

## Introduction

This volume marks a significant event in the development of an academic infrastructure in Ireland, being the first ever postgraduate venture of this kind in German Studies in the country. The essays assembled here were contributions to the initial Postgraduate Conference in German Studies hosted by the Department of German, University College Cork in May 2011 and organized by Laura Noonan and Adelina Syms. The convenors' intentions were that the conference provide an opportunity for postgraduates to meet, exchange ideas and forge connections; in addition, and as is reflected in the broad chronological and disciplinary scope of the essays published here, the event was to be as open, inviting and thematically diverse as possible. Not least, it was an opportunity for emerging scholars to present their developing research within a supportive scholarly environment. It was the successful realisation of these aims that led to the encouraging suggestion, by Dr Rachel MagShamhráin (Department of German, University College Cork), to work towards a published collection of essays.

The broad historical span of the material explored here – from the mid-eighteenth century to the present – invites the reader to engage with Enlightenment morals, challenges to the Enlightenment by the Romantic movement that followed it, the liberalism of pre-unification Germany replaced by the Wilhelminian Empire, the abrupt transitions in politics and society brought about by both world wars and their aftermaths, and contemporary culture and society. It is the corresponding response to such societal and cultural change that provides the common thread that links the essays together: either in the structure or the content of the material explored established rules and norms are challenged or renegotiated, or sometimes ultimately uprooted and subsequently replaced. Power relationships, either implicit or explicitly expressed, are thus a central feature in some contributions; in other cases, deliberate nonconformity in the ideological bent of the creators of the works is projected through rebelliousness or digression in the actions or thoughts of their 'players', reflecting the challenges posed to culture, politics and society alike during the periods in question.

As well as becoming acquainted with the social and political conditions in which the works were produced, the reader is invited to (re)consider these works through a variety of interconnected theoretical approaches. Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of the *grotesque body* and the *carnavalesque* (both pinpointed by Bakhtin in his *Rabelais and his World*, completed 1940, published 1965, as subtexts of Renaissance writer François Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*), are considered in relation to theatre and avant-garde artistic practice. The *carnavalesque*, as descriptive of a social world that survives in spite of efforts to subdue it reflects the ethical dimension of Bakhtin's work, as in his early essay *Art and Answerability* (1924). According to Jeffrey T. Nealon, the idea of an 'unassimilable excess as a bulwark against the reification of otherness' unites Bakhtin's ethical thought with that of Emmanuel

Levinas, whose work on the primacy of the Other provides a theoretical framework in other contributions presented here; Bakhtin and Levinas shared the conviction that ‘contact with the human other cannot simply be reified into a moment or movement of appropriation’.<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault’s concept of human geography, *heterotopias*, and Homi Bhabha’s theories of cultural difference – captured in the terms *hybridity* (also used in a non-racist sense by Bakhtin in the development of his *carnavalesque*) and *the third space* – are employed here in relation to Levinas’ writings, and within the context of postcolonialism. In addition, Foucault’s perhaps lesser-known concept of the *dispositif* is given an alternative reading through Peter Braun’s interpretation of its relation to Jean-Louis Baudry’s theory of film. The reader can also draw comparisons between Levinas’ *otherness* and Theodor Adorno’s addressing of linguistic violence; Adorno’s essays, for example his *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947, with Mark Horkheimer) and his book *Negative Dialectics* (1966), are considered here with regard to their rejection of the rationalization and categorization associated with language.

As well as drawing upon substantial archival research, the essays offer fresh perspectives on well-known works while in other cases they re-open dialogue on works that have received little attention in English. Andrea Hanna’s and Tatsiana Shkliar’s contributions explore how the work of Austrian dramatist Philipp Hafner (1731/35-1764) and Swabian late-Romantic writer Justinus Kerner (1786-1862) challenged the moralistic reforms imposed by the Enlightenment. Hanna looks to Bakhtin’s study of Rabelais as a conceptual framework for her exploration of the fool character Kasperl in Hafner’s plays for the Viennese *Volkstheater*. While the Enlightenment had established itself as a major intellectual force by the mid-eighteenth century, and had become the standard bearer of ‘correct’ moral etiquette by which society was to be measured, the ‘correctness’ of this moral etiquette would be interrogated by the revolt of Romanticism. We learn from Hanna that the seemingly harmless Kasperl’s actions are in fact deeply reflective of Hafner’s resistance to the stringent moralistic reforms imposed on the Viennese *Volkstheater* throughout the eighteenth century. Though largely overlooked in English-language scholarship, Hafner was among the most prominent playwrights of the eighteenth century, particularly in Viennese theatre. The character of Kasperl was a morally cleansed alternative to the bawdy, less Enlightenment-friendly characters of extemporized performance such as Hanswurst and Bernardon, the former whose ‘banishment’ from theatre in 1737 marked a long process of censorship which in Austria eventually led to the *Hanswurststreit* [Hanswurst Debate] (1747–69) and comprehensive state censorship under the absolutist monarchy of Maria Theresa and Joseph II. As Hanna traces in her exploration of Kasperl in Hafner’s work, Hanswurst’s ‘banishment’ in 1837 is symbolic in German theatre history of the transition from the popular, improvised ‘Stegreiftheater’ to a modern bourgeois

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey T. Nealon, ‘The Ethics of Dialogue. Bakhtin and Levinas’, *College English*, 59 (1997), pp. 129-148 (p. 133).

literary mode.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps Leopold Mozart's harsh criticism of Hafner's *Megära die furchterliche Hexe* [Megära the Fearsome Witch] (1765), as an example in Mozart's view of how culturally backward Viennese theatre had become, prompted Hanswurst's replacement by the figure of Kasperl in Hafner's work.<sup>3</sup> Word play in Kasperl's dialogue betrays both Hafner's refusal to submit to Enlightenment etiquette completely and his attempts to uncover its imperfections. Bakhtin's concepts of the *grotesque body* and the *carnavalesque* provide the theoretical framework for this exploration of Kasperl. While extemporised performance had been removed from the stage by Enlightenment reformers, Philipp Hafner's comic drama ensured the survival of the stage fool in the Viennese *Volkstheater*. Shklier treats how Kerner used farce, grotesquerie and satire in his novel *Reiseschatten von dem Schattenspieler Luchs* [The Travelling Shadow of Silhouette Player Linx] (1811) as weapons to scorn the so-called educated theatre audience. In a manner similar to Hafner before him, Kerner uses the structure and content of *Reiseschatten* to project his own viewpoints with regard to Enlightenment rationality. Highly unconventional in that it is written in the style of a shadow play, *Reiseschatten* is invested with the strongly visual elements of written language characteristic of Romanticism. *Reiseschatten*'s chapters approximate to short (often comedic) performances, which are structured as a series of word-images (dispositives) that take centre stage or fade out, in a manner similar to a scene-change in a theatre performance; as such, *Reiseschatten* is a nexus between literature and visual art, its intermediality representative of *die romantische Synästhesie*. Shklier looks to Peter Braun's reading of Foucault's concept of the *dispositif* to illustrate Kerner's intentions with regard to the structure of the novel; for Braun, the *dispositif* functions as an apparatus between the written text and the reader, and a juncture in which literature and visual art merge.

Charlotte Lerg traces the course of German culture politics in the early twentieth century through an exploration of the conditions and events that shaped the founding of the Germanic Museum at Harvard University in 1903 and offers insight to the cultural conditions that culminated in war in 1914. While for Harvard officials, the value of the museum – at that moment at least – did not stretch far beyond its being a significant addition to the university's scholarly environment, the motives of the German intellectuals involved had a strongly missionary impetus and ethnographic dimension, in that they saw the museum as an assertion of German cultural superiority: it may have pained the German delegation that Germany could not compete with the industrial might of the United States but for the moment at least, Germany could trade on its considerable cultural achievements. By the close of the

<sup>2</sup> Karen Jürs-Munby, Hanswurst and Herr Ich: Subjection and Abjection in Enlightenment Censorship of the Comic Figure, <<http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/4232/1/download.pdf>> [accessed 5 June 2013].

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Till, review of David J. Buch, *Magic Flutes and Enchanted Forests: The Supernatural in Eighteenth-Century Musical Theatre* (Chicago and London, 2008), *Music and Letters*, 91 (2010), pp. 263-266 (p. 266).

nineteenth century, the Wilhelminian Empire, founded on the military successes of 1864-1871, had become more culturally homologous, and in German foreign policy, 'German' rather than 'Germanic' identity was projected abroad. Already assured of its position as the greatest military power in continental Europe, pre-World War I Germany fostered a sense of superiority and dominance in its cultural achievements; this was infused with an innately racist undertone, inherent in the use of 'Germanic' in the museum's title. *Kultur* and *Bildung* were the key concepts in the drive to promote German national identity abroad, thus the events surrounding the museum's foundation reveal the competitive nature of German-American relations at that time, while also pointing to what had become the norm in Germany by 1914: an overarching pride in a culture founded largely on military victories, and which seemed to encourage the bellicose spirit that led to war.

Sarah Kelleher and Ann Murray each consider different though not disconnected aspects of visual arts practice during the Weimar Republic, which was in no small part a revolt against the pre-war militarized culture. The fourteen years of the Weimar Republic that began in August 1919 has often been described as a history of 'extremes rubbing shoulders'.<sup>4</sup> Normalcy for German society was a constant battle for economic survival in addition to grappling with the emergence of the new order that was triggered by the war: as well as the conversion from imperialism to democracy, the pre-war militarised and bourgeois culture that had allowed the war to happen and continued to deny the real devastation of the war was under attack from liberals, and encapsulated by the caustic responses of avant-garde artists and writers, particularly the Dadaists: 'Dadaism is the reaction against all those attempts to disavow the actual' noted Wieland Herzfelde in 1920.<sup>5</sup> Artists homed in on society's outmoded expectations with regard to the body's ability to withstand industrialized warfare, expectations no doubt influenced by the myth of endurance attached to the portrayal of German military invincibility in the popular press. The fate of the body was a major theme, if not the locus of, the First International Dada Fair in Berlin, held between 30 June and 25 August 1920 at Otto Burchard's gallery, and which Kelleher considers in relation to her exploration of the work of Hannover artist Kurt Schwitters, and New York-based German Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. Kelleher looks to Bakhtin's concept of the *grotesque body* as a model for interpreting a more hopeful consideration of the fate of the body in the industrialized age. While ardently Dadaist in their use of *objets trouvés*, a unifying element of Dadaist practice, Schwitters' and von Freytag-Loringhoven's work differed from the much more dystopian register of the Berlin Dadaists' picturing of the 'reconfigured' bodies of war cripples by instead celebrating the body's capacity for change and transformation. With particular reference to Schwitters' *Merzbau* [Merz

<sup>4</sup> John Willett, *Art and Politics in the Weimar Period. The New Sobriety 1917-1933* (New York, 1996), p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Wieland Herzfelde, 'Introduction to the First International Dada Fair' (1920), trans. by Brigid Doherty, *October*, 105 (2003), pp. 93-104 (p. 100).

Construction], and von Freytag-Loringhoven's assemblages and attire, Kelleher shows that, while their work was borne of a culture of mourning, it ultimately offered the possibility of healing and renewal. Murray reconsiders German soldier-artist Otto Dix's battlefield pictures as pictorial interrogations of the continuing widespread idealization of militant masculinity in 1920s Germany. Dix challenged the image of soldierhood projected by the epigonal generation of military leaders who were for the most part 'the postheroic generation of inheritors: victors' sons [...] vacillating between the duty to preserve their fathers' achievements and the pressure to produce great deeds of their own [...]. The Wilhelminian generation [...] saw its own historical mission as an expansion of its inheritance'.<sup>6</sup> When this generation failed to emulate their predecessors in 1918 and the country was faced with war reparations, runaway inflation and widespread social and political unrest, much energy was expended – by the army and the government – in blaming something or somebody for the loss of the war. The political and military leaders at the helm in 1914 had been raised on the Wagnerian brand of *Nibelungen* mythology, which became a key component of nationalist propaganda in the print media from the 1870s onward.<sup>7</sup> Wagner devoted particular attention to the figure of Siegfried, converting him from being a rebel to a great hero whose fall is brought about by the betrayal of Hagen (who in the traditional *Nibelungenlied* was the loyal servant who avenges Siegfried's insult to Brunhilde's honour). As Dix was well aware, and as Wolfgang Schivelbusch recalls, popular culture and military might were united in Siegfried, the symbol of the Wilhelminian Empire that was built on military victories; but despite the loss of the war, idealizing imagery based on the figure of Siegfried continued to be a feature in the print media throughout the Weimar years. Dix had exhibited his *War Cripples: A Self-Portrait* (1920) at the First International Dada Fair, and by the mid 1920s, had become one of the foremost – and one of the most controversial – artists of the Neue Sachlichkeit [New Sobriety]. Compared with the popular images of soldierhood, Dix was highly non-conformist in his visceral imagery of industrialized warfare and attempted to expose the mythologizing of the war experience through images that exposed its horrific impact on the body. With reference to the works' provenance, the socio-political climate and the artist's recollections, the battlefield pictures are reconsidered within the environment for which they were originally intended.

Simone Klapper and Antoinette McNamara explore the impact of fascism in German and Austrian memory and identity through the work of two female writers: the Austrian Ingeborg Bachmann (1926-1973), and German writer Ulla Berkéwicz (b. 1948). Bachmann's *Das Buch Franza* [The Book of Franza] (1966-1967) and Berkéwicz's *Engel sind Schwarz und Weiß* [Angels are Black and White] (1992)

<sup>6</sup> Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat*, trans. by Jefferson Chase (London, 2003), pp. 194-195.

<sup>7</sup> *Das Nibelungenlied*, transl. by Daniel B. Shumway (New York, 1909). *Der Ring des Nibelungen* [The Ring of the Nibelung] was written by Richard Wagner between 1848 and 1874, with one of the four operas devoted to the figure of Siegfried.

reflect how Germany and Austria have tried to come to terms with the legacy of National Socialism and comparison between Bachmann and Berkéwicz point up key generational differences with regard to how writers have dealt with the subject. Bachmann experienced the war years first-hand and was the daughter of a Nazi official; indeed, Bachmann's voiced admiration of her father and the prominence of cruel male figures in her work is a chasm that scholars have attempted to bridge.<sup>8</sup> Berkéwicz on the other hand, writing a generation and a half later than Bachmann, attempts to reconstruct Germany's Nazi past and contextualize it (and it is interesting to note that Berkéwicz has adopted her Jewish grandmother's surname). Klapper looks to Adorno's and Levinas' writings on linguistic violence and Levinas' (face-to-face) encounter with the Other as a theoretical framework for her exploration of the interrelation of speechlessness and suicide in Bachmann's novel fragment. In common with a number of other post-war Austrian writers, Bachmann links these themes to a crisis of identity generated by fascism, rationalism and patriarchy but also to ethical considerations connected to the reductive capacity of language. *Das Buch Franza* is generally considered central to Bachmann's scholarship, containing as it does her views on race, aesthetics and gender – particularly in relation to patriarchal structures (and their link to fascism). The utilization of these themes are delineative of Bachmann's rejection of logocentric linguistics' objectifying nature: Franza is reduced to a case study by her psychiatrist husband who stigmatizes and violates her through words; in turn, Franza cannot sufficiently express (or defend) herself through language, pointing up (as Bachmann saw it), the reductive nature of language and her view that fascism is based on an unethical rationalism. Suicide, the result of Franza's speechlessness (and loss of identity) is presented as a manifestation of the destructive nature of language and fascism but also as her only defence against objectification: to protect herself from further stigmatization, she commits suicide, or 'erases' herself, making herself 'unreadable'. McNamara applies an explicitly sociological approach to the reconstruction of childhood experience during the Third Reich in Berkéwicz's controversial first novel *Engel sind Schwarz und Weiß* [Angels are Black and White], first published in 1992, and analyses the manner in which Berkéwicz utilizes her child protagonist, Reinhold, as a means to critically engage with Germany's fascist past. The novel characterizes a profusion of literature produced in the so-called Berlin Republic of the 1990s, which in part sought to confront and contextualize Germany's Nazi past and the Holocaust.<sup>9</sup> While the novel generated much controversy on its release due to its recreation of German fascist diction, McNamara contends that Berkéwicz's method is necessary in order to close the distance of two generations and immerse the reader in the world of National Socialist Germany, and

<sup>8</sup> See for example Bernhard Fetz and others, "My Father, ... I would not have betrayed you ..." Reshaping the Familial Past in Ingeborg Bachmann's Radiofamilie-Texts', *New German Critique*, 93 (2004), pp. 131-143.

<sup>9</sup> See for example Stuart Taberner, *German Literature of the 1990s and Beyond. Normalization and the Berlin Republic* (Rochester, New York, 2005).

to consider Reinhold's development therein as an exploration of that period. McNamara considers the role of Berkéwicz's child protagonist as that of a social actor who assumes an active, rather than passive role in his development towards adulthood, and who ultimately interrogates National Socialist dogma; while Reinhold's overbearing father (as much as society) inculcate Nazi ideology in the young Reinhold, he progressively reassesses his understanding of his environment and gradually develops an awareness and insight which inform his future decisions and actions. Thus, while the impact of acculturation and socialization within the exigency of National Socialism cannot be overlooked, neither can the child's agency be ignored. To do so, argues McNamara, would be to overlook one of Berkéwicz's key objectives: in utilizing a child protagonist to critically engage with the past, the author compels the reader to consider the extent to which personal agency is dependent upon the cultural and sociological forces of one's environment.

Gert Hofmann's contribution (based on his keynote paper for the conference), looks to Levinas' considerations on the presence of the Other as a starting point for his reading of Bulgarian-born writer Ilija Trojanow's biographical novel *Der Weltensammler* [The Collector of Worlds] (2006), in which he treats the otherness of the Other' as another 'world' in an explicitly literary application of Levinas' concept, while also considering Foucault's heterotopias and Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity and the third space to underline the interdependent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. *Der Weltensammler* is based on the travels and experiences of nineteenth-century British colonial officer and travel book writer Richard Francis Burton (1821-1890), who immersed himself in the cultures of the countries he visited until he had assimilated them. Trojanow's narrative is anything but linear, however, introducing multiple perspectives: Burton's experiences of those cultures are not only revealed from his standpoint, but we are also confronted with other people's view of Burton as a British foreigner, which gives the concept of 'foreign' a double edge. Thus Burton's relationships with the people he meets along the way are liminal in nature. Trojanow lived in several Western and non-Western countries before finally settling in Austria, and this experience clearly informed his views on acculturation and the 'ever-changing definition of identity', and the diminishing validity of terms such as nationality in the context of the gradual pluralisation of the world.<sup>10</sup> As Hofmann shows, the scope of Trojanow's term 'collector of worlds' goes beyond the idea of the merely 'trans-cultural' and in literature opens up a new dimension in terms of a quasi-experimental cosmography.

The concluding contribution by Markus Oliver Spitz provides the first ever translation into English of five poems from German writer and artist Christoph Meckel's *Southern* (1984), accompanied by an introductory essay on Meckel's poetry and poetics. *Southern* is the second volume of the trilogy *Die Komödien der*

<sup>10</sup> Ilija Trojanow, 'Döner in Walhalla oder Welche Spuren hinterläßt der Gast, der keiner mehr ist', in: Ilija Trojanow (ed.), *Döner in Walhalla. Texte aus der anderen deutschen Literatur* (Cologne, 2000), p. 10.

*Hölle* [Comedy of Hell] and continues the cyclical quality of the poems in the first volume, *Säure* [Acid] (1979). The poems chosen by Spitz for translation are representative of most of the poems in *Southernrain*; Jerry Glenn notes that while the poems in the volume seem very similar, in that they are generally six to ten lines in length and describe the breakdown of a romantic relationship, they contain an impressive richness and variety, as they reflect on ‘the ambiguously unambiguous nature of human relationships’.<sup>11</sup> Spitz’s selection is based on the fact that little of Meckel’s poetry, unlike his prose, has been translated and studied. In addition, *Southernrain* is generally considered to be the most representative of the author’s mature style, in terms of its universal nature and in that it encompasses the most visited themes in his writing, such as the uncertainty of human relationships. Thus Spitz’s contribution introduces key aspects of Meckel’s work to an English language readership. Spitz draws on Meckel’s *Rede vom Gedicht* [Speech about Poems] (1974, translated here also) as an outline of Meckel’s approach to poetry: through this *Rede*, Spitz conveys Meckel’s wariness of the term ‘poetics’ which, on account of its theoretical restrictions, cannot fully encompass the poetry’s universality. Meckel insists on the role of the poet as a chronicler of truths, however disillusioning these may be: beauty for example is given no privilege, either in terms of human experience (e.g. happiness) or in the structure of the poem, where Meckel eschews formal aestheticizing elements such as metre and rhyme, and, as in the *Rede vom Gedicht*, rejects the epic form.

In sum, the rich variety of approaches and perspectives presented here reflect the dynamic nature of current postgraduate research in German Studies. The editor wishes to extend her sincere thanks to all contributors for their investment of time and effort throughout the editorial process. I also thank Adelina Syms and Laura Noonan, who committed so much energy to the organisation of the conference, Dr Rachel MagShamhráin for her initial guidance, and my doctoral supervisor, Dr Sabine Kriebel (Department of History of Art, University College Cork), for her support. I wish to thank copyright holders for their permission to reproduce texts and images. Very special acknowledgment is extended to the series editors Professor Florian Krobb and Dr Jeff Morrison (National University of Ireland Maynooth), who have committed so much time in helping shape this volume, to Dr Sabine Strümper-Krobb (University College Dublin) for formatting the manuscript, and to Professor Eda Sagarra (Trinity College Dublin), for her kind assistance in preparing this volume for publication. Finally, I wish to thank the Senate of the National University of Ireland for the award of a publication grant, without which the publication of this volume could not have been realised.

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<sup>11</sup> Jerry Glenn, review of Christoph Meckel, *Southernrain* (Munich: Hanser, 1984), *World Literature Today*, 59 (1985), p. 421.