

# NEWS FROM GERMANICS

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

WINTER 2002

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## News from the Chair

*by Sabine Wilke*

One of the pleasures of serving as new Department Chair is sharing the news from Germanics with our friends and alumni all over the world. I am pleased to report that our department is alive and well. In fact, there seems to be a resurgence of those interested in the study of German language, literature, and culture. Our language classes filled up quickly this summer and we had to turn away many interested students. The two major tracks that we offer (German Language and Literature and German Area Studies) are filled with an especially enthusiastic cohort. They are busy making plans to revive the German Club and exchanging the latest news from their study abroad experiences. All of our courses in English translation are now cross-listed with programs such as Comparative Literature, Cinema Studies, European Studies, Comparative History of Ideas, and Linguistics resulting in significantly increased enrollments.

Our graduate students continue to excel in the pursuit of academic excellence that has defined graduate study in this Department for decades. In addition, this year we were able to attract a particularly promising group of Max Kade fellows and Teaching Assistants to our Department and we look forward to working with them in our seminars. Our former students from the last decade who decided to pursue teaching careers are doing well professionally: Imke Meyer received tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor at Bryn Mawr; Karin Bauer is chairing the German Department at McGill University; Laura McGee continues to teach at Western Kentucky University; Bettina Matthias is at Middlebury; Heidi Schlipphacke at Old Dominion; Sylvia Rieger at Harvard; and Sean Ireton at Emory. We also have a group of former graduate students who decided not to go into academics, but are pursuing other careers, including Ulrike Irmler, Britta Simon, Eric Beck, Erin Dallin, and Jochen Liesche at Microsoft and Eric Macki who works for Amazon.

In other exciting news of our department this year, we are searching for a new faculty member in the field of German-Jewish studies to teach courses in Germanics, as well as in the Jewish Studies program at the Jackson School of International Studies. With this hire, we will continue to broaden the scope of our scholarship and teaching to include aspects relating to cultural and international studies. We began this trend

two years ago with the appointment of Eric C. Ames who represents the field of nineteenth and early twentieth century German culture. He also has been teaching interdisciplinary courses on German film and cultural studies in conjunction with the new Cinema Studies program at UW. This year we are also making a concerted effort to draw faculty from other departments who incorporate material relating to Germany and Austria into our day to day operations by making their courses available to our students. Sarah Bryant-Bertail (drama) and John Toews (history) will give talks for our Friday afternoon colloquium series. We hope to continue this collaboration into the years ahead. More information about the German Studies Faculty is available on our newly updated web site ([//depts.washington.edu/uwgerman/](http://depts.washington.edu/uwgerman/)). On a sad note, we said good bye to two colleagues, C. Stephen Jaeger and Dorothee Ostmeier, both of whom had taught in our department for many years. Both accepted offers from other institutions (U of Illinois and U of Oregon respectively). We are hoping to rebuild after these departures. The new position in Jewish studies is a first step in that direction.

Given the current fiscal difficulties the state of Washington is experiencing, it is harder to recruit and retain excellent faculty. We will need to place more emphasis on development and the need to raise more private funds for endowed professorships and research support. As a department, we have drafted our first development plan outlining our fundraising goals for the next five years. We are confident that the academic strength of the department and our forward-looking attitude with regard to issues of interdisciplinary collaboration, technological innovation, and community involvement will be our best fundraising tools. Just recently, the department received a little over \$100,000 from the estate of Professor emerita Dr. Annemarie Sauerlander, which we placed into an endowment for student scholarships. We are enormously thankful to our former colleague for including us in her will.

This year the Department is sponsoring five international visitors. Our Distinguished Max Kade Professor, Nikolaus Wegmann (Potsdam), will be teaching a graduate course on Alexander Kluge in winter quarter. Thanks to an Arts & Sciences award, Christopher Balme (Mainz) will be teaching a two-week graduate workshop on German theater in the spring. Two visiting scholars sponsored by the Feodor-Lynen program of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation will be conducting their research

*Wilke continued on page 6*



## Roberto Simanowski

Dr. Roberto Simanowski, at present **Feodor-Lynen fellow** (Humboldt Foundation) in our department, former fellow at Harvard (1998-2000) and editor of the on-line journal, *dichtung-digital*, is at the University of Washington German department for a three-month sojourn.

While here, in addition to pursuing his own research, Dr. Simanowski will be assisting in the creation and development of our department's Vienna website, which is to be on-line for the use of our students.

As for his research interests, which he has referred to as "digital aesthetics", Simanowski emphasizes that it is not a matter of "digitalized literature" such as, say, a Stephen King novel appearing on the internet. Rather, digital art is involved with utilizing the many unique potentialities of the internet. One of these is interactivity, namely a text to which the reader can contribute and in which (s)he can, in effect, participate.

Another is intermediality, which includes the use of several media, such as music and graphic illustrations to accompany a text. Another aspect of intermediality is the construction of what Simanowski terms a "nonlinear" or "hyper-" text. While a traditional text such as a book is essentially linear (for example, reading from line to line and page to page), a hypertext consists of a lattice or tree of nodes, at each of which the user has a number of choices or links from which to proceed. The user can thus determine to a great extent the configuration of a text to a degree formerly impossible.

A third aspect of digital art has been termed "Inszenierung" or performance. This involves among other things, the adjustment of a text contingent upon certain characteristics of the user. For example, the construction of a journal which can be programmed to be read only at a particular time of day, or even the withholding of a text under certain circumstances.

Dr. Simanowski, who studied in Jena and Goettingen and now pursues his editorial and research work in Berlin, was originally drawn to his present research through his interest in "virtual reality" such as is exemplified by those computer games in which the user can participate and thus effect the final outcome. He notes that while internet technologies provide hitherto unimagined aesthetic possibilities, there have in fact been earlier forerunners such as the so-called "Lexikonroman" in which the reader had a choice in selecting succeeding pages and various endings as well as in the innovative work of the Frenchman Marc Saporta, who constructed a novel consisting of unattached pages in a box.

As for the future of the field, Simanowski notes

that in view of the great potential of further technological developments, it is difficult to make any exact predictions. He does, however, foresee that the further development of the field will lead to the posing of some basic questions such as what is the nature of authorship and of reception. Further, will the participation of virtually any user in the creation of an art form result in some sort of "democracy

*Simanowski continued on page 6*



## Uwe Steiner

The Department of Germanics is pleased to report that Professor Uwe Steiner from Berlin, now teaching in the Department of German and Slavic Studies at Rice University, held the position of **Max Kade Distinguished Visiting Professor** here at the UW last spring (2001). Steiner,

who is a specialist on Walter Benjamin, offered a seminar entitled "Theses on the Concept of History: From G.E. Lessing to W. Benjamin." The title of his seminar, "Theses on the Concept of History," was taken from an eponymous work by Benjamin, who is considered to be one of the leading lights in the history of criticism.

Benjamin, a German Jew, fled Nazi Germany for France. After Paris fell victim to the German *Wehrmacht*, he committed suicide after his failed attempt to escape to the U.S. via Spain. However, his "Reflections on History", written in 1940, bears witness to the devastating disappointment the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939 spelled for many leftist intellectuals. Benjamin's work took shape within the tradition of German *Geschichtsphilosophie*, a discipline which, like so-called Continental Philosophy, usually lacks a home of its own in the American academy. Here its practitioners are most likely to be found in the departments of comparative literature, history and, at least at the UW, in the Department of Germanics. *Geschichtsphilosophie*, which originated in the Age of Enlightenment, problematizes such basic concepts as history, progress, development, and freedom.

Commenting on his experiences instructing American students, Steiner is pleased to find them, especially the graduate students, to be more engaged in their studies than he had anticipated. He believes his experience to be counter-evidence to the widely held notion that students today are more passive and need to be "entertained" with trendy and less rigorous approaches to literature and the arts in general. Nevertheless, Steiner believes that Germanists must find creative ways to attract students to the field of Germanics, such as by offering courses in English, without abandoning a commitment to high standards and to keeping German language and literature at the heart of the curriculum.

# FACULTY NEWS



## Eric Ames

In addition to his language classes, Eric Ames taught three new courses last year: Introduction to German Cultural Studies, Weimar Cinema, and a seminar on Modernity and Spectacle. He also directed two students in a new undergraduate research project on early German cinema.

The Center for Western and European Studies awarded him a grant to develop a course on East German cinema, which will be offered for the first time in 2002. At the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies (INCS) Conference, held in Eugene, he delivered a paper on ethnographic exhibitions and ethnomusicology in Imperial Berlin. With graduate students Geoffrey Cox and Kevin Johnson he delivered a public lecture, "The Terrain of Weimar Cinema," at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Eric also participated in Cinema Seattle's educational outreach program by giving a public lecture at the Varsity Theater on Volker Schlöndorff's latest film, *Die Stille nach dem Schuß*. His essay entitled "Animal Attractions: Cinema, Exoticism, and German Modernity" appeared this fall in the *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften*.



## Hellmut Ammerlahn

Hellmut Ammerlahn received a research fellowship from the University of Washington's Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities and was made a member of the Center's Society of Scholars. His recent research has concentrated on structural parallelisms in Goethe's

works in two related respects: the significance of memory for artistic production and the impact of the creative versus the destructive power of the imagination. An article dealing with these themes and juxtaposing Tasso, the Harfner and Wilhelm Meister appeared in *Orbis Litterarum* (1998). A paper on parallel structures of "Paradiesesglueck, Trauma und transformatives Erinnern" in Lehrjahre and Wanderjahre was delivered at one of the NEMLA Goethe-Year sessions in Pittsburgh. Also, he is continuing to preside as departmental Undergraduate Program Coordinator. Among the celebrations Hellmut was actively involved in, one deserves to be singled out: the Department's festive recognition of Gunter Hertling's thirty-eight years of devoted teaching, scholarship and service to the University of Washington on the occasion of his retirement.



## Manfred Bansleben

As coordinator of the Department's language courses, Bansleben remains very active in adapting the latest innovations in cyberspace to the needs of the language classroom. He is presently making use of his "Tools for Transformation Award" from the Provost to develop a computer-based instructional program, "Virtual Vienna," to enhance the Department's intermediate German curriculum.

The program is designed to be accessed by students on CD-Rom and has the goal of acquainting students with Vienna's cultural heritage. The narrative takes place in modern-day Vienna with frequent references to and visual retrospectives of Vienna of the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries showcasing such figures as Mozart, Beethoven, Mahler, and Freud. The multi-media approach employing video, audio, and graphics is built on an interactive platform with the goal of familiarizing students with the cultural heritage of Austria. Such preparation is especially important for those students who choose to participate in the Department's yearly "Spring in Vienna" program, which is open to all students who have completed German 102 or the equivalent.

The results of initial testing of the "Virtual Vienna" Program using volunteers from our second-year German classes have been very encouraging. Participants found the new program, especially the ancillary activities, very exciting. Manfred is personally looking forward to accompanying a new group of students to Vienna in spring, 2002 on our "Spring in Vienna" program.

For more information on either this interactive multi-media program or on "Spring in Vienna", please call Bansleben at (206) 543-6887 or write to him in care of Germanics or at [bansmw@u.washington.edu](mailto:bansmw@u.washington.edu).



## Charles Barrack

Charles Barrack has just completed three manuscripts on the glottalic controversy in Indo-European: 1. The Glottalic Theory Revisited: A Negative Appraisal; 2. The Problem of the Voiced Stops in Proto-Indo-European; 3. Frederick Kortlandt's Glottalic Account: a Critique.

# FACULTY NEWS



## Diana Behler

Diana Behler presented a paper on “Sexual Fantasies: Arthur Schnitzler’s *Traumnovelle* in relation to Stanley Kubrick’s film *Eyes Wide Shut*” at an interdisciplinary Kubrick conference; an expanded version will be published in a *Companion to Kubrick* volume. She has also been

working on the problem of guilt and transgression in Chamisso’s *Peter Schlemihl*. A new project takes up the work of Goethe contemporary Carl Gustav Carus, whose *Briefe über Landschaftsmalerei* she had investigated earlier in terms of Schelling’s philosophy. Decades before Freud, and in the spirit of the romantics, the then famous Dresden physician Carus had posited in his book *Psyche* the realm of the unconscious as the key to the nature of the conscious life of the soul and linked this to organic life, medicine, and healing. The new study analyzes Carus’ letters, lectures on psychology, and gynecological textbook to investigate these linkages. Behler has been active on various university-wide committees (e.g., Intellectual Property, Simpson Center for the Humanities Board) and has recently been elected as one of two colleagues to represent the humanities on the College Council, the Dean of Arts and Sciences’ Advisory Board. She also traveled to Russia, Germany, Kenya, and South Africa during the year.



## Jane Brown

Jane Brown has been pursuing her work on allegory in drama and the advent of neoclassicism; from it have grown several recent courses on history of drama and on opera and drama in both Comparative Literature and Germanics. In addition she continues to work in translation, and to write essays and book chapters on *Faust*, the German *Lied*, and most recently on Goethe and Rousseau. In the coming year she will be speaking on an MLA-sponsored radio show on *Faust* and chairing the 2002 meeting of the MLA Division on 18th and early 19th century German literature.



## Richard Gray

Richard Gray is working on a new book project with the working title “Economics and the German Cultural Imagination, 1770-1871.” In the context of this project he recently completed an essay with the title “Red Herrings and Blue Smocks: Commercialism, Ecological Destruction, and Anti-Semitism in Annette von Droste-Hülshoff’s *Die Judenbuche*.” For the same project Rick is now investigating the connections between theories of money and of nationhood in works by the Romantic thinkers, Adam Müller and Johann G. Fichte. He has also completed an essay entitled “Metaphysical Mimesis: Nietzsche’s *Geburt der Tragödie* and the *Aesthetics of Literary Expressionism*,” which will appear in the Camden House *Companion to German Expressionism*. In summer semester 2002, Gray will be visiting professor at the Deutsches Seminar of the Universität Tübingen.



## Gunter Hertling

Gunter H. Hertling, Professor Emeritus, continues to teach a reduced load of 40%, following his “retirement” in 1999, which permits him to devote more time to research and writing. He has just completed a lengthy study on Gottfried Keller and his relationship to 15th and 16th century German folk literature. This will be published along with a selection of Gunter’s earlier essays in Professor Katharina Mommsen’s Stanford series “Germanic Studies in America”. The volume will appear under the collective title *Bleibende Lebensinhalte: Essays zu Adalbert Stifter und Gottfried Keller*. Furthermore, Gunter is currently working on an article comparing Grillparzer and Kafka, with the working title “Existentielle Berührungen: Grillparzer’s ‘Armer Spielmann’ und Kafka’s ‘Urteil’”. In collaboration with the UW’s School of Music, Gunter participated in a public performance of a fairy tale by Ludwig Tieck, “die schöne Magelone”, as set to music by Johannes Brahms and sung by tenor Thomas Harper of the Music Voice Faculty. Gunter contributed to the performance by narrating the fairytale.

### The Department of Germanics is on-line

For information on classes, events, upcoming lectures and much more, visit our web site at:

<http://depts.washington.edu/uwgerman>

# FACULTY NEWS



## Sammy McLean

Sammy McLean studies French, is learning Italian, plays trumpet in the Magnolia Big Band and writes an occasional orchestration for that band. Northwestern University Press has not yet replied to his submission to them, last July, of his translation of Hans Erich Nossack's novel, *My Younger Brother* (*Der jüngere Bruder*). He wonders whether they like it so well that they are coveting it, or whether they may simply have lost it. Editors! Editors!



## Brigitte Prutti

Brigitte Prutti is presently working on different topics in the context of modern Austrian literature. An essay she wrote on Grillparzer's drama *Sappho* will appear in the *Goethe Yearbook*, and she recently gave a talk on the allegory of folly in Veza Canetti's novel, *Die gelbe Straße* , at

the yearly PMLA meeting. Next spring she plans to attend a conference on Austrian literature and she continues to serve as graduate advisor and is presently chairing the faculty search committee.



## Dagmar Reese

Dagmar Reese, current DAAD (German Academic Exchange) professor at the University of Washington, arrived from Berlin in September 1997. Her area of research is contemporary German history, National Socialism, and the history of science. She is currently writing a

book on Georg Simmel's views on the philosophy and sociology of women. While very much engaged in the European studies program of the Henry M. Jackson School, as well as in the History department, Dagmar nevertheless looks forward to teaching a course on her hometown, Berlin, this spring in the Department of Germanics. Moreover, Dagmar is currently organizing a conference to be held in May with the title: "Urban Spaces – Modern Subjects. European Metropoles at the 'Fin de Siecle'". A conference organized by graduate students of the Department of Germanics will take place concurrently. The main conference will be interdisciplinary and international in scope and promises to be a very exciting event with

topics of interest to all.

Dagmar regrets that this is the final year of her stay here in beautiful Seattle with its wonderful university. But while she must leave, DAAD will stay. A new DAAD professor will start here autumn quarter of 2002. For any questions or inquiries, especially concerning the conference in May, please contact Dagmar at her office in Thompson Hall or e-mail her at reese@u.washington.edu.



## Joe Voyles

Joe Voyles continues to conduct research on the Germanic languages and Indo-European and is presently working on an 'Introduction to the Indo-European Languages'.



## Sabine Wilke

Sabine Wilke served as undergraduate advisor in winter and spring 2001 and started her term as new departmental chair July 1. She published essays on the Nazi film (in *German Studies Review*), Uwe Timm's novel "Morenga" about travel into colonial Southwest Africa (in *Monatshefte*), and Christa Wolf's novel "Medea" (in *German Quarterly*). She is a member of the Society of Scholars at the Simpson Humanities Center this year with a project on masochism and the German colonial imagination.

### Truth Spots

A tortoiseshell table top, blend  
of browns reds and golds

sudden sun

and grains of salt, spilled  
in haste, sparkling  
now in sun relief  
on the bright  
golden top of the table,  
caught

in sunburst.

*Sammy McLean*

# ALUMNI NEWS



## Lois Bauer

After graduating from the University of Washington with a bachelor degree in Germanics in 1983, Lois (Oien) Bauer completed a successful thirteen year career at Microsoft in 1996. Now devoting her energies to raising her two children, Lois also finds time to encourage and facilitate the

inclusion of the German language in the curricula of the primary grades. Not incidentally, Lois has been a much appreciated benefactor of the Department of Germanics here at the University of Washington.

As an undergraduate majoring in Germanic Area Studies with specialization in linguistics, Lois also took many courses designed to hone her computer skills. This combination of courses in linguistics and experience with computer software made Lois attractive to Microsoft recruiters, especially when they learned that Lois had experience tutoring for the UW Athletic Department, an indication to the recruiters that Lois not only possessed the type of skills Microsoft seeks in its employees, but also that Lois combined this knowledge and experience with an enviable degree of patience, just the type of background ideally suited for working in Program Management, the area at Microsoft where Lois was ultimately employed. The Department of Germanics is proud to have played a role in launching Lois on her successful career.

## *Wilke continued from page 1*

in our Department. Christoph Zeller (Stuttgart) is working on the aesthetics of the ugly. Roberto Simanowski, who is the editor of an on-line journal on digital poetics, is researching the parameters of digital aesthetics. Urs Meyer (Fribourg), sponsored by the Swiss National Science Foundation, is working on the language of advertising. All visiting professors and fellows will be presenting their projects in the Friday afternoon colloquium series. We are looking forward to the stimulating discussions that follow these lectures. Look for more information about our international visitors in this newsletter.

In staff news, Anneliese Wuichet, who was, as many of you will recall, the Department administrator for over twenty years, retired in July of this year. She is doing well, planning lots of travel, and spending more time with her family, especially her grandsons. Our new administrator, Karen Walter, has many years of university experience working for development and most recently, the medical school. Karen lived in Kassel for two years when she was growing up and is glad to be able to reconnect with her German roots. Our new graduate program specialist is Kate Howe who joined the department in June.

She has found on the job applications for the French, Russian and German she studied. Stephanie Diltz is staying on as undergraduate program specialist after a brief interlude on maternity leave. She is the proud mother of her second daughter, Ainsley, born in September. Together, we are working to reorganize and streamline our office environs to better serve the needs of the department. All Denny classrooms were renovated last year and now feature not only a fresh coat of paint and new furniture, but also built-in screens, darkening shades, and multi-media equipment. A former Germanics undergraduate who is now a graduate student in the School of Library Sciences, Kris Unsworth, is helping us this year to preserve and catalogue the books in our Lowenfeld collection. Our video and DVD library is growing steadily and our new DVD player is used in instruction and for film screenings.

In addition to maintaining and strengthening our mission as scholars and educators, we are focused on building and strengthening friendships in the community and recruiting energetic volunteers to help us succeed in our concerted development plans. We are continuing our efforts to strengthen relations with our alumni. Please continue to send us updates and interesting information we can share with our Germanics friends. With the help of its friends and alumni, the Department is striving to achieve its academic vision as a leader in the field of interdisciplinary German Studies.

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## *Simanowski continued from page 2*

vs. aesthetics" dichotomy?

In any event, it became clear to the present writer from Dr. Simanowski's colloquium to our department, "Digitale Ästhetik," given on November 16, 2001, that research of the kind he envisions is bound to have a major impact on art form and art theory. It is indicative of our department's involvement in and commitment to forward-looking technology and research that we have been able to attract a scholar of Dr. Simanowski's ability and standing. More information on these topics may be found on the internet at [www.interfictions.com](http://www.interfictions.com); a further source is issue #152 of *Text und Kritik* of October of this year edited by Dr. Simanowski. His book, *Interfictions*, is to appear next year in Suhrkamp. Near the end of January, Dr. Simanowski will be giving a talk similar to his colloquium, at the Center of Digital Arts and Experimental Media here on campus. This talk will be in English. We also note that the on-line journal cited above provides an English-language section; and about half of the contributions to the journal are in English.

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*Should you notice an error or omission in this list, please notify us at (206)543-4580 or by emailing the chair (wilke@u.washington.edu)*

Each year the Department receives gifts from its alumni and friends, usually in the form of financial contributions. These gifts permit us to carry on important activities for our students, provide money for scholarships, fellowships, and prizes and support visits to our Department by distinguished scholars from other institutions. They also give the Department a much-needed element of flexibility to meet special needs as they arise. We hope to continue enjoying the support of our many alumni and friends. If you are thinking of making a gift to the Department or perhaps, remembering the Department in your will, we invite you to discuss the matter with Professor Sabine Wilke, the chair of the Department or with Donald Summers of the Development Office in the College of Arts and Sciences.

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