

Dr. EDGAR LANDGRAF

Bowling Green State University
Dept. of German, Russian and East Asian Languages
Bowling Green, OH 43403
Tel. : (419) 372-9517 FAX: (419) 372 2571
E-Mail: elandgr@bgsu.edu

On Faculty Improvement Leave for AY 2008-9

Research

My research focusses on well-known and well-established German literary, aesthetic and philosophical texts from the mid-eighteenth to the nineteenth century, addressing what within the field of German studies (and beyond) are familiar themes: artistic creativity, modern subjectivity, and changes in the semantics of individuality, of love, and of education (German *Bildung*). I investigate these themes in the context of the larger question of the emergence, structure, and semantics of modernity – modernity understood as the time period and the culture that has defined Western societies since the mid-eighteenth century. Within this broader thematic context, the body of my work gains contour through its methodological commitment. Drawing on contemporary systems theory and in particular on the works of the German socio-theorist Niklas Luhmann, my research engages what have traditionally been seen as philosophical problems and relates them to the kind of cultural analysis in which literary studies have always been interested. A secondary goal of my research then (second to the desire of making original contributions within the field of German studies and literary theory), is the ambition to introduce contemporary systems theory and its potential for the humanities to a wider audience. This is, I believe, a *desideratum* especially in the U.S. where systems theory's reception, although increasing in recent years, still does not compare to the productive debate this methodology has stimulated in German academia.

Current Projects

Book Project

Improvisation, Art, and the Art of Living. Unpredictability and Creativity in the Age of Goethe (working title of book project). Book examines the aesthetic and literary engagement with improvisation during the age of Goethe in socio-cultural terms, namely as a reflection and critique of modernity. This means that my study is not restricted to improvisation defined as the simultaneity of performance and composition in art and their associated traditions in music and theater (esp. the *commedia dell' arte*); rather, I will approach as it concerns unplanned, unprepared, and unforeseen (the literal meaning of *im-pro-visio*) actions in art and in life. In this broader sense, we can recognize improvisation as a central *topos* of the period, which is of interest not only aesthetically, but also poetically, and with regard to quite specific social and even political concerns. To put it in broad terms: modern society structures the interaction between individuals (and individuals and things) in ways, which invite and ever more often require that individuals improvise. A quick comparison with pre-modern society can elicit this point. In pre-modern societies, rituals, traditions, rigidly defined behavioral patterns (e.g. courtly manners) defined much of the interaction between individuals. The temporal imagination emphasized continuity through repetition and the dominant cosmology insinuated a "pre-stabilized harmony" which made the idea of a free will—of actions not always already predetermined in an overarching eschatology—all but unthinkable (think of Leibniz' considerable efforts in dealing with the paradox of a free will in a world defined by an almighty and supposedly all-knowing God). By the end of the eighteenth century, a very different cosmology, a very different way of understanding time and history, and very different ways of people interacting take hold. Modernity defines itself teleologically. By insisting on newness, originality, and progress in almost every walk of life, modern society structures the expectations and interactions between people differently, turning improvisation into a primary *modus operandi*. One might even argue that improvisation has become the precondition for any activities or encounters that endeavor to be productive, i.e. activities that want to achieve more than a repetition of the familiar and old. This is true not only with regard to the production of artworks, but even for a simple conversation between two people. As opposed to the highly stylized conversational patterns of pre-modern, aristocratic societies, in modern times, even the most common conversation with a familiar person demands that each participant—if they indeed desire to converse

rather than to agitate, manipulate, or (e.g. pedagogically) coerce—be not transparent or predictable for the other person and for him- or herself. Today, a conversation deserving of this name can emerge only if the participants are willing to act (verbally) in an unpredicted, unprepared, and unforeseen manner. Improvisation, in this regard, must be understood as necessarily defining the social horizon of modernity—modernity understood as a social structure that defines itself through its open future and its ability to learn.

Articles

“*Werther’s Sentimental Narcissism. Reflections on the Social and Aesthetic Origins of the Modern Psyche*” (article for forthcoming anthology *The Self as Muse: Narcissism and Creativity in the German Imagination 1750-1850*)

“Black Boxes and White Noise. Don DeLillo and the Reality of Literature” (article for forthcoming essay anthology *Addressing Modernity: Niklas Luhmann and U.S. Cultures*).

„Unvorhersehbarkeit, Kreativität, Individualität. Ästhetische und gesellschaftstheoretische Überlegungen zur Reflexion improvisierten Handelns in der Romantik“ (article for forthcoming anthology *Improvisieren -- Das unvorhersehbare Tun*).

Curriculum Vitae Fall 2008

Education

Ph.D.	German, The Johns Hopkins University, 1998
M.A.	German, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1992
B.A. equivalent	German Studies, Philosophy, and Psychology, Universität Zürich, 1990

Academic Positions

2006 to present	Associate Professor of German, Department of German, Russian, and East Asian Languages, Bowling Green State University
2007 to 2008	Director of BGSU Study Abroad program in Salzburg, Austria
2003 to 2004	
2001 to 2002	
2006 to 2007	Graduate Advisor, Department of German, Russian, and East Asian Languages, Bowling Green State University
1998 to 2006	Assistant Professor of German, Department of German, Russian, and East Asian Languages, Bowling Green State University
1992 to 1998	Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of German, Johns Hopkins University
1995 to 1997	Assistant Language Coordinator, Department of German, Johns Hopkins University
1990 to 1992	Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of German, U. of Illinois at Chicago
1988 to 1989	Teaching Assistant, Department of German, Universität Zürich

Teaching Experience

Undergraduate Courses Taught at Bowling Green State University

GERM 480	Automatons: Man and Machine	(Spring 1999)
GERM 417	Advanced Composition and Conversation	(Fall 1999 & 2002)
GERM 416	Contemporary Austrian Life	(Fall 2001)
GERM 413	Crime and Literature	(Fall 2003, Spring 2006)
GERM 400	Crime Literature	(Spring 2006)
GERM 400	Senior Seminar: Young Goethe	(Spring 2005)
GERM 315	German Culture and Civilization	(Summer 2006)
GERM 313	Crime and Lit. in the 18th & 19th Centuries	(Spring 1999 & 2000)
GERM 311	Intro into German Lit. of the 20th Century	(Fall 1998, 1999, 2002, 2007)
GERM 231	Intermediate Reading	(Fall 2004)
GERM 202	Intermediate German 2	(Spring 2001, 2003, 2007)
GERM 201	Intermediate German 1	(Fall 1998, 1999, 2000, 2006)
GERM 102	Elementary German 2	(Summer 1999)
GERM 101	Elementary German 1	(Spring 2001 & Fall 2002)
HNRS 300, PHIL 340h Nietzsche		(Spring 2000 & 2001 & 2003 & 2007 and Fall 2004))

Graduate Courses Taught at Bowling Green State University

GERM 680	Lessing, Goethe, Kleist	(Fall 2006)
GERM 680	Heinrich von Kleist	(Spring 2006)
GERM 680	The Ideology of 18 th Century Aesthetics	(Fall 2000)
GERM 680	Romantic Love	(Fall 1998)
GERM 601	Intro. To Grad. Study	(Fall 2001, 2003 & 2007)
GERM 582	Young Goethe	(Spring 2005)
GERM 517	Advanced Composition and Conversation	(Fall 1999 & 2002)

Research Interests

German Romanticism
 Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German literature, aesthetics, and philosophy
 Anthropological and sociological approaches to literature
 Theories of modernity

Research Grants

Re-application to Fulbright European Union Scholar-in-Residence Grant (Fall 2005, received Spring 2006).

Fulbright European Union Scholar-in-Residence Grant Application, filed Fall 2004. For European Scholar-In-Residence that would serve Political Science, International Studies Program, and GREAL (esp. German dual degree M.A. programs). Value of grant proposal, ca. 12'000 USD; Grant application was recommended by U.S. Fulbright Commission. European commission was unable to find candidate.

Institute for the Study of Culture and Society (ICS) Grant Applications, awarded for fall 2005, first runner up in 2003, also applied in 2001

A&S Travel Grant (awarded Spring 2005)

Instructional Improvement Grant for Intermediate German, 2/2000 & 2/2003 (awarded in 2003)

SPAR Travel Grants (awarded 1998, 1999, and 2000)

Publications

Articles

"The Psychology of Aesthetic Autonomy. The Signature of the Signature of Beauty," in: Karl Philipp Moritz. Signatures of Thought, ed. by Anthony Krupp (forthcoming, Rodopi Press)

"Improvisation: Form and Event—A Spencer-Brownian Calculation," in: Emergence and Embodiment: New Essays in Second-Order Systems Theory, edited by Bruce Clarke and Mark Hansen. (forthcoming 2008, Duke UP)

"The Education of Humankind. Perfectibility and Discipline in Kant's Lectures 'ÜBER PÄDAGOGIK'." Goethe Yearbook/Jahrbuch XIV (2007): 39-60.

"Comprehending Romantic Incomprehensibility. A Systems-Theoretical Perspective on Early German Romanticism," MLN 121 (2006): 592-616.

"The Disintegration of Modern Culture. Nietzsche and the Information Age." Comparative Literature 57.1 (Winter 2005), 25-44.

"Romantic Love and the Enlightenment: From Gallantry and Seduction to Authenticity and Self-Validation." German Quarterly 77/1 (Winter 2004), 29-46.

"Improvisation: Paradigma moderner Kunstproduktion und Ereignis." parapluie: Kulturen - Künste- Literaturen, Improvisation, (<http://parapluie.de/archiv/improvisation/kunstproduktion/>) November 2003.

"Self-Forming Selves: Autonomy and Artistic Creativity in Goethe and Moritz." Goethe Yearbook/Jahrbuch XI (Spring 2002), 159-176.

"Observing Postmodernity: Subjectivity and Communication in Twentieth-Century Critical Thought." Society for the Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery, Proceedings 2001.

"Die Realität der literarischen Kommunikation." in: parapluie: Kulturen - Künste- Literaturen, Kommunikation, (<http://parapluie.de/archiv/kommunikation/literatur/>) January 2001.

"Beobachter der Postmoderne." parapluie: Kulturen - Künste- Literaturen. X Generation, (<http://parapluie.de/archiv/generation/postmoderne/>) August 1999.

Editing

Reviewer for *The European Romantic Review* (2007)

Reviewer for *Comparative Literature Studies* (2006)

Reviewer for *German Quarterly* (2003, 2004)

Editorial Assistant, *MLN* 109/3 (1994)

Book Reviews

Moore, Evelyn K. and Simpson, Patricia Anne (ed.s). *The Enlightened Eye. Goethe and Visual Culture*. Amsterdam / New York: Rodopi, 2007. 322 pp. *German Quarterly* 81:3 (2008): 357-359. (review)

"Elystan Griffiths. *Political Change and Human Emancipation in the Works of Heinrich von Kleist*. Rochester, NY: Camden, 2005." *Colloquia Germanica* 39/6 (2006): 88-90. (review)

"Simulating Mimesis" *MLN* 115/3 (April 2000): 554-560. (review)

"Experience: An Untimely Subject," *Semiotica* 111-3/4 (1996): 347-356. (review essay)

Reports (unpublished)

Evaluation of book manuscript (Peter Fuchs, Niklas Luhmann - Observed, engl. transl.) for Stanford University Press (January 2001)

Conference Papers Read to Professional Societies

Invited Papers

“Unvorhersehbarkeit, Kreativität, Individualität. Beobachtungen zur poetischen und gesellschaftlichen Reflexion improvisierten Handelns in der Romantik.“ Berlin, April 2008.

“The Psychology of Aesthetic Autonomy. Karl Philipp Moritz’s ‘Über die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen.’” At: Signatures of Thought: Karl Philipp Moritz (1756-1793). Conference organized by the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on German Literature and Culture at the University of Chicago. Chicago, November 3-4, 2006.

“Creating Performativity and Performing Creativity. Considerations on the History and Phenomenology of Improvisation.” Interdisciplinary Seminar on Improvisation. U. of California, Santa Barbara. April 2006.

“Self-Forming Selves: Autonomy and Artistic Creativity in Goethe and Moritz.” ICS Research Fellow Talk, Bowling Green State University, November 2005.

“Comprehending Romantic Incomprehensibility. A Systems Theoretical Perspective on Early German Romanticism.” Colloquium in Honor of Bianca Theisen. Johns Hopkins University, October 21-22, 2005.

“The Value(s) of the Humanities Today,” BGSU’s First Russian Undergraduate Research Conference, 4/21/2005.

“The Education of Humankind. Perfectibility and Discipline in Kant’s Lectures ‘On Pedagogy.’” BGSU philosophy club, 11-2004.

“The Disintegrating Effects of Modern Culture. Nietzsche and the Information Age.” .International Forum 2003. Bowling Green State University, March 20, 2003

“The Birth of Romantic Love from the Enlightenment Spirit of Writing: From Gallantry and Seduction to Authenticity and Self-Validation.” International Forum 2000. Bowling Green State University, March 30, 2000.

“Communicating the Incommunicable: Artistic Inspiration in late Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics.” Lecture held at “Deutsches Haus,” Columbia University, September 30th 1999.

“Artistic Inspiration: Paradoxes of Communication in late Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics.” International Forum 1999. Bowling Green State University, March 1999.

Refereed Papers

“The Reality of Literature: World-Art and the Modern World-System.” Special Session organized by “sociology and literature” section, MLA convention, Philadelphia, PA. December 2006.

“Heroes Undone. Modern Society and the Logic of Representation in Goethe’s *Götz von Berlichingen* and Kleist’s *Michael Kohlhaas*.” GSA conference, Pittsburg, Pa. October 2006

“Contingency and Creativity. Kleist and the Self-Programming of Modern Art.” GSA conference 2005, Milwaukee, WI, October 2005.

"Comprehending Romantic Incomprehensibility. A Systems Theoretical Perspective." GSA conference 2004, Arlington, VA, October 2004.

„Improvisation: Form and Event – A Spencer-Brownian Calculation." 3rd SLS (Society for Literature and Science) European Conference, Paris, France, June 2004.

"Patronizing Anthropology. Schiller's 'Briefe zur ästhetischen Erziehung des Menschen.'" Annual Meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS); Boston, MA, March 2004.

"The Disintegrating Effects of Modern Culture. Nietzsche and the Information Age." Kentucky Foreign Language Conference (KFLC); Lexington, KY, April 2003.

"Comprehending Romantic Incomprehensibility. A Systems Theoretical Perspective on Early German Romanticism." ICR conference 2002, Tallahassee, October 2002.

"What Culture needs Cultural Studies? Nietzsche's Critique of Modern Culture Revisited." GSA conference 2002, San Diego, October 2002.

"The Societal Relevance of Literary Communications: A Systems Theoretical Perspective." MLA convention 2001, New Orleans, December 2001

"Racism and Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics of Authenticity, Originality, and Immediacy. Kleist's 'Die Verlobung in St. Domingo.'" MLA convention 2000, Washington DC, December 2000

"Self-Positing Selves: Genius and Self-Identity in the Aesthetics of *Storm and Stress*." Canadian Society of Eighteenth Century Studies Association (CSECS); Toronto, ON, October 2000

"Self-Positing Selves. Autonomy and Artistic Creativity in Goethe and Moritz." German Studies Association (GSA); Houston, TX, October 2000

"Docile Daughters. Love and Power in the German Enlightenment." Kentucky Foreign Language Conference (KFLC); Lexington, KY, April 2000

"Inspired Minds. Inspiration and Consciousness in late Eighteenth-Century German Aesthetics." Annual Meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS); Philadelphia, PA, April 2000

"Observing Postmodernity: Subjectivity and Communication in Twentieth-Century Critical Thought." Society for the Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery (SISSI); Colorado Springs, Colorado, March 2000

"The Inspired Gaze: Inspiration and Spectacle in Eighteenth-Century German Aesthetics." Western Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies (WSECS); University of Nevada, Las Vegas, February 2000

"The Genealogy of Romantic Love: Gallantry, Authenticity, Play, and Simulation in Pre-Romantic and Romantic German Literature." American Conference of Romanticism (ACR); Bloomington, IN, November 1999

"The Inspiration of Language: German Romanticism and its Simulation of Meaning;" American Conference of Romanticism; Santa Barbara, October 1998

"Histories of Venus;" 5th Conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas (ISSEI), Utrecht, August 1996

"Body, Mind and Soul in Medieval Literature;" Graduate Student Conference, Chicago, March 1992

Service

Bowling Green State University Department

AYA Director 2007-8, 2003-2004 and 2001-2003 (activities incl. search for and hire of new professors, undergraduate and graduate advising, managing AYA budget, recruiting Austrian students for BGSU, organizing new field trips, directing communications between BGSU and Mozarteum, creating program webpage, organizing film series, organizing social events promoting cultural exchange between Austrian and American students, etc.)

Incoming AYA Director 2006-7, 2002-2003 and 2000-2001 (activities included revision of graduate brochure – both form and content! – and new layout of undergraduate brochure and poster, organizing and coordinating recruitment efforts, recruitment trips to other universities, organization of several information evenings for students, class presentations in all German classes, consistent communications with prospective students and parents, etc.).

Graduate Coordinator (spring 2006-2007).

Chair of Chair Succession Committee (2006)

Chair of Budget & Merit Committee (2006)

Participated in Japanese Search (2006)

Salzburg Summer Program director (2005), duties included recruitment of within and outside BGSU, soliciting financial support for high school students from Max Kade,

updating AYA web pages (fall 2004),

Member of AYA Salzburg Committee, 2000 to present

Wrote up general education course approval forms for GERM 201 and GERM 202 (2/2003)

Member of German Search Committee, 2000-2001

German Club Advisor, 2000-2001 (helped organize Oktoberfest, Christmas Party, movie nights, German carnival celebrations, etc.)

Chair of Merit & Budget Committee, 1998-2000; 2002 & member 2004

Member of Secretary Search Committee, 2000

Assessment of 3rd Year German Literature Track, Spring 2000

Member of Departmental Retreat, 5/9/00

Member of Chinese Search Committee, 1998-1999

Oral Proficiency Exams with Graduate Students, 1998 & 1999

Participation in Study Abroad Fair, 1998 & 1999 & 2003

Updating German news page and course listings on Web, 1998 and 1999, 2002, 2004

University

University Faculty Research Committee, 2005-2008

AYA Process Team (2006-7)

Distinguished Thesis Awards Committee 2004

Faculty Senate, 2002 – 2005 (interrupted because of study abroad directorship)

Faculty Senate, one year replacement for 2000-2001

International Programs, 2000-2001; 2002-2003

Film Studies Committee, one year replacement 1999-2000

Honors and Awards Committee, 1999-2000

Professional

Panels

Commentator. "The Holocaust and Evolving Cultural Discourse in Germany and Israel." Trajectories of Memory: Intergenerational Representations of the Holocaust in History and the Arts. Bowling Green State University, Ohio, March 2006.

Commentator. "Staging the Woman in the Long Nineteenth Century I," at GSA conference 2005, Milwaukee, WI, October 2005.

Organizer: "Improvisation and Late Eighteenth Century Aesthetics." American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) conference 2005, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Moderator: "The Curse of Enthusiasm: Sublimity to Sadomasochism in Literature and Philosophy Around 1800," German Studies Conference (GSA) 2004, Washington, D.C.

Chair, "Emotional Journeys in German Romanticism," ICR conference 2002, Tallahassee, October 2002.

Commentator (invited to replace Brigitte Prutti) of "The Romantic Eighteenth Century: Lessing, Winckelmann, Herder" at GSA conference 2002, San Diego, October 2002.

Organizer: "Observing Kleist Observing: Challenging the Cultural Bias of Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics." Panel: **MLA special session** at the annual MLA conference, Washington, D.C.: 2000.

Organizer: "Systems Theory and Literary Studies: Observing the Auto-Poiesis of the Literary System;" Panel: **MLA special session** at the annual MLA conference; San Francisco: 1998.

Reviewer Fulbright Scholar in Residence applications 2007

Graduate Student member of Committee on Undergraduate Language Instruction,
1995-1997.

Membership in Professional Organizations

Modern Language Association
German Studies Association
American Association of Teachers of German
American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies
Society for Literature, Science and the Arts (SLSA)
American Comparative Literature Association

Honors and Awards

Authors & Artists Recognition (Friends of the University Library), BGSU 2006
North American Goethe Society Essay Award for 2005.
Institute for the Study of Culture and Society Fellowship (Fall 2005)
Roulston Prize for outstanding achievement and excellence in German, Johns Hopkins University (AY
1997-1998)
Humboldt Consortium; Research Stipend at Berlin's Humboldt Universität (Summer 1996)
NEH-sponsored Summer seminar at Johns Hopkins University (Summer 1995)
Robert Kauf Award for Scholastic Excellence, University of Illinois at Chicago (1991 and 1992)