

# Wat's In-Sight

News from

and the



Germanic and Slavic Studies  
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

WATERLOO CENTRE FOR  
**Germanstudies**



Dear readers,

Welcome to the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the joint newsletter of the Waterloo Centre for German Studies and the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Waterloo. This issue is packed with news about the many exciting events that took place this 2012 winter term. You'll read about the conferences that were hosted here over the past few months, about the lecturers who came to engage us in the latest research in German Studies, and about the local performances that brought us fresh insights into German-language literary classics. Although the winter semester is over, we are looking forward to a number of upcoming events this spring, including the *2012 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences* – be sure to check these out on page six!

Allison G. Cattell, editor

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# GSS In-Sight

## German + Multilingualism

In January, the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies organized a lecture series on "German + Multilingualism: Lectures by German Applied Linguists," in which three professors from Europe and North America participated.

The series was kicked off on January 13th by Professor Per Urlaub (University of Texas at Austin), whose lecture was titled "Transcultural Competence, Third Spaces, and Music Documentary Film in University Foreign Language Education." After proposing a definition of "transcultural competence" rooted theoretically in Homi Bhabha's concept of "the third space", Professor Urlaub argued that documentary films can foster the development of transcultural competence among university foreign language learners. Further, he illustrated this claim by analyzing the films *Full Metal Village* by Sung-Hyung Cho and *Rhythm Is It!* by Thomas Grube and Enrique Sanchez-Lensch.

On January 20th, Professor Emma Betz (Kansas State University) gave a lecture entitled "Managing Diverging Agendas and Vulnerable Claims in Interaction: First Names as Address Terms in German, Siebenbürger-Sächsisch, and English." Using cross-linguistic evidence, Professor Betz showed in her study how interactional and interpersonal factors determine micro-linguistic choices. Her analysis illustrated that some conversational turns contain syntactically optional address terms in unit-final position and showed how speakers use them to invoke a past exchange and increase the constraint for a response to a problematic action, thus prioritizing their agenda over a co-participant's.

On January 27<sup>th</sup>, Professor Nicole Marx (Universität Paderborn) gave an engaging lecture entitled "Promoting Plurilingual Potential: The Case for More Languages in the Language Classroom", the last lecture in the series. Professor Marx's research interests are particularly in the intriguing area of multilingualism and pedagogy. Her paper explored concepts of multi- and plurilingual teaching and learning as well as the increasing need for evidence-based research in this field.

Jujuan Xiong



On April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Myriam Léger successfully defended her PhD dissertation, entitled *Neoliberal Governmentality in the Red-Green Era: Tracing Facets of the Entrepreneurial Self in Three Contemporary German Novels*. Her dissertation investigated the ways in which contemporary works of literature – *Alles Bestens* (2002), *Das Ende des Kanzlers. Der finale Rettungsschuss* (2004), and *Schule der Arbeitslosen* (2006) – actively process the personal and societal impact of programs introduced by Germany's red-green coalition. Her project highlighted the role of literature as a forum in which we can fully think through the pervasiveness and the implications of neoliberal, market-oriented discourses. Dr. Léger is currently General Manager at *Pat the Dog Playwright Centre* in Waterloo, ON, and she is also the outgoing editor of *Wat's In-Sight*. Congratulations, Myriam, and thank you for your fine work!

## 10<sup>th</sup> Germanic and Slavic Studies Conference



GSS conference planning committee: Belinda Kleinhans, Dr. Barbara Schmenk, and Kyle Scholz.

The Germanic and Slavic Studies department held its tenth annual conference on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April. Like the previous conferences, we had contributions from both graduate students and faculty members alike. The papers at this conference covered a variety of topics, tackling research questions in literature, drama, philosophy and applied linguistics. Contemporary issues in foreign language study and some favourite literary texts and adaptations were discussed and presented in fascinating ways.

The first session looked at literature and discourse, as Dr. Mat Schulze merged aspects of corpus analysis with Hölderlin's *Halbte des Lebens*, and Antje Riethmüller analyzed the gender discourse found in Stamm's *Seerücken*. The session on literature and philosophy that followed began with Allison Cattell and Belinda Kleinhans' paper, which looked at Bridge Markland's *Faust in the Box* and its connections to intermediality and interculturalism, while Dr. John Smith adapted Heidegger's philosophy to the novella, finding new means by which to look at its structure. Finally, in our last session that dealt with concepts of language and culture, Christine Kampen Robinson presented samples from a conversation analysis and analysed chat opening sequences in transcultural activities, and Dr. Barbara Schmenk concluded the conference by discussing trendy prefixes and their relevance in language education discourse. Yet again, the conference proved to be a source of excellent scholarship and discussion amongst our faculty and students.

Kyle Scholz

# In-Sight Centre

## Interview with Paola Mayer

Dr. Paola Mayer is associate professor of European Studies and German in the School of Languages and Literatures at the University of Guelph. She has published on German Romantic literature and thought, myth and fairy tales in 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century German culture, and the uncanny and fantastic in German literature and theory.

### Greetings, Dr. Mayer!

### How are you involved in the WCGS?

I am a member of the research group on the Environment.

### Which aspects of your research do you find most exciting? Can you tell us about one of your current projects?

At present, I have three book-length research projects on the go. The first is a monograph on the uncanny in German Romantic literature (I am particularly excited about this project!). I have almost completed the first draft. I look at Romantic definitions of the concept of the uncanny (or its conceptual predecessors, such as the sublime and the horrific), and at fictional texts in the light of these early attempts at definition. Whereas many studies on the uncanny focus primarily on the problem of definition, I am mainly interested in it as a psychograph of the time's anxieties and preoccupations; that is, I ask: why does the writer introduce uncanny tropes in his text(s)? What aspect of contemporary society, culture, or thought is he trying to present as questionable or disturbing?

In the volume, I look at canonical writers such as E.T.A. Hoffmann, Tieck, Kleist and Eichendorff, but also at minor writers, epigones and parodists. Themes that recur, not only within one writer's oeuvre, but in the work of several contemporaries, give us a good sense of the thoughts and fears of an age. In the case of the Romantics, such recurrent themes include: the question of the limits of human knowledge and perception, the relationship of nature to the so-called supernatural (a concept to which the Romantics tend to deny validity), science and the dangers of hubris, music and its relationship to the supersensible.

I am also co-editing with Drs. Jean Wilson and Hartwig Mayer a volume of essays in memory of my mentor Hans Eichner, who died in 2009. The volume includes essays by Germanists who were students, friends and colleagues of Eichner, clustered around three themes: Romanticism, Humanism and Judaism.

I am also working with a colleague, Dr. Rüdiger Müller, to put together an anthology of short fiction by Alexander Moritz Frey (1888-1956). Frey was a friend of the Mann brothers, a pacifist who used the fantastic genre and its tropes to

criticize the horrors of war, the militarist mentality and the rise of National Socialism. In World War I, he had been a medical orderly in the same regiment as Adolf Hitler, whom he once treated for a sore throat. When the Nazis came to power, they tried to enlist Frey, but he refused and was quite outspoken about his reasons. As a consequence, he had to flee, first to Austria and then to Switzerland. He was unable to publish during the years of the Nazi regime, and suffered extreme poverty. Having once been forgotten, he was unable to make a comeback after 1945 and remains all but completely forgotten to this day. Major themes in his work include: criticism of militarism, nationalism and Nazi ideology; description and condemnation of cruelty to animals and marginalized people; and psychological studies of certain situations (e.g. what leads to crime). By publishing an anthology of some of his best short fiction we are hoping to revive interest in him.

### Which courses do you enjoy teaching the most? Can you tell us how your teaching and research activities intersect?

As I am cross-appointed to European Studies, a lot of my teaching takes place in an interdisciplinary and comparative context. Then too, most of these courses are team-taught, and this is something I love: it gives me an opportunity to learn from colleagues who work in other disciplines (other national literatures, art history, history of music), and so to place my own work in German literature in a European perspective, and to compare my teaching methods with those of others. These courses focus on the time from the beginning of Enlightenment to the present.

I am responsible for the modules on German literature and thought in all of them, but the courses I coordinate tend to match my research interests fairly closely: at the undergraduate level the first of the core courses, from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century; at the graduate level I have twice offered a course on *Myth, Fairy Tales and European Identities*, and just this term I was able to design a course on the *Fantastic and Uncanny in European Literature from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present*.

More generally, there is an ethical dimension to teaching in the humanities and in particular in German Studies, to which I feel very committed. This includes making sure students are aware of the dark side of German history, particularly the rise of National Socialism and the Holocaust, training students in logical, critical thinking, making them aware that all texts manipulate readers and that they need to learn to recognize the argument and reconstruct its strategies, and helping them develop good writing skills.

Interview by Allison Cattell



### Paola Mayer speaks on Beethoven, Hoffmann, and a new Romantic Aesthetics of Terror

Guest lecturer Paola Mayer (University of Guelph) gave a talk on February 27<sup>th</sup> entitled "What do Beethoven and *Der Sandmann* have in common?" Her talk explored E.T.A. Hoffmann's aesthetics of terror and compared it to an aesthetic of the sublime, which was predominant in his time, and applied her concept to Hoffmann's tales *Der Sandmann*, *Die Serapionsbrüder*, and *Johannes Kreislers Lehrbrief*.

According to Paola Mayer, E.T.A. Hoffmann moves beyond the 18<sup>th</sup> century theories of the sublime by Burke and Kant and is thus an example of the transitory phase from the sublime to the concept of the uncanny. He appropriates the sublime for tales of necrophilia or ghost stories and extends the sublime in the direction of the horrific.

This process is connected to Hoffmann's perception of music, which is mostly represented by the work of the composers Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. E.T.A. Hoffmann's aesthetics of terror is based on his reviews of these composers, which he arranges on a scale from concreteness (Haydn) to abstractness (Beethoven). The most abstract piece, which imitates the infinite and leads to a transcendence through fear, comes closest to the aesthetics of terror which E.T.A. Hoffmann aims to mirror in his stories. The abstractness is expressed in stories like *Der Sandmann* through unreliable narrators or characters that support a radical cognitive uncertainty and anti-rationalism.

The talk was well attended by faculty, graduate as well as undergraduate students and members of the community. There was some time for a question and answer period to deepen the understanding of the topics she discussed.

Belinda Kleinhaus

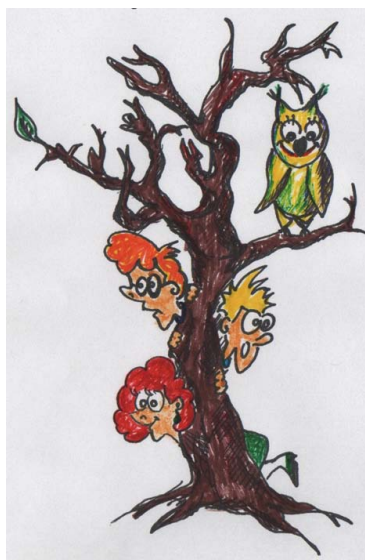


# In-Sight Centre

## Can Christians and Jews be Friends?

On January 31<sup>st</sup> 2012, Dr. Edward Breuer, professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, gave a talk in St Jerome's University on the friendship of Moses Mendelssohn and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. The somewhat provocative title of the talk was "Can Jews and Christians Be Friends?", and to answer that question with a "yes", Breuer examined the friendship of Mendelssohn and Lessing as well as the tensions which arose because of their religious backgrounds. Mendelssohn, a Jewish philosopher, first met Lessing, a protestant writer, in 1754. They played chess, engaged in theological and philosophical discussions, and even though they moved to different places in Germany and rarely saw each other in later years, they regularly wrote letters. Lessing used Mendelssohn as a model for Nathan in his famous play "Nathan the Wise", which put forward the idea of tolerance between the three Abrahamic religions. Mendelssohn, however, did not agree with Lessing: he claimed that a too rigorous interpretation of tolerance would stifle fruitful theological discussions. Breuer agreed with him on these terms and concluded that of course Jews and Christians (and Muslims) can be friends, not despite but *because* of their differences.

Mario Hirstein



## Tales of the Grimm

During Family Day weekend, the Registry Theatre staged a German-English production of *Tales of the Grimm*. A local piece through and through, the play was written by Maggie Clark, produced by Lori Heffner, directed by Arlene Thomas, and supported by our own WCGS. *Tales of the Grimm* draws on several of the lesser-known Grimm Tales and creates a new and fun adventure in which four characters – named Hans, Gesundheit, Big, and the Grimm – battle it out in the Grimm's dark fairy-tale forest. The stage was designed as a children's playroom in

which the four characters played make-believe, bringing to life the world of the Grimm's forest with all its scary spells and enchanting magic. The bilingual element of the piece was especially captivating: While the Grimm spoke mostly German, the other characters used German only occasionally and when it was likely to be understood by English-speaking audiences. Ich hoffe auf ein baldiges Wiedersehen, Grimm!

Myriam Léger

## Dream of the Other Europe : Rethinking *Germanistik* through the Balkans

On Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, a mini-conference was held on the topic "Dream of the Other Europe: Rethinking *Germanistik* through the Balkans." It was co-sponsored by the Waterloo Centre for German Studies and Croatian Studies at the University of Waterloo and organized by Alice Kuzniar.

The speakers were Maria Mayr (Memorial U), Charlotte Schallié (U of Victoria), Anke Biendarra (UC, Irvine), Michael Boehringer and Alice Kuzniar (U of Waterloo). They examined how contemporary German-speaking writers from the Balkan countries contribute to recent discussions of migration, displacement, impermanence, and what Azade Seyhan calls the "geographies of memory." The authors discussed included Irena Vrkljan, Dragica Rajčić, Dimitré Dinev, and Marica Bodroži. Topics included the multilingual subject, a poetics of exile, and *Väterliteratur*. The speakers also investigated how this new body of writing attempts to come to terms with the history of South-Eastern Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially post-1989 developments, and how it enters into dialog with the problem of historical and national amnesia.



For the exile writer, Croatia, Bosnia, or Bulgaria may or may not offer a nostalgic dream of a former homeland; Germany too may become other than one's dream of Europe. But, in the end, these writers led us as participants to reflect on our own position as practicing *Germanistik* from a distance. Thus, the conference took place in the framework of the new U of Waterloo and Mannheim U dual MA programme in "Intercultural *Germanistik*."

The event was inaugurated the night before by readings in Croatian and German by the Swiss-Croatian poet, Dragica Rajčić, with translations into English offered by Christine Fritze (U of Victoria). Hosted at the home of Alice Kuzniar, the poetry reading was followed by a wine-and-cheese reception sponsored by the Swiss Consulate.

Alice Kuzniar



# In-Sight Centre

## Performing Goethe's *Faust* out of the box: the Canadian premiere of Bridge Markland's "Faust in the Box" at the University of Waterloo

On March 27th and 28th, 2012, the Waterloo Centre for German Studies, in collaboration with UW's Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies and the Department of Drama and Speech Communication, welcomed Berlin performance artist Bridge Markland as she staged her one-woman-show "Faust in the Box" – an adaptation of Goethe's *Faust* – in the Theatre for the Arts at the University of Waterloo. Her performance gave the story of Faust, an intellectual who sells his soul to the devil for knowledge, a new and interesting spin by crossing boundaries of gender, performance, theatre, cabaret, collage, and puppet theatre. With only a cardboard box for a set and with Bridge Markland as the sole actor, Faust was literally conjured "out of the box". Bridge Markland switched quickly and effortlessly between the roles of Margaret, Mephisto, and Faust himself, using hand puppets to perform multiple roles simultaneously.

The performance was accompanied by an extraordinary sound collage that included well-known pop tunes which were lip-synced by this talented performance artist. The juxtaposition of quotations from Goethe's literary classic with lines from well known 20<sup>th</sup>-century pop music led to a new and inspiring understanding of the relevance of the major themes in this classical piece as well as their connection to themes in modern pop songs. This adaptation was not only intellectually stimulating but also highly entertaining for the audience.

In this piece, Markland managed to create a dialogue between different streams of popular culture and highlighted central themes in Goethe's *Faust* that have hardly changed over time. She performed in German and in English and drew an audience from a variety of backgrounds and age groups who enjoyed a question-and-answer period with the performer following each performance.

*Belinda Kleinhans*



# Wat's Upcoming



The **Austrian Studies** research group is planning two events for the coming year. In Fall 2012, the group is hosting the well-known Austrian author *franzobel* for a reading of his recent work and participation in two seminars at UW. *franzobel* (picture left) is a modern author whose range of activity is truly breathtaking: he writes novels, essays, theatre plays, books for children, radio dramas, and poems. He has received the "Ingeborg-Bachmann-Preis", the "Kasseler Literaturpreis für grotesken Humor" and the "Arthur-Schnitzler-Preis". *franzobel* will be in Waterloo from October 23<sup>rd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>. Details about his visit to follow.

In May 2013, the **Austrian Studies** group will host the Annual Conference of the Austrian Studies Association. The Association has over 1000 members in all fields of Austrian Studies from literature and culture, to history, music and politics and we are expecting a lively gathering.. The theme of next year's conference will be *Glaubenssystem/Belief-Systems*. The conference will seek to explore the variety of belief-systems that have shaped Austrian culture both past and present through literature, film, theatre, and music, but also in natural and medical sciences, history, politics and society.  
*Michael Boehringer*

The **German-Canadian Studies** research group consists of engaged individuals with diverse research interests. Ranging from linguists to historians to literary scholars to archivists and librarians, we seem to have something for everyone. Our group meets regularly to discuss ongoing projects, which include the translation of the Anthes letters (featured in the December 2011 newsletter), the maintenance and updating of the German Canadiana in Ontario (GCO) Bibliography, oral histories of German-speaking immigrants to the KW region, the examination of German-Canadian identity in language, as well as many others. In the past, our group has hosted events such as the joint talk of Susan Thorne and Geoff Hayes about the Anthes Papers (Fall 2011). In Fall 2012, we are looking forward to hosting Alexander Freund, Chair of German-Canadian Studies at The University of Winnipeg, when he gives a talk on the experiences of German truckers in Canada.

*Christine Kampen Robinson*

The members of the WCGS's **Environment** research group meet regularly to share our research with each other and receive feedback on current projects-in-progress. We are interested in exploring all aspects of humanities research that have to do with the environment. For example, we have looked into the connections between Romantic thought and current discourses on the environment. In general, we study the ways in which fields as diverse as fine arts, homeopathy, literature, and philosophy take part in the discourse on the environment in a variety of contexts. Feel free to contact us if you want to learn more.

The Waterloo research group in **Applied Linguistics** (WAPPLS) engages in research in a wide variety of topics in applied linguistics. In spring 2012, we hosted a talk by Françoise Blin of Dublin City University, and we are planning another event for this semester – stay tuned for details!

The members of the WCGS are looking forward to **CONGRESS 2012** (May 26<sup>th</sup>-June 2<sup>nd</sup>) in Waterloo. More details at: <http://congress2012.ca/>

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