreting it through language use. What students need to be taught in today’s global world, she explained, is symbolic competence (a term she coined several years ago), which entails the capability of interpreting and reinterpreting language in context. Kramersch concluded that foreign language learners of today should not only learn to communicate in another language, but develop symbolic competence and become cultural translators.

There was plenty of food for thought, rounded off by a well-attended post-lecture reception which gave many attendants the opportunity to venture into further thoughts and discussions about symbolic competence, and talk with Waterloo’s new graduate – Dr. Dr. h. c. Claire Kramersch.

Barbara Schmenk

GSS In-Sight

On September 18th, 2012, Viktoriya Melnykevych successfully defended her doctoral dissertation, entitled *The Stage History of Goethe's Faust I in Imperial Russia: Performance and Archival Record*. Her examiners were Professors Zina Gimpelevich, John North, and Paul Malone of the University of Waterloo and Prof. Jane Brown of the University of Washington at Seattle, a Faust scholar of international repute. The dissertation was supervised by Prof. David John.

Taking the approach of theatre historiography, Viktoriya's research focus was on the stage chronicle of Goethe's *Faust I* in Imperial Russia. To gain a reliable picture of the drama's stage history, she viewed the production, performance, and reception of the play as a social phenomenon. She drew her analysis from the preserved documentation on the staging and reception history of *Faust I*, which she collected during a research trip to numerous archives in Russia and extensive subsequent correspondence with these archives and the archivists of the Russian manuscript collection at Harvard University.

In the course of a thorough study of characters, themes, sets, costuming, and acting styles of five distinct adaptations, as well as cultural and socio-political determinates of the state, Viktoriya opened a new scholarly discussion on the reception history of the dramatic productions of Goethe's *Faust I* before 1917.

The findings suggest first that a successful adaptation of Goethe's *Faust I* in Imperial Russia was delayed until the flourishing of 'directorial theatre', which then opened new possibilities for future theatrical explorations of the play. Moreover, the analysis documents strategies of cultural appropriation and affirms the sensitivity of theatre to current affairs in the state. Taken together, the findings of her research contribute to the scholarly discussion of the influence of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust* in the Russian literary and theatrical worlds, at the same time filling a gap in the research on Goethe's international reception. Congratulations, Dr. Melnykevych!

Tetyana Reichert



Dr. Melnykevych; *Faust and Margarita* [Фауст и Маргарита], 1878: First page of the manuscript used for the production of the play at the Imperial Maly Theatre in Moscow.

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