

Academic disciplines develop, reform, and redefine themselves through critical innovations and interventions. Especially in the case of disciplines based in the humanities and social sciences, the impact of historical forces on the political present and future of the very subjects of inquiry—individuals, societies, cultural practices, institutions, and the plethora of aesthetic expressions, including art, architecture, cinema, literature, performative traditions, and more recently, digital and internet-based media—shapes and informs disciplinary practices and agendas. No unique “-ism,” no singular practitioner/scholar, no specific “school of thought,” no thematically unified bibliography, no singular “turn” (linguistic, cultural, historical, spatial, ethical, material—the list goes on!) indeed no fashionable “trend” ever gains ultimate, absolute, and therefore impenetrable dominance in the life of an academic discipline. The significance of a particular mode of critical thought within a discipline at a given point in history is in fact a manifestation of that specific discipline’s dialogue with the historical and political realities in which it exists, which it in turn attempts to understand, analyze, critique, and influence. The existence of an academic discipline, in other words, is a function of its geo-political inhabitance.

And in order to *pursue* such existence, rather than merely to *assure* it (for better or worse), it is imperative for the practitioners of a discipline to identify hitherto unexamined, under-represented, or under-discussed themes, issues, and texts, and/or to revisit those that have been frequently examined, well discussed and perhaps even over-represented, in order to revamp and reshape the theoretical underpinnings of the modes of inquiry that have been pursued. To be sure, innovation in academic disciplines cannot be identical to the corporate model of “new, improved, and (therefore) better!” In fact, what distinguishes academic/scholarly inquiry in fields such as the humanities and social sciences from other modes of innovation is not so much the ability to constantly generate a new product, a new theory, or a “new light fixture” that sheds the

proverbial “new light” on a problem, but the courage to question and critique the perceived “newness” of a mode of inquiry through a constant engagement with the old, the past, the historical in the process of reshaping, redefining, indeed re-determining the new, the present, the contemporary.

The essays collected in this Special Topic, “Cosmopolitical and Transnational Interventions in German Studies,” attest to the truth of these observations in many ways. As editors, we see it as our role to serve as moderators and facilitators of a multidirectional dialogue (a poly-logue if you will), a collaborative thought process that began at the 49th Annual Conference of the German Studies Association (Oakland, October 2010).¹ These essays represent a continuation of this conversation. They offer for consideration a set of theoretical approaches and strategies that position “German-speaking nations” (Germany, Austria, Switzerland), as geo-political units and as cultural-linguistic spaces, on the multidirectional itineraries of migration of human beings and ideas, focused on, but not limited to, the labor migration to Germany in the second half of the twentieth century. However, locating a nation or a set of nations on the criss-crossing itineraries of migration can hardly augment the “transnational” or “cosmopolitical” dimensions—to be explained shortly—of interventions if the linguistic qualifier itself is not subject to reasoned scrutiny. *Germanistik* as a discipline specific to studies of literature and cultures of German-speaking countries was a widely accepted

¹ <https://www.thegsa.org/conferences/2010/index.asp> (accessed May 27, 2011). The interdisciplinary series of panels “Cosmopolitical and Transnational Interventions” consisted of six panels with a total of twenty-two presentations. The panels were organized under the following rubrics: “Concepts and Critical Strategies”; “Traveling Boundaries: Space and Narrativity”; “Language and Narrativity: mono-, bi-, -multi”; “Culture and Representation: Turkey and Germany”; “Transnational Medialities: Historicity and Contemporariness”; and “Nodes, Networks, Crossroads.” Participants included graduate students in English, German, History and other disciplines, as well as faculty members. For an overview of departmental and university affiliations see the flyer for this panel series: http://german.berkeley.edu/transit/2010_2011/articles/GSApanels.html. The papers published in this Special Topic represent select submissions that were revised, expanded and peer-reviewed.

perspective for most of the second half of the twentieth century.² By the 1980s, transformations in the societal compositions of German-speaking nations due to migration, as well as an acknowledgement of German Studies in nations outside of Germany—India, China, Japan, South Korea, Cameroon, South Africa, but also the UK, Australia, Canada, among others—led to the formation of qualifiers such as *Auslandsgermanistik* and *Interkulturelle Germanistik*.³ The unique dimensions of *Germanistik* in the United States, as well as the transformation from a literature/culture based *Germanistik* to German Studies cannot be dissociated from the position of the United States as a country of immigration; indeed, it is a function of the migration of intellectuals from German-speaking countries to the U.S. and the collaborative shaping and reforming of the discipline to an interdisciplinary enterprise, including both practitioners born in the U.S. and migrants from other (non-German speaking) nations. These observations can be well tested through Jost Hermand's magisterial *Geschichte der Germanistik* (1994) and *Fünfzig Jahre Germanistik: Aufsätze, Statements, Polemiken 1959-2009* (2009). In many ways, the essays included in this volume extend the conversation about transformations in German Studies in the United States.⁴ The contributors thus question modes in which disciplinary calcifications can be challenged by highlighting the multilingual composition resulting from migratory processes. In other words, these essays investigate and confront the primacy of the term "German-speaking" as an appropriate qualifier for the geo-political and cultural units represented by Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. And last but not the least, these essays imagine modes in which precincts of the disciplinary rubric "German Studies" can be blurred, diffused and

² See Lämmert, Killy, Conrady and Polenz (1967); Gress (1971); Burckhardt (1976); Martens (1988); Rosenberg (1981, 1989); Fassbender (1988).

³ Wierlacher (1980, 1985); Wierlacher and Bogner (2003); König (1995).

⁴ For discussions in U.S.-based journals, see special issues of *New German Critique*: "Minorities in German Culture" (46: 1989; Guest Editors Seyhan and Berman) and "Multicultural Germany: Art, Performance and Media" (91: 2004; Guest Editors Wolbert and Göktürk); *Monatshefte* (15: 2001: Guest Editors Benseler, Nickisch, and Nollendorfs). See also *German Quarterly* (79) Forum on "German Studies and Globalization" (2006-2007); Mani, "German Studies as Perpetual Difference: A Cosmopolitical Sketch." (2006).

expanded within and beyond the boundaries of Europe. The contributors to the issue, by virtue of their specialization in a range of disciplinary foci—anthropological, historical, cultural, linguistic, literary, and political—examine modes in which political and ideational phenomena such as transnationalism and cosmopolitanism have shaped and informed “modern” (primarily) German-speaking nations since the late eighteenth century. These scholars identify and theorize actual processes by which migrant, colonial, and cosmopolitan subjects have challenged, innovated, and revised the narrow definitions of home, belonging, and cultural and political citizenship within a nation; at times in conjunction with, and at other times as a challenge to the “transnational and cosmopolitical” imagination of national and regional subjectivities.

Before moving to detailed previews of the premise and promise of the collected essays, a discussion of the terms “transnational” and “cosmopolitical” and their significance in contemporary German Studies merits attention. With his seminal work *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson has contributed greatly to the shift from the study of nations as organic artifacts to that of national identity as a construct. In his presentation of the nation as an imagined political community, Anderson also comments on the increasing tension between the demands of globalization and the continuing efforts to define space in national terms. In the case of post-reunification Germany, the question of national spatiality immediately evokes issues of borders and cultural identity; indeed, some of the most recent assessments of German cultural history focus on the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.⁵ The debates over a coherent national and European identity have increased in spite of or rather because of the rise of a vast cultural diaspora and the challenge to the traditional hegemony of Western culture through ethnic minorities. As the cultural historian Norbert Elias (*The Civilizing Process*, 2000) has pointed out, the particular historical conditions of Germany’s earlier nationalist self-isolation as a

⁵ See Brockmann (2010); Niven and Paver (2010); Silberman (2011).

belated nation had a lasting effect on the German concept of *Kultur* as the basis of German civil identity, which clearly differentiated Germany from its neighboring countries and their concept of *Zivilisation* (5). Constructions of identity thus became based not on universal values and civil rights but rather on exclusionary concepts that defined German belonging in ethnic terms, thereby stressing national and cultural differences. The necessity to respond to globalization and growing immigration, though, has caused a push to redefine and reassert national identity and cultural spaces of belonging. What still seems to be lacking in Germany's integration policies, however, is a revision of the traditional notion of cultural identity, as Homi Bhabha (*The Location of Culture*, 1994) expresses it: What is "politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities" and to focus instead on those "processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences" (1). Explaining his attempt to redefine the intersubjective and collective experiences of "nationness" in our age of migration and cultural hybridities, he continues: "These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood" that initiate "innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (1-2).

The debate on immigration, integration, and Islam recently reignited by the August 2010 publication of Thilo Sarrazin's controversial *Deutschland schafft sich ab* ("Germany is doing away with itself") demonstrates the ongoing challenge to the German nation-state of integrating its immigrants, in particular its four million Muslims, most of whom are of Turkish descent. With his sweeping claims about race, the unwillingness and inability of Turks and Arabs to integrate, their intellectual inferiority, higher birth rates, exploitation of the welfare state, and the overall negative impact of Muslim immigration on a presumably stable German identity, Sarrazin sparked a national controversy as politicians, the media and the general public offered

widely different opinions.⁶ In contrast to Sarrazin, President Christian Wulff in his speech on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of German reunification on October 3, 2010, not only called for a strengthening of East-West unity, but also made an attempt to set a distinct signal against exclusion and for greater openness vis-à-vis different cultures and religions by recognizing Islam “as now belonging to Germany” just as Christianity and Judaism “doubtless belong to Germany.”⁷ Wulff’s acknowledgement of the country’s new social and cultural realities, however, were contradicted by the Interior Minister, Hans-Peter Friedrich, who sees Islam neither as essential for Germany’s changing society nor as part of its history.⁸ According to Friedrich, Western Judeo-Christian values remain the nation’s exclusive *Leitkultur*—a view also shared by Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Bavarian Prime Minister Horst Seehofer.⁹ Yet this idea of a homogeneous German identity seems to reflect an increasingly self-enclosed Christian consciousness, contrary to the universal humanist and secular values of the Enlightenment, the legacy of which these politicians nevertheless claim. Whereas Seehofer in his “Sieben-Punkte-Plan” denied that Germany had become a country of immigration and called for an end to the influx of immigrants from other cultures (“multiculturalism is dead”), Merkel took the middle ground by distancing herself from Sarrazin’s contentious theories and endorsing Wulff’s statement about Islam as part of contemporary Germany, while also stating at the convention of the Young Christian Democrats in October 2010 that “the approach to multiculturalism has utterly failed”: “immigrants must not only be fostered but also challenged” whereby education and competence in the language were key to social integration. Disagreeing with Seehofer’s

⁶ See the preprint of Sarrazin’s chapter on “Immigration and Integration” in *Der Spiegel* 34, August 23, 2010: 136-140.

⁷ Ulrich Greiner, “Unser Islam?” in *Die Zeit* 41, October 7, 2010: 1

⁸ See “Für Friedrich gehört der Islam nicht zu Deutschland,” *Zeit Online*, March 3, 2011 <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2010-03/innenminister-islam-friedrich>.

⁹ See “Merkel erklärt Multikulti für gescheitert,” which also includes Seehofer’s “Sieben-Punkte-Plan” for integration, in *Spiegel Online*, October 16, 2010 <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,druck-723532,00.html>.

radical stance, Merkel strongly stressed the continued importance of immigration to Germany for economic and demographic reasons—a position also taken by Klaus Bade, a well-known researcher in the area of migration and integration. Bade argues for a facilitated and “controlled immigration” of highly skilled foreigners to guarantee Germany’s global competitiveness and the functioning of its social system in light of declining birth rates.¹⁰ Contrary to Sarrazin’s contention that Turks would undermine German society by eventually turning it into a Muslim-controlled nation, Bade posits an actual reversal from immigration to emigration, since in recent years more people of Muslim descent have been leaving Germany than entering it. From Bade’s perspective, however, efforts to turn German immigration politics around and make the country more attractive for experts from abroad are being undercut by xenophobic and populist arguments such as Sarrazin’s that prevent qualified potential immigrants from moving to Germany while not keeping well-educated German-Turks in the country. According to a recent survey, published in this year’s report (*Migrationsland Deutschland 2011*) by the national Council for Integration and Immigration, chaired by Klaus Bade, the future recruitment of skilled foreign workers would also be supported by a majority of the German population—for Bade a telling sign of how little some politicians know their own citizens when they “relate horror scenarios about immigration.”

The Council’s favorable report regarding public opinion on immigration has been recently repudiated by the conservative German-Turkish sociologist Necla Kelek, who (in support of Sarrazin) dismisses the Council’s study as scientifically questionable, ideologically driven, and based on political correctness, thereby ignoring “social reality.”¹¹ As seen by Kelek,

¹⁰ For Bade and the following discussion, see Lisa Caspari, “Die fremdenfreundlichen Deutschen,” April 13, 2011 in *Zeit Online* [http://www.zeit.de/ gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2011-04/studie-migrationsland-immigration](http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2011-04/studie-migrationsland-immigration).

¹¹ Necla Kelek, “Professor Bade gibt den Anti-Sarrazin,” in *FAZ.NET* http://www.faz.net/s/_Rub_31A20177863E45B189A541403543256D.

the “real issues” of immigration, such as forced marriages, honor killings, and a readiness for violence among young migrants, are a direct outcome of the Islamic religion whose potential for reform and compatibility with democracy she denies—a populist view for which she too has been criticized as this contributes to Islamophobia and only impedes integration.¹² What seems indisputable, though, is the fact that the debate on integration “is being split into two levels”: whereas Sarrazin’s book “has drawn almost unilateral condemnation from political leaders in Germany,” surveys also indicate that it enjoys considerable sympathy among the general public, based on its sales figures.¹³ According to Armin Nassehi, the wide-spread popularity of this book touches deeply rooted social anxieties related to the migrant as visible “other” and evokes fears of *Überfremdung* and identity loss in an increasingly multicultural society and complex global world.¹⁴ In reference once more to Homi Bhabha, who politicizes Freud: the consoling idea of nation and of the belonging to a familiar, home-like place cannot be separated from the uncanny but unavoidable threat posed by the cultural “other,” so that the “other” is never located outside of us, but within each cultural system.¹⁵

While national and cultural identities, as well as the range of meanings and “imagined communities” associated with the concept of Europe, continue to be publicly debated and negotiated in German-speaking countries, German literary and cultural studies have shown that the imaginary literary-artistic constructions of the world function as a major social force in their own right. Within the context of the much-analyzed concepts of national, racial or ethnic identity in both the social sciences and cultural studies, language is probably the most important

¹² See the interview with Necla Kelek and Patrick Bahners in *Der Spiegel* 8, February 21, 2011: 124-127.

¹³ See Mark Hallam, “Politicians call for serious debate on integration in Germany,” *Deutsche Welle*, September 3, 2010 <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,5971908,00.html>.

¹⁴ Armin Nassehi, “Mein Abend mit Sarrazin,” in *Die Zeit* 41, October 7, 2010: 55.

¹⁵ See Elisabeth Bronfen’s Preface to the German translation of Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture*, in *Die Verortung der Kultur*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2000: x.

determinant. As Azade Seyhan argues in *Writing Outside the Nation* (2001), narratives “shape national consciousness” both by instituting and supporting national myths and by recording and questioning what our contemporary society, history and public memory often repress and forget (8). Contemporary scholarship on modern Germany, especially in the first decade of the twenty-first century, reveals an unprecedented attention to nationalism and cosmopolitanism, migration, and colonialism.¹⁶ From the consequences of World War I and the migration of German-Jewish intellectuals to Istanbul (Konuk), to transnational production of film (Halle) and theater (Sieg), to the comparative evaluation and redefinition of Turkish-German literature (Seyhan, Adelson, Cheesman, Mani), these scholars spotlight key moments that form and inform German self-imagination and German imagination of the non-German/non-European “other.” This body of scholarship—there are many more examples—collates and examines reactions to German nationalism and cosmopolitanism, migration, and colonialism from the outside by focusing on German-language intellectual, artistic, political, social, and historical engagements with the rest of the world. Underlying these multiple critical perspectives is the notion that an isolationist and insular examination of cultural, political, and historical institutions of the German-speaking nations can at best only inadequately address the complexities of the multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic compositions of those nations. Without over-simplifying a so-called “globalization” of German Studies, these scholars centrally reference historical processes that condition contemporary political realities, thereby necessitating innovations in critical approaches.

Since “transnationalism” and “cosmopolitanism,” as “-isms,” immediately induce disciplinary and methodological anxieties, a brief statement on the theoretical purchase of these

¹⁶ Seyhan (2001); Adelson (2005); Ames, Klotz, and Wiedelthal (2005); Beck (2006); Benhabib (2006); Beck and Grandé (2007); Cheesman (2007); Mani (2007); Sieg (2008); Halle (2008); Mandel (2008); Konuk (2010).

terms is necessary. The second half of the twentieth century witnessed an unprecedented escalation of migration and amplification of technological, financial, and commercial interdependence between nations. These processes inaugurated many new modes of inquiry in the humanities and the social sciences. On the one hand, the rise of new nation-states following processes of decolonization led to postcolonial examinations of the concept of the nation; on the other, the development of regional entities such as the European Union gave rise to transnational perspectives on national cultural heritages. In the field of literary and cultural studies, the interdisciplinarity of feminist, postcolonial, and minoritarian interventions, combined with new methodologies and perspectives in the field of Comparative Literature, manifested themselves in a deconstruction of the category of “national” languages and literatures, which turned out to have been more plural and hybrid all along than scholars had realized.

The inherent hybridity of the nation has informed regional, continental, and in some cases comparative global examinations of the term, dispersed and diffused under a new “ism”—“transnationalism.” There are many extant definitions, proposed methods, and approaches surrounding the term, often centered around the significance of the “nation-state” as the primary principle of organization of polity in the multinational corporate economies of the late-twentieth century.¹⁷ Interestingly enough, the use of the prefix “trans-” in works on governance and political theory often occurs parallel to a sympathetic or critical evaluation of the term “post-national.” Instead of rehearsing these arguments in their entirety, three points merit attention. First, “transnationalism” as a critical approach does not invoke the condition of the “nation-state” (bounded by a hyphen) so much as it calls for a critique of the “nation/state” (separated by a slash)—prompting both choice and alternative. Transnational critique includes the examination of the nation through its various “nation-building” institutions: language, literature, politics,

¹⁷ Matustik (1993); Habermas (2001); Hedetoft and Hjort (2002); Zürn and Joerges (2005).

sociology, art, and history. Consequently, transnational approaches prompt an engagement with universalism and cosmopolitanism; race and ethnicity; globalization and modernity; border crossings and migration; cultural citizenship and multicultural rights. Second, “transnationalism” cannot be reduced to a “methodology.” It is a mode of critical intellectual experience, representation, analysis. It is a perspective that comprises many modes of investigation of dominance and emancipation, cultural assertion and cultural self-definition, mono- and multiculturalism, mono- and multilingualism, among many others. And last but not least, “transnationalism” is not a sub-discipline, it is a way of re-arranging, or even creatively dis-arranging prevalent national paradigm within disciplines, especially those pertaining to language and literature.

It would thus be fair to state that the discursive energy of transnational approaches lies not so much in the so-called “replaceability” of the nation-states with regional entities such as the European Union. The simplification of this “causal” relationship between critiques of nation and the rise of a transnational perspective through the so-called “end of the nation state” has been aptly critiqued, with the most effective recent contributions including Etienne Balibar (2004) and Seyla Benhabib (2004). Extending the inquiry that started in *Race, Nation, Class* (1991), Balibar’s *We the People of Europe?* (2004) performs a critique of the nation in the context of a late-capitalist European economy saturated with (and dependent on) labor migrants of global origins. On the one hand, as in his earlier essays, Balibar mobilizes the overt elements of national self-definition—language, ethnicity, religion—to identify national scripts and codes and thus to invite de-scripting and de-coding a transnational context. On the other hand, by declaring that “Europe is postcolonial,” Balibar effectively decries any attempts to disconnect the federalist present of a post-Berlin Wall Europe from its imperialist/colonialist past that conditioned the

presence of migratory labor in Europe in the second half of the twentieth century. In *Rights of Others* (2004), Seyla Benhabib formulates similar questions about the changing form of a nation. Underlying her discussion of transformations of citizenship is a renewed examination of the relationship between *demos*—authors and subjects of governing law; and *ethnos*—communities of fate. At the core of Benhabib’s argument is an assessment of modes through which distinctions of “us” and “them,” citizens and aliens could be re-conceptualized in both the principle and the practice of modern nation-states. Her investigation of pluralism and minority rights is thus conducted through an engagement with “hospitality”—a phenomenon whose centrality within European philosophical discourses can be traced backwards through Jacques Derrida and Hannah Arendt all the way to Kant’s seminal essay “Perpetual Peace.”

The fact that postcoloniality remains a central point of reference in Balibar’s and Benhabib’s conceptualizations of contemporary Europe is not merely a nod to an academic subdiscipline. Balibar and Benhabib seem to be in a dialogue with Gayatri Spivak’s *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, which she describes as “practitioner’s progress from colonial discourse studies to transnational cultural studies” (2, n. 3). Postcolonial studies, Spivak categorically states, cannot “unwittingly commemorate a lost object.” Colonial discourse studies, when they only concentrate on the representation of the colonized or the matter of the colonies, can sometimes serve the production of current neocolonial knowledge by placing colonialism/imperialism securely in the past, and/or by suggesting a continuous line from that past to our present. Hence Spivak’s admonition that colonial/postcolonial studies is becoming a “subdisciplinary ghetto” (1) marked by “a self-marginalizing, self-consolidating migrant or postcolonial masquerading as a “native-informant” (6). A “transnational cultural studies,” it seems from Spivak’s theorization, must therefore also include knowledge production about the

third world, and the orientalist—to use Said’s term—dimension of such knowledge production to criticize the “primary texts” on the one hand; and colonial/postcolonial critics on the other hand. While an overuse of the term “postcolonial” to describe all political subjectivities bereft of historical context actually weakens the critical purchase of the term, to grant Germany or German-speaking countries a complete freedom from the term would be to compromise attempts to critically connect Germany with Europe’s shared history of colonial enterprises in Asia and Africa. The processes of nation-building within and beyond Europe, as Benhabib, Balibar, and Spivak demonstrate, cannot be fully comprehended without taking such a history into consideration. While the demarcation of time—the moment of “decolonization”—is indeed important for postcolonial thought, postcolonial theories and theorists do not presume that the moment of decolonization is also the absolute actual end of colonialism. In fact, it has been the predicament of postcolonial theory to present and choose as its subject of investigation and critique the extension of colonial/ist practices, the expansion of the master-slave/settler-native/colonizer-colonized relationships in the present societal, epistemological, and institutional structures of postcolonial societies. “Postcolonial” is not merely a term for a national/political space that has been carved out of a decolonizing practice. It can also be used as a designation for the world in which we live. It is not merely a temporal term, but also a qualitative one. These multiple and varying meanings of the term “postcolonial” as it informs “transnational cultural studies” are explored and developed in many essays in this collection.

Cosmopolitanism is a mode of conversations with, a set of obligations to, and a strategy of intervention in a world beyond one’s immediate individual and communitarian affiliations. In the second half of the twentieth century, in a socio-political text complicated by decolonization and political autonomy on the one hand and global capital expansion and multinational techno-

economic corporatism on the other, cosmopolitanism has acquired new dimensions and gained new ground.¹⁸ We owe the term “cosmopolitical” to its imaginative use by Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, editors of the anthology *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (1998). Cheah and Robbins used the word *cosmopolitics* to place emphasis on a restructuring and rethinking of the term “cosmopolitanism.” In their two separate introductions to the anthology, Robbins and Cheah define cosmopolitics as “less than kin or friendship but a good deal more than polite or innocent nonrelation” (Robbins); and “cosmopolitical as an apposite term for the global force-field of the political” (Cheah). Also in 1998, the German term “kosmopolitisch”—in alignment with Wieland and Kant’s use of the adjective “cosmopolitan”—regained currency in discussions of Europe through its use by Jürgen Habermas in his influential and much-discussed essay, “Die postnationale Konstellation und die Zukunft der Demokratie.” Habermas stressed in his essay the need for reevaluation of national sovereignty and state structure vis-à-vis the reorganization of Europe as a confederation of nation-states. Arguing forcefully for an attenuation of real and metaphorical national boundaries, Habermas concentrated on the question of European civil society’s mutual affiliation, parallel to the affiliation to the nation inhabited by the populace, and the state, which the populace legitimizes as democratic subjects of polity.

In transnational contexts, the imaginary is used as a mode of understanding between different linguistic and literary traditions without, however, erasing cultural differences. A plethora of narratives discussed in the present collection attest that the literatures of the twenty-first century tend to be “literatures on the move” (see Ottmar Ette’s comparative study of the same title, 2003), border-crossing literatures that go beyond clear-cut national and territorial

¹⁸ See Robbins and Cheah (1998); Anderson (2001); Vertovec and Cohen (2003); Archibuigi (2003); Benhabib (2004); Appiah (2006); Walkowitz (2006); Mani (2007). This is by no means an exhaustive list, just a mention of a few key positions in philosophy, sociology, political theory, and literary/cultural criticism.

borderlines and literary genres, raising many questions pertinent to our scholarly inquiry in the interdisciplinary field of German Studies. To name just a few: how do texts and cultural products resist hegemonic semantics while simultaneously dismantling the rhetoric of binary opposition encapsulated in phrases such as “the clash of civilizations”? To what extent, and through a deployment of which aesthetic strategies do authors, painters, performance artists and thinkers re-write and transform dominant, exclusionary political narratives? Conversely, as professional readers and analysts of cultural artifacts, do we express unflinching belief in our modes of “rescuing” minoritarian and marginalized subjectivities from the hegemony of “dominant” narratives (which we in fact have identified), thereby falling prey to our self-importance in our self-avowed celebration of “politics of resistance” (Lennox 2008, 24-25)? Or are we capable of questioning our own epistemic privilege through rhetorical and analytical modes that reveal in fact the vulnerability of the scope of our own epistemological interests (*Erkenntnisinteressen*); the limits of our power to represent marginalized/minoritarian subjectivities in transnational, para-local contexts?

The very first essay of this collection formulates the above-mentioned question in the context of visual conceptualizations of globality. David Kim pursues a two-pronged inquiry, the fulcrum of which is a particular condition of (belated) postcoloniality that draws attention to the unevenness of power-equation (Fanon) within a *Weltbild* model (Heidegger) that seems to be complicit in the contemporary heralding of the globe. From the perspective of the contemporary proliferation of a planetary notion of eco-cosmopolitanism, popularized by Al Gore’s famous documentary film *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006) among others, Kim brings into relief the tensions among “translatability” and “intranslatability,” “visibility” and “invisibility,” in other words, accessibility and inaccessibility of the Heideggerian *Weltbild*.

Kim's inquiry is extended in the context of (world)-literary networks by Johannes Pause. His literary analysis of a novel by Krausser contributes to insights regarding questions of temporality as an epistemic network by pointing to its ambivalence against the background of a globalized world, increasingly dominated by political and economic networks of "special interest." Whereas the concept of border-crossing networks has been embraced by postmodern authors such as Borges and Nabokov, as reflected in the literary deformation of temporal structures in their texts, Pause argues that some contemporary German-speaking writers (even though they take up those authors' literary-aesthetic device) are actually questioning the subversive power of networks by negatively associating them with symptoms of rhizomatic dislocation and a loss of identity.

Language as socio-political practice becomes key to Jennifer Gully's contribution, which demonstrates the politics of language in border zones—Corinthia being the focus—where histories of occupation and migration work hand in hand to produce very complex results for their inhabitants. Her article analyzes the national relevance of the German-Slovene "*Ortstafelstreit*" in Southern Austria by focusing on the political implications of discursively constructed territories and the performative power of language. With instructive substantiation of the issues with historical research, Gully's article assists in augmenting the complexity of "linguistic landscapes."

From the location of the globe, and intertextual networks that construct multiple locations of literary globality, the discussion moves with Paul Buchholz to the idea of "circumlocution." Through readings of contemporary prose by authors such as Terézia Mora and Peter Handke, Buchholz draws attention to questions of formal and political fusion of aesthetic devices whereby the narrator/author simultaneously accentuates and attenuates geo-political as well as

identitarian specifications, innovating thereby both the narrative and the readers' participation in the narrative. Akin to Kim, Buchholz centralizes the question of narrative geo-political mapping. However, Kim's focus on "visibility" and "invisibility" acquires new dimensions in Buchholz's discussion: instead of a construction of *Weltbild*, we witness a powerful deconstruction of "*Bild*" through "*Bildverlust*."

These ideas of narrative geo-political mapping find extension in Gordana-Dana Grozdanic's investigation of Enzensberger's essay *Aussichten auf den Bürgerkrieg*, which points out how the dynamics of space and space relations (the Yugoslavian wars of the 1990s and the simultaneous escalation of violence in German cities) in a concrete single text can be analyzed within the context of greater temporal developments (the fall of the Berlin Wall and of the Iron Curtain). As Grozdanic convincingly argues, it is through a discursively constructed cross-linking of local and (semi-)global conflicts, of proximity and distance, of the familiar and the foreign, that the author succeeds in generating an effect of estrangement, thereby drawing our attention to an increasingly interconnected world in which clear-cut demarcations between the domestic and the global no longer apply.

The issue of space, language, ethnicity and their rhetorical impact in "naming" the minoritarian subject becomes central to the contribution by Monika Albrecht. Her article examines the unreflective conflation of the adjectives "Muslim" and "postcolonial," rendering questionable the very politics of representation and its limits. Albrecht critiques the overuse of the terms and presents a commentary that is still highly relevant for connecting Germany with Europe's shared history of colonialism and thus for understanding the inclusionary/exclusionary processes of nation building.

Carol Pfaff makes a sharp incision in the debates on mono- and multilingualism, using a

dual approach. First, she analyzes the politicization of language and linguistic pedagogy with regards to “migrant” or “minority” subjects in contemporary Germany, with due attention to the larger EU cultural policies and politics; and second, she substantiates the critique of “expectations” with insights from research in socio-political linguistics. Her timely analysis clearly shows how closely connected the issues of linguistic, social, and political policies are, as the current immigration debate and Sarrazin’s recent remarks about Muslim immigrants, their unwillingness to integrate, and his call for higher barriers to immigration all attest. While for reasons of integration the importance of German language-learning is widely acknowledged, the level of proficiency and its role in granting right of residence remains controversial, given its potential use as a political instrument in controlling unwanted immigration.

Yasemin Yildiz evaluates the philosophical and literary imagination of language. She draws attention to hitherto under-discussed demarcations of “mono- and multilingualism” and brings into relief the tensions underlying singular and plural conceptualizations of language as a medium of expression. Whereas Gully’s contribution to the correlation of national space and language politics points out the hybrid and cosmopolitan dimension of multilingualism, Yildiz argues in her analysis of two very different multilingual texts for a more critical valuation. Her idea of “postmonolingual” captures the ongoing co-existence of a persisting monolingual, nation-related paradigm in spite of its multilingual claim, on the one hand, and a truly subversive multilingual practice of altering the perception of languages and cultures, on the other, as seen in the literary texts of Yoko Tawada.

Barbara Wolbert effectively questions and “displays” the very idea of collective representations of “national” or “nationally oriented” art. The processes underlying the curation, classification, and exhibition of works of art that Wolbert examines through “Turkish” art

exhibits in Germany unfold and unravel questions of “home,” “belonging,” and cultural-political citizenship of the artwork itself.

Kathrin Bower extends some of these issues, linking comedy in text and performance with questions of cultural and political citizenship. By focusing on Serdar Somuncu, the article brings to center stage multiple layers of “belonging”/affiliation/dis-affiliation that Somuncu performs and writes about through his inclusion of issues that would otherwise be considered social taboos. While Wolbert’s ethnographic study of art exhibitions exposes the inner makings of collective identification and the marketing of art as commodity, Bower presents a rehearsal of identity as dis-identification, whereby Somuncu’s performative pieces and writings together disrupt any easy subscription to the hyphen that binds the adjectives Turkish and German.

And finally, Elke Segelcke unravels the text of a postcolonial, transnational, migratory Europe as a “work-in-progress.” Beginning with a consideration of (trans-)“difference” and identity as a set of values that have often fueled passionate endorsement on the one hand, and critique on the other of the so-called “clash of civilizations,” Segelcke takes a sober look at the very foundational ideas of Europe as a philosophical and political concept at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Turkish-German author Zafer Şenocak’s essayistic writings emerge as a strong example of the gap between the overtly tolerant, multicultural policies of the European Union and the ground realities of the European polity.

The diversity of texts, methods, and approaches chosen by the contributors to this collection is a testament to the diversity of the subjects of inquiry that may be included in the discipline of “German” studies. Collectively these essays demonstrate that transnational and cosmopolitical approaches are neither a recipe for pre-determined desired results, nor a set of

rules from an instructional manual. The conceptualization of this Special Topic is along these very lines: a collective enterprise of reshaping and reforming through introspective, retrospective, and prospective strategies and collaborative thinking. The essays are, in sum, a series of interventions that re-position the nation as text, performance, and pedagogy.

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