**German-Jewish Studies beyond the Nation-State**

Since its debut, the study of German culture has shaped German national character. Such figures as the brothers Grimm and Schlegel impregnated in the study of German literature their respective visions of the German people and disseminated collective myths that have become constitutive of German nationhood. Examining this history, Jacob Norberg has recently appealed to the transformative potential of German Studies as an academic field by asking it "to remake itself into the meta-national discipline par excellence" (14). Yet aside from raising awareness to the history of the field, how can scholars of German Studies uncover nationalist agendas instead of reinforcing them? Norberg mentions German-Jewish studies as a model for approaches critical of nationalism, for perspectives that unearth the cultural homogeneity at the core of nationalism (13).

Norberg is not the first one to turn to Jewish studies as the litmus test of the national impetus behind the study of German culture. Scholars have pondered the centrality of Jewish authors to the canon of modern German literature before as indicative of postwar transformations of German nationhood (Anderson; Morris). The surge of German-Jewish studies in the United States since the 1980s paralleled the steady support of this subfield in Germany, where German-Jewish studies built on transatlantic cooperation (Isenberg). As I opt to suggest, German-Jewish studies reveal not only the effort to study German culture through a resistance to *Germanistik*'s nationalistic past, but also the complexities behind this attempt. The attention to Jewish authors hardly allows one to leave behind the national history of German Studies given that the wide support of this interest in Germany embodies the aftermaths of German nationalism.

In our times, the appeal to make German Studies a discipline that confronts national apparatus leads to a conundrum. As Norberg notes, today, the attraction to German Studies derives from Germany's status as the current "EU hegemon" (4). This vision behind German nationhood diverges significantly from nationalist trends of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Germany owes its current cultural dominance to its pertinence in facilitating European and international collaboration. In the last decade, Germany has attracted many immigrants, and its relatively accommodating policies toward some groups of refugees became its trademark. These recent policies contrast with separatist trends in the United States and in the United Kingdom. Consequently, German nationalism currently draws its power from its pluralistic vision (although this vision is not translated into concrete open-door policies, and notwithstanding the ethnic, cultural, and religious biases behind European notions of cosmopolitanism). The accentuating of ethnic and linguistic pluralisms in literary studies aligns well with Germany's *current* model of nationalism rather than that it transgresses it.

Mark M. Anderson's essay "German Intellectuals, Jewish Victims: A Politically Correct Solidarity" (2001) traces the treatment of Jews in post-1968 Germany as a continuing influence on German Studies. According to Anderson, the engagement with German-Jewish authors in German literature departments—both in Germany and in the United States—is disproportional to this literature's scope within the German canon. Anderson points out the centrality of such Jewish authors as Benjamin, Celan, and Kafka to German Studies. He thus contends that German intellectuals have overstated and idealized the cultural legacy of Jewish authors. The dominance of Jewish authors in German literary studies is evident in the curriculum in the United States, Anderson argues, even when the social and political conditions diverge drastically between the countries.

Anderson's essay does not spell out the exact ways in which German-Jewish authors were exported to American academia. One is led to assume that the canonization of Jewish literature in *Germanistik* transformed German Studies on a global scale. Anderson does touch on the success of this export, noting that in the United States German Jews are associated with the history of the Second World War that draws students' attention: "To increase undergraduate enrollments, German professors here are obliged to reduce the canon of German literature to a tiny handful of teachable authors who often have a Jewish background. They are also forced to skew courses away from literature toward the study of persecution, exile, and genocide" (9). Americans' interest in the Holocaust differs greatly from the "political correctness" that provokes the German admiration of Jewish authors in Anderson's mind. Notwithstanding this disparity, Anderson argues, the search after reconciliation, a guiding principle of contemporary German nationhood, impregnates German Studies on a global scale and leads to major biases in selecting a new canon at the expense of some of the constitutive figures of German literature.

In reference to the topic of this special forum, I would like to point out that the version of nationalism that Anderson traces among German intellectuals since 1968 is evidently at odds with the celebration of the German national character in Romanticism. The admiration of Jewish authors of liminal national and linguistic background (like Celan and Kafka) does not transgress the nation-state model; rather, this tendency could be said to make agreeable German nationalism in the present.

Benjamin, Celan and Kafka are still pillars of German Studies in both Germany and North America. Moreover, the cultural tendency that Anderson correlates to German intellectuals still appears prevalent: broad support of Jewish culture in Germany is steady and the resilience of this trend appears to be steeped in historical guilt. The past decade has only amplified the appeal of German nationhood to visions of religious acceptance and ethnic toleration. It can be argued, therefore, that the admiration of Jewish authors to which Anderson points in his 2001 essay has grown from an inner cultural code, an organizational principle of the German public sphere, into a token of Germany's international stature.

I would like to point out that Anderson's position separates academic cultures—with the intellectuals that ostensibly run them—from the figures they study. This position portrays German-Jewish authors as objects, or social capital, to be disseminated in tandem with cultural trends. The view of German-Jews as cultural pawns overlooks, for instance, Hannah Arendt's controversial comments on American racial segregation. It likewise disregards Günther Anders's reflections on the use of atomic weapon or Adorno's inquiries into American radio and television cultures. As these examples show, German-Jewish authors evade their correlation to a singular national culture—and thus, also to deterministic national impetus. Authors are not merely a commodity to be taken on by scholars who aspire to develop a scholarly curriculum compliant (or recalcitrant) to national agendas.

The view of authors as passive pawns does not account for the transnational activity that guides the development of German literature to the same extent that it shapes its scholarship. Our choice of a literary canon, Norberg and Anderson importantly remind us, hones the ideological footprint of our scholarship. German-Jewish Studies straddle a lineage of intellectual inquiries that reflect on the establishment of a literary canon while questioning—reflectively and performatively—the idea of a coherent national character. I would like to point out that this tradition instills in German Studies the consideration of the ethical implications of scholarship: in

so doing, this tradition has construed the scholar as an empirical person rather than an objective and calculated outsider to the chronology of nationalism. Such figures as prominent literary scholars Ruth Klüger (in the United States) and Peter Szondi (in Germany) developed a career that echoed their personal stories of forced migration. Other Jewish intellectuals, including Margarete Susman and Hilde Domin, reflected on the cultural valence of literary forms while engaging in poetic writing in German—creation that signaled their exceptional political choice to remain or return to the German-speaking cultural arena. German-Jewish Studies jog our memory that scholarship is transformed constantly by migration, relocation, and reorientation. Forms of mobility thus shape the affiliations between scholars and authors. They are a constant reminder that the ideological footage of their work is not given entirely to scholars' free choice.

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