RETROSPECTIVE OF GERMAN COLLOQUIUM FALL 1999

Stanley Corngold opened the fall colloquium series with "Something to do with the Truth: Kafka's Later Stories." Corngold, professor of German and Comparative Literature at Princeton University, examined Kafka's consciousness of writing as metaphysical longing and practical orientation: In the writer's work to create, against the falsity of the sensible world, an aura of truth, artistic practice becomes a kind of ethical practice. In his prefatory remarks, Corngold positioned the writer's endeavors in and against the contemporary stage of desire for cultural immortality. Kafka can be seen as a late-modern figure "between negative theology and the medial archive," the transcendental desires of this metaphysical poet differ from and challenge the satisfactions of a culture that finds infinity in the World Wide Web.

In his paper, Corngold explores the reflective quality of Kafka's later texts that have made them resistant to easy interpretation. He detects a "Gnostic verve," a striving for the eternal beyond the empirical self, but also a striving beyond philosophical contemplation, in stories such as "The Village Schoolmaster" as well as in aphorisms and diary entries. Following this thread, he identifies an "onto-graphico-logic" which demonstrates how a desire for transition may affect ethics.

This practical logic builds, in the material of textual argument, a series of transformation and negation. An everyday quarrel, for example, is raised to the level of existential truth and then essentially disappears as something that does not [(continued on page 11)](continued on page 11)

BIDDY MARTIN NOMINATED PROVOST

Cornell President Hunter R. Rawlings announced on February 2, 2000 that he will submit to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees his nomination of Biddy (Carolyn A.) Martin as University Provost, effective July 1, 2000. Martin will succeed Don M. Randel, who has been named the new president of the University of Chicago.

"Biddy Martin has had an outstanding scholarly and teaching career at Cornell," said Rawlings. "She has excelled in every assignment entrusted to her care, and has won the admiration of faculty, students and staff throughout the university. Her most recent role as senior associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences has given her substantial exposure to university-wide issues that will prove most valuable in her new role as provost. I look forward to working closely with her on a day-to-day basis as a colleague and a friend."

Martin expressed enthusiasm on her nomination: "I am honored to have been asked to serve as Provost and delighted at the prospect of working with the president, the members of the central administration, and the [(continued on page 15)](continued on page 15)

BERLIN, BEIJING AND BEYOND

Franz Peter Hugdahl

Professor Jonathan Monroe, Department of Comparative Literature at Cornell University and Director of the John S. Knight Writing Program, opened the conference, "Berlin, Beijing and Beyond: Cultural Politics Since 1989" on November 12, 1999 with a few prefatory remarks concerning the context of the conference's conception. Just three days after the tenth anniversary of "fall of the Berlin Wall" and almost six months since the same commemoration of the Tiananmen Square uprising, the conference was convened to consider the implications and consequences of those pivotal events within a diverse cross-section of disciplines. The organization of the event itself had its own historical trajectory which followed from two other affairs Professor Monroe had organized in the fall of 1994 and the spring of 1995. "Poetry. Community. Movement," an afternoon symposium, and "Past. Present. Future Tense," a three-day conference, respectively, reflected on what the effects of the cultural, political and economic reconfigurations of 1989 were on how poets and critics conceived their work.

Professor Monroe explained that in considering this conference and its conjunction of Germany, China and America, he intended poetry to play a prominent and significant role in a multi-genre, multi-disciplinary disquisition delving into the discursive constraints of cultural politics after the end of the Cold War era. He then inaugurated the conference by reading a poem, "Disclosures," by Michael Palmer from his 1995 collection, which is tellingly entitled At Passages, and aptly expresses the experience of the uncertainties and [(continued on page 6)](continued on page 6)
In her historical contextualization of Goethe, Professor I. V. Hull asserted that
the big problem between Goethe and his context is that he lived too long. Between the
years 1749 and 1832, thus over the course of 83 years, there was fundamental
and wide-ranging upheaval in German politics, society, and economy. There
was enormous violence, literal and metaphorical, done to Germany as it had been
known until that time. In addition to the well-known wars, including the Seven
Years War and the Napoleonic invasion, there were the Agrarian Revolution,
the Industrial Revolution, and a revolution in the demographics of Germany’s
population. Politically, Germany shifted from small absolutist states to (still many and small)
modern state/society models. Socially, Germany shifted from a
Ständegesellschaft (a society based on clearly defined Stände or quasi-classes)
to a bürgerliche Gesellschaft (bourgeois society). These years finally culminated
in the 1830 revolutions in Paris and Warsaw, which were symptoms as well as
foreshadows of continuing and future tensions in the transformations transpiring
in Europe.

The demographic, political, and social changes marking Germany all overlapped.
The agrarian and demographic revolution resulted in a doubling of Germany’s
population, which grew from thirteen million to twenty-five million over the course of the
eighteenth century. Concomitant with this population explosion were changes
in the nature of work and the constitution of the workforce: women began to work
formally in unprecedented numbers, a development with consequences for both
marriages and general social relations. The population growth meant that there
were many more poor people, and the indigent put significant pressure on the
Ständegesellschaft’s system of careers and social strata. The government was in
fact compelled to create new Stände, including the Bildungsbürgertum, a social
group to which Goethe belonged and that would have enormous influence on both
German politics and culture.

Some of the reformulation of the state and society was due in large part to the
lastinng influence of the Enlightenment and its new understanding of the subject-citizen,
natural law, and social reform. The citizens’ public use of reason and critique
was thereafter supposed to inform their interactions with the state; society was
now supposed to serve as the basis for the state. The Enlightenment, by way of
the Napoleonic invasion, also had significant consequences for the rule of law: once
Napoleon invaded, he introduced, in the place of the ad hoc but effective legal
systems of the Holy Roman Empire, modern laws. By 1810, a modern legal system
was in place.

Some of Professor Hull’s own recent work relates to the emergence of the bourgeoise private and public spheres in this
period, and she emphasized that ideas of privacy existed long before they were
codified in the legal reforms. She cited a book from 1788 that suggested the twiligh
of the Stände system by recognizing a number of key features of the bourgeois
private sphere. Well before many of these observations were officially recognized,
the book understood civil society as a system of communication, observed the
importance of competition, rejected automatic deference to political leaders,
accepted constant change as inevitable, and
omratized tolerance. Parallel to the
emergence of this private sphere was the
rise of the public sphere. Literacy in
Germany at 1800 was about 70%, higher
than either France or England. There was
a massive burgeoning of print culture, of
presses, bookstores, and voluntary asso-
ciations to meet, read, and criticize. Many
of these fundamental shifts had occurred
by 1810, in time for an aging but still active
Goethe to observe and react to them.

In his paper “Goethe in the GDR: The
case of Werther,” Michael Richardson,
Instructor at Ithaca College, took up the
question of the image and function of
Goethe, particularly his The Sufferings of
Young Werther, in the German Democratic
Republic (GDR). Richardson opened
with Walter Ulbricht’s 1962 declaration
that the GDR was “Faust, Part III,” a state-
ment that reveals the intimate connection
between the GDR’s self-understanding
and the bourgeois literary heritage.
Goethe, after all, is the very personification
of this heritage and provides an unparal-
leled opportunity to reexamine the
GDR’s relation to it. Richardson reviewed
the relationship of literary critics, artists,
and the public of the GDR to the bourgeois
literary tradition before analyzing the spe-
cific occasion of Plenzdorf’s The New
Sufferings of Young W., which appeared in

Marx and Engels did not discuss the
relationship of the communist state to the
bourgeois literary heritage in their cultural
writings, so critics in the GDR had to turn
to Lenin and Lukács for guidance on this
issue. Critics interpreted Lenin as fairly
reconciliatory about the literary heritage
and cast him in support of appropriating
it: they interpreted Lenin to have said that
the proletariat should extend, develop,
and improve this heritage by acknowledg-
ing and working with it. In 1931-32, the
German Communist Party (KPD) linked
their cultural project to the bourgeois
classics, and debated how best to wrest con-
trol of the canon from its fascist-leaning
interpreters. As the Weimar era drew to a
close, most Marxists were strong defend-
ers of German Classicism and Goethe in
particular as precursors of their own aes-
thetict. After World War II, Johannes
Becher, the leading figure on the cultural
politics scene in the early GDR, insisted
that the GDR was the rightful inheritor
of classicism, which he invoked against
American “imperialist” formalism.

There were, however, dissenting opin-
ions in the GDR, some of which were on
display in Brecht’s 1952 production of
Eisler’s Urfaust. Brecht warned against
the mystifying aura of high culture and the
classics, and believed the most produc-
tive way to handle the classics was as
material for contemporary problematics;
Eisler depicts Faust as a charlatan and
drunkard. The dominant interpretation of
LISA LEWENZ VISITS CORNELL

Valerie Weinstein
Adam J. Sacks

On Wednesday, November 3, 1999, guest filmmaker Lisa Lewenz presented her award-winning documentary, *A Letter Without Words*. In 1971, Lewenz found a treasure in her parents' attic: over 14 hours worth of film shot by her grandmother, Ella Lewenz, in Germany, the United States, Palestine, Brazil, and other locations from the period after World War I until her death in 1954. Since that time, more of Ella Lewenz's footage, as well as some of her papers and diaries, have come into Lisa Lewenz's hands. Ella Arnhold Lewenz, member of two of the wealthiest and oldest German-Jewish families, had been an avid amateur photographer, possessing a home movie camera when it was still a luxury, and using color film before it was available to audiences in movie theaters. Ella, who remained in Germany until 1938, captured not only her family, exotic vacation locations, and bustling cityscapes, but also celebrities (such as family friend, Albert Einstein, amongst others), historical events, and the marks of change in the Third Reich: soldiers, red banners, and swastikas. More tellingly, she documented a range of signs and posters forbidding Jews access to various aspects of daily life such as swimming pools, park benches, telephone booths, and even whole towns. For seventeen years after finding this treasure, Lisa Lewenz researched, interviewed, traveled, translated, filmed, and edited in order to produce the hour-long documentary, *A Letter Without Words*.

While Ella Lewenz's archival footage is the centerpiece of the film, Lisa Lewenz has created an effective personal and historical narrative through a montage of the archival footage, archival stills and documents, and her own contemporary footage of sites previously filmed by her grandmother. They include a visit with her aunt in Berlin, and interviews with surviving relatives. Whereas Lisa Lewenz filmed the contemporary footage with sound, she has accompanied her grandmother's silent footage with original music and voiceovers. These are comprised of her own personal narrative, readings by relatives from her grandmother's diaries, and other commentary, including a moving audio tape made by her father in 1969 where he expresses regret for having converted out of Judaism.

While some of the analysis, the chronological narrative, and the historical footage claim to represent an authentic, insider's view of an important historical moment, other techniques in the film underscore how unique, contingent, and subjective this narrative is. The voiceover often expresses regret about missing text — diaries, letters, and documents — and information about Ella Lewenz and her state of mind. Repeated references to the extraordinary wealth of the Arnholds and Lewenzes, and an explanation of its role in buying the family's way out of Nazi Germany remind us that the original footage could have been produced and survived, only in this wealthy milieu. A scene where Lisa and her aunt Dorothea visit the Charlottenburg Standesamt (registry office) housed in the family's former mansion makes the scale of this wealth most concrete for the viewer. The subjectivity of the narrative is further underscored by the differing perspectives of Lewenz's various relatives, and also particularly neatly in a scene where Lisa reads diary entries by Ella about World War I and comments that that account is completely different from what she had learned in school. It is this weaving of the historical and the subjective, present and past, sound and image, as well as the acknowledgement of absences and gaps, that make *A Letter Without Words* such an effective account.

Valerie Weinstein is a graduate student in the Department of German Studies at Cornell.

Declaring her Cornell visit, "liberation day," Lisa Lewenz's visit coincided with the first day on which she was not working on her film, *A Letter Without Words*. The preceding eighteen years, four months and three days comprised, not only the film's production, but a process of oral history and historical research spanning an historical bridge upon which the "German Jewish century" unfolds. Rather than deferring to nostalgia for a "world of yesterday" that takes refuge in a simplified past, the continuity of stable origins is disrupted; the "revelation" of identity is exposed as a process constantly under revision and difference. As scenes of Weimar luminaries and the comfort of home life give way to the visible effects of fascist racism and the onset of exile, the film is interspersed, through interviews, with the memory of the many relatives of the grandmother. In the context of an ever-tightening noose of legislation, the grandmother's pursuit of film is an evident act of resistance, an "island of memory," surrounded by amnesia. *A Letter Without Words* comprises a fraction of the overall footage and provides extraordinary accessibility to the pictorial memory of both the Weimar and Nazi eras, making visible a cultural heritage invisible in contemporary German society.

As the title indicates, it is based on the idea of silence: silent film and a silent interlocutor in an inter-generational memorial dialogue. As an examination of what silence means and how it works, the film sunders the common equation of silence and repression. In a traumatic context, silence may be a sign of a psychic (continued on page 16)
DAAD SUMMER SEMINAR: GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN GERMAN STUDIES

Anna Parkinson

On June 7, 1999, the fifteen participants of the DAAD summer seminar met for the first of many sessions to follow over the next six weeks. The group consisted principally of professors and other professionals whose doctoral dissertations had been completed in German Studies, or whose research material was derived from German speaking contexts. Their disciplines included German studies, romance studies, art history, visual arts, history, and psychoanalysis.

Professor Biddy Martin of the German Studies Department, also Senior Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, coordinated and taught the seminar. Professor Martin provided a provisional syllabus, which, after some discussion, emerged in a revised form to accommodate contemporary readings on gender and sexuality, several presentations by guest lecturers, and works in progress of the participants themselves. It was quite an achievement, as the participants’ work on significantly different projects, ranged from queer re-readings of Marx and Husserl to analyses of visual materials and discourses from fin de siècle Vienna and Germany.

In the first three weeks of the seminar, several seminal psychoanalytic texts by Sigmund Freud were studied, in order to examine how contemporary discourses of feminism and queer theory and contemporary theorists have argued with and against “the father of psychoanalysis.” The group reviewed critiques of Freud’s claims about gender and sexuality in the writings of Michel Foucault, George Mosse, Gilles Deleuze, Judith Butler, Jay Prosser, Lynne Layton, Jacques Lacan, Eric Santner and Slavoj Zizek. Assistant Professor Ellis Hanson, Department of English, presented a reading of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch’s Venus in Furs as a text about the sexuality that dares not speak its name, namely male homosexuality.

Finally, Professor Dagmar Herzog from Michigan State University, offered two pieces of writing pending publication: the first on sex and marriage in Germany after World War II, and the second, mischievously entitled: “Germany’s Most Misbehaving Children: Child Sexuality, the West German New Left, and the Nazi Past.” Dr. Mariatte Denman of Stanford University presented the penultimate paper and this week’s series of discussions, taken from two chapters of a book that she is preparing for publication. Her work concerns the aesthetics of memory, and considers the rubble plays in terms of gender, genre, and aesthetics. Finally, Assistant Professor Julie Johnson of the University of Chicago assigned two chapters from her dissertation entitled “The Art of Woman: Women’s Art Exhibitions in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna,” in which she discusses the discursive spaces of the artist — in particular that of the gallery — through a Foucauldian inflected lens. The diverse methodological approaches and areas of research served to stimulate and extend discussions that provoked challenging comparisons between various projects and protagonists.

The final week began with an extremely full schedule. Assistant Professor Howard Pollack from DePauw University discussed his analysis of literary representations of masculinity in the literature of German Romanticism. This paper was nicely complemented by the subject matter of Dr. Brad Prager’s work, a chapter from the doctoral thesis he recently completed in the German Department at Cornell, entitled “Don’t Look Back: Pygmalion and the Poet’s Vision in Joseph von Eichendorff’s Das Marmorbild.”

Two papers by Assistant Professor Hedwig Frauenhofer from Georgia College and State University, were read and discussed. The most controversial one posed the question whether or not Jean Paul Sartre might be considered a fascist writer. Assistant Professor David Ehrenpreis of James Madison University then presented his fascinating visual and textual research into the main opponent of the femme fatale in turn-of-the-century

(continued on page 15)
HEGEL CONFERENCE
TO BE HELD
MARCH 31-APRIL 1

Professor Peter Gilgen of the Department of German Studies will host a two-day conference March 31 and April 1 on "The End of Art: Aesthetics and Knowledge After Hegel." The conference will be guided by two questions: What is the meaning of aesthetics at the end of the twentieth century? And how is Hegel's answer to this question in his Aesthetics relevant for our age?

Participating are Professor Andrew Bowie, Department of German, University of London; Professor Mark Roche, Department of German and Russian, University of Notre Dame; Professor Donald Phillip Verene, Department of Philosophy, Emory University; Professor William Egginton, SUNY Buffalo, Professor Jason Hill, Southern Illinois University and presently a Fellow at the Society for the Humanities, Cornell University, doctoral candidates Steve De Caroli, SUNY Binghamton, and Marianne Tettlebaum, Department of Music, Cornell.

The conference will begin at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, March 31 and continue at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 1. Venue is the Guerlac Room, A. D. White House. Sponsors include the Institute for German Cultural Studies, the German Academic Exchange Service, University Lectures Committee, Society for the Humanities, Institute for European Studies, Einaudi Center Events Fund, and the departments of German Studies, Government, Comparative Literature, and English at Cornell.

The public is cordially invited. For further information, please contact Professor Gilgen at telephone 254-3312 or pg33@cornell.edu.

In connection with this conference, Professor Susan Buck-Morss (Government) will give a lecture entitled "Hegel and Haiti" on Thursday, March 30, at 4:30 p.m. in the Guerlac Room, A. D. White House. This lecture is also open to the public.

FACULTY PROFILE

Frederick Neuhouser came to Cornell in September 1998, as Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy, where he teaches courses in German Idealism, Rousseau, and political philosophy. He received his Ph.D. in 1988 from Columbia University where he wrote a dissertation on Fichte's project of unifying Kant's accounts of theoretical and practical reason. Before coming to Cornell, Neuhouser taught for three years at the University of California, San Diego. Prior to that, he was eight years at Harvard University.

In 1990 he published his first book, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity*. This book attempts to articulate Fichte's understanding of theoretical and practical self-consciousness (as inherited from Kant) and to spell out what these forms of consciousness have in common that makes them modes of "subjectivity." The book's thesis is that Fichte attempts to resolve certain tensions internal to Kant's account of theoretical self-consciousness (the 'I think' of transcendental apperception) and that in doing so he arrives at his foundational idea of the "self-positing" nature of all subjectivity. Neuhouser argues that, in one version or another, Fichte's conception of the self-positing subject informs much of the philosophical tradition that follows, including the thought of Hegel, Kierkegaard, Husserl, and Sartre.

He recently completed Actualizing Freedom: Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory, which is due to be published in March by Harvard University Press. In this book Neuhouser articulates the various conceptions of freedom that underlie Hegel's social theory, in a way that shows the contemporary relevance of some of Hegel's ideas about what constitutes a free social order. The book looks backward by making use of Rousseau's idea of the general will in order to explain how being part of a social and political order can make one free. It also portrays Hegel's social theory as a forerunner of Marx's critique of capitalism and of early Critical Theory.

This year Neuhouser is a Fellow at the Society for the Humanities, where he is beginning work on a new book, again on Hegel and Rousseau. The topic of this project is the importance of recognition (for Hegel) or of l'amour propre (for Rousseau) in the constitution of subjectivity. He is investigating Rousseau's and Hegel's views on the role the human need for recognition from others plays, not only in generating conflict and domination but also in making it possible for human subjects to be rational, free, and bound by moral laws.

In conjunction with this new research Neuhouser is teaching a two-semester sequence of seminars on "Subjectivity and the Other." The aim of the seminars is to examine various philosophical versions of the claim that subjectivity is constituted through individuals' relations to other subjects. The seminar in Fall 1999 looked at this theme in the context of the master slave dialectic by Hegel, Sartre, and de Beauvoir. The second semester will focus on the role relations to other subjects play in the constitution of social identity, conscience, rationality, as well as guilt and neurosis.
awkward transitions since 1989 through its contortion of a familiar idiom. “Disclosures” makes very suggestive commentary on the structures and constraints of writing during the Cold War as well as incisive observations about the ideological order that has usurped it since 1989 through its allusion to and overt use of the Berlin Wall for cultural and poetic material.

Professor Reinhold Grimm from the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of California/ Riverside, presented the first paper of the conference, “Around and After the Wende: Four Representative Poems.” He read his own translations of Volker Braun’s “O Chicago! O Widerspruch!,” Hans Magnus Enzensberger’s “Aufbruchsstimmung,” “Altes Europa,” and “Der Krieg, Wie.” His translations were accompanied by detailed, critical commentary concerning the challenges and compromises that confront the prospective translator. Although his commentary was couched in terms of the concerns of a translator, it also served as an explication of recent contributions from some of Germany’s most regarded poets to the “turn” of 1989.

Professor Grimm used “O Chicago! O Widerspruch!,” which Volker Braun dedicated to him for a 1991 publication, to demonstrate the difficulties of satisfactorily rendering intertextual references. Braun’s references to Bertolt Brecht are doubly challenging not only in light of the accumulation of Brecht’s Biblical and Shakespearean allusions, but also on account of the characterizations of the pre-

and post-socialist Brecht that pepper the question of the turn of East Germany in 1989. Due to demands of time, Professor Grimm decided to drop another poem by Volker Braun, “Wustensturm,” and instead devoted the rest of his lecture to the three poems by Hans Magnus Enzensberger. Grimm’s translation and discussion of Enzensberger’s poem “Aufbruchsstimmung” from the 1991 volume, Zukunftsmusik, was of particular interest because he juxtaposed it with Jonathan Monroe’s own translation of the poem, which appeared in an article on Enzensberger’s Utopian Pragmatist Poetics in 1997. Grimm argued that Monroe’s translation exposed an obstacle that he overcame by opting for a translation that privileged the reading of the sense of a word over its sound and homophonic play.

Quoting a headline in Der Wochenspiegel from July 1993, Gerd Gemünden, Professor of German and Comparative Literature at Dartmouth College, began the second presentation with an exclamation and a question that distilled and reflected the peculiar problem of national identity in the unified Germanys. It read: “Wir sind wieder wie! Aber wer? (‘We are somebody again! But who?’) It captured the curious paradox of the resurgent national pride and the concomitant crisis concerning German identity in the wake of the disappearance of the German Democratic Republic as well as the Federal Republic of Germany that existed along side it. Gemünden investigated this paradox that is made manifest in the discussions concerning national and cultural identity by concentrating on the writings of three West German artists: the filmmakers, Hans Jürgen Syberberg and Wim Wenders; and the novelist Botho Strauß. They have all made vaulting reassessments of Germany that promise to lay the groundwork for the unified country. Although they are radically different in many ways, the texts of Syberberg, Wenders and Strauß are united in their use of a common narrative strategy, namely, a “(re)birth-of-a-nation” story that is linked to a nostalgia that longs for a better future. Such nostalgia inevitably stands in tension or opposition to the history of the postwar years or Third Reich. Gemünden sees this nostalgia mobilized through a shared set of binary opposition: own (eigen) and foreign (fremd); high art and mass culture; and tradition and being up-to-date.

The text from Hans Jürgen Syberberg that Gemünden considered was Vom Unglück und Glück der Kunst in Deutschland nach dem letzten Kriege, which he wrote between the fall of the Berlin wall in November 1989 and the German unification in October 1990. In this polemical piece, Syberberg asserts that unification offers the opportunity to recover the lost heritage of the culture that has degenerated since the loss of World War II. His argument becomes increasingly disturbing in that the postwar deterioration eclipses the horrors of the Holocaust. Indeed, Gemünden argued that, according to Syberberg, only art is the true victim of the Holocaust. Gemünden referred to the recent work of Stephen Brockmann in addressing the conundrum of understanding the critical praise bestowed upon Syberberg in the 70s in light of this upsetting essay. Brockmann reads prefigurations of Von Unglück in films that are attenuated by the historical position from which he speaks. Gemünden considered Wim Wenders’ speech given on November 10, 1991, “Reden über Deutschland” (Talking about Germany) particularly difficult to reconcile with his earlier work that expressed an ambiguous, highly self-conscious love-hate relation-
ship with America. In his speech, he made a similar plea for German national identity by attacking American popular culture as the agent that is imported to fill the cultural vacuum around Germany and prevents that identity from being produced from within. It is particularly curious that Wenders articulates this view by drawing upon autobiographical passages that differ significantly from their first presentation in his work. Gemünden identified the truly troublesome aspect of Wenders’ speech in his recourse to an 18th century notion of *Kulturzur* that he uses to explain the rootedness, authenticity and purity of German culture that opposes American popular culture and regrettably smacks of racism and elitism. Whereas the essays of Wenders and Syberberg received relatively little attention, Botho Strauß’s “Anschwellender Bocksgesang” (Increasing Tragedy) set off a public debate for making arguments very similar to those of Wenders and Syberberg. He speaks much less directly to the question of national identity. Instead, he advocates a cult of the loner. Furthermore, his quest for reconciliation with the “long tradition” is not made with nationalist terminology. Gemünden argued that the difficulty in coming to terms with this discourse can be explained in part by the legacy of the overcompensatory antinationalist rhetoric of the 70s and 80s.

Professor *Xiao Mei Chen*, from the Departments of Chinese and Comparative Literature at Ohio State University took the podium on Friday as the last speaker of the morning session, presenting a paper entitled “Bird-lovers, Prostitutes, and Other Patriots: The Performance of the Nation in Post-1989 China.” Professor Chen began by discussing the contrast between the romantic courtship with the West after the death of Mao, and the more recent disenchantment with the West following the tragic end of 1989 student demonstrations at Tiananmen Square. She proposed to examine the Chinese constructions of the West that became popular in post-1989 China and their reflection of a new conception of Chinese identity. She proceeded by examining two pieces of contemporary Chinese theatre, highlighting an ideological departure from the official view of the Chinese nationalism since the founding of the People’s Republic of China.

Professor Chen first discussed the 1992 production of Guo Shixing’s *Birdmen*, a piece written for the elite theater of spoken drama. *Birdmen* meditates on the question of Chinese identity and national character in contemporary China using dramatic conflict between a Chinese man, a Chinese-American man, and an American-educated Chinese man in 1990s Beijing. The primary tension is between Dr. Paul Ding, a Chinese American psychiatrist, and the men he treats in Beijing. Professor Chen posited that Ding is alienated by the common cultural referents of his patients, which were almost always political and collective, and that Guo’s work constructs the Chinese American as a representative of his adoptive country both in its cultural imperialism and its cultural illiteracy.

Professor Chen went on to examine Ke Xing’s *The Biography of Sai Jinhua*. This work depicts one of society’s least enfranchised members, a young prostitute, both as a link to the West and as a proponent of Chinese national integrity. Sai used her German language skills to work out a compromise with a German barbarian. She drew a parallel to the two-faced image of China Ke presents, which is represented both by the meek and submissive Qing Court and by the prostitute Sai Jinhua, who puts forward the hope for strong China. Chen remarked that the figure of Sai Jinhua is simultaneously glorified, as a national hero, and denigrated as a lower-class prostitute. Professor Chen suggested that the issues of gender, class, and race gain new importance in this post-1989 construction of national identity.

Professor Chen concluded that China’s response to its foreign others after 1989 not only continued the official view of the anti-imperialist nature of Chinese nationalist movements, but also expressed a subversive view of the PRC government as weak and submissive, much like previous regimes. She made comparisons between both the internal and external imperialist threat, and the popularity of stories of individual heroism. Professor Chen insisted that the Chinese construction of the others still retains its double-edged quality as an official and anti-official discourse.

Friday’s afternoon session began with a paper by Professor *Yunte Huang* from the Department of English at Harvard University, entitled “Deimagining the Language: Post-Tiananmen Chinese Writing.” Huang, proposed using the neologism “deimagining” to describe the work of younger Chinese avant-garde poets, such as Xu Bing and Che Qianzi who are pushing the question of ‘Chineseness’ and language to a new level. Professor Huang explained that they differ radically from the Today Group (also known as the Misty School), which constitutes the majority of canonical contemporary literature and includes such luminaries as Bei Dao, Gu Cheng, and Yang Lian. Though Huang asserted that this group broke new ground in contemporary Chinese literature, he ultimately criticized the group, saying that the writers and intellectuals associated therewith are overdetermined by an exile mentality and lack peripheral thinking. Huang posited a characterization of the Today Group and their writing as exilic. He asserted that their writing expresses a nostalgic yearning for ‘home,’ an undying will to return to the ‘center’ from which they have been removed. Huang further remarked that this exilic mentality is so deeply inscribed in the Today Group that they adhere to a Sinocentric version of world literature, which stands in notable contrast to the German Romantic model.

However, Professor Huang praised the younger Chinese avant-garde artists / writers Xu Bing and Che Qianzi. Huang
attributed to this generation a 'deimagination of the center,' which he defined as a poetic rethinking of the heterogeneity and polyphony of the Chinese language. He cited the examples of Xu Bing, a master of printmaking; and Che Qianzi, a poet and leader of the Original group. Huang first examined Xu's piece entitled "A Book from the Sky," in which Xu invents about four thousand Chinese characters and achieves their deimagination through a 'radicalization' of the characters, a process in which radicals (components of Chinese characters) regain their nomadic quality — the potentials for regrouping and degrouping. Huang also explicated the skepticism expressed by Che in his poetic experiments, where Chinese culture and language are referred to as "hand-copied paperbacks;" in this pithy remark, Che expressed both distance from and criticism of China-centered and Chinese-centered discourses.

Huang went on to delineate the 'pan-Asian tour' running through Che's work, which, Huang explicated, demonstrates a series of copying, borrowing, or cross-cultural appropriation in such discourse. Huang concluded by expanding his definition of deimagination, whereby, he said, "I try to identify fractures of a seemingly homogeneous linguistic culture and to rearticulate the dissonance that has been muffled in the process of nation-building and canon-making." Huang argued that deimagination is a cultural unlearning that captures the core of writing, which always imagines what is impossible and deimaginess what is possible.

Professor Beatrice Hanssen from the Department of Germanic Languages and Literature at Harvard University, presented the last paper on Friday, "Memory, Void, Extension: The Jewish Museum in Berlin," which examined Daniel Liebeskind's design as an attempt to make visible or perceptible the present absence of the Berlin Jews. She immediately proceeded to situate the work within the cityscape and offered an extensive exegesis of the design, explicating the architectural gestures and their allusions, while explaining how the work sought to externalize voids that are not even traces. Professor Hanssen articulated the limits of representation that are challenged in this project by referring to and critiquing Adorno's notion of negativity and his own writing on the incommensurability of the Holocaust. In doing so, she cited Kant's concepts of the sublime and radical evil as means of bringing together the political potential of aesthetics with the necessity of negative representation. However, it is pertinent referring to Kant's own commentary on the Egyptian Pyramids as an artificial construction of the sublime, she underscored that she did not believe in the unrepresentability of the Holocaust as an example of the sublime, but instead as a problem of the negative. Furthermore, she would not connect it to Kant's ethics. Professor Hanssen further developed her discussion through invocation of Schoenberg's opera, Moses and Aaron, as a way of introducing the issue of imagination.

Leslie Adelson, Chair of German Studies at Cornell, opened Saturday's morning session with a paper entitled, "Touching Tales of Turks, Germans, and Jews: Literary Riddles for the 90s." The riddle in Professor Adelson's title refers to the contemporary riddle of referentiality in literature and history as it is made manifest in the broad historical narrative of civilization and barbarity that are touchstones for the Holocaust and Turks in Germany. Adelson identified the frequently deployed narrative of regression to barbarism as one that is susceptible to a number of problematic assumptions, whereas a narrative of the return of the repressed avoids such pitfalls. For that reason, Adelson reads the question of the Turks in contemporary Germany against the backdrop of trauma in order to tease out the riddle of referentiality.

Adelson traced the cultural comparisons of the Turks and Jews, beginning with a Leftist slogan of the 60s, which proclaimed the "Turks are the Jews of Today." German-Turkish literature of the early 80s, however, does not refer to Turks as Jews. Interestingly, since 1989, German-Turkish literature invokes the Jewish comparison. Adelson explained that she is interested in exploring the structural function of Jewish referentiality in Turkish texts, inquiring, what can it tell us. She positioned her scholarly pursuits in opposition to a particular aspect of Homi Bhabha's essay in Nation and Narration, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation" that borrows the image of the Turkish Gastarbeiter as a figure of the Double / Uncanny from John Berger's A Seventh Man in order to express the radical incommensurability of translation. Adelson attacked this use of the trope that perpetuates the Turk as figure of incoherence.

Adelson went on to point to Peter Weiss' play Marat / Sade as an example of the referential excitability of the Holocaust, in particular Scene 22 of Act I. In that moment, it becomes apparent that the play is less about the French Revolution and more about the crisis of historical consciousness and the relation between the historical past and present. Professor Adelson proceeded to invoke the work of Zafar Serocak in order to demonstrate how the status of referentiality and rhetoric of the past 30 years was being interrogated.

During Saturday's presentations, Professor Kang Liu from the Department of Comparative Literature at Pennsylvania State University reprised the theme of contemporary Chinese national identification and international relations by presenting an analysis of the after effects of the Tiananmen student demonstrations. These he characterized as a search for a new symbolism that can capture the sentiments of a public in social and political turmoil. Professor Liu described the bizarre sense of déjà vu in Beijing at the May 1999 demonstrations, which were foreshadowed by what U.S. A. Today called 'anti-U.S. vitriol' that gushed from Beijing following NATO's missile attack on the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. Professor Liu commented on the 'global,' meaning U.S., attention to Beijing's student demonstrations in May 1989 and then in May 1999, and the multitude of images it supplied. He contrasted two salient media symbols of the decade: the Goddess of Democracy statue in white plastic, erected in Tiananmen Square, May 1989, and an image of a weary looking U.S. Ambassador James Sasser. He is peering from the damaged Beijing Embassy door on
May 11, 1999, with the caption: “he has been imprisoned for four days.” Rather than interpreting the events and their symbols, he proposed to track the development of the contorted and contradictory trajectory of intellectual and cultural politics since 1989. Kang Liu argued that the anti-Americanism in the student demonstrations of 1999 was not a simple reflection of the waning popularity of U.S.-inspired liberal ideologies amongst a post-Tiananmen generation of pragmatists and nationalists. Nor does the 1989 Goddess of Democracy symbolize a total capitulation to ‘Western bourgeois liberalization’ as communist die-hards had charged. Professor Liu supported his contention that the symbolic interpretation is challenged by the complex intra- and international drama unfolding as China enters a capitalist-dominated global system. The international media’s demonization of China, and the intense domestic battles, which involve the pro-free market, pro-efficiency liberals; the pro-justice and equality ‘New Left;’ the leftist old guards; and the party line that “economic-development-is-all” underscores the dilemma of representing China as seen from within and without.

Professor Liu concluded that the various searches for a new symbolism of the decade are enmeshed in global realpolitik, and in military, economic, and ideological warfare. He further proposed that this complex trajectory suggests a different kind of postmodern indeterminacy, not as a result of infinite interplay of free-floating signifiers or symbols, but as a result of a new round of global power games with finite and determinate objectives.

Professor Ulri Linke, Department of Anthropology, Rutgers University and Ludwig-Uhland-Institut, Tübingen, concluded the morning session on Saturday with her paper entitled: “There is a Land Where Everything is Pure: Linguistic Nationalism and Identity Politics in Germany.” She investigated the process of German unification and its subsequent reinvention of a political community through the fabrication of a national imaginary. She was particularly concerned with the specific ideological form of ideal signifiers that facilitates the formation of the nation-state and appears as a natural process. Professor Linke argued that the two most important ideological strategies employed in the course of German unification reinscribe its historically diverse populations as naturally rooted in a common language and race. She explained that these terms operate together complementarily to represent the “nation” as an absolutely autonomous unit. Those terms situate the “national character” as a quality immanent in the “people.” Diversity is completely eliminated as a category so that the only symbolic difference exists between Germans and foreigners. Professor Linke illustrated this idea with the image of the German state’s external frontiers becoming internal frontiers, so that they can be imagined both as a projection and protection of an internal collective that enables Germans to inhabit the space of the state.

Professor Linke proceeded to show how this logic of race, heredity, and blood, which defines those who belong to the nation as an extended circle of kin, has been inscribed into language. Her analysis focused on the political production of linguistic nationality, and the legitimation of itself through corporal metaphors, which she finds embedded in quasi-mythic notions of the German nation as a linguistic body most notably in the idioms of blood. She proceeded with a historical examination of diverse political issues such as the citizenship debates, immigration policies, German language reform, and German literary societies. Professor Linke concluded that the German nation accorded a privileged place to the symbol of language in its own initial process of formation and bound political unity closely to linguistic uniformity and linked national unification to the ethnicization of language.

Professor Dilip Gaonkar from the School of Communications Studies at Northwestern University opened the afternoon session on Saturday with his paper, “The Rushdie Apology: Six Texts in Search of a Character” that clearly moved the conference “beyond” the realm of Berlin and Beijing. The first texts under consideration were coeval with the events in Berlin and Beijing and resulted from the controversy surrounding the publication of Salman Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses in 1988 that unveiled a new dimension in literary communication. For the first time, the technological resources and financial incentives of multinational publishing houses enabled the publication of a work like Rushdie’s nearly simultaneously (even in translations) in radically different cultural settings with different conventions and strategies for decoding and consuming “messages,” literary or otherwise. The “author” (and his/her publishers) are confronted with a new set of communicative “rights and obligations” that cannot be fully understood or justified in terms derived exclusively from the Western Enlightenment tradition of “freedom of thought and expression.” Even some of Rushdie’s staunchest supporters, who champion freedom of expression, have questioned his (and his publisher’s) practical judgment in their decision to publish the book in that form at that particular historical juncture.

Professor Gaonkar examined six texts that Rushdie has published since the controversy over his novel erupted: “An Open Letter to the Indian Prime Minister” (October 7, 1989); “A Clash of Faiths” (February 28, 1989); “In Good Faith” (February 4, 1990); “Is Nothing Sacred?” (February 6, 1990); “Why have I Embraced Islam?” (December 28, 1991); and “A Thousand Days in a Balloon” (December 12, 1993). Professor Gaonkar explained that these six texts may be regarded as Rushdie’s “apology” or “defense” of himself and his
novel that consists of two sets of arguments. The first pertains to the “right” of an author to publish his or her work free of censorship or any other form of intimidation. The second is Rushdie’s rejection of the claim that *The Satanic Verses* is intended to “insult and abuse” Islam. On the contrary, Rushdie argues that his novel should be viewed as an attempt to provide a language that would enable the post-colonial and diasporic muslims and other people from the Indian subcontinent to better understand their migrant experience and further to resist the marginalization of the host countries’ hegemonic culture. Gaonkar showed how Rushdie addresses not only different audiences but also speaks from multiple and sometimes contradictory “subject-positions” in order to defend himself in different political idioms (liberal, communitarian, and postmodern / performative) depending upon the audience. He concluded that a close reading of these texts shows the limits of “practical reasoning” embedded in different political idioms in a deeply divided multicultural world.

Saturday’s afternoon session also brought a paper by Tobin Siebers, of the University of Michigan, Department of English Language and Literature entitled “The Return to Ritual: Violence and Art in the Media Age.” Siebers’s paper explored the renewed preoccupation with animal and human bodies as revealed by the “Sensation” exhibition currently touring the world. Siebers remarked that this preoccupation has risen to fetishistic levels, pointing out that the art work itself not only represents but incorporates flesh and animal material. He noted the cultural studies field’s attention to the signal importance of traumatic bodies in the media, adding that theorists of ritual have equally given special attention to bodies in the production of “collective representations” — ideals of community disguised as transcendent notions. Siebers explained this shared attention by citing their common argument that bodies set into motion is a symbolic action, by which collective representations achieve an outward appearance, thereby providing a specific community with a powerful symbol to represent its cohesiveness. Siebers applied this argument to the “Sensation” exhibit, citing specific examples of its incorporation of animal flesh and organic material as the catalysts of this “symbolic action,” as well as the subjects of greatest media controversy.

Siebers went on to examine the impact of the media on symbolic action and the collective representations produced by various communities? Do media technologies defeat ritual or return us to the ritual era? Siebers explored these questions through the filter of the “Sensation” exhibit and its recent media uproar. In light of this he argued that cultural studies needs to develop strategies for enlarging local analyses of collective representations to account for the influence of symbolic action on a global scale. It also, Siebers noted, needs to examine how globalization affects the ritual desire for social cohesion.

Professor Andrew Ross, Director of the American Studies Program at New York University and a writer for *Artforum, The Nation, The Village Voice,* amongst other publications, delivered the concluding lecture of the conference on Saturday night: “Celebration Chronicles: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Property Value in Disney’s New Town.” It was an account of his year-long stay at Disney’s suburban development, which opened in Celebration, Florida in 1996. The town was touted as the start of a bold social experiment, a showcase for the most cutting-edge ideas about urban planning. Ross reported on the complexities of the corporate developed community and its underside that have generated complaints about construction, community rules and schools as well as other larger issues and implications that have yet to be voiced. Ross placed Disney’s Celebration in the tradition of utopian communities established to realize the American Dream and situated it within the context of the New...
Urbanist movement that seeks to combat suburban sprawl and restore public life to the increasingly privatized landscape. Ross, however, pointed out that Celebration brought the movement into the corporate future. The corporate interests are particularly complicated and compete with one another on different registers. The company has two hands on the land, one that is at work building a showpiece community, while the other recruits low wage labor. However, the economic risks for an image conscious company in the hospitality industry, which traditionally operates scripted developments such as theme parks, are extremely large. In spite of the generally beneficial zoning and tax incentives that Disney negotiated, as well as the meteoric rise in the value of the property since it was acquired, the fifteen-year investment is still difficult for a company with deep pockets. The risk is seen in even greater relief with the consideration that the project was never demand driven. The public and retail space was developed before there was a need.

Ross reported that the peculiar position of Disney as real estate developer exerted an unusual influence over the decision-making dynamics in school and community issues. For example, when a critical majority of parents became dissatisfied with the rather progressive school, it was reconceived as a more traditional institution. The residents expected a high level of customer satisfaction that one would normally associate with an industry like tourism, rather than real estate development. Ross concluded with a question quoting Blake and asking whether the public and private realms are slouching towards the end of the millenium as it is no longer easy to distinguish between the two.

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Contributions to German Culture News are welcome. If you would like an event listed or have an article to contribute, please contact Julia Stewart at 255-8408 or e-mail: js75@cornell.edu

reference. He responded that Kafka's work cannot be split off from the empirical personality. Much of the unpublished writing, Corngold noted, is still "in a way attached to Kafka's body," and the writer himself struggled with the tension between the literal and the figurative.

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Volker Kaiser of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, University of Virginia presented a paper entitled "Marx and Modernity: Promises-Premises" to the Colloquium series on October 1. His paper, originally given at a Bonn conference Versprechen zur Moderne 1848-1949, set out to explore the intersection of a possibly redemptive Marxist criticism and modern history. Such a redemptive criticism would, he argued, attempt to uncover the revolutionary potential within traditional form. Kaiser made a plea for a critical analysis of the 'collision of discursive presentation and critical force' in Marxist discourse, a collusion that provides the very articulation of promised modernity. In order to highlight this, he proposed a reading of Marx's The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, in which the 'forms of presentation' provide the possibility for critique. Indeed the very problem of presentation, which in this text refers explicitly to revolution, is linked to the notion of repetition. Marx articulates his own theory of historical repetition by supplementing Hegel's historical narrative in the language of theatrical presentation. Events in history happen twice, he writes, the first time as tragedy, the second as farce. Kaiser argued that the very practice of iteration — of Marx citing Hegel and then adding his own interpretation — this presentation as repetition with a difference, affects "the construction of a critique." Such a reproductive structure of presentation, he asserted, gives rise to alternatives or schisms in the construction of a critique, e.g. revolution becomes counter-revolution. He then mobilized Freud's dream theory and
Benjamin's ‘redemptive critique’ of Marx to explore the potential transfiguration of such repetitions and proceeded to ask how Marx in his essay on the Eighteenth Brumaire might “exceed or transcend the alternatives presented to it.” Kaiser went further and asked how critical Marxism might arrive at a point where revolution is not reversible. Following Derrida, he suggested that this might be possible only if the critique conceives of material analysis as a ‘working through’ rather than as an exorcism. Like Marx’s vision of the proletariat revolution, those involved with such a critique must “criticize themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course... deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltriness of their first attempts.” The context for Kaiser’s argument was the possibility of a “revival of Marx and his texts after the pronounced or declared collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe.” A critical engagement with the Marxist structure of repetition might, he concluded, provide “hope for its future and its redemption.”

A lively discussion ensued. Questions focused mainly on whether or not one could read a redemptive promise into Marx’s texts, in particular, whether or not there might be a contemporary context for such a structure of hope in the light of the events of 1989. The colloquium also questioned whether critique as presentation/critique as promise was peculiar to Marxism.

Aofe Naughton is a graduate student in the Department of Comparative Literature at Cornell.

On October 15, Jill Gillespie presented “Public History, Private Stories: Authorizing Gender in Helke Sander’s Befreier und Befreite” at the IGCS Colloquium. Gillespie’s paper, a chapter of her dissertation on trauma in postwar German women’s film, intervenes in both the specific reception of Sander’s Befreier und Befreite and psychoanalytic debates about trauma and Vergangenheitsbewältigung in postwar Germany. The reception of Befreier und Befreite has largely been critical of Sander for staging the mass rapes of German women by occupation soldiers at the end of World War II as part of an ahistorical “Geschlechtskrieg.” Gillespie argues that this criticism, while potentially valid, fails to notice the ways in which the film works through the historical trauma. The film both articulates this trauma, and constructs itself as a “transitional object” that can be used to come to terms with its ambiguities.

Gillespie began the colloquium by explaining her primary questions: How does the German public sphere attempt to negotiate a “correct” view of the past? How do films interact in the many spheres of these discourses, and how has gender been instrumentalized to represent historical concerns? She then showed 16 minutes of excerpts from Befreier und Befreite, which provided additional stimulus for the lively discussion that followed. This discussion covered a wide range of topics, from “the culture of silence” and notions of collective identity to the validity of Sander’s use of an ahistorical “Geschlechtskrieg” to frame her images and the efficacy of moments of irony and alienation in the film.

Valerie Weinstein is a graduate student in the Department of German Studies at Cornell.

With impressive alacrity Winthrop-Young managed to make the abstruse ideas of these communication theories accessible by providing points of entry via his commentary on the contemporary conjecture pursuant to their proposed combination. He adumbrated the obstacles of such a union by asserting that the merger could be more readily explained in terms of the issues that both parties oppose rather than in terms of their common interests. Winthrop-Young compared the scenario to Schopenhauer’s parable about the precarious situation of
two porcupines coming together in order to overcome the cold of winter. However, he organized his analysis along an axis of issues that the Kittlerian and Luhmannian schools have both abandoned or excised from their respective investigations of the materialities of standardized information input and the evolution of the understanding and meaning emerge out of contingent communicative output. He formulated it as set of farewells that they have bid to the human subject, communication, smooth continuity and emancipatory theorizing. The corresponding conventions inherited from discourse analysis and phenomenology come together in their shared bias toward describing what is rather than directing towards liberation. Both schools conceptualize history in terms of fundamental discontinuities. And they both replace the conventional understanding of communication as something rooted in consciousness with a notion of mediation as communication. Ultimately, in spite of these points of confluence that set their rejection of the hermeneutical tradition and the Frankfurt School into relief, Winthrop-Young is deeply skeptical about the possibility of integrating their divergent uses of key terms and concepts such as “information,” “communication” and “media” into a common framework. Winthrop-Young focused on media as one of the terms that evinces the conceptual incompatibilities between the two that are bound to thwart this attempt at a merger.

The audience that filled 181 Goldwin Smith to its capacity was eager to interrogate Prof. Winthrop-Young about his introductory remarks and his essay. The questions about individual terms and passages evolved into inquiries about particular themes and Winthrop-Young's position in relation to his report about the porcupines in his paper. He addressed queries about the provocative tone of the posthuman discourse with its proto-fascistic overtones celebrating the elimination of the human and his interest in probing these theorists who run counter to the humanities in search of productive insights. Professors Bathrick and Hohendahl were especially interested in examining Winthrop-Young about his own position in light of his impartial, didactic introduction to these competing theorists. This questioning crystallized into an analysis of the reconciliation required for an accounting of the social component within these theories.}

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In his paper, "Who's Watching the Rubble-Kids? Youth, Pedagogy, and Politics in DEFA's Rubble-Films," Jaimey Fisher offered a reading of the rubble-film genre, that is, films made in the "rubble" of Germany by German directors between 1945 and 1951. Fisher argued how many films of this genre moved youth and generational discourse to the symbolic center of "adult" feature films in order to defuse and resolve intense political and social trauma. Featuring as they do a Heimkehrer, a male returning from the war, the films depict a complicated masculinity — one that is ambivalent about being home after the war — via the terrain of generational difference and a peculiarly contradictory representation of youth. Fisher focused on the role that youth discourse plays in the reconstruction of this threatened masculinity: the films shift the site of social crisis from the inadequate adult male to a crisis of delinquent youth, which can then be more easily rehabilitated.

Fisher argued that in describing how masculinity is constituted and perpetuated, many scholars (including Kaja Silverman) underemphasize the role of the paternal function and stable generational difference in propelling up the masculine subject. In this historical moment, paternity and generational difference were threatened and therefore attended to — and eventually reconstructed — in a conspicuous, emphatic manner. Fisher connected this analysis of masculinity to the film theory of Gilles Deleuze, who understands Italian neorealism — Italian films from the same years — as a watershed in the history of the cinematic image. Deleuze, however, is not able to explain how the shift in the cinematic image is implicated in the social context of the postwar period, particularly with regard to those gender and generational instabilities described above.

With an interpretive model bred of this gender and film-formal analysis, Fisher analyzed two rubble-films, Irgendwo in Berlin [Somewhere in Berlin] and Rotation [Rotation], respectively, they are the second and second-best known films of the genre. Irgendwo in Berlin is preoccupied with the labile domestic social constellation so prevalent in the postwar period, and stabilizes this constellation by deploying and manipulating overdetermined generational relations. According to Fisher, Rotation (Rotation, 1949), although a well-known revision of the Weimar Arbeiterfilm (worker-film), is most productively analyzed within the context of the rubble-film genre and its generational operations. Rotation furthered Fisher's analysis because of its deliberate attention not only to youth's role within the traditional bourgeois family, but also to youth in the schools, an important subcultural social site for the reformation of the nation. The film elaborates both the multiple social sites of youth as well as the film's engagement with one of the most important political discourses of the day, reeducation.

The questions posed by the Colloquium participants focused in part on Fisher's reading of masculinity via generational difference as well as on the film-formal aspects of his analysis. Some participants suggested that Fisher did not attend quite enough to the function of gender in his emphasis on generation, some asked about how he understood his approach's relation to psychoanalytic film...
theory, while others challenged his elaborate readings of single images. Despite the pointed questions and heated debate, it did seem that a good time was had by one and all at this last colloquium of the semester/year/century/millenium and it portended many other fruitful meetings of the Colloquium of the Institute for German Cultural Studies in the future.

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Werther, however, remained positive about the text's politics. Most influential in this context was Georg Lukács, who portrayed Werther as a deliberate representation of the contradictions in the bourgeois milieu. Though Lukács admitted that Goethe was not a revolutionary, he insisted that Goethe was lodging a strong critique of bourgeois society and its division of labor — he persistently tried to connect Werther to the Volk. Lukács even drew a (rather tenuous, Richardson pointed out) parallel between Werther and the French Revolution.

Plenzdorff's parody of Werther, Richardson suggested, needs to be seen within the context of this complicated relationship of the GDR to the bourgeois literary heritage. Though the story was written as a film script in 1968/69, Plenzdorff was able to publish the parody in the window of relative cultural tolerance that opened up between the 1971 rise of Erich Honecker and the 1976 Biermann affair. Richardson indicated that Plenzdorff is not criticizing the classics or Goethe per se, but rather the rigid and dogmatic cultural policy vis-à-vis these classics. Plenzdorff's novel is critical on two levels: he recontextualizes Werther's critique of society in the GDR, and he offers a reading of Goethe resisting the official line on the bourgeois heritage. The novel's suicidal protagonist finds Werther in the bathroom and makes what would have been regarded as desecrating use of his Goethe. Edgar's death is left vague, but the episode asserts that one must not maintain a hollowly adoring respect for the bourgeois literary heritage.

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Herbert Deinert from the German Studies Department, opened the afternoon session with a paper entitled “Faust, Part I. The key players and their agenda.” His paper addressed the universality of Goethe’s seminal text through a comparative analysis of Faustian and pilgrim narratives. Deinert began by arguing for the necessity of placing Faust in context—its historical, visual, musical and literary borrowings—and proceeded to examine the critical possibilities of such comparative, analytic axes. In particular, Deinert focused critical attention on the possibility for productive comparison between visual narratives of Mephistopheles, 'the principle negator,' and Goethe's text. By pursuing such extra-linguistic relations, by historicizing the dramatic figures, context becomes not simply a backdrop but a crucial analytic maneuver for approaching such a ‘classic’ as Faust, Part I.

Gretchen Wheelock of the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, presented a paper entitled "Mozart's Elective Affinities: Cosi Fan Tutti," which explored the critical possibilities of the comparative space between Mozart's opera and Goethe’s Elective Affinities. Indeed the very notion of 'affinity,' which for Goethe was linked to the chemical notion of new alliances, is critically mobilized by Wheelock herself to bring the 'chemistry and fatal attraction' of the two works together in a productive dialogue. Both texts deal with two sets of couples, the dissolving and reformation of their bonds and the transference of mobile desire. Wheelock argues that musical affinity is central to the narrative unfolding of both texts. In Goethe's Elective Affinities, Charlotte and the Captain are seen to play a difficult work 'with ease'-their musical 'affinity' suggests from the start their compatibility. Similarly, Wheelock argues that musical affinities are crucial in understanding Mozart's ironic musical recollections. In Cosi Fan Tutti, musical clues suggest that the couples with which we are presented at the start are mismatched — it is only in the new bonding (however temporary) that musical affinities emerge. Wheelock proceeded to analyze the 'sincerity' of Mozart's music as a method of approaching the complicated couplings and 'key relations' of the libretto, arguing persuasively that attention to the musical irony casts the 'happy end' of Cosi Fan Tutti in a new light.

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Sunday's session opened with a lecture by Nobel laureate, Roald Hoffmann, professor of Chemistry, entitled "Human Chemistry: Goethe's Elective Affinities." After discussing a table of affinities from Goethe's time, Hoffmann suggested that Elective Affinities represents Goethe's attempts to trace chemical composition to spiritual origins. In the novel, Goethe illuminates aspects of chemistry such as polarities, dualities and eternal change. Hoffmann focused in particular on Goethe's critique of the chemist as "Scheidekünstler," a term which emphasizes separation. Hoffmann pointed to a passage in Elective Affinities where Charlotte claims that bringing things together is more important than separating them. According to Hoffmann, this statement is very prescient, in that "bringing things together" has been the primary task of synthetic chemistry in the twentieth century. He also proposed that Goethe's project of finding the spiritual origins of chemistry is still a worthy task. Hoffmann has it in his book The Same and not the Same, which presents a Jungian view of chemistry.

Goethe's privileging of synthesis over analysis was also explored by Patrick Roth, CEO of Transatlantic, whose lecture, "Goethe versus Newton," focused on Goethe's theory of light. Roth cited Goethe's hostility toward Newton, who was the first to recognize that light can be separated into colors. Goethe rejected this analytical method and preferred a phenomenological approach that leaves things in their natural state and looks at
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contemporary scientific theories that show an amount of knowledge but no wisdom. Roth claims that too much knowledge dulls the senses. Complex theories need to be linked to everyday life as Richard Feynman did in QED. Roth also asserts that Goethe's phenomenological approach is not entirely false, as can be seen by contemporary scientific theories that show the linkage between the observer and the observation.

The conference concluded with lectures on "Progress and Violence in Faust I and II" by Gerlinde Ulm Sanford, professor of German at Syracuse University and Herbert Deinert. Sanford noted many examples of violence in Faust. The drama begins with Faust's contemplation of suicide. Throughout the drama, Faust commits other acts of violence in his process of striving forward. Though necessary for Faust such striving also necessarily involves error. Sanford suggested that any kind of action compels guilt because action entails violence and therefore guilt. However, as evidenced by Faust's final speech, Goethe's central message is that the task of humans is to be as active as possible. Although that activity causes violence, it is only through striving that one can be redeemed and achieve immortality. She noted the importance of the blessed boys who take Faust's dead body to a higher sphere. Sanford proposed that while Faust wants to reach the sphere of pure activity through suicide in Faust I, in Faust II, he attains this state not through violence but through the love of the blessed boys. It shows that ideally love and compassion enable progress, not violence. Sanford concluded that while Goethe opposed violence he is ultimately a realist and sees violence as inevitable.

Deinert's lecture focused on colonialism in Act V of Faust II. There, Faust wants to build a new civilization without violently dispossessing natives. By reclaiming land from the sea, he attempts to create assets without victims. However, to build his observation platform, he has to evict Baurus and Philémon, the native residents of the plot of land he needs. They are killed and their house and trees are burned. This can be read as representative of colonial tactics. In Faust's final vision, however, he imagines a future society of independent people participating in a democracy without an overlord. Deinert argued that critics are incorrect in assuming that this society is a reference to America. America in the late 1820s and early 1830s could hardly have been considered utopian. At this time, it was characterized by war and violence against Native Americans. Furthermore, the Monroe Doctrine created a policy of non-interference with existing colonies. In other words, young America did not live up to its promise of being a nation impervious to the violent tactics of colonialism. Therefore, Faust's vision is not of America but of a tomorrow that will never come. Trying to work toward it is a fundamental aspect of human striving, but the perfect society will only come about at the end of history or in the afterlife.

Erica Doehoff is a graduate student in the Department of German Studies.

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Germany, namely the Backfisch, or the young, sexually inexperienced girl. When Assistant Professor Jeffrey Schneider from Vassar College regretfully had to leave the seminar early, a chapter from his dissertation that he is currently revising for book publication was read. concentrating on a close reading of Theodor Fontane's Effi Briest, he demonstrated the closely spun weave of masculinity, materialism and homoeroticism in the text and in other historical sources he situated alongside the text. Work continued with a chapter from Anne Simon's dissertation, which she completed at CUNY. Using her concept of "visual hysteria," she analyzed the anxieties of the male, rather than the female, bourgeois subject, through her interpretation of the work of Gustav Klimt in turn-of-the-century Vienna. Rose Ellen Lessey, a graduate student from the English Department, distributed her paper on illness and identity in Todd Haynes's film Safe, which provided the seminar with a nodal point to discuss the incomplete and inadequate encounter between the discourses of feminist and queer theories.

After five continual days of meeting during the final week of the seminar, the group met for one last time to discuss Professor Martin's thought provoking article, recently published in Differences, "Success and Its Failures." This text focuses on some of the more urgent contemporary issues concerning the university as an institution and its management of "excellence," through an analysis of Bill Readings's and Martha Nussbaum's recently published books on this topic. Her article's emphasis on the desirability of a critical exchange between the humanities and the sciences, enabled the seminar to reflect on issues of institutionalization, especially in terms of our own relationship to knowledge, power, and our particular disciplines in the climate outlined in the article.

Anna Parkinson is a graduate student in the Department of German Studies at Cornell.

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deans, faculty, and students of all our colleges. It is an exciting and challenging time for the university, and I look forward to working to enhance the strength and richness of our programs and the diversity of our community."

Philip E. Lewis, the Harold Tanner Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, offered the following comment on Martin's designation: "Biddy Martin is a brilliant scholar of international stature in the fields of German studies and women's studies. During her more than 16 years here at Cornell, she has proven herself to be a charismatic teacher and a remarkably articulate spokesperson for the cause of liberal education. She is also a colleague of exceptionally strong commitment and high integrity in whom the members of this
A German-born New Yorker, Prof. Kizer Walker brings a personal historical perspective to her talks on World War I and the Holocaust. Her talks will provide a fresh and unique view of the Great War and its effects on Germany, and will illuminate the underlying themes of the 21st century.

**The Significance of Being Lesbian and Modernity: The (Life) Styles of Loa Andreas-Salomé.** By presenting a contemporary analysis of Andreas-Salomé's work, Prof. Walker explores the relationship between traditional psychoanalysis and modern concepts of gender and identity. Her talk will highlight the enduring relevance of Andreas-Salomé's ideas in understanding current gender identities.

**Suffering, Solidarity, and the New Man.** In her presentation on Randolph Bourne's influential book, Prof. Walker will examine the themes of suffering and solidarity as they relate to the concept of the New Man. Her talk will provide insight into the cultural context of World War I and its impact on society.

**World War I and 'Final Solutions'.** Prof. Walker's talk will explore the historical and cultural context of World War I and the Holocaust, providing a deeper understanding of the events and their lasting effects on society.

**Line and Zone: Constructing Space in the New Man.** By examining the role of space in Andreas-Salomé's work, Prof. Walker will provide a fresh perspective on the significance of gender and identity in modernity.

**Making War in Twentieth Century Europe.** Prof. Walker will discuss the effects of World War I on Germany and its connections to the Holocaust. Her talk will provide a comprehensive understanding of the events and their lasting impact on society.

**ONE LAST THING**

Financial support was given in support of the following lectures:

Professor Sabine Hark (University of Potsdam) on September 29

Professor Leora Auslander (University of Chicago) on October 22

Professor Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (Stanford University) on November 15