Something Old, Something New: Integrating Canonical Works in a German Studies Curriculum

Kyle Frackman

Abstract

This essay focuses on advanced-level German instruction and advocates an open, flexible approach to integrating the recommendations of the much-discussed 2007 MLA report on Foreign Languages and Higher Education. Specifically, language, literature, film, and cultural studies are combined to allow for the development of transcultural competence at the advanced level, while also fostering advanced capacities in German. Informing the discussion is an examination of changing demands on German Studies curricula and their inclusion/exclusion of canonical material. Bringing together a wide range of cultural products facilitates students' consideration of cultural/historical contexts, relationships and similarities/differences among characters, and connections to the students' own experiences. Student goal-setting, assessment, and evaluation help to direct the trajectory of the advanced course, avoiding the common problem of underdefined or undertheorized pedagogies past the intermediate level.

The present generation in Germany finds little solace in the literature of the early classical period, in Klopstock and Lessing; indeed the more radical among them find Schiller's heroes and heroines, even some of Goethe's a trifle ridiculous. [...] Dr. Walter Schönbrunn, for example, feels: "Nur bei einer künstlich schülerhaft gehaltenen Generation kann es der Lehrer noch wagen, Dramen von Lessing zu lesen. Emilia Galotti wird sonst als Groteske empfunden" (Burkhard, 1930, 117).

Published in *The German Quarterly* in 1930, this quotation would arguably resonate among many Germanists even today.¹ Burkhard observed that “a student would continue reading German for himself [*sic*], without the stimulus of course credit, if I selected works for him to read that presented characters and problems with which he was able to identify himself, in which he could see his own life portrayed, in part revealed” (118). It was then and is still uncontroversial that students are more likely to be engaged by a text if they feel it holds some relevance for them. Nonetheless, for better or worse, approaches to the teaching of literature have changed little in the past century, and this despite innovative pedagogical approaches, such as those by Kern (*Literacy and Language Teaching*) or Swaffar and Arens. Yet the issue of teaching literature within the language curriculum has remained a contentious subject at least since the publication of Burkhard’s lament. As W. P. Trent wrote in 1904, “Are we not further haunted by the thought that an extremely large proportion of the facts about literature that we make our pupils learn must be speedily forgotten by them and can in few cases do them any direct good?” (404). This question may sound familiar to many teachers of foreign languages today, illustrating an ongoing problem in language pedagogy in general, and German language pedagogy in particular.

The place of teaching canonical literary works has in any case been a recurring topic in German Studies since at least the late 1980s and early ‘90s (e.g., Arens, Bledsoe, Frederiksen, Herminghouse, Holub, Hopkins, and Nollendorfs). Members of the discipline and others have repeatedly wondered whether and to what extent students can or should be introduced to

¹ I would like to acknowledge the support of the Office of Faculty Development at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, especially in its annual faculty writing retreat, in the writing of this article.

‘masterpieces’ of German literature and culture. Instead of arguing for the simple maintenance or avoidance of canonical literature in course syllabi, in this article I will address approaches to curricula with the literary canon in mind, and present one version of such a curriculum: a mixture of canonical and non-canonical works in an advanced language course.² In line with the arguments and proposals of the 2007 MLA report on “Foreign Languages and Higher Education,” I advocate for an open flexible approach to literary studies, which fosters trans- and “intracultural” competence and understanding while continuing language learning at the advanced level, rather than isolating the analysis of literary and other cultural works. Underlying my approach is the belief that developments in our discipline, which move toward expanding (the) canon(s), do not necessitate the complete removal of so-called canonical works. Indeed, with proper care for contextualization and awareness of students’ abilities, “the” literary and cultural canon can be integrated into all levels of language instruction. Moreover, comparisons of older and newer cultural works can lead to discoveries about both sets of texts. In what follows, I will briefly discuss the debate regarding reaching advanced proficiency, particularly in relation to the noteworthy 2007 MLA report, before describing a possible methodological approach to achieving such proficiency and the kind of competence the MLA has suggested.

The MLA Report

Rightly so, the MLA report of 2007 inspired a good deal of self-reflection among many in the cultural language disciplines. It prompted a new wave of scholarly engagement with the

² Canons can vary, of course, depending on the theme. There is conceivably a canon of women’s literature, just as there is a canon of literature, as Nollendorfs expresses it, “of exemplary works by major authors, mostly male, who had been dead at least for several decades” (1).

topic, including articles, individual scholarly presentations, and whole conference panels.³ A principal assumption in German Studies is that language instruction should be supported and encouraged so that it can become and remain a solid foundation for the rest of the learner's studies in the discipline. Although it is a main occupation of the discipline to teach target languages and foster cultural awareness, some of the same decades-old neglect of particularly this kind of instruction persists. One of the responsibilities of Germanists is to provide myriad and sophisticated opportunities to learn and use German. As Russell A. Berman notes, too often language instruction is undervalued, or at least viewed as unequal to literary studies, in the taking stock of where the field's priorities lie ("Global Thinking, Local Teaching" 89). Departments with graduate programs tend to perpetuate the language/literature divide, reifying the idea that language courses should be taught by graduate students or non-tenure-system and/or lower-paid and/or part-time faculty, thereby disconnecting the language learners from the most experienced scholars in the subject area. This approach continues to thrive, and there is a wide range of proposals for how to address it. The 2007 MLA report describes the tendency to separate approaches to language into "instrumentalist" and "constitutive" views of language.

On the one hand, these ideas reduce language study to "a skill to use for communicating thought and information," and on the other hand, to "an essential element of a human being's thought processes, perceptions, and self-expressions" (235-236). Noting that there are exceptions in, for example, non-doctoral institutions, the report also criticizes the frequent division of programs into the language study track that may funnel students into the study of traditional,

³ See, for example, the four responses to the report in the 2008 issue of *Profession* (Ryding, Pireddu, Geisler, and Levine, et al.) and Byram and Kramersch. Panels related to the report were held at, among others, the University of California Berkeley, the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, and Yale University as well as at organization conventions for the American Association of Teachers of German, Women in German, and the MLA itself.

canonical literature, which further illustrates the chasm between non-tenure and tenure-track faculty, while also potentially disparaging the necessary lower-division language courses (236; see also Byrnes and Maxim). In his response to the MLA committee's position paper, Peter C. Pfeiffer posits that we continue to relive the failure of the "cultural turn" in FL departments, which neglected to

develop a coherent framework that encompassed the (language) teaching mission of the departments and the research missions in a mutually beneficial way. As a consequence, the institutionally anchored aspect of the mission (teaching and, in particular, language teaching) lost out to the research mission anchored in professional reputation and carried on mostly in English. (297)

Relatedly, debates over the usefulness of institutions' foreign language requirements appear often to devalue the students participating in the language sequence, especially if they do not declare our majors; and, in my experience, many instructors complain about the lack of or decline in quality among students 'just' meeting the requirement. This happens despite the arguable need for the enrollments these students supply in the face of the continued and increasing marginalization of most disciplines in the humanities, which includes the study of languages and literatures.⁴ Indeed, success of language programs often depends on initial gathering of students through a core requirement and then working to retain those students (Kern, "Reconciling"). The MLA report recommends fostering the demand for FL (and culture) courses by bolstering language requirements: that is, by either instituting FL requirements where they do not yet exist or enforcing them where they do (242). This would further the goal of

⁴ See Conn, Donoghue, Harpham, and Strum.

spreading knowledge of language and culture over different fields and, consequently, create a more diversified and interdisciplinary body of students in our classes.

Moreover, the report and the committee's subsequent position paper (Pratt, et al.) point to the exacerbating problem of vague or undefined goals at all levels and the failure to advance language competency in the post-language-course stage (290). Indeed, what constitutes "advanced" language proficiency or competency, that is, the point at which cultural knowledge and understanding would become especially relevant, remains undertheorized (Brantmeier 307; Belz and Reinhardt 324-5). The MLA report acknowledges that teachers' and professors' ideas of what constitutes "advanced language training" are usually based on emulating native speakers, "a goal that postadolescent learners rarely reach" (237). Pfeiffer writes that we may know advanced proficiency when we see it, but "we are much less able to characterize [it] well enough to agree on sound pedagogical approaches to developing it" (297). Discussing the dearth of scholarship on the development of advanced language proficiency, Byrnes and Sprang observe that the skills those students must exhibit are framed "in terms of insurmountable limitations or [...] giftedness, privilege, or exceptionalism" (50). Faced with twenty-first-century globalization and persistent capitalism, theorization of language ability is perhaps naturally colored by economic concerns, which then help to determine where students fall on a range of skills. Quite different from the focus of this essay and the undergraduate course described below, a dominant view of foreign language proficiency (and usefulness) in the post-9/11 United States places value on task-based learning according to "critical" needs, which are the consequence of U.S. foreign policy and the dictates of the Department of Defense and/or the CIA (Kramsch 559). Contrary to the agenda that these governmental bodies might set, it can be enlightening (and revelatory) to

consider, for example, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German texts in juxtaposition with today's Western political philosophies.

In the end, the goal of FL departments, according to the MLA report, should nonetheless be to foster “translingual and transcultural competence,” an endpoint, like advanced proficiency, that is left largely undefined (MLA Report 237, Schechtman and Koser 309-10).⁵ It is unclear how the report's conceptualization of this competence would differ from “intercultural competence” described in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., Byram), which already indicated an ability to understand other cultures and one's own (Kramsch 551).⁶ This latter ability, self- or “intracultural” as well as trans- or intercultural understanding, foreshadowed the MLA report's new conceptualization of competence. According to Kramsch, the earlier (“intercultural”) formation added “a dimension of reciprocity (‘inter’) and sociohistorical understanding (‘culture’) to the notion of communicative competence,” which, starting in the 1970s, focused on democratic “turns-at-talk” (548, 550). On the post-1989 international scene, however, Kramsch critically observes that contemporary capitalism demands “team work, collaborative problem-solving, and ability to understand and autonomously espouse the goals of the organization, and to

⁵ See also the commentaries on the report and the committee's position paper in *The Modern Language Journal* 92.2, 2008. The future careers of former graduate students are important to discuss as well. Guillory notes that the job market increasingly “demands [...] a graduate student who is already in some sense a successful professional before that student can be considered for a position as a professor” (92). In other words, teaching only beginning or intermediate language is unlikely to prepare our graduate students for success in our profession. Schechtman and Koser also remind us of the need to revise graduate curricula in light of the changing demands on future faculty (311).

⁶ Kramsch rightly adds, however, that intercultural competence aimed for improved comprehension and understanding “beyond national borders within Europe, [...] not to understand compatriots from different cultural backgrounds in one's own country” (551).

translate these goals into specific tasks, the outcomes of which can be assessed for quality assurance and quality improvement” (549). The corporate flavor notwithstanding, these are elements that can move easily into the FL classroom, including into a course that encounters examples from a literary canon.⁷ In other words, a canon-aware curriculum and twenty-first-century skills are not mutually exclusive.

Contentious Relationships with the Canon

Complementary and even conflicting tensions with regard to the place of canonical literature in the German curriculum have proven fruitful over the decades, inspiring innovative and exciting approaches to both canonical and non-canonical cultural products of all sorts. In his albeit dated anthology, Robert von Hallberg writes, “A canon is commonly seen as what other people, once powerful, have made and what should now be opened up, demystified, or eliminated altogether” (1, cited in Berman “Cultural Studies and the Canon”). My idea of what a “canon” is encompasses frequently evolving bodies of literary, filmic, and cultural works that, for a multitude of aesthetic, cultural, emotional, personal, and political reasons, respond to a group’s needs for “must-reads” or “must-sees.” They are multiple and flexible. The discursive consequences of creating such lists can be both positive and negative. The negative effects are often the singular focus of discussions of canons. It is right, as Ruth-Ellen B. Joeres writes of feminism, “to question the canon or any other form of canonic thinking that hides behind absolute concepts such as the aesthetic concepts of ‘good,’ ‘beautiful,’ ‘bad’ in order to make us

⁷ For an approach to advanced language proficiency that goes beyond literature and film to incorporate technology and the Internet, see Thorne and Reinhardt. Peck also comments on the relationship between German instruction and the marketplace or economy.

assume that the dominant modes of thinking are not only correct, but inevitable and eternal” (253).

The advantages of a continued critical approach to the canon in the curriculum and the classroom are manifold. Allowing for the consideration of marginalized experiences was and is the most immediate positive effect of canon revision, a process that is certainly not new (Mujica, Torbruegge). It can help to correct assumed racial-stereotypical thinking about the German-speaking lands and peoples (Hopkins), make theoretical contributions to expand curricula and scholarship (Lennox, "Feminist Scholarship and Germanistik"), or find new ways of describing "culture" (Byram and Kramersch). While the traditional canon of German literature had first contained primarily the works of men like Goethe, Schiller, and Lessing, canons expanded over the generations to include the works of, for instance, Hauptmann, Kafka, Keun, Bachmann, Wolf, Jelinek, Müller, Özdemar, and Akin. More recently, along with changes in critical and cultural theory, Germanists' approaches have also grown to cross-pollinate areas of inquiry like women's, feminist, and gender studies; film studies; gay and lesbian studies; queer and sexuality studies; and racial, ethnic, and, e.g., Black German studies.⁸ Canon flexibility and adaptability have become readily apparent, as the marginal(ized) is more frequently folded into courses, degree examinations, and dissertation research. Care must be taken, however, as Katherine Arens points out, that "If we do not take the trouble to assess and validate our efforts at novelty, we will be adding compartments to our departments [...]—but we will not necessarily be making substantive changes in teaching or learning practices" (24). Responding to this, Melin and Laun

⁸ See, e.g., Lennox ("Beyond Eurocentrism") and Hopkins, or the work that arose from the 2006 conference at the University of Massachusetts Amherst: "Remapping Black Germany: New Perspectives on Afro-German History, Politics, and Culture" (<http://www.umass.edu/germanic/remapping/>).

advocate the development of a body of learners with “portable interpretive skills that can be applied to multiple text types and fluid genres” (1). Such a mixture is illustrated below.

Another positive effect of rethinking the canon is not necessarily editing or removing it, but rather pushing it toward unexpected contrasts with other, newer works, in order to foster historical dialogue. This creation of a singular confluence can have welcome effects on learning because of the surprise it provokes in students. An awareness of intellectual history and tracing these kinds of developments encourages its use in the classroom, where students sometimes have little historical perspective. Especially (but not exclusively) at the advanced level, students are more able to engage with the higher demands of reading and analyzing a text by Schiller, for example. Despite the assumption that literary appreciation should be seen as the primary target of language instruction (Berman), Melin and Laun, and Kramsch have suggested in their approaches that the intermediate level could be used as a bridge between contemporary texts and more advanced canonical literature.

Melin has asserted the need for responsive and thoughtful curriculum revision in the face of the changes in German Studies (“Notes from the Field”). Other scholars have also offered reasons for reform, which include declining enrollments, underprepared language students, low (or missing) involvement of tenure-system faculty in lower-level and language courses, the rapidly changing demands of twenty-first-century jobs, and drawing in more minority students (Bernhardt and Berman; Henderson; VanValkenburg and Arnett).⁹ As the field of German Studies continues to face cultural and budget-driven crises in the humanities and higher

⁹ See also Bayer on an approach to including minority literature in courses and canons; Melin (“Beyond Language Courses”) on the preparation of graduate instructors; Peck on a more “borderless” look at German Studies and opportunities for reconceptualizing the field and its objects of study; Weber on the failure to promote actual reform of curriculum, which perpetuates a system that fails our students.

education, it also proceeds in expanding its mandate to include previously untouched fields, like “migration and adoption, health care and social policy, and sustainability and new technology” (Melin, “Notes from the Field” 4). These changes, however, must not necessarily be confronted with an excision or extreme reduction of traditional, “canonical” literature, as is sometimes the case. Indeed, we often run the risk of becoming, as Russell A. Berman writes, “presentist,” “at the price of a new repression and a loss of memory” (“Cultural Studies and the Canon” 168).

Especially in light of dramatic developments in the field of German or German Studies in the past twenty to thirty years, the issue remains: How does one approach the disparate and often conflicting needs in our curricula? On some level, there is an expectation that students of language, literature, film, and culture, whether in German or other languages, emerge from their studies having encountered what has been called (ironically or not) “the best that has been known and said in the world” (Arnold xii). Traditional, canonical works as well as contemporary, (even?) popular literature do cultural and “ideological work” (Poovey, cited in Lennox, “German Studies: Who Cares?” 13). Creating clashes or intersections of these various works can be illuminating for all involved. Indeed, as Lennox argues, “that is where our job as scholars and teachers of culture and literature becomes important again” (“German Studies: Who Cares?” 13).

Integrating a Canon: One Example

An illustration of including canonical works is an undergraduate course in advanced conversation and composition, although the course I will describe could be adapted to the intermediate level (second or third year) of university instruction. At my institution, this 400-level (usually fourth-year) course, which is mandatory for German majors, rarely had a set topic or theme. The approximately ten students in the course read and discussed texts selected by the

professor and then completed writing assignments with revisions, allowing them to hone their skills. In my approach to this course, I decided to select a main theme of mystery and crime stories and to include canonical as well as less canonical works. As is typical at the advanced level, students possessed a wide range of abilities and interests: those fulfilling the FL requirement, those majoring in German, those with significant proficiency gained in high school (cf. Byrnes). I was concerned not only with the students' exposure to actual texts but also to genre/sub-genre as well as categories (e.g., within the narratives) that produce or contribute to Otherness and outsider status (e.g., gender, race). I was most focused on the learning processes for which conversation and composition courses are best suited: as Leslie Adelson describes them, "articulation and elaboration of questions that elicit responses which in turn raise more questions" (14). While many methods have changed since the standard of requiring students to write reviews of Goethe's "Götz von Berlichingen" and "Egmont" and dictation from the *Hildebrandslied* (see Hewitt), the long-running debates over the inclusion of canonical works attest to both the importance of the issue and the challenges it poses.¹⁰

One can see from the list of cultural products encountered in this course (see Appendix: Texts and Films) that the students interacted with a number of different narrative styles in literary and filmic formats. Capitalizing on the differences among these, each week's class sessions focused on features of grammar that students at this level typically benefit from practicing (e.g., passive constructions and mood) as well as reviews of frequently challenging features (e.g., adjective endings, *da-* and *wo-*compounds, and participles). In the style of Jurasek and Jurasek and Corl, Jurasek, and Jurasek, students wrote biweekly essays that fit into particular genres; these essay genres were paired with the text or film of that week along with assignment

¹⁰ See, for example, Frederiksen, Schinz and Tucker.

descriptions that activated the students' memories of elements they saw in the text/film. For example, Schiller's "Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre" was paired with the composition of an *Erzählung*, evoking the feelings and tensions in the narrative; the assignment to write an *Ortsbeschreibung* highlighted the adjective-rich place descriptions of Droste-Hülshoff's *Die Judenbuche* and the Expressionist landscapes and sets of Wiene's *Caligari*. Before each class session, students received question prompts that allowed them to organize their thoughts for discussion; these also inspired their writing in each unit (see Appendix: Questions). The students' final project, the creation of an audio mystery-drama or *Hörspiel*, followed from these processes as students not only employed the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary they had studied during the semester but also the narrative techniques and historical cues found in the works. As I continue discussing the course, I will describe the encounters with two contrasting cultural products (one literary text and one film; one an eighteenth-century work by a canonical author and the other a film that focuses on a double-marginalized population, namely gay Turkish-Germans) that captured the students' attention and offered similar characteristics that could be exploited in instruction. These two works shared, first, the underlying criminal element, which corresponded to the course theme, and, second, narrative devices that allowed the class to examine characters' motivations, in particular.

Early on in the semester, the students read Schiller's "Verbrecher," which can be considered the first German mystery or crime story. Schiller's text tells the story of Christian Wolf, whose life circumstances force him into criminality and begins as an intense philosophical inquiry into the foundations of morality, before any dialogue is encountered. Activities in this unit included using Schiller's own writing to examine questions of grammar and style like word order (time-manner-place) and adjectival continua. In order to take advantage of Schiller's more

verbose style, in-class activities also required the students to paraphrase and rewrite excerpts from the story. Contextual information included a discussion of Schiller's biography, the Seven Years War, and the particulate political composition of the German-speaking lands at that time. This latter point helped to set the stage for a later discussion of what 'German' is.

Further, students interpreted the experiences of characters in the texts and films they encountered during the semester. As mentioned above, students responded each week to journal and discussion questions, which inspired writing and communication. These questions also required the students to examine their expectations for the characters' behavior, based on their own assessments of the situations illustrated in the narratives. Like the unit on Schiller's story, the semester's final unit on Kutluğ Ataman's film *Lola und Bilidikid* (1999) began by delving into the social, political, and narrative contexts of the film. An advance organizer required the students to assemble key words describing the film and its characters, while stills from the film showing the characters were projected. Another activity involved pairs of students giving a presentation on the history of Turkish-German communities as well as the *Gastarbeiter*. Subsequent discussion linked the contextual information to elements of the film's narrative (e.g., the name of the performing group in the film, *die Gastarbeiterinnen*; the film's setting in Berlin). The film focuses primarily on Murat, a young Turkish-German man coming to terms with his sexuality, and the complicated relationships among a group of gay Turkish-German men living in their Berlin subculture. An awareness of the *Gastarbeiter* and German citizenship laws allowed the class to debate what 'German' is and who belongs in Germany, also in comparison or contrast to what the students had learned about the German-speaking lands of Schiller's time.

The students discussed in small groups and then all together more questions provided to them in class (e.g., "Was passiert am Ende des Films? Gibt es einen Schluss? mehr als einen?",

“Wie beschreiben wir die Rollen im Film, die Männer bzw. Frauen spielen?”, “Passt dieser Film unserem Kurs? Inwiefern?”). An organizing principle of the course had been Brecht’s assertion of the democratic nature of murder: “Sowohl der schurkische Baronet als auch der lebenslängliche treue Diener oder die siebzigjährige Tante *kann* der Täter sein. Kein Kabinettsminister ist frei von Verdacht. Von einem Feld her, wo nur Motiv und Gelegenheit funktionieren, wird entschieden, ob er einen Mitmenschen getötet hat” (508). Thus, as with the course’s other texts, this quotation entered the discussion and prompted an analysis of viewers’ expectations of characters’ behavior and whether, for example, Murat’s actions would correspond to the students’ suggestions for how he might behave. The summarizing example of students’ consideration of characters occurred in the final class session. Students received a worksheet meant to guide their discussion, in small groups and then with the whole class, of the semester’s texts and films. The sheet consisted of a table with a row for each text and three columns: “Text/Film,” “Figur(en),” and “Eigenschaften / Gemeinsamkeiten.” Students noted, for example, the role of social context and ‘nature/nurture’ in characters’ behavior in both Schiller’s story and Ataman’s film.

In addition to this sort of approach to working with the texts and films, a regular component of the course was reflection that allowed the students to compare and contrast experiences. The semester began with students engaging in a self-evaluation of their abilities as well as needs and wants in the course. On the first day of class, students received a goal-setting sheet. It asked them to describe their goals for their vocabulary, grammar, and cultural knowledge, while also requiring them to reflect on their perceived weaknesses in German: which topics are the most difficult to discuss, which grammar concepts cause problems, what would be a cultural topic for further exploration, etc. These surveys were then revisited at midterm and in

the last week of classes. In midterm and end-of-semester evaluations students reflected upon their goals and described in writing how they assessed their progress, and how they would continue developing their skills. These reflections offered both challenges and inspirations for the work they had completed and what they could continue to do in the future.

Conclusion

Canon excision, or what Berman calls “anticanonism” (“Cultural Studies and the Canon” 169) while teaching in German Studies curricula is not absolutely necessary. Responsiveness, critique, and contextualization, however, are vital at all levels and when approaching works that are canonical as well as non-canonical. The combination of older and newer works in this semester allowed the students and the instructor to accomplish a number of goals that are crucial for learners in language and culture courses. The students worked with each other, assessed and reflected on their own skills, communicated successfully about their own experiences as well as those of their classmates and the texts’ characters, and encountered a wide range of works from a number of time periods, genres, and creators. This integration of language learning, cultural and historical context, variation of genre/format, and reflection aimed to create a harmonious balance of advanced-level elements. Moving toward a kind of transcultural competence that is one of the goals of language instruction, these activities also encourage learner autonomy, fostering “detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action” (Little 4). Thus, the students also develop an awareness of the interrelated nature of their linguistic and cultural study. In the examples described above, the German students advanced their proficiency, while also increasing knowledge of cultural and historical context. Moreover, the cultural dialogue in which the students engaged linked disparate cultural products while also providing opportunities for personal reflection and consideration of cultural topics. In the case of Schiller and Ataman,

students noted differences (e.g., format, style, cultural backgrounds) as well as similarities (e.g., tenuous “Germanness,” melodramatic mood). The juxtaposition of more- and less-canonical texts was rich with topics for discussion and opportunities for reflection and consideration. In the end, our work as teachers and scholars can be relevant and dynamic when we facilitate and mediate confrontations between old and new or former and current.

Appendix: Texts and Films (in order of appearance in the course)

Brecht, Bertolt. “Über die Popularität des Kriminalromans” and “Über den Kriminalroman.” *Bertolt Brecht Schriften*. Vol. 2. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1993. 504-10, 510-11.

Schiller, Friedrich (1786). “Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre.” gutemberg.spiegel.de.

Kleist, Heinrich von (1811). “Der zerbrochne Krug.” gutemberg.spiegel.de

Droste-Hülshoff, Annette von (1842). *Die Judenbuche*. gutemberg.spiegel.de

Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari. Dir. R. Wiene. 1920.

M. Dir. Fritz Lang. 1931.

Affaire Blum. Dir. Erich Engle. 1948.

Unterm Birnbaum. Dir. Ralf Kirsten. 1973.

Moser, Milena. “Mein vierter Mord” and “Mein sechster Mord.” *Gebrochene Herzen, oder Mein erster bis elfter Mord*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1993.

Deitmer, Sabine. “Die Männer von nebenan.” *Bye-Bye, Bruno: Wie Frauen morden*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1988.

Heinrichs, Kathrin. “Lippstädter Liebeshäppchen.” *Mehr Morde am Hellweg: Kriminalstorys*. Eds. H.P. Karr and Herbert Knorr. Dortmund: GRAFIT Verlag, 2004.

Moehlen-Studzinski, Ruth. "Mord(s)treffen." *Mörderische Mitarbeiter*. Eds. Ingrid G. Schmitz and Ina Coelen. Frankfurt am Main: Scherz, 2003.

Lola und Bilidikid. Dir. Kutluğ Ataman. 1999.

Appendix: Questions on Schiller's "Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre" (Examples)

1. Schreib deine ersten Reaktionen auf diesen Text auf.
2. Schiller schreibt: „Entweder der Leser muß warm werden wie der Held, oder der Held wie der Leser erkalten". Was bedeutet das?
3. Wie würdest du Christian Wolf *innerlich* und *äußerlich* beschreiben?
4. Wie ist die Struktur dieses Textes?

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