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Germanics: New Directions in a Long Tradition

Their Tricentennial Conference of German-American History, Politics and Culture attracted leading scholars from both sides of the Atlantic as well as West German President Karl Carstens.

They were among the first in the University and the nation to introduce proficiency-based language instruction.

Their Dutch Studies Program brought Netherlands Prime Minister Andries van Agt to campus to speak in honor of the 200th anniversary of continuous diplomatic relations between The Netherlands and the United States.

They are the authors of the world's first dictionary of Old High German. And their research ranges from heroic literature of the Middle Ages to Goethe in Russia and current German film.

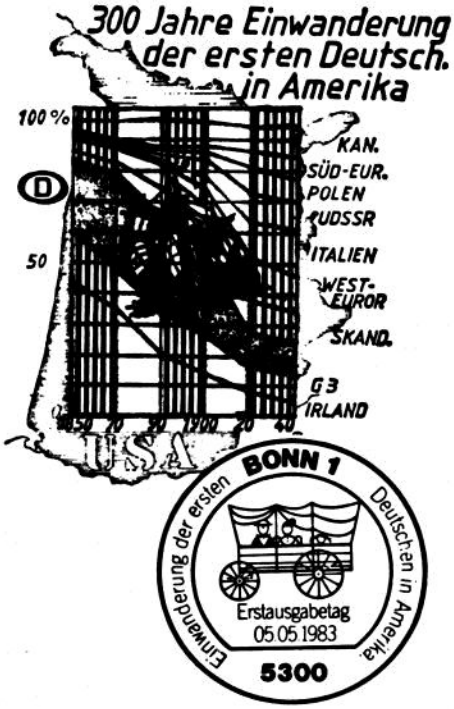
They are the nine professors, two emeritus professors and two lecturers who make up the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University. These faculty are the first to credit their ten teaching fellows for some of their achievements (and the first to tell you that they are all overworked!). Among them, they teach German, Swedish, Icelandic, and Dutch from the elementary to the advanced levels and make up one of the best Germanics departments in the United States.

Certainly it is one of the oldest. German was included as one of the subjects set out by Benjamin Franklin in his 1749 *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania.* By 1754 Penn had introduced its German courses and in 1779 appointed its first Professor of German and Oriental Languages. At the end of the nineteenth century, the University gained new interest in its Germanics program and became the first academic center in the country for German-American studies.

". . . there is a substantial tradition, going all the way back to Franklin, for German-American studies at the University of Pennsylvania. That is as it should be in a city and state with a long and unique history of German immigration and American-German contributions," noted President Sheldon Hackney at yet another departmental undertaking, the opening of the exhibition "German-American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania," held this fall in Van Pelt Library in honor of the 300th anniversary of German settlement in North America.

The Tricentennial Celebration

It was this tradition that the department hoped to re-establish this fall through its four-day "Tricentennial Conference of German-American History, Politics and Culture."



"For the profile of Penn in the area, nationally, and internationally, certainly the conference has done a lot," said Professor Frank Trommler, Chairman of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures. "It established Penn again as a center for the study of German-American relations, something that had been the tradition, but disappeared in the last thirty or forty years. From the scholarly point of view, it was an unusual and important assessment in history and politics—the bridging over from history to contemporary politics."

Although President Karl Carstens and the thirty members of the West German *Bundestag* drew the attention of the media, some seventy scholars—an international "who's who" of those in German-American studies—participated in the twenty conference panels on topics ranging from "The German Immigrant Experience in Pennsylvania" to "Ethnic Identity and American Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century" to "American-German Relations in the Twentieth Century." Yale Professor Peter Gay's lecture on Freud's America drew 450 people as did a panel discussion on Contemporary American-German Political Relations. Each evening throughout the conference, the department sponsored the film series "German Directors Look at America," the work of ten German filmmakers. At a panel discussion Assistant Professor Anna K. Kuhn and other film scholars and critics assessed the image of America in the New German Cinema.

The proceedings of this four-day conference will be published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Towards a German Teaching Community

The conference also fit into another departmental goal: "to help bring the language alive in the Delaware Valley area," as Professor Trommler puts it. A number of area teachers were among the conference participants, and over fifty students from the region attended the panel on American-German Political Relations. The conference's "Open Forum: The German Language in America, Present and Future," chaired by the department's Undergraduate Chairman John A. McCarthy, brought together teachers from area high schools and colleges to discuss issues in German teaching at all levels of instruction.

This panel was one step in a process that has been gaining momentum since the mid-'70s when colleges began to drop their language requirement. Although college faculties asserted that high schools should be teaching the elementary and intermediate levels of language, many high schools were not willing to push for languages if the colleges no longer required them.

Convinced that colleges and universities needed to help generate an interest in the language and make the high schools aware of the need for good language students, Department Chairman Frank Trommler joined other high school and college German professors to plan for a German Language Week in Greater Philadelphia and Delaware. The first language week took place in 1981 and featured German language contests (with such coveted prizes as airline tickets to Germany) and a full roster of cultural and social events—films, concerts, and a few academic lectures. The second German Language Week was held last March with some 4,000 students from Delaware Valley high schools and colleges competing in the language contest. Penn sponsored a film and cabaret—an evening of German songs by Brecht and Eisler—as one of its contributions to the program. Professor McCarthy and other members of the department were instrumental in devising the special examinations used during each of the two language weeks.

Last spring, German department faculty members participated in the day-long workshop for 300 high school teachers organized by Barbara Freed, Assistant Dean for Language Instruction in the College of Arts and Sciences. German teachers at the workshop joined a panel with Professor Anna K. Kuhn, who was then undergraduate chairperson, to talk about coordinating teaching at the high school and college levels. The department now has firm contacts with high schools as far away as Dover, Delaware.

"Traditionally colleges and universities complain about the poor quality of preparation of the students entering our language courses," explained Professor McCarthy. "That complaint is not entirely reflective of the actual state of affairs because there are a number of excellent language teachers in high schools. However, too many of the students passing through programs are not exposed to excellent teachers and have not been prepared as well as they should have been. We don't have answers for high schools, but we think we can work jointly with them to come up with a solution."

Already plans are underway for in-service exchanges in which University faculty members will spend a half day at a high school observing and conferring with their high school colleagues on ways to improve their programs. The University hopes to become a resource for those high school teachers who wish to improve their German. High school teachers will also meet with University teaching fellows; it is hoped that through seeing what is happening at the high school level, teaching fellows will reevaluate some of their prejudices about careers in secondary education.

Leadership in Proficiency-Based Teaching

Probably the most exciting facet of the department's own language teaching is the introduction of proficiency testing and proficiency-based language instruction.

"Penn is the first school to institute proficiency-based teaching of German," exclaimed Anna Kuhn, who was undergraduate chairperson last year when the proficiency test was introduced. "Within five years, proficiency is going to become *the* recognized way of approaching language teaching. We are going to be the leaders. We already are."

Proficiency-based language instruction is based on the premise that students should develop the skills necessary to communicate in the language, rather than simply mastering material in a given number of courses. In order to satisfy the University's foreign language requirement in German, students must now demonstrate minimal proficiency in the traditional four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as measured by a proficiency test.

"In the past we have often turned out people who were not able to function in Vienna or Zurich or Berlin because they had not been equipped with the necessary skills to interact, to carry on life as a student, a tourist, or a business person," explained Professor McCarthy. "Now we can at least equip them with enough skills to survive for a month or two in Germany or Austria in a completely German setting. They would be able to order their meals, travel around by train, make reservations at hotels (and get a room with a bath), and find their way around. The better students who go through our program will be able to go beyond that minimum to carry on conversations and narrate what they have experienced."

The German Department's emphasis on communications skills has been ten years in the making. When John McCarthy was appointed the first undergraduate chairman a decade ago, he and other junior faculty members began to experiment with the curriculum introducing a "four-skills" approach. Moving a course at a time, they developed a new curriculum for the first four semesters of German using new materials. Their goals shifted to teaching German as a means to the culture rather than relying on literature as the dominant focus. Since joining the faculty in 1979, Professor Kuhn has been instrumental in restructuring the curriculum for the first four semesters of German to make it consistent with the proficiency standards of the department.

The department's interest in the teaching of language extends to teacher training as well. Twenty-five years ago, the department introduced the University's first pedagogical seminar for its teaching fellows. Over the past ten

years, the faculty has also observed each teaching fellow in the course of each semester to offer suggestions on his or her teaching method. The pedagogical seminar is now being used to introduce teaching fellows to proficiency-based instruction. The faculty hope to pass some of this knowledge along to the high school teachers with whom they are now in contact to upgrade the quality of high school courses and move them toward a proficiency-based curriculum.

The department's efforts appear to have been rewarded: there has been an average annual increase in enrollment in undergraduate German courses of 14 percent during the last three years with the current enrollment at 372.

The Department also provides instruction in Swedish and in Dutch. Enrollment in Swedish has increased to twenty-nine students this semester while the Department's twenty-five-year-old Dutch Studies Program involves sixteen students. Although small, the Dutch Studies Program has been very active, maintaining close ties to community organizations and sponsoring a number of events. Over the years, its lecture series has drawn together not only University students but several hundred residents from Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania to hear about Holland's art, history, educational and political systems, commerce, and relationship with the United States. The highlight of this lecture series was a symposium last year in which Andries van Agt, Prime Minister of The Netherlands, came to the University to speak in celebration of the 200th anniversary of continuous diplomatic relations between The Netherlands and the United States.

The Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures may be a small department, but it maintains a large agenda. Some departmental research interests are described in the sections that follow.

Research Across Disciplines

For twenty-five years, Anton Ludewig Friederich Kotzebue, an Army officer in the northern German town of Wolfenbuttel, was a regular visitor to the Herzog August Bibliothek, the country's largest and most famous public lending library of its time. Wolfenbuttel was the home of the court of the Duchy and the center for its intellectual life. As an officer, Kotzebue was not part of the intelligentsia, but of the important middle and upper-middle classes, which set the real tone of the times in the mid-eighteenth century.

Kotzebue began visiting the library in 1755 as a young lieutenant and by the end of his borrowing life in 1780, had become a major with an ensuing rise in social status and income. He first took out works to further his general education, works that were morally edifying and would improve his mind. After two years, he turned to what one might call trivial literature—adventure stories, a genre inspired by Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and love stories, which were not only romantic but didactic in the eighteenth century. In the course of Kotzebue's borrowing life, his son began to borrow books too.

Kotzebue and his son are two of about twelve eighteenth-century readers at the Wolfenbuttel library whom Associate Professor John A. McCarthy is now studying to learn more about the social and literary history of that period. He hopes eventually to understand how reading brought about and reflected changes in literary, intellectual, and cultural ideas and values.

As Professor McCarthy points out, the period he is studying—1740 to 1780—is particularly interesting "since it spans the era of the Enlightenment to Storm and Stress and the first stirrings of the Romantic Movement. The adventure stories that Kotzebue read early in his borrowing life, for example, were important vehicles for teaching people Enlightenment values." Professor McCarthy intends to compare the reading choices of these military men with other men—and with several women of the period, who were supposed to be contenting themselves with moral weeklies but in some cases were making the same selections as men.

Wolfenbuttel has particularly good lending records. Professor McCarthy plans to pour through these records to establish which books were borrowed most frequently; he will then read and evaluate these books for their content and implications for the period. A literary historian, he has joined with a librarian and a social historian from Germany to carry out this major research project.

Professor McCarthy's work is a good example of the research interests of some of the younger members of the German department who are looking at literature as a way of understanding the culture, at the relationship between literature and social history and the arts.

While Professor McCarthy is one of a very few scholars studying readership patterns, his colleague Francis B. Brévart, assistant professor of Germanic Languages and Literature, is charting new scholarly ground in his research on the *Fachprosa*, or nonfictional literature of the late Middle Ages, which ranges from cookbooks to tracts on medicine or astrology— the guiding science of the Middle Ages.

"This is a completely new field, since only fictional literature—the novels, love poetry, in short the 'nice' literature—had been considered to be important in the past," explained Professor Brévart. "These nonfictional works, on the other hand, have been viewed as inferior."

Such works were, however, what people in the Middle Ages were reading and using in their daily lives. Professor Brévart and the relatively few other scholars who are now joining this research have discovered that some of the works under study, for example the *Volkskalender* or Johannes Sacrobosco's *Sphaera Mundi*, are to be found in over 150 manuscripts (in comparison, there are only slightly over thirty copies of *Nibelungenlied)* and the fingered pages and annotated margins attest to their use.

This new field, which Professor Brévart began in 1977, is revealing a great deal about life in the Middle Ages, from the gentry's best recipes for venison to meatless menus in the monasteries during religious fasts. They describe the appearance of a new disease called syphilis and the rising prices in the cities.

One type of text that has been particularly interesting for Professor Brévart is the *Volkskalender*, which in its early stages was a long work similar to our *Farmer's Almanac* and later appeared in condensed form as a single-leaf almanac. These tracts introduce the life-governing forces such as the humors, the elements, and the signs of the Zodiac and go on to offer all the information necessary to make good decisions—when to cut wood or slaughter cattle, how to duel with a particular opponent or the best date for a wedding or an escape from jail.

Professor Brévart, who also works on heroic literature of the Middle Ages, came across these works during studies on manuscripts in Munich and has since found others in libraries on both sides of the Atlantic. He has written some forty-five papers and edited three books on these works. Not only is his work helping scholars look anew at the culture of the Middle Ages, but it is giving them fresh perspective on such classic works as *Parzival* and the *Meistersang*, which had rarely been interpreted with adequate consideration of medieval astrology.

While Professors Brévart and McCarthy are looking at the culture of earlier periods, Assistant Professor Anna K. Kuhn is considering recent culture through film and literature.

"Film for me is a means of studying national culture as well as of looking at literature," she explained. "If you look at the '20s, the Germans along with the Russians were in many respects *the* leading filmmakers and contributed significantly to the rise of modern cinematographic technique. The experimentation of this period reflects the iconoclasm and turbulence of the Weimar Republic. Then in the Nazi period, film and all art became compromised by the Nationalist Socialist Volkisch ideology. In the post-war era, German cinema was essentially moribund. For one thing, most of the best directors had emigrated. Those who remained were embarrassingly mediocre. Suddenly in the mid-'60s, there was a cinematic renaissance. Today with filmmakers like Schlondorff, Wenders, Herzog, Fassbinder, and Margarethe von Trotta, the New German Cinema has attained international stature."

Professor Kuhn's interest in the connection between literature and film is reflected in an article on Fassbinder's adaptation of a novel by the nineteenth-century novelist Fontane, entitled *Effi Briest*. In this interpretation of Fontane's novel of adultery, Fassbinder took a very stylized approach, creating a series of tableaux and juxtaposing image and voice to make a film that was "cogent, immediate, essential, and incredibly faithful to the literary text," as Professor Kuhn puts it. "It was as if Fassbinder had read the text with a highlighter and opened up his interpretation to you."

Professor Kuhn is also interested in women's issues, an interest related to her current research on East German writer Christa Wolf, whom Professor Kuhn thinks is one of the most interesting and important of the contemporary writers. Wolf has recently written a narrative on the myth of Cassandra, systematically rewriting and reinterpreting in the process patriarchal myths and literature. She is also trying to define what constitutes women's writing. Much has been written on Wolf, but scholars have focused either on her work as a political writer (mostly men) or her work as a woman's writer (mostly women with little background in the German literary and socialist political tradition). Professor Kuhn is now on a year's leave to write a book on Christa Wolf that will bring all of these aspects together into one work for English-speaking readers.

Department Chairman Frank Trommler also focuses on recent culture and literature. He is author of a book on the history of the German literary left since the days of Marx and Heine and of the first book on Weimar culture to appear in German. At present he is involved in a major study on the German modernist movement between 1880 and 1930. Excerpts from his paper, "The Rise and Fall of Americanism in Germany," which he presented at the Tricentennial Conference, are included below.

The scholarly interests of the faculty have resulted in a number of interdisciplinary teaching ventures. Anna Kuhn has developed a freshman seminar on Turn of the Century Vienna, which brings together the psychology, literature, architecture, and art of this period and includes lectures by Art History Professor David Brownlee. Lecturer Gunnil Sjoberg has taught a course on Scandinavian literature and film. Professor Trommler taught a course with History Professor Thomas Childers on Culture and Politics in Germany, 1871-1933, which they offered for three semesters. The German department was also among the founders of the Comparative Literature program and still maintains a very active role in its courses.

The following is excerpted from a talk given by Frank Trommler, Professor of German, at the recent Tricentennial Conference of German-American History, Politics and Culture.

The Rise and Fall of Americanism in Germany

In view of the fact that my paper deals with historical developments which moved America and Europe closer together in the twentieth century, it may be helpful to start with some quotations which attest to the distance that had to be overcome. George Clemenceau's presumptuous and notorious put-down of America is not unique: "America? That is the development from barbarity to decadence without the detour through culture." Heinrich Heine concluded about the Americans without ever having set foot on their shores: "Wordly utility is their true religion and money is their God, their one all-powerful God." In his *Frohliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche even draws the unwitting Indians into his assessment according to which an "Indian-like wildness, characteristic of Indian blood, lies in the American way of striving for gold."

. . . Both the term Americanization which came to be widely used at the turn of the century, and the parallel term Americanism which was propagated in an almost ideological manner in the 1920s, contained a strong element of ambiguity, tilting more toward the negative than the positive. While pointing to the United States as the model for social and industrial modernization, its connotation was often critical, alarmist, even hostile. Already in 1901 the British critic W. I. Stead made clear in his comprehensive survey, *The Americanization of the World or the Trend of the Twentieth Century*, that Americanism or Americanization was considered synonymous with modernization, invoking the fear of being confronted with soulless rationalization, mass society, and mass culture.

Stead's conclusions were confirmed thirty years later by the Dutch historian and secretary of the World Council of Churches, Visser't Hooft who arrived at the following distinction which gives the gist of most definitions of Americanization: "There are then two different European reactions to America; they come from two different types of mind: on the one hand the technical and economic, represented by employers and employed alike who study American methods and who advocate rationalization, and on the other hand the cultural, represented by those who would resist Americanization because they see in it an attack upon the elements of European life which they value most."

Overlooking the enormous array of European assessments of America and Americanism, one is struck by the similarities of the criticism. Again and again the authors strike out against the ugly face which modernization has revealed in America. Although most innovative in the area of economics and industrial organization, Americanization is seen as a phenomenon of cultural alienation which should be avoided. In other words: what Europeans reject in modernization is labelled 'American.' It is as if Europe needed America and Americanism as a scapegoat for its difficulty to come to grips with the alienating effects of modernization. It is as if Europe needed America in order to keep a clearly circumscribed image of itself.

Less has been written about the fact that this phenomenon is mirrored almost in kind in the United States. In his book, *America and the Image of Europe* (1976), Daniel Boorstin has summarized the history of American self-perception in the words: "We stand for everything that Europe is *not*." Boorstin then shows how this self-perception of being a non-European was shattered in the twentieth century, especially by the Great Depression and America's involvement in the wars. Boorstin calls it the "fall of the American Adam" who had to—but did not want to—come to grips with the fact that he shares the ills that have overcome Europe.

"The consequence of these and other facts," Boorstin concludes, "has not been to make us abandon our familiar way of thinking—our traditional tendency to see the United States of America at the one end of the antithesis and an image of all possible evils at the other. It has led us rather to fill the framework with a new content. Whereas formerly we were a non-Europe, now we have become a kind of noncommunism. If throughout most of our history Europe was a handy mirror in which to see what we were not, and hence to help us discover what we were, now communism does us the same service."

Despite the fact that the statement originated in the 1950s, Boorstin has a valid point. He gives important arguments for the assessment that there is a strong correspondence between the European concept of Americanism and the realization of the Americans that they lost their uniqueness in the twentieth century. This interrelation is quite complex. Despite all talks about the Western alliance, it still plays an influential role in the relations between the two continents.

In the case of Germany, two World Wars and subsequent recovery periods have provided for especially extreme reactions toward America and Americanism, both pro and con.

When the United States entered the war in 1917, German politicians and writers felt compelled to reassure the world—at least their world—that America was a nation without culture—at least without the German concept of culture.

When the chaotic post-war years ended and the topic of a peaceful modernization moved into center stage after 1924, the term Americanism was especially played up to two segments of society, engineers and businessmen on the one hand, and journalists and intellectuals on the other. The studies and travelogues of German visitors carried the message that the American economic miracle, *Wirtschaftswunder*, could and should be a model for the economic recovery of Germany. The term appeared in the title of an influential book by a professor of the University of Cologne and later a member of the German Ministry of Economics, Julius Hirsch, who tried to show that the American prosperity was not a miracle but built on a new type of industrial

organization which should be adopted.

. . . During this same period, Adolf Halfed's book, *Amerika und der Amerikanismus*, became the rallying text for the anti-Americanism of large segments of the cultural elite. Its cover bore the inscription: "The culture of Europe, in particular of Germany, developed by tradition, is threatened by America with its concentration on materialism and the mechanization of life. Rationalization on the American example is trump, regardless of whether it kills the human in mankind." Halfeld's concerns were shared by many contemporaries who saw in the rise of the "dollar-imperialism" a confirmation of the decline not just of Germany but the old European culture in general.

. . . It was shared by large segments of the middle-classes which had been impoverished by war and inflation . . . While they cherished the values of a preindustrial society and a corresponding political system, they learned to blame America for these evils which were an inevitable price of economic recovery.

It follows that the success of the Nazis resulted not the least from their ability to tap these ambivalent sentiments. They promoted prosperity and work for all without the alienating effects of modernization... When Hitler declared war on the United States in 1941, his Minister Joseph Goebbels immediately demanded "The production of printed materials which are directed at the German intelligentsia and show in an objective manner that the USA has practically no culture of its own. Rather it should be pointed out that the cultural products of the United States are essentially the products of European achievements. In this context the American film should be scrutinized. In addition, very popular reading materials should be distributed which are directed at the German public in general and the German youth in particular. These materials should show that the uncritical acceptance of certain American standards, for example, jazz music, means a loss of culture."

. . . With the onset of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, a new political identification process was set in motion which pointed beyond national borders and pitted the so-called West, including the Western part of Germany, against the so-called East, including the eastern part of Germany. This process found a ready audience in West Germany where Hitler's policy of confrontation with the Soviet Union all of a sudden seemed to receive some justification. The Germans in the western occupation zones were only too eager to join in this identification with the West since they had to cover up so much of their inhuman dealings with the East in the Second World War. Only in East Germany did part of the anti-western rhetoric survive, fostered by the formulas of Russian condemnation of western decadence and American imperialism.

It was only a matter of years that the main objections against American predominance were dropped and public life in West Germany adjusted visibly to a pro-American attitude . . . There was a strong redirection of many sections of literature, theater, the visual arts, and popular culture toward the American cultural scene which attested to a genuine interest of writers and intellectuals, not to mention the scientists and academics, much beyond the America-orientation of politicans and businessmen. Was this turn-around just a result of the Cold War? Or was it even a late result of the reeducation endeavor of the Americans and to a lesser degree of the other western occupation forces?

GEORGE GROSZ. *Germany, a Winter's Tale*. 1918. Formerly Collection Garvens, Hanover, Germany

These and related questions have received surprisingly little attention. While much has been written about the various steps that led to the political integration of the newly founded Federal Republic into the Western Alliance, the post-war cultural adjustment both of the cultural elite and the population at large to the West is still to be studied. Why, for instance, did Hemingway achieve such a high status and why was he imitated over and over again as the most "contemporary" writer? Why were Thornton Wilder's plays and books so successful in Germany despite serious literary shortcomings? Was it just the clever translation of his play *The Skin of Our Teeth* into a German title which comprised the core of German thinking after 1945: *Wir sind noch einmal davongekommen?*

The answers to these questions need much clarification. They will have to reflect the fact that the America which presented itself in the works of these and other writers such as Thomas Wolfe, William Faulkner, Eugene O'Neill was quite different from the one that caused the stormy debates about Americanism as the synonym for modernization in the 1920s. American writers of the 1930s and 1940s showed a new view of life that had been noticed in Europe as the perspective of the "lost generation" but had not really shaped the image of the United States . . . Now, after the depression years, the Spanish civil war and many other earth-shattering events in which America was involved, the "fall of the American Adam," as Boorstin calls it, manifested itself in American literature and culture and drew enormous attention in Europe, most notably among the existentialist mandarins of Paris. What struck the European intellectuals was, in one word, the tragic dimension of this literature. It was, by no means, a literature of tragedy. Rather, it was a literature which tried to reassure the integrity of the individual against many odds and failures. It built on an identification process in a time of severe personal loss and insecurity.

. . . Even more influential in shaping the cultural perspectives after 1945 was the American popular culture which had never ceased to capture broad masses of the Germans, in particular the young generation, as even Goebbels had to admit. The success story of stars such as James Dean, Elvis Presley, and Marlon Brando was an issue of the young generation which came to idolize American popular culture as a culture in which modernization and alienation were being given full and—most important—creative attention. This phenomenon which took the shape of a generational opposition against the prevailing tradition in culture and everyday life, was also built on an aesthetic of identification.

In short, the approach to American culture had drastically changed in comparison with the 1920s: from the polarizing model of what many considered the future to be to the paragon of an almost existential identification. Germany was by no means unique in this development but it seemed to be particularly susceptible to it. And no wonder: the country had not only lost the war but also, after the excesses of the Nazi rule, a viable image of itself. Writers and intellectuals—some of them former prisoners of war in the United States—and younger people were particularly aware of this sad heritage of the Third Reich. They learned to find a new sense of themselves through the mirror of the American experience. The draw of this experience was so strong that it affected even the German population at large.

There can be no doubt today that the pendulum has swung back. A decade and many anti-Vietnam war demonstrations later, the younger generation came to formulate its emancipation in a distancing process from the United States while the older generation became the defender of America. It is indeed a strong reversal of the preceding constellation. One can safely conclude that the intensity with which the new antagonistic spirit finds expression is intimately related to the intensity with which a previous generation had identified with American models. And it is in keeping with the tradition that the new sense of national or European identification emerges in a distancing process toward America, not Russia. We can see the repetition of a familiar pattern. It will be interesting to watch how far the pendulum will continue to swing before it returns.

Reference Works Years in the Making

etymology: *1. origin and historical development of a word, as evidenced by study of its basic elements, earliest known use, and change in form and meaning; semantic derivation and evolution. 2. An account of the history of a specific word. 3. The branch of linguistics that studies the derivation of words.*

For the past five years Albert Lloyd of the German Department has been working with Emeritus Professor Otto Springer and a small staff of research assistants on the first etymological dictionary of old High German, the oldest stage of recorded German, covering the period from approximately 750 to 1100 A.D. As Professor Lloyd explains, "It is not possible to compare modern languages effectively without tracing a language as far back as possible to its earliest stages."

The need for such a dictionary has long been noted by the National Endowment for the Humanities which is supporting the project, as is the William Penn Foundation. Old High German is important not only for historical studies of the German language, but also for comparative studies of the Germanic or Indo-European languages. Yet, while there are etymological dictionaries of the other major old Germanic dialects—Old Norse has the distinction of possessing no fewer than three—none exists for Old High German.

There is good reason for this lack. Almost 50 percent of the Old High German vocabulary is preserved only in the form of glosses to Latin words. These are something like entries in bilingual dictionaries, in which the Latin words of a particular text (usually religious) or belonging to a certain field of meaning (household implements, animals, plants, etc.) are defined by Old High German words. Although thousands of these glosses were compiled by two scholars into a five-volume collection, they had neither index nor concordance and were virtually unavailable for systematic study: it could take as long as an entire day to find one word. Recently, these glosses have been computerized, rendering the vocabulary readily available.

Old High German vocabulary can be found in literary texts as well. Although a concise dictionary of such texts does exist, it is intended primarily for students and lacks any etymologies. And the only definitive dictionary of the whole High German vocabulary—again without etymologies—has been in progress for a quarter of a century and has only reached the letter F. Thus Professor Lloyd's dictionary would not only be the first etymological dictionary of the language, it would be the first complete dictionary of any kind based on the vocabulary of both the literary texts and the glosses.

Six volumes of the dictionary are planned, each containing approximately 500 pages. They will probably be jointly published by Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht of West Germany and the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Because the preparation of an etymological dictionary of any Indo-European language involves research in every other language in the same family that may have related forms, such a task can be undertaken only at an institution with outstanding library holdings. "We are extremely fortunate," notes Professor Lloyd, "that our library's collection in these areas is truly first rate." Nevertheless, even with such research materials, no two scholars can possibly be "experts" in all the languages concerned. Accordingly, all etymologies are checked for accuracy by a board of consultants, outstanding linguists here at Penn, as well as at Yale, Penn State, and Chicago, representing such areas as

Hittite and Tocharian, Indo-Iranian, Greek and Latin.

To get an idea of the detail and extent of the research necessary to compile such a dictionary, one need only to look at the preposition *aba*, which means "from" or "of"; the article on this word is four and one-half typewritten pages long.

According to Professor Lloyd, each entry in the dictionary adheres to the following format: the Old High German entry will be presented, along with a brief definition. If there are important spelling variations, and/or Middle High German and New High German equivalents, they will be listed. The equivalent in modern German dialects will then be listed, followed by the Germanic cognates and other Indo-European cognates. In the case where there are disputed or uncertain etymologies, a discussion of proposed etymologies together with the investigator's suggestions will be discussed. Lastly, a list of references to other sources will be given. In addition, there will be a complete bibliography, which will include virtually every reference work utilized.

"Our aim," explains Professor Lloyd, "is to make each article readable and reliable as a reference tool, yet simultaneously contain sufficient information and bibliographical references to stimulate further research in problematic areas."

The dictionary will place all Germanic and Indo-European etymological and lexical studies on a firmer footing, as well as lead to a greater understanding of the lexical development of the German language. It will provide new cognates for the lexical items in other Germanic languages and increase the role of Germanic evidence in Indo-European etymological research.

Professor Lloyd hopes, as well, that the dictionary will pave the way for a greatly improved etymological dictionary of New High German and, eventually, for the production of a new Germanic etymological dictionary (the last was compiled in 1909). Moreover, since numerous Old High German words which have died out in standard German survive in German dialects and/or place names, the dictionary should provide a valuable tool for researchers in German dialectology and onomastics.

Themes and Motifs Focus of Handbook

Professor Horst Daemmrich, too, is involved in a significant long-range project, the publication of the *Deutsche Literatur Lexikon*. The set, a comprehensive biographical-bibliographical reference work of German authors, is being produced by a collaboration of European and American scholars with Professor Daemmrich coordinating the effort for the literature since 1600. The work is projected at sixteen volumes, of which eight have appeared; volume nine is in press.

Long-term research is not new to Professor Daemmrich. He has spent the last ten years studying themes and motifs in German literature in an effort to determine their function and structure. The results have been published in *Wiederholte Spiegelungen Themen und Motive in der Literatur*. Two further books have been planned: a *Handbook of Themes and Motifs* will appear in 1984 and a study on the predominant themes and motifs in classicism and realism will follow later.

As Professor Daemmrich points out, themes and motifs are basic components of literary works. Their arrangement, distribution, repetition, and variation form an intricate system of relationships. Since themes and motifs persist over long periods, they establish a literary tradition that transcends epochs and national literatures. Therefore, the study of themes and motifs often reveals unexpected relationships between literary works not usually linked together.

"The motif of the path, for example, assumes various shapes in different epochs. The Middle Ages emphasized the crossroad at which a decision must be reached; classical literature contracted the straight path of truth and the crooked path of accommodation, while realistic and modern works envision a circular path without outlet. Nevertheless, individual writers within these broad periods could and did develop their own concept of the path." Professor Daemmrich has discovered that themes and motifs are often interconnected. Thus the concept of the various paths recurs in conjunction with the themes of self-realization and confinement and the motif sequences of dialogue and silence, the giving heart and the possessive hand.

Professor Daemmrich has also published in the area of literary theory. His book, *Literaturkritik in Theorie und Praxis*, is a standard guide in Germany and deals with the complex matters of aesthetics, literary theory and the principles underlying literary criticism in theory and practice. He has written extensively on German Romanticism and Classicism and is the author of studies reevaluating the work of E.T.A. Hoffmann and Wilhelm Raabe.

In a thematic study of Hoffmann's works, Professor Daemmrich focusses upon an aspect of Hoffmann's work which has been surprisingly neglected until now: his tragic view of human existence.

Professor Daemmrich's reevaluation of Hoffmann shows him to be a precursor of modern existential thinking. He analyzes major themes and motifs and shows that they form a grand design of man in search for identity. As Professor Daemmrich explains, "Hoffmann captures the struggle between man's yearning for self-transcendence and the will to self-assertion as well as the clash between visions of beauty and the atavistic forces of evil. By identifying the feeling of fear with man's existence and the image of the cage with the structure of the world, Hoffmann portrays the disintegration of the individual in a world of uncontrolled forces."

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