University of Alberta

Curriculum and the foreign language student: Interpretive approaches to understanding the postsecondary study of German in Canada

by

John Lee Plews

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Secondary Education

©John Lee Plews

Fall 2010

Edmonton, Alberta

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Libraries to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only. Where the thesis is converted to, or otherwise made available in digital form, the University of Alberta will advise potential users of the thesis of these terms.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis and, except as herein before provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatsoever without the author's prior written permission.

Examining Committee

Dr. Ingrid Johnston, Secondary Education (Supervisor)

Dr. George Richardson, Secondary Education (Chair)

Dr. William Dunn, Secondary Education

Dr. Raleigh Whitinger, Modern Languages & Cultural Studies

Dr. Kim Fordham, Humanities, Augustana Campus

Dr. Carl Leggo, Language & Literacy Education, University of British Columbia
(External reader)

Abstract

In this dissertation, I use a hermeneutic framework drawing on critical and postcolonial theory and interpretive inquiry (narrative analysis) to explore the postsecondary curriculum for German as a foreign language and culture (GFL) in Canada, its history, and its current manifestation, in relation to the twenty-first-century Canadians who study it. I pursue the questions, *What is the GFL curriculum? How did it come about? What is it like for students?* and *What would curriculum innovation look like if it were based on students' interests?*

In part one, I discuss research paradigms, the influence of hermeneutics, the research process, the role of the researcher, and my research acts. In part two, I critique the history of GFL as taught at university in Canada. In part three, I examine the subject positions that have informed that history. I find that the Canadian postsecondary GFL curriculum reflects and benefits the symbolic sociocultural position of native-speaker literary professors and not the educational needs and interests of nonnative-speaker students. The Canadian postsecondary GFL curriculum has been articulated by a cross-cultural divide and withheld knowledge. Using postcolonial perspectives, I propose the diaspora and the less native speaker as potentially counter-hegemonic positions from which to conceptualize the teachers and learners of GFL and reconstruct the curriculum.

I follow these initial theoretical analyses with four narrative analyses based on interviews with four Canadian undergraduate students of GFL that

explored their experiences of instructional materials, teaching approaches, and curriculum design. The narratives include an episodic account, a mock epic, a psychological case with allegorical digressions, and an allegorical tale and tell of *an unrequited love*, *a quest*, *shame*, and *an anti-quest* in order to reveal how some are failed by existing curricula and yet make progress toward their linguistic and intercultural goals. In the final chapter, I present a fictional case study of a small German program where I have attempted to rethink curriculum and instruction based on the perspectives and student experiences explored in the previous chapters. I thus offer new vantage points from which to understand the GFL curriculum and enact more constructive teaching and learning.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to my supervisor Dr. Ingrid Johnston for her expert and gracious guidance, advice, and support throughout the preparation of this dissertation and my time in the Department of Secondary Education. Most respectful thanks also to my committee members Drs. William Dunn, Kim Fordham, George Richardson, and Raleigh Whitinger, and especially to the external examiner Dr. Carl Leggo.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Drs. Olenka Bilash, George Buck, Terry Carson, Julia Ellis, Ken Jacknicke, Manfred Prokop, Leila Ranta, and Dennis Sumara for the important roles they have played in my graduate experience in Education. Thanks also to the ever friendly and always helpful administrative staff in the Department of Secondary Education.

For their encouragement and friendship, I thank Dr. Sophie Beaulé, Dr. Yvonne Breckenridge, Carolina M. Cambre, Ashley Carver, Dr. Nicole Conrad, Pam Correll, Rick Dagg, Jackie Doig, Dr. Lori Francis, Dr. Kirrily Freeman, Kerstin Haßlöcher, Dr. Val-Marie Johnson, Dr. Sean Kennedy, Larry Loomis, Dr. Michael MacKinnon, Dr. Marc Patry, Dr. Mythili Rajiva, Dr. Caroline L. Rieger, Dr. Elena Siemens, and Dr. Susan Walsh.

I also acknowledge and thank the assistance of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

I am also most grateful to my research participants and students (and take delight in knowing that they continue to evolve in widening communities of practice).

Finally, I would like to express special thanks to Nick Zwaagstra for his love and heartfelt kindness, to Bilbo, Kadu, and Kalliope for their soul connection, and to the Halifax Shambhala community for their dedication to mindful awareness.

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Part One: Research Approach 5

Part Two: The “Core,” the “Outside,” and the “Borders”: A Critical Curriculum History of Canadian Germanistik 34

Part Three: Postsecondary Germanistik or GFL in Canada as Seen From a Postcolonial Perspective 63

Part Four: Conducting a Narrative Analysis of Canadian Students’ Experiences of the Postsecondary Curriculum for German 79

Part Five: A Story of Love Found and As Yet Unrequited 86

Part Six: The Story of Passivail and the End Produkt 99

Part Seven: The Story of the Mask and the Apparatus 128

Part Eight: The Story of Selma and the Clothespins 156

Part Nine: The Little German Program That Could: A Fictional Case Study 214

References 245

Appendix 263

List of Tables

Table 1: German programs at Canadian universities and colleges, by course categories (2007) ……………………………………………………………….62

Introduction

I have learned from my experience over the last nineteen years as a graduate student, postdoctoral fellow, and university instructor and professor of German language and culture in Alberta, in Nova Scotia, and for the Canadian Summer School in Germany that many students who take upper-level German are majors in political science, history, comparative literature, or business, or intend to enter education. They have not chosen to study German in isolation, but bring these interests with them to the German language and culture class and often express a desire to make up for a lack of contextually specific (grammatical, lexical, interpretive, or performative) German language competence in those disciplines. These students do not regard German in its disciplinary singularity, but already relate to it and mean to integrate it as part of their current and future multiple ways of being. My doctoral dissertation uses critical and philosophical approaches (critical education theory, deconstruction, and postcolonialism) and interpretive inquiry (narrative analysis) to examine the postsecondary curriculum for German as a foreign language and culture (GFL) in Canada, its history, and its current manifestation, in relation to the twenty-first-century Canadians who choose to study it. My study centers particularly on the tension between two groups of people — Canadian students of German and professors of German — as they are positioned and represented in the history and design of the GFL curriculum. My intention is to ease this tension — or otherwise complicate it — in order to open up the GFL curriculum to different perspectives, new reflection, and constructive ideas.

I begin by asking, *What is the GFL curriculum and how did it come about?* I discuss the development of second language curricula in relation to the historical conditions of the people involved, the relations of power between them, their local and transnational identities, and their local and transnational contexts.

Thus, by inquiring into the curriculum, I am at first necessarily concerned with the role, position, and effect of professors of German as the predominant players in curriculum design. If professors construct the curriculum, students are the recipients of their effort. I next ask, *What is it like for students to follow this curriculum and what are their interests and needs?* I focus on students' perceptions of what they are taught, the ways in which they are taught, and what they understand learning German to mean for them. By drawing on historical and theoretical analyses and the findings of interviews with students, I argue that postsecondary German in Canada has been constructed for the benefit of keepers of knowledge (professors) and not for the benefit of learners of knowledge (students). I wonder whether the postsecondary GFL curriculum has persistently (and perhaps unwittingly) disenfranchised Canadian students. I explore how some at once are failed by existing curricula and yet nonetheless make progress toward their intercultural goals. I thus open up current understandings of the curriculum for German in Canada to include the experiential, critical, and highly innovative perspectives of students. By critically and imaginatively regarding the teaching of German from students' perspectives, I demonstrate how the curriculum (courses and program design) for and pedagogy (instructional methods and materials) of German might look if they reflected less the symbolic sociocultural position of professors and more the educational needs and interests of students. I wonder, *What would the curriculum look like if it were based on Canadian students' interests?*

Since this study regards the GFL curriculum from a number of approaches and vantage points — a historical perspective, theoretical perspectives, student narrative, recent and contemporary student-oriented and multiperspectival developments in second language pedagogy/methodology, the researcher's historicity, interpretation, and self-reflection — I have organized my dissertation in a series of related, yet stand-alone, article-length thematic chapters. That is, I do not develop a thesis incrementally across a strict succession of chapters as in

the traditional “humanities” book format for writing a dissertation. Rather, in keeping with the postmodern and constructivist principles of qualitative or interpretive inquiry, I strive for more sophisticated and perhaps differing understandings of the GFL curriculum derived from a series of related yet diverging research encounters. My dissertation begins with an introductory explanation of my research methodology and research acts. Here, I present my research approach by discussing research paradigms, the central influence of hermeneutics, the formal aspects of the research process, the role of the researcher, and my research acts. This is followed by a critique of the history of German as taught at university in Canada. I then use postcolonial theories to explore the subject positions that have informed that history and to propose a reconceptualization of the teachers and learners of German in Canada. These two initial analyses provide a critical platform from which to further examine student motivation and experience, instructional materials and approaches, and curriculum design. Thus, the theoretical chapters are followed by a series of four narrative analyses of undergraduate student perspectives of German in Canada. Each narrative analyzes the experiences of one research participant. The narratives essentially tell the stories of *an unrequited love*, *a quest*, *shame*, and *an anti-quest*. Stylistically, they include an episodic account, a mock epic, a psychological case with allegorical digressions, and an almost entirely allegorical tale. In the final chapter I present a fictional case study of a small North American German program where I have attempted to rethink the curriculum and instructional approaches based on the kinds of perspectives and student needs, interests, and experiences explored in previous chapters in the dissertation.

I hope that by having undertaken this dissertation, which brings together the distinct areas of curriculum, second language pedagogy, German as a foreign language and culture, postsecondary education, critical education theory, narrative inquiry or narrative analysis, case study, and student voice, I have acquired and am able to communicate the knowledge and vocabulary that will assist university

teachers to improve the education experiences of students of a second language. While my primary readership is my examining committee, I hope that the conversation I have begun here will continue with second language instructors of German and other languages in secondary and postsecondary education across Canada in a way that will help them to effect constructive change at the level of curriculum and pedagogy.

Part One: Research Approach

Introduction to the Research Approach

The initial concern about the Canadian postsecondary GFL curriculum that engages me and so motivates and shapes my study is my own discomfort with that curriculum. I begin with the observation that many students in upper-level undergraduate German language and culture courses are majors in other disciplines, but that the German program they chose to combine with their other academic and career interests does not provide them with the particular discipline-based linguistic (or, for that matter, intercultural) competence they desire. *I wonder whether the curriculum content is relevant to my Canadian student-learners of German and how and why it has come to take the shape it has*. I wonder what the students' overall experience of German at a Canadian university is like; whether it is positive, enjoyable, and intellectually and professionally useful. I wonder whether students perceive the relevance of German differently from those who teach it. I wonder about the ways in which I, as an instructor and professor of German, am implicated in that curriculum and what I can do about the situation. Likewise, I wonder about the ways in which that curriculum content is taught and whether they are effective in meeting students' learning needs and interests. In short, I wonder whether the GFL curriculum is fulfilling its promise and, if not, whether it can be reimagined and replaced.

The study can be understood as an interpretive inquiry. Since my topic and interest concern personal, professional, historical-cultural, social, interpersonal, and practical aspects of teaching and learning German, my study requires a research approach that is sensitive to the subjective processes and situated nature of human activity. It is thus associated with the *participation* approach to second languages rather than with the *acquisition* approach that examines language

systems and isolates linguistic rules and facts (Sfard, 1998), and has been the traditional focus of second language education research (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) maintain that interpretive research methods (such as narrative-based approaches) are more insightful than the traditional experimental and observational methodologies of the hard sciences when regarding questions concerning the social and personal or psychological dimensions of second language learning and use. Phillion and He (2007) argue that narrative inquiry is well suited for research in second language education because it enables study in the context of life experiences that are fundamental to learning languages. They observe a shift in research orientations in second language education from abstract formalism to narrative and narrative-like approaches that offer "nuanced understanding[s] of the complexity of language learning and its embeddedness in interconnected social, cultural, and political contexts" (p. 1006) (for lists of examples of narrative inquiry in language education, see Bell, 2002; Coffey & Street, 2008; Phillion & He). Bell (2002) also sees advantages in using the interpretive approach of narrative to study second language education since story structures account for experience rather than only outcomes, reveal influential assumptions hidden below the conscious surface, and recognize how understandings of people and events change over time.

Interpretive inquirers care about and make a self-conscious effort to directly engage with and understand a situation, and how people experience a situation, in the hope that through such engagement and interpretation any prior understanding of the situation will be extended with new understandings. The research undertaken by interpretive inquirers differs from other approaches in terms of methodology as well as of considerations of reality or truth and of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For example, interpretive inquirers do not seek a definitive answer or single truth about something, as would quantitative scientists, by standing apart from and isolating that something, running tests on it and manipulating variables in order to produce statistically measurable results that

upon analysis prove an existing theory (Merriam, 1998, pp. 4 & 7). Nor do they rigidly subscribe to a single, exclusive method of engagement, or pursue methods that are singularly prescribed, as would both quantitative and some other qualitative researchers. D. G. Smith (1991) contends that interpretation — or, particularly, hermeneutics — challenges the Enlightenment assumption that the truth of life can "be systematically brought under control of correct logical procedure" (p. 189). He maintains that the aim of interpretation is not to assert another method or doctrine or provide the last word on any particular topic, but rather to search for understanding, freedom, and peace in the broadening of one's horizons. Instead of espousing a given method and reductive scientific control, interpretive inquirers trust a process that is generated by the research situation itself once it becomes the subject of their "concerned engagement" (J. L. Ellis, 1998, pp. 29 & 30; Packer & Addison, 1989, p. 279) and that, because of this concerned engagement, leads to new understandings in the ways they interpret the meaning that others give to their lives.

Research Paradigms

All research approaches operate according to a particular paradigm. A paradigm is a human construct of guiding principles or ideas for looking at the world, that is, a worldview or system of beliefs espoused by researchers. A worldview concerns how researchers see the nature of the world and their place in it. The paradigms that currently compete for preference among researchers include positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism. The various worldviews have developed due to researchers' changing or varying perspectives and their increased awareness — from their respective vantage points — of the limitations of each of the other paradigms. Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain that the four paradigms are differentiated according to ontological, epistemological, and methodological principles. That is, they can be distinguished from one another by the answers they give to three particular questions: 1) what is

existence or reality, and what can be known about it? 2) what is knowledge, especially in terms of the origins, nature, and limit of the relationship between researchers and what they believe exists to be known? and 3) what is the appropriate methodology for discovering what exists to be known? (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). Researchers select their method(s) in accordance with a worldview or belief-system founded in the answers to these questions.

The positivist worldview asserts that an external reality can be apprehended, that the researcher and object studied are independent of, and do not influence, each other, and that one comes to know the reality of the object by means of the experimental process of stating and verifying a hypothesis (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 109-110, 111). Postpositivism critically expands on positivism by similarly, yet differently, maintaining that reality can be apprehended albeit imperfectly, that researchers and objects likely influence each other but that objectivity is still attained by the replication of findings through triangulation, and that consequently one comes to know the reality of the object by means of a critical combination of experimental and natural or situational data in order to falsify a hypothesis (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 110, 111). The critical theory paradigm declares that reality is historically apprehendable since over time various sociocultural values have acted on different human phenomena, causing them to be perceived as real, concrete, and natural although they are constructs situated in time and place; in the critical worldview researchers and research subjects are connected in that researchers consider the researched subjectively from the perspective of their own value-systems with the intention of transforming the subjects and the subjects' perspectives by means of a dialectical or consciousness-raising dialogue (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 110, 111-112). Constructivism believes that reality is — or, rather, realities are — apprehendable as multiple, relative, possibly conflicting or contradictory, and changing, that is, as socially specific and individually experienced constructions at any point in time and place; it recognizes that researchers and research participants create

knowledge together in interaction; and it supposes that a more mutually informed and differently expressed construction will be reached by the interpretation of their encounter (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 110-112; Merriam, 1998, p. 6).

Particularly, the positivist paradigm has been much criticized for engendering the experimental research design that did not produce the clear findings it promised. Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain how positivism is criticized for removing variables from the context of the research that might affect the findings, that it ignores meanings provided by human actors, that it separates general theory from specific circumstances and applies the general to the individual, that it values verification and method over the deliberative human source of the research question, and that it assumes theory, language, values, and facts to be independent (see pp. 106-107). In contrast, they see qualitative approaches as contextual, concerned with human behavior, confirming specific and individual relevance, allowing variation and ambiguity between individuals, promoting the creative role of reflective human beings, acknowledging the interdependence of theories, facts, and values, accepting that some facts may support different theories, and ultimately offering "a more plausible description of the inquiry process" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107) with the idea that knowledge is created by the interaction of the researcher and phenomenon.

Interpretive inquiry is a qualitative (as opposed to a quantitative) research approach and can occur in all four of the above paradigms. However, nowadays it is most prevalent as a mode of inquiry in critical and constructivist worldviews. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) retrace the historical evolution of qualitative research in the social sciences by categorizing it chronologically into "five historical moments" (p. 1). They call these five moments "the traditional (1900-1950), the modernist or golden age (1950-1970), blurred genres (1970-1986), the crisis of representation (1986-1990), and postmodern or present [...] (1990-present)" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). The first or traditional moment was characterized by the scientific method and so-called objective attempts to recount field

experience in the style of the positivist paradigm (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 7). The second or modern moment was influenced more by the postpositivist paradigm whereby the researcher became more of a participant observer and endeavored to include various new interpretive theories for the sake of rigor, though still sought a single truth (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 8). During the third or blurred genres moment qualitative researchers would draw on a full range of methods and strategies and in particular looked to the humanities for analytical models or critical theories to inform their work (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 9). A "new social criticism" gained ground in the fourth or crisis of representation moment as researchers sought to apply models that questioned gender, class, and race norms (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 10). The fifth or present moment is marked especially by the postmodern sensibilities of situated and embodied knowledge that bring to bear a certain critical irony or doubt to any theory or method that stakes a universal claim to authority, deconstructing such claims as just one position in a web of theories each with their specific contexts (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 1 & 11). J. L. Ellis (1998) explains the positive implication for research of the value postmodernism places on multiple perspectives: "By sharing the knowledge from each of our locations through dialogue we develop a fuller understanding of the places we inhabit together" (p. 8). This fifth historical moment is clearly associated with the constructivist paradigm.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics, as a philosophy of the nature of meaning and understanding, has developed as the main set of theories supporting qualitative research approaches of the fifth historical moment. J. K. Smith (1993) identifies three kinds of general hermeneutics: validation, critical, and philosophical hermeneutics. These correspond with the postpositivist, critical, and constructivist paradigms and so more or less with Denzin and Lincoln's abovementioned second and third, third and fourth, and fifth historical moments in qualitative research,

respectively. The three kinds of hermeneutics differ from one another in the way they locate meaning and so understand the nature of understanding. In validation hermeneutics, researchers believe that meaning is located in the author's original intention; in critical hermeneutics, researchers look for meaning within objective historical conditions; and in philosophical hermeneutics, it is maintained that meaning is created in the encounter between text or expression and reader or interpreter (see J. K. Smith, 1993, pp. 185-186). These three positions affect the way researchers go about looking for meaning.

Researchers working according to validation hermeneutics, and who locate meaning in the author's, text's, or phenomenon's original intent, distinguish this meaning as autonomous from the significance to the interpreter, which is the relevance of that meaning to the interpreter (see J. K. Smith, 1993, p. 190). Meaning is considered "determinate" (J. K. Smith, 1993, p. 190), that is, it is whole, has defined limits, and can be accurately represented, whereas significance is contextual, it varies according to time, place, experiences, interests, and so on. This means that in validation hermeneutics researchers pursue meaning as an "external referent" (J. K. Smith, 1993, p. 190) or standard that is prior to and separate from their interpretations and against which they must measure the accuracy of their interpretations; without the presupposition of this transcendent referent, their interpretations are pointless. The aim of research is to depict an accurate rendition, that is, to provide an interpretation that coheres with the referent of the author's intention. A qualitative research process following the principles of validation hermeneutics includes stating a hypothesis, seeking evidence that calls the hypothesis into question, amending the hypothesis in light of this falsifying evidence, and repeatedly retesting the hypothesis (see J. K. Smith, 1993, pp. 191-192).

D. G. Smith (1991) critiques positivistic and postpositivistic validation hermeneutics, or what he calls "the tradition of consciousness" (p. 195ff.). He observes how researchers within the positivistic / postpositivistic tradition of

consciousness promote perception — rather than experience — as the preferred way of apprehending reality and reinforce their perceptions as true representations of reality within a discourse of disciplinary standards (pp. 195-196). Such methods of research and evaluation are judging, disputatious, and reductionist in nature in that they seek a single correct version of the truth or reality (p. 196). D. G. Smith remarks that the positivist / postpositivist tradition "proceeds on an assumption that once things are arbitrated as true, they are true once and for all" (p. 196); it is concerned with "getting the facts of a particular case right" and so, for the sake of scientifically agreed accuracy, explicitly rules out complexity and contingency.

In critical hermeneutics researchers assume that they may understand an author's expression better than the author, or the meaning of a social situation better than those who act within it. That is, the author's or social actors' thinking and expression may have been subjected to "historically formed ideological distortion and false consciousness" (J. K. Smith, 1993, p. 192), or are shaped and limited by social, economic, political, and historical discourses that serve the interests of a particular elite. The critical researcher is in no way concerned with cohering with the author's or social actors' meaning, since they are unaware of the "historical truth" (J. K. Smith, 1993, p. 192) of why they think the way they do. Rather, the researcher is intent on revealing that historical truth, that is, on showing sociohistorical factors that condition thought and the ways people interpret their circumstances in order to correct people's thinking and emancipate them. The qualitative research process conducted according to critical hermeneutics involves presenting data and analyses in order to reveal the constructedness of sociohistorical conditions (that the conditions are constructed according to the interests of a hegemony), showing the dialectical relation between author meaning or people's understandings and the conditions that produce them, critiquing the dominant ideology that stops people from seeing things in light of present conditions, and encouraging people to understand their

situation differently — free of distorting ideology — and to take corrective action.

D. G. Smith (1991) criticizes the "critical tradition" (p. 196ff.) for imposing rigid analytical categories and for proposing a single version of a better reality as predetermined by the researcher. Within this paradigm, researchers are concerned less with getting things right than with putting things right according to how they see others' reality and wish them to see it too. This imposition of a new ideological regime risks ignoring or may do as much harm to the research subjects or participants as the one from which critical researchers mean to emancipate them. Smith remarks:

> When categories such as class, labor, or surplus value, for example, are taken as ultimately fixable determinants of social reality, instead of being simply interpretive frameworks which themselves can be interpreted, then as categories they can be used as conceptual weapons by which to browbeat others and the world into a preordained recognizable form. [...] Dialogue in the critical sense becomes dialogue with a hidden agenda: I speak *to* you to inform you of your victimization and oppression rather than *with* you in order that together we create a world which does justice to both of us. (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 196)

D. G. Smith (1991) contends that, since the aim both of the positivist / postpositivist tradition of consciousness and of the critical tradition is "to get things *right*" (p. 197) according to how each thinks what is right and to the exclusion of all other possibilities, they will always be in conflict with people who adopt different interpretive perspectives from which to claim their versions of what is right. In contrast, "philosophical hermeneutics" (J. K. Smith, 1993) or "the hermeneutic imagination" (D. G. Smith, 1991) of the constructivist paradigm is interested in bringing together a variety and the complexity of meaning, it is concerned with specific experiences or instances of reality beyond our immediate sphere so as to attain a deeper understanding of the world in all its breadth (see D.

G. Smith, 1991, p. 197).

In my study, I do not intend from the start to proclaim the postsecondary GFL curriculum in Canada to be in need of definitive correction. Nor do I mean to suggest that I have a ready and exclusive answer if there are issues to be found and changes to be made. Rather, I wish to explore the way in which that curriculum has been constructed. I mean to review the ideas, discourses, language, and events that have enabled that curriculum. I begin to imagine and pursue further ways for making sense of that curriculum, be that by applying a new language or different theories to describe its construction or by entering into a series of dialogues with others in order to listen to, learn from, and even act anew according to their experiences, perspectives, and interests. For these reasons, my study is organized not in accordance with the positivistic / postpositivistic hypothesizing of validation hermeneutics; nor is it driven exclusively by a singularly predetermined ideology as in some kind of critical hermeneutics. Although I do initially provide a critical historical analysis in order to show, in the hope of future corrective action, how the sociohistorical conditions that have shaped the traditional GFL curriculum are constructed according to the interests of a particular hegemony, I then apply further research methods and techniques so as to take these initial understandings to new horizons in a dialogic encounter with other concepts, people, texts, and situations. Rather than remain in a critical hermeneutic mode, I turn to the ideas and concepts of philosophical hermeneutics to guide my concerned engagement in the postsecondary GFL curriculum in Canada.

In philosophical hermeneutics researchers do not consider it meaningful to strive to represent an author's original intention that is prior to and independent of any significance to the researcher. Nor do they believe that the meaning of an expression or situation can be known only once it is shown in the context of and also freed from the constraints of the prevailing ideologically determined historical conditions. Rather, this kind of hermeneutics declares understanding as

a fundamental condition of human existence and that it is in the process of understanding that meaning is produced; the process of understanding comprises interaction or the dialogic, that is, two-way, encounter between a text, work of art, individual expression, phenomenon, or social situation and the interpreter (see J. K. Smith, 1993, pp. 194-195). Such a perspective of understanding and meaning recognizes the importance of significance and of our inseparability from prevailing conditions; it relies on the concepts of historicity and the horizon of experience. Historicity is the fact of human situatedness in time and place that effects in all individuals certain prejudices or preconceptions based on those individuals' past experiences of their time and place. The extent of individuals' perspectives or experiences is known as their horizon. Philosophical hermeneutics proposes that these prejudices are important since they guide our initial experience of other people or phenomena (see J. K. Smith, 1993, p. 195). Interpreters then strive for an effective historical consciousness, that is, they endeavor to make explicit their historical situatedness or reveal the tradition from which they come (see J. K. Smith, 1993, p. 195). This occurs only if interpreters are willing to examine their prejudices so that the horizon of their tradition encounters and interacts with the horizon of others, others' situations or expressions, a work of art, or phenomenon; interpreters realize that tradition changes as they interpret or enact understanding and new meaning is produced in the fusion of horizons in interaction (see J. K. Smith, 1993, p. 196). The qualitative research process guided by philosophical hermeneutics takes the form of an ongoing or unfinished conversation of question and answer. Put most simply, it includes drawing upon a variety of methods or techniques to enable that conversation, declaring one's own historicity or situatedness in time and place, examining one's own prejudice in an encounter with others, and discussing one's own historicity in light of that encounter and the fusion of horizons it facilitates (see J. K. Smith, 1993, pp. 196-197).

Formal Aspects of the Research Process

Guba and Lincoln (1994) point out that each paradigm implies several practical implications for research. By adopting the qualitative research approach of interpretive inquiry under the umbrella of the constructivist worldview, I necessarily conceive understanding and the reconstruction of previously held constructions as the aim of my inquiry; the knowledge created is multiple and differentiated according to the interpreters' or participants' identities and experiences and it accumulates as a result of the hermeneutic and dialectical juxtaposition of varying new constructions; the inquiry is judged good if it is deemed trustworthy and authentic; my role as inquirer is as facilitator of an encounter and instrument of interpretation; and the values that I and my participants bring to the research are central and formative (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 112-116). D. G. Smith (1991) explains that the meaning created by hermeneutic inquiry is the effect of a referential and relational process, that is, people arrive at a consensus understanding through dialogue or conversation (pp. 197-198). Also, key components of the hermeneutic research process are researchers' self-reflective accounts of the dialogical transformations that they experience as a result of conversational activity with others (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 198). Consequently, to establish a successful conversation, anticipate transformation, and prepare the way for a rich and meaningful report, researchers must adopt an attitude of "self-forgetfulness," that is, yield themselves to the mutual construction of reality and committing to the task of knowing oneself "in relation to others" (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 198).

I shall now expand upon the above general comments on the nature of reality or truth, knowledge, and method from the perspective of philosophical hermeneutics in order to further articulate the formal aspects of research or research acts I have undertaken in my interpretive inquiry. Although methods are not prescribed in qualitative and interpretive inquiry, D. G. Smith (1991) evokes the works of hermeneutic philosophers in order to point out four essential

"requirements" (p. 199) for conducting interpretive work.

Requirement One: Engaging the Creative Spirit by Linking the Part to the Whole

The first requirement, following from Friedrich Schleiermacher's work, is the recognition that hermeneutic research or interpretation is inherently creative in that it is about the production of meaning; when interpreters engage a text, phenomenon, or social situation in search of an author's intention or the meanings others give to their experiences, they engage the creative spirit of that text, phenomenon, or situation of which it is an expression (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 190). This means that, instead of pretending to be neutral transmitters of knowledge who reduce things to categories in order to explain a supposedly preexisting meaning in isolation, interpreters take responsibility for and share in the expression of the creative spirit by speaking about it and through it in a new voice (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 190). Interpreters also attempt to see the whole picture in which that expression is realized (Smith, 1991, pp. 190 & 201; J. L. Ellis, 1998, p.15). That is, they realize that the uniqueness of another's singular expression can only be apprehended in the context of meanings that are commonly understood. D. G. Smith (1991) remarks how "A unity occurs when the singular and the common 'permeate each other' by means of intuiting or divining what is at work on the part of the original author" (p. 190). In asking questions and reflecting upon answers the interpreter once again places the singular in clear relation to the common and the common in relation to the singular. Thus, "good interpretation involves a playing back and forth between the specific and the general, the micro and the macro" (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 190). This "interplay of part and whole," or moving between the singularity of an expression and the world in which it was expressed and experienced, would later be known as "the hermeneutic circle" (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 190).

Requirement Two: Being Aware of the Interpretability of Human Experience

The second requirement is for researchers to become aware of "the basic *interpretability* of life" (Smith, 1991, p. 199). This concept stems primarily from Edmund Husserl's theory of intentionality, which explains that "we never think or interpret 'in general' as a rhetorical activity that bears no necessary connection to the world at large" (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 191). It is not possible to separate subjective and objective thinking since subjectivity is motivated and directed by its interaction with the world as its object. Thus researchers do not engage in interpretative encounters with the world for the sake of receiving the world in a way that bears no relation to the researchers, but rather they inquire for their own sakes, for thinking means coming to have a deeper understanding of oneself. D. G. Smith (1991) maintains that "From Husserl on, words like 'understanding,' 'interpretation,' and 'meaningfulness' are rooted, hermeneutically speaking, in a sense of the dialogical, intersubjective, and conversational nature of human experience" (p. 192).

Husserl's concept of intentionality is useful when considering how to start an interpretive inquiry. Researchers are motivated in their inquiries by the desire to find out something about life that is relevant to them that they do not yet know or wish to know differently. J. L. Ellis (1998) remarks that one begins an interpretive inquiry with an entry question (p. 18). This question must be real in that it is a question for which one does not already have an answer or about which one does not have a ready position to adopt (J. L. Ellis, 1998, p. 18). An entry question usually expresses a desire to find out "what to do to be helpful in a situation one cares about" (J. L. Ellis, 1998, p. 18); it reflects "a relationship of care and responsibility and an attitude of openness and good will" (J. L. Ellis, 1998, p. 19).

In the case of my own study, I wished to better understand the GFL curriculum that often seemed to me to lack relevance for Canadian students and that I was nonetheless expected to deliver as a university teacher of German. I wanted to discover if there was a more appropriate curriculum for students and if there were ways other than the preexisting one for professors — and students — to conceive and construct the curriculum. This research topic is fundamental to my professional being. My experience of learning and teaching German spans 30 years: I learned German at school and university in England and by visiting and living in Germany, I studied German literature and culture at the graduate level in Canada, and I have taught in four Canadian undergraduate programs. These experiences have positioned me well for investigating the GFL curriculum and yet I started out without a ready answer to the problems I suspected regarding the relevance, delivery, and conception of a curriculum for German in Canada. My experience studying and teaching German in Canada does not include the time when the Canadian GFL curriculum was conceived and evolved and it is restricted to direct experience at only four — thus, far from all — institutions. Nor can I say any more that I see the world from an undergraduate student's perspective. Had I considered the curriculum only as I experienced it as a student-learner of German, as a Europhile Briton who initially came to Canada to pursue a Master's degree, or described it from my current perspective as a professor of German, had I imagined students' experiences of the curriculum based exclusively on memory, my own perception, or mere general observations, I would not have arrived at an understanding that is particularly new, different, or more elaborate. Thus my inquiry started by asking: what exactly is the curriculum that Canadian students currently pursue, how did it come about, and how do those students experience it? But by posing the questions that I have, by regarding a broader set of curriculum documents than merely the few I have followed or in part delivered, by looking beyond and before my relative moment in time, and by seeking others' perspectives and stories, I have necessarily moved toward finding answers or at least discovering more sophisticated understandings. If the

curriculum is indeed irrelevant to Canadian students, then by better understanding what that curriculum is, how it developed, and what the experiences, needs, and interests of students are, I am able to begin to call for, propose, and make changes to that curriculum that will improve the learning content and context for those students.

The ideas of the hermeneutic circle and the dialogic or conversational nature of human experience also help to describe the stages or rounds in the research process as one poses the initial entry question and discovers a new frame within which to repose it. J. L. Ellis (1998) suggests visualizing the development of an interpretive inquiry "as a series of loops in a spiral" (p. 19) in which each loop, based on the hermeneutic circle, stands for the separate and/or repeated collection and interpretation of data and the spiral represents the accumulation of knowledge as an ongoing dialectical dialogue. The first loop comprises of the first research act that enables an encounter with the subject of research. This act is guided by the nature of the research topic and the entry question.

Martin Heidegger extends Husserl's ideas by considering subjective interpretation as the most fundamental condition of one's being in the world (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 192). Heidegger observes that our encounter with the world is characterized by our situatedness in time: we experience the world within a horizon of the past, present, and future. From Heidegger we gather that understanding is possible because our past experience serves as a forestructure of understanding (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 193). Hans-Georg Gadamer explains how the forestructure of our past experience comprises our prejudice or prejudgment, which in turn constitutes the horizon from which we make sense of the world; this horizon of prejudgment initiates our concern and further engagement with the world (see D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 193). Gadamer then introduces the concept of the fusion of horizons in order to explain how understanding between different people occurs: understanding is possible only if people enter into conversation with each other so that their respective horizons or prejudgment meet and fuse

(see D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 193). In such a dialogic encounter, each is affected by the other and together they create new ways of thinking.

In order to illuminate the organization and development of the research process, Packer and Addison (1989) draw attention to the significance of both arcs in the hermeneutic circle: the forward arc and the backward arc. As researchers begin to act they enter or project themselves into the forward arc of the hermeneutic circle or of the first loop of J. L. Ellis's spiral. In this projection, researchers are guided by and draw on their preconceptions of the text, subject, or situation. These include the motivation or purpose of asking the entry question, the interest or any stake the researcher may have in asking it, any pertinent experiences, values, or interpretive perspectives the researcher brings to the topic, and any pre-understandings of the situation or participants (J. L. Ellis, 1998, pp. 26 & 27). Influenced by Heidegger's concept of forestructure and Gadamer's use of prejudgment, Packer and Addison (1989) explain how the forward arc of projection helps to make understanding possible: "Interpretation is the working out of possibilities that have become apparent in a preliminary, dim understanding of events. And this pre-understanding [...] provides a way of reading, a preliminary initial accessibility, a stance or perspective (a fore-structure) that opens up the field being investigated" (p. 277). Clearly, the account of preconceptions in the forward arc corresponds with the researcher's forestructure. J. L. Ellis (1998) explains that the projection of the researcher's preconceptions is an invaluable part of the research process since it helps to establish the researcher's prior understanding and possibilities which will be transformed in the research process; it can be seen as an "initial interpretation" (p. 26).

While the forward arc assists researchers by using their forestructure of understanding to orient their entry into the hermeneutic circle, Packer and Addison (1989) explain how the backward arc enables the evaluation of an interpretive account (p. 275). As researchers continue around the loop toward the backward arc they conduct the first act of inquiry that makes possible a meeting

of horizons; then they enter the backward arc and begin to look for what was not known previously in the projection. Carson (1986, p. 78) draws on Gadamer to explain how (in the dissertations of his then fellow graduate colleagues) the intersubjective conversation of the act of inquiry is a working out of shared understanding. J. L. Ellis (1998, p. 35) remarks that in the interpretive stage of the backward arc researchers have the opportunity to create a broader and deeper understanding of the other person or phenomenon than they originally had. Researchers look for "confirmation, contradictions, gaps or inconsistencies" (J. L. Ellis, 1998, p. 26) and how they deliberately evoke "Alternative interpretive frameworks" (J. L. Ellis, 1998, p. 27) to help make more sense of the situation. The loop generates findings in the form of expectations and surprises (J. L. Ellis, 1998, p. 22). Heidegger uses the term "uncovering" to describe the unexpected findings or the truth of an interpretation; uncovering "is the response to our inquiry" (Packer & Addison, 1989, p. 278). This is a central notion in hermeneutics for, as J. L. Ellis (1998) explains, "If some aspect of a person or situation has eluded our [initial] awareness, our research works to 'let it show itself'" (p. 23). Boostrom (1994) maintains that, in order to learn which things to pay attention to and how inquirers' own understandings are affected by inquiry, they must be attentive to the story as it unfolds before them in an open yet focused, patient, inquisitive, observant, and self-reflective manner.

J. L. Ellis (1998) observes that usually the researcher's understanding of the research question or problem changes as a result of the first action and the new aspects that it helps bring to light; the new relationship between the researcher and participants changes the shape of the inquiry (p. 22). The researcher sees the problem differently as the new is integrated with the old and this causes the question to be reframed. This reframing of the question in turn elicits the next step in the research process — or loop in the spiral. The uncovering or backward arc thus leads both to a new understanding and to a new question that motivates continued research. The researcher again looks for and

performs a research act that is appropriate to the new, reframed question and suitably enables the participant, subject, or text to show itself again as another uncovering. This process of the repeated reframing of the research question and the elicitation of an answer or uncovering by means a variety of appropriate research acts takes the form of a protracted conversation between the researcher and the participants, text, or phenomenon that comprise the subject of inquiry. This question-and-answer conversation or dialogue causes researchers to rearticulate their preliminary understandings in the new terms of the uncoverings and so leads to a fusion of horizons and the expanded understanding the researcher hopes to attain.

Requirement Three: An Attentiveness to Language

The third requirement for interpretive inquiry specified by D. G. Smith (1991) is that researchers must "develop a deep attentiveness to language" (p. 199), because understanding is a fundamentally linguistic exercise. Researchers look closely at language because, as Gadamer maintained, it reflects our awareness of our situatedness in time (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 193). It reflects our predispositions, values, traditions, histories, hopes, desires, misgivings, and avoidances. Since language is formed over time and as the effect of countless social and historical experiences and interactions of the many people who have lived before us, it can be said to contain the past or history and, as mentioned above, it is only in the terms of past experience, as our forestructure of understanding or prejudgment, that we attempt to make sense of that which meets us as new. Language thus anticipates our transformation. It enables an individual's understanding, but it also constructively constrains it, for those who speak, and so describe their horizon of experience, must do so within the general language they have inherited and use to converse with others. It is in how we use this general language to create a description of a new lived reality that the fusion

of horizons necessarily occurs. As a result, interpretive inquirers must strive to be "richly descriptive" (Merriam, 1998, p. 8) in their research.

Requirement Four: The Object of Inquiry Discloses the Method Required to Study It

The fourth requirement of interpretive inquiry is for researchers to free themselves of any commitment to a particular method and to be open to all ways of thinking and acting. Heidegger's consideration of interpretation as the fundamental condition of existence meant that the method for understanding could not be defined in isolation from thinking about that which we seek to understand (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 192). This meant that each phenomenon would require its own unique method of interpretation. Gadamer suggested that the phenomenon being studied discloses the method required to study it when we engage it with our questions (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 192). Considering the multitude of things and the variety of questions we may have, researchers should not limit their discursive field as they endeavor to make sense of the world and help us understand our individual lives as they relate to others and the world. Researchers should draw on any and all methods, strategies, and perspectives that elicit understandings of the world that are "more helpful, adequate, informed, or sophisticated" (J. Ellis, personal communication). D. G. Smith thus remarks that

> the hermeneutic imagination is not limited in its conceptual resources to the texts of the hermeneutic tradition itself but is liberated by them to bring to bear any conceptualities that can assist in deepening our understanding of what it is we are investigating. This means that the mark of good interpretative research is not in the degree to which it follows a specified methodological agenda, but in the degree to which it can show understanding of what it is that is being investigated. (D. G. Smith, 1991, p. 201)

An appropriate method, then, is not one that is designed in the absence of that which is studied and deemed equally applicable to or effective for all things and all situations. Rather, it is a "multimethod" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2) that depends largely on the object of inquiry and causes us to think about it in new language. Such an openness to all ways of thinking means that the acts of inquiry that enable interpretive encounters with the research subject may take on several forms, such as reading around in pertinent research literature and theoretical or philosophical works, studying policy or historical documents, providing an autobiographical introspective, reviewing life histories, conducting interviews, making observations in the field, designing and circulating questionnaires, organizing and recording think-aloud or focus-group workshops, keeping journals, using visual texts and expressive arts, etc.

The Role of the Researcher

Since there is no universally applicable method in interpretive inquiry, the inquirer replaces the controlled experiment as "the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 1998, p. 7). As J. L. Ellis (1998) observes of teacher-researchers, a qualitative inquirer is someone who "'makes the path by walking it'" (p. 16). Likewise, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) maintain that "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 2). As mentioned above, they draw on several methods or strategies that facilitate in varying ways an engagement with and in the world. Thus, in my study I consider the inquirer — myself — the primary instrument of inquiry and I draw on several strategies to bring me into contact with the ways people make sense of the postsecondary GFL curriculum in Canada so that I can arrive at and offer a new understanding.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) evoke the French social anthropologist and

structuralist thinker Claude Lévi-Strauss's use of the terms "bricoleur" and "bricolage" to illustrate the multifaceted and dynamic nature of the qualitative inquirer and the qualitative research process. Both terms stem from the French verb "bricoler," originally meaning "to rebound" (as a ball from the outstretched palm of the hand) and "to stray" (as a dog from a path). The French "bricoleur" signifies a man who works with his hands and in ways that contrast those of a craftsman or engineer; the bricoleur is a worker who performs the tasks necessary to get the work done and be paid. A similar — though clearly not identical — meaning is expressed by the English words "jack-of-all-trades" and "tinkerer." The popular German expression "Hansdampf in allen Gassen" similarly conveys the meaning of someone who is well versed in many things. "Bricolage" is the varied technical activity, or perhaps "tinkering," of the bricoleur. Lévi-Strauss used the term "bricolage" in his work *La pensée sauvage* (1962; *The savage mind*, 1966) to describe the process by which mythological thought expresses itself. He observed that mythological thought necessarily draws on a diverse, yet limited, range of strategies regardless of the point being expressed. Just as myth is communicated through bricolage, so the process undertaken by the mythologist or researcher must also draw from across a diverse set of strategies, straying from one technique to another (and not following a set procedure), when reflecting upon the mythologies and seeking to express understanding. Clearly, this concept resonates with Heidegger's and Gadamer's suggestions that method is not independent of the thing being inquired. D. G. Smith (1991) explains that "*what* is being investigated itself holds part of the answer concerning *how* it should be investigated" (p. 198). In essence, Denzin and Lincoln call to mind Lévi-Strauss's bricoleur and bricolage in order to make the subtle yet significant point that the interpretive researcher does not stick to the techniques and standards — the particular method or ways of thinking — of one trade or profession — or approach — but may draw on one or several or be inventive at any given time depending on the research task at hand. Researchers are bricoleurs in the sense that they perform bricolage, that is, get the work of inquiry done — bring thought

and meaning to expression — by employing whatever range of strategies and tasks that are suggested by the subject of inquiry necessary to bring that meaning to expression.

Lévi-Strauss's bricoleur may at first seem opportunistic and unhinged, but this itinerant tinkering tasker is purposeful, focused, and informed: the bricolage of qualitative inquiry is deliberately oriented toward the expression of new meaning and grounded both in the situation under analysis and in the researcher's prior experiences. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) describe bricolage as "a pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation" (p. 2) and as "a complex, dense, reflexive, collagelike creation that represents the researcher's images, understandings, and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis" (p. 3). Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg (1992) make the fundamental point that the "choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context" (p. 2). Thus, in order to arrive at deeper and broader understandings, the inquirer-as-bricoleur uses especially those various methods and strategies that — to the inquirer, and given the nature of the phenomenon under analysis — seem the most practical for, readily available in, or to emerge from the given situation. The diverse range of strategies from which the bricoleur performs bricolage includes interviewing, observing, reviewing and referring to personal documents and historical texts, self-reflection, reading the various interpretive paradigms, and applying their perspectives; the bricoleur "works between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 2-3). Further, the bricoleur is a self-conscious inquirer because bricolage is arranged by, through, and about the inquirer; the bricoleur acknowledges the instrumentality of the inquirer, the formative influence of the inquirer's — and the participants' — experiences, identities, and relationships with the world, and the values implied by the inquiry and its representation as research (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 3).

My Research Acts

As discussed above, the particular research topic and the concerns and questions it raises necessarily determine the research approach. A qualitative or interpretive research approach draws on those methods and strategies that most appropriately lead to a broadening of one's horizons. Interpretive inquiry requires any number of research acts. The research acts I have chosen enable me to "emphasize, describe, judge, compare, portray, evoke images, and create" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 149, qtd. in Merriam, 1998, p. 22) and so reach a broader and deeper understanding of the Canadian postsecondary GFL curriculum, how it has evolved, and how students experience and make sense of it.

Given the size of Canada, its regional differences, its number of universities, and the academic freedom of their professors, one presumes that there is likely to be more than one curriculum for German in the country. In raising questions about the GFL curriculum, my first task was to establish what that curriculum or those curricula looks or look like. My study thus includes an examination of the relevant sections of Canadian university calendars and department Web sites which show course listings and syllabuses. I then compare and analyze this descriptive information with a review of the history of postsecondary German in Canada. In doing so, I evoke the work of critical education theorist Michael Apple and the postcolonial concepts of Edward W. Said (1978), Homi K. Bhabha (1994), and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1995) as theoretical traditions that can help to make sense of educational phenomena (such as curriculum development, professors, students, etc.) in terms of their historicopolitical and geopolitical constructedness.

Once having established the historically situated nature of the GFL curriculum and the student's ideologically negotiated place in it, I then turned my attention more to the subjective experience of students in my endeavor to

understand the curriculum differently and seek perhaps more useful versions of it. Central to the creation of meaning by interpretation are the relational process of conversation and researchers' self-reflective accounts of the dialogical transformations that they experience as a result of their conversations with others (D. G. Smith, 1991). Thus I interviewed undergraduate students about their lived experiences of studying German at Canadian universities. Specifically, I interviewed four students. Three were women and one was a man. Two of the interviewees (including the one male) were students of German at the time of the interview; two were former students of German, one of whom was doing an after degree in Education while the other was doing a PhD in a social science subject at the time of the interview. Each of the four had studied or was studying German at the same western Canadian university. One of the participants was a former student of mine; I came into contact with the others through a friend, through a former professor of mine, and by a chance encounter. I interviewed the participants individually for over an hour. Before the interviews, I asked each to complete a pre-interview creative art exercise. The artwork primarily served as an icebreaker and enabled the interviewees to focus and reflect on the topic and their experiences ahead of time and at the start of the interview. It also provided alternative meaningful qualitative visual data to complement the participants' words. Also before the interviews, I made notes of my preconceptions of the topic and studied the section for the German program in the university calendar. During the interviews I referred to a set of prepared questions, but, in the interest of having a genuine conversation, I also digressed from these questions, returning to them only if the interviewee and I were going far off topic.

I have configured my conversations with the Canadian students of German as narratives that represent how I have come to new understandings of postsecondary German in Canada. Specifically, I analyzed the interviews by following the concept of "narrative configuration" proposed by Polkinghorne (1995). Narrative inquiry asserts that people's understandings of their experiences

are shaped by the context of stories in which those experiences occur (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Phillion & He, 2007). The stories that participants tell are thus the object of inquiry and the examination of the stories' rhetorical and discursive structures, characters, episodes, and motivations or assumptions — that is, the narrative — is the method by which the researcher analyzes the stories. Polkinghorne (1995) makes an important distinction in narrative inquiry between "analysis of narrative" and "narrative analysis." The former operates according to paradigmatic cognition by making use of stories as data, seeking common elements among them, and producing categories or independent themes to assist understanding. The latter follows narrative cognition by using events and actions as data, looking for their particularities, and composing stories to explain certain outcomes. In particular, Polkinghorne (1995) promotes narrative analysis as the preferred method of presenting qualitative research data since storytelling rather than reductive taxonomy is able to reflect the complexity of human existence as situated action that is motivated yet contingent and changing. Narrative analysis relies on the process of "narrative configuration" or "emplotment" by which the researcher arranges events and actions into a coherent whole organized according to time and an overarching theme or plot. Polkinghorne observes that plots "configure events into a story by (a) delimiting a temporal range which marks the beginning and end of the story, (b) providing criteria for the selection of events to be included in the story, (c) temporally ordering the events into an unfolding movement culminating in a conclusion, and (d) clarifying or making explicit the meaning events have as contributors to the story as a unified whole" (p. 7). Narrative analysis recognizes that participants' told stories are already linguistic and literary (grammatical and semiotic) conversions of the experiential or felt meanings of their lived stories, transformed by the telling participants' omissions, reductions, elaborations, exaggerations, and rationalizations as well as the researchers' questions, and requiring researchers — as co-authors — to make inferences in their interpretive retelling (Polkinghorne, 1996). Thus researchers as interpreters or storytellers create new meaning by selecting, synthesizing, and

describing those episodes and actions in research participants' lives that the researchers see as significant in forming a particular outcome. While *narrative inquiry* goes beyond telling stories to include "analytic examination" (Bell, 2002, p. 208), I understand that Polkinghorne's *narrative analysis* — as different from *analysis of narrative* — releases researchers from an enduring dependency on the traditional research role of distancing classifier. I recognize that researchers' interpretations are also necessarily grammatical and semiotic conversions of their broadly contextualized lived research experiences with participants and as such restory and create narrative. This narrative creation — their/my/our restorying — *is already* a complex examining, reflective, and organizing analysis (see also Coffee & Atkinson, 1996; Vickers, 2010). Also, as peculiarly artistic objects of inquiry, the students' visual representations of the German curriculum are examples of the participants' self research in the form of creative practice. As such they were valuable components of my interpretive inquiry upon which both my participants and I were able to reflect and that I could integrate into my narrative analysis of the interviews.

The next and final loop of my dissertation comprises a fictional case study of the need for and actions taken toward curriculum innovation in one specific place. The perspectives raised in my critical historical, theoretical, and interpretive (i.e., narrative) explorations of what the Canadian postsecondary GFL curriculum is, how it came about, and what it is like for students necessarily provoked the further question of what curriculum *change* would look like if the curriculum were to be shaped by different and potentially more equitable interests. I have chosen a case study approach for the endeavor of exploring this question, given the particularity or highly context-driven nature of the situation of any given German or modern language program in which changes are made. My intention is to illustrate and thereby support the possibility of appropriate curriculum innovation for GFL. Merriam (1998) defines a qualitative case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance,

phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 27) and indicates the compatibility of this approach for studying educational innovations, evaluating programs, and informing policy. Cresswell (1998) explains that case studies explore the activities rather than patterns of behavior of a bounded system or particular program, event, or process involving individuals (i.e., case) by collecting extensive data. Yin (1994) emphasizes the usefulness of a case study approach to examine instances where a phenomenon's variables are inseparable from their contexts. For the case in this dissertation, I have chosen to depict a German program in a modern languages department at a medium-size Canadian English-language urban public university. I have located this specific example of the need for and process of curriculum change in a broad context that includes local program history, student evaluation of needs, interests, and innovations, and descriptions of macro- and micro-level changes in curriculum and syllabus design that correspond with the critical and interpretive perspectives arising from earlier chapters in this dissertation as well as with seminal ideas from recent second language education research and scholarship. The case study is fictional in order both to allow for coherence with the preceding interpretive parts of this dissertation as well to avoid promoting any one actual program.

My purpose in examining university calendars, reviewing histories, conducting interviews with students, and reporting a fictional case study has been to search for information previously unknown to me. I have entered each stage or loop in the research process with a new, or reframed, question. To begin, I asked: What is the current state of the curriculum? My findings in this part of the inquiry have led me to ask: How and why has the curriculum developed in the way it has? When entering into conversations with students, I asked: What is it like for students to study German at university in Canada? As I reflected on my inquiry and my research encounter with students, I asked: In which ways can I re-imagine that curriculum now knowing what I did not before? What does the process of introducing a more genuinely student-oriented curriculum for German look like?

At the beginning of each encounter I have stated any preconceptions or preliminary understandings that I had of those texts or the ways the persons interviewed make sense of their experiences. To assist my endeavor to expand my understanding I looked for confirmations of and discrepancies with my prior understandings, for similarities and variations between the different departments' curricula, for correlations and inconsistencies between the assertions, values, and silences of the written history of the curriculum and the experiences and aspirations of students, and for aesthetic indications of my transformation in the research process.

Part Two: The "Core," the "Outside," and the "Borders":

A Critical Curriculum History of Canadian Germanistik[1]

> "If you don't know and don't care about who I am then why should I give a damn about what you say you do know about."
>
> — J. Jordan, 1987, p. 29.

Introduction

In this discussion, I first ask: What is the curriculum for teaching German as a foreign language and foreign culture (GFL) at university in Canada, and how has it evolved? I wonder whether this GFL curriculum can effectively lead to interculturally literate German users. I endeavor to provide a general picture of the current Canadian postsecondary GFL curriculum by examining relevant sections of Canadian university calendars and department Web sites, which show course listings and actual courses offered. Then, I relate the current state of the GFL curriculum to its origins by drawing on information presented in a recent history of postsecondary German in Canada by Canadian Germanist Michael Batts. *A brief survey of Germanic studies at Canadian universities from the beginnings to 1995* (Batts, 1998) offers "a backdrop against which the current situation [of the discipline] may be productively examined" (Prokop, 2000, p. 360). Indeed, by looking at the current state of the Canadian GFL curriculum in relation to its history, as reflected in *A brief survey*, I do not mean to describe and

[1] A version of this chapter has been published. Plews 2007. In C. Lorey, J. L. Plews, & C. L. Rieger (Eds.), *Interkulturelle Kompetenzen im Fremdsprachenunterricht. Intercultural literacies and German in the classroom. Festschrift für Manfred Prokop* (pp. 1-27).

compare moments across time merely for the sake of keeping record. Rather, I examine the current situation of GFL in Canada — or Canadian *Germanistik*[2] — in the context of its historical conditions as well as in relation to the different subject positions of its immediate stakeholders (see Dimitriadis & McCarthy, 2001, pp. 118-119; Johnston, 2003, p. 40) in order to attend to a kind of curriculum thinking that has long stood at its foundation. *A brief survey* both serves as a wealth of useful historical information and must be seen as a discursive site that, specifically while taking stock of curriculum history, reiterates a particular approach to, and outcome for, curriculum for German. I thus enter into a critical discussion with the underlying ideas of *A brief survey* in order to recover in the educational discourse of Canadian Germanistik those "contradictions that we tend to suppress as we process experience and history into curricular knowledge" (Dimitriadis & McCarthy, p. 119; see also Castenell & Pinar, 1993, pp. 2 & 3). Taking the perspectives of critical educational theorists (Anyon, 1981; Apple, 1979; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991; Lewis, 1996), critical applied linguists (Cook, 2002; Firth & Wagner, 1997; Graman, 1988; Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2006; Pennycook, 1989; van Lier, 1996), and antiracial (Castenell & Pinar, 1993) and postcolonial identity-conscious approaches to curriculum and teaching (Dimitriadis & McCarthy, 2001; Johnston, 2003), I explore the postsecondary curriculum for German in Canada as the expression of a specific content-driven pedagogical aesthetic or methodology that in turn replicates and supports a predominant form of social organization and power. My discussion leads me to suggest suspending the notion of an essential area or

[2] The German name for the study of German language and literature is *Germanistik*. The English translation is "Germanistics," "Germanics," "German," or more commonly "German studies." I use the term "GFL" since Germanistik and its translations do not necessarily draw attention to the study of German as a foreign language and foreign culture. Some academic departments use the terms "German" and "German studies" to distinguish between two programs, where the former indicates an emphasis on the study of texts in the German language and the latter includes the study of German culture, history, society, politics, and philosophy in English translation. However, such programs are rarely mutually exclusive. GFL can be likened to "Deutsch als Fremdsprache" (DaF), although this field primarily concerns teaching German as a foreign or second language at universities and language institutes in German-speaking countries or at German language institutes elsewhere in the world.

course of study in the case of German in Canada and putting the focus of curriculum on an intercultural plurality of people teaching and learning. This kind of critical understanding of, and deep commitment to, the plurality of people in the educational context and their intercultural relations is both understated in histories of German in Canada and missing from curriculum development in the discipline. I embrace such critique and commitment in curriculum thinking in the field and encourage others to do likewise.

Critical Educational Theory

Critical educational theorists maintain that educational institutions and practice reflect and repeat the arrangements of broader society. Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux (1991), in their critique of Allan Bloom's and of E. D. Hirsch's educational reforms, draw attention particularly to works by Pierre Bourdieu, Basil Bernstein, Paulo Freire, and Michael Apple that have shown how "the culture transmitted by the school is related to the various cultures that make up the wider society, in that it confirms and sustains the culture of dominant groups while marginalizing and silencing the cultures of subordinate groups of students" (p. 235). Indeed, Apple (1979) explains that institutions of learning and their pedagogical methods or techniques are often set up and operate in order to attend to the powerful in ways that do not question how "educational procedures [serve] the interests of those who already possess economic and cultural capital [and] are linked to other aspects of our conceptual apparatus to form a larger taken for granted perspective that dominates education" (p. 125). Jean Anyon (1981) also shows how educational institutions and their practices (such as curriculum) are agencies of social and cultural legitimation and reproduction; she claims that they represent the social power structure as ideal and replicate the same distribution of cultural and economic opportunity as in society:

The study of schooling as a legitimating agency suggests that an accurate

> assessment of the social meaning of education will acknowledge symbolic forms in education, and dominant educational principles of curriculum and classroom organization, as ideal (ideological) representations of material (or sociological) arrangements of power and resource. [...] These meanings reproduce on a cultural level the practical configurations of opportunity that characterize social action and social power; they express, and may confirm, social organization. (p. 97)

Critical theorists state that to achieve a profound understanding of educational institutions and such procedures as the curriculum one must consider both how education is produced by society and how it produces society. That is, it is important to realize (a) that curriculum is not a given circumstance but an aggregate of knowledge that is historically constituted within the material and ideological power-relations of society and (b) that it also then functions ideologically as a technology of power and social control (Anyon, 1981, pp. 86 & 98; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, pp. 222 & 235). Thus, an investigation of the curriculum should be less concerned with the manifestation of "obvious characteristics" (Apple, 1979, p. 132) or a group's or individual's "specific intellectual positions" (127) and more concerned with revealing and engaging with the underlying material conditions or patterns of thought upon which that curriculum relies and according to which it has taken shape and may or may not change. Accordingly, when analyzing the curriculum for German in Canada, it is necessary to regard this educational practice as a reflection of social relations and to concentrate somewhat less on its outward appearance — course offerings and the actual texts chosen — and more on the grounds for the choice.

Critical Applied Linguistics

Critical applied linguists apply the perspectives of critical theory and critical educational theory to topics specifically in the discipline of second

language education (SLE). They regard language, language learning and teaching, language learners and teachers, language teacher education, the language classroom, and other language environments applicable to second language (L2) learning not as simple systems, practices, roles, or spaces that are devoid of cultural and social contexts, but rather as complex human phenomena that are — fundamentally — ideologically constructed and reconstructed by the social relations and professional discourses of a given time and place (Johnson, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). Pennycook (1989), in his seminal historical analysis of second language teaching methods, discusses how teaching methods, and the bodies of literature and research that substantiate them, are a system of "interested knowledge" in the service of an elite that supports inequities between academic scholars (often in one part of the world) and teachers (often in another). He sheds doubt on the claims of scientific objectivity and apoliticalness implied in the predominantly positivistic research approaches of applied linguistics theorists and scholars by indicating that their research and proposed teaching methods reflect and reproduce a priori social and linguistic conditions that favor the privileged cultural position of the scholar, as opposed to the teacher. Pennycook (1989) draws attention to the need to question the nature of the knowledge produced by applied linguists and language methodologists, to study the relationship of power between academics and teachers, to question the assumptions underlying methods, and to strive toward more local knowledge. Critical applied linguists thus seek different and more elaborate understandings of theories of and approaches to L2 teaching and learning by questioning and reflecting on the social relations and particularly the relations of power in which they are grounded and that they reiterate.

Critical applied linguists are particularly concerned with the linguistic, educational, and sociocultural identities of speakers (see esp. Coffey & Street, 2008; Kramsch 2006; Norton, 1997a, 1997b, 2000; Norton Pierce, 1995) and the question how certain identities are privileged over others especially in

methodological theory and practice. Firth and Wagner (1997) focus on the concept and treatment of the foreign language learner in second language acquisition (SLA) research. They observe that the field's predominant research bias toward cognitive (and not social) perspectives creates a binary between the foreign nonnative speaker and the native speaker in which the foreign language nonnative speaker is necessarily considered in an "oversimplified" and "stereotypicalized" manner as a "deficient" or "defective communicator" in relation to the "idealized 'native' speaker" (Firth & Wagner, 1997, p. 285). In response, they call for an increased awareness of the context of language use and suggest greater sensitivity toward the participant user. Similarly, Cook (2002) proposes the concept of the "L2 user" as a way to reconsider and avoid the theoretical practice of placing the L2 "learner" forever in a relationship of shame, inability, intimidation, and subservience in regard to the native speaker. Cook queries the common assumptions that native speakers should provide the ideal for L2 learners to imitate and that the language to be taught is that of the native speaker and not that of L2 users. He argues that L2 learners need L2 *user* goals, not *native speaker* goals, and that effective L2 speakers would be more appropriate models for L2 learners.

At the heart of such critical discussions of L2 teaching and learning is the desire for a different and more appropriate understanding both of the theories and structures that frame teaching and learning and of students and teachers — theoretically and in actuality in the classroom and educational institutions. Van Lier (1996) suggests that language teachers create their lessons not by following preordained plans but rather by basing them on just such a better understanding of their students. Following such discussions of the interested knowledge of method and the reductive stereotyping of learner/speaker identity, my study of the GFL curriculum in Canada similarly ponders the apparently autonomous and objective nature of that curriculum and investigates the underlying assumptions, concepts, interests, and relations of the groups of people — students and professors — it

necessarily reflects.

Now and Then: The Postsecondary Curriculum for German in Canada

Given the large geographic size of Canada, the various historical, demographic, linguistic, and cultural distinctions between its regions, the ever growing ethnic diversity of its population, the number of its universities and colleges, their diverse student body (including increasing numbers of international students), and the academic freedom of their professors, I imagine that the postsecondary curriculum for German would likewise be broadly conceived and potentially reveal a significant degree of variation across the country. When asking what the curriculum is for German in Canada, I also wonder whether "the curriculum" will reveal itself rather as "curricula."

In seeking answers to the above questions, I examined the sections relevant to the study of German in Canadian university calendars and department Web sites. University calendars (both print and online versions) provide the course numbers, titles, and brief outlines of university courses approved for inclusion in the curriculum of each program of study. However, these lists of courses are ideal plans and contain items that are taught every year, on rotation over two or more years, infrequently, or even never, depending on student enrolment, administrative and budget restrictions, or the interest and teaching loads of and variation in faculty and staff. Nowadays most German departments or programs (within Modern Languages departments) also post both their calendar listings and actual course offerings for a given year online. These documents serve as curriculum contracts between faculties and students who choose to take courses or pursue a minor, major, or honors concentration in German.[3]

It is useful at this point to take a general look at current undergraduate

---

[3] There are often discrepancies between course descriptions in university calendars and those on department Web sites. Either source may be out of date at the time of access.

course listings of Canadian German programs. For this purpose, I have randomly selected three programs at universities of different sizes from across the country. These include the large — and so perhaps standard-bearing — program at Queen's University and the two — more typical — mid-size and small programs at the University of Victoria and Acadia University.

The Department of German Language and Literature (2007) at Queen's University lists its courses according to a five-year breakdown. In the first year it offers four language acquisition courses (Reading German, Introductory German, and Beginner's German I and II), two courses in English on German political and cultural history (Germany A People and its Culture I and II), and three literature in translation courses defined by time or ethnicity (19th Century German Writers in Translation, 20th Century German Writers in Translation, and Yiddish Literature in Translation). The second-year courses comprise five options in German language acquisition (Intermediate German I and II, Business German I and II, and Reading German II) and two in English on German film defined by period (German Film I: Expressionism in Weimar and II: New German Cinema to the Post-Unification). Third-year options include two business language courses (Business German III and IV), two integrated culture and language courses (Survey of German Cultural History I and II), each of which "includes regular exercises in formal grammar, translation, and dictation," two literature courses with texts in German (Survey of Literary History I and II), one course on German literature in translation (Contemporary German Women's Writing East and West), and a credit option for participation in the "Werkstudentenprogramm" (see WSP, n.d.) (Work and Study in Germany). In the fourth year, students can opt for two language classes (Advanced Language Skills I and II) and five literature courses (Goethe and his Age, Romanticism and Realism, Modernity and the German Imagination (another "introduction to several literary periods and movements"), Masterpieces of Twentieth-Century German Narrative, and Contemporary Austrian/German Women's Writing Focus: Fiction by Ethnic Minority Writers).

The eleven fifth-year offerings include two courses in philology (History of the German Language I and II) and nine others exclusively in literature (Readings in Middle High German Literature, Goethe I and II, Die Deutsche Novelle, Special Topics I and II, Directed Special Studies I and II, and 20th Century Studies — "a specialized study of literature").

The online university calendar (Queen's University 2001–2007) provides different names for the two first-year German literature in translation courses (Masterpieces of German Literature I and II), the two third-year literature courses in German (German Language and Culture Through 20th-Century Literature and German Language and Culture Through 18th- and 19th-Century Literature), the fourth-year course on Modernity in German (German Modernity: From Vienna to Weimar), and the fifth-year courses on Goethe in German (Goethe and his Age I and II). The change in the titles of the third-year literature courses indicates that the latest versions use literary content as a basis not only for cultural but also explicitly for language learning.[4] The calendar also cross-lists an option in Art History (Schinkel to Speer: German Architecture from 1815 to 1945).

The Germanic studies program in the Department of Germanic and Russian Studies at the University of Victoria groups its course offerings according to two program streams: those in German and those in Germanic Studies, where knowledge of the German language is not required. The first category (University of Victoria, 2007a) contains Beginners' German I and II, Intensive German, Intermediate German, Conversational German, Advanced Grammar and Stylistics I and II, Advanced Oral German I and II, German Reading Course, Advanced Translation, The Evolution of Early German, The Evolution of Modern German, and the Honours Graduating Essay. The second category (University of Victoria, 2007b) consists of a long list of mostly literature and some film courses based largely on periods but also on literary personages, genre, and gender, and which may have a broad or very focused coverage: Major Figures of German Culture,

[4] I have nonetheless still counted them as literature courses in German in Table 1 (below).

Introduction to German Literature, Modern Germany, Novella and Short Story, German Drama, Poetry, German Literature in English Translation, Introduction to Twentieth Century Literature: (Pre-1945), A Short History of German Film, Portraits of Women in German Literature from Medieval to Postmodern Times, Medieval German Literature, Storm and Stress to Classicism: Revolution and Tradition, Faust, Romanticism, Nineteenth Century: Realism, The Dark Side of the Enlightenment: Madness in Literature, “Overcoming the Past” in Film and Text, Literature Since 1945, Major German Filmmakers, Special Topics A and B, The New German Cinema, Kafka, Brecht, Christa Wolf, Women Writers, German Literature: The Last Two Decades, Recent German Film, Popular Culture, A Cultural History of Vampires in Literature and Film. Four courses in particular stand out in this long list. The Modern Germany and Pop Culture courses make use of literary text and, respectively, “documentary texts, analytical essays and film” as well as “non-literary forms of expression, such as films, popular music and other media” in English. Similarly, the two courses on madness and vampires are unusual for their highly thematic focus (although the course on madness concentrates on literary representations only).

The German studies program in the Department of Languages and Literature at Acadia University (2004) is divided into three groups of courses. The language acquisition courses include German for Beginners 1 and 2, Intermediate German 1 and 2, Inter-Conversational German 1 and 2, and Advanced German 1 and 2. There are four German literature courses offered in English translation (Introduction to German Culture and Literature 1 and 2, From War to War, and Division and Reunification. Despite their conspicuous thematic titles, the latter two courses concern, respectively, early-twentieth-century and late-twentieth-century German culture taught “through its literature.” The third group of courses consists of period-bound German literature courses (Modern and Contemporary German Literature 1 and 2, History of German Literature 1 and 2, Reformation to Enlightenment, Classical Period and Early Romanticism, Pre-Realist Period,

Realism, Individual Readings of German Literature, and Honours Thesis). The online course catalogue of the university calendar (Acadia University, 2007) does not list the two abovementioned thematic literature courses taught in English, but does include a culture and civilization course in German (Introduction to German History, Culture, and Literature) as well as two courses titled Individual Readings.

Similar to the above three examples, my examination (see Table 1) of the online university calendars of all forty-five German programs listed in the *Directory of departments of German at Canadian universities and colleges* (Snook, 2005) reveals a recurring pattern in the GFL curriculum. German programs in Canada offer undergraduate students a prescribed number of German language courses in the hierarchical sequence of beginners' through intermediate to advanced levels (including reading and conversation courses) that then most often stop in order to shift to a range of senior-level literature courses (cf. Byrnes, 1998a, 2002a, 2002b). When taught in German, these courses frequently include canonical surveys and almost unvaryingly run the gamut of historical literary periods, further subdividing (and replicating) that periodization with courses that stress literary genre (drama, poetry), literary figures (Goethe, Kafka), or social (women, madness) and cultural (relation to music, the hero) — but still very much literary — themes or aspects. When taught in English, these courses appear as one of two types: literature in translation or German studies. The literature in translation courses follow more or less the same pattern as the literary offerings taught in German, though tending slightly more toward themes. The German studies courses contextualize the study of literature further in history, politics, or philosophy and are often cross-listed with, or even offered by, other programs or departments (included in Table 1 only if a course number was given for the German program). As Manfred Prokop (1996) revealed, German studies has further complemented the study of literature: "In typischer kanadischer — kompromißbereiter — Art haben die 'German studies' bereits existierende Studiengänge bereichert und ergänzt, aber nicht ersetzt" (p. 33; cf. Berman,

1994). These courses are then often topped up with variations on special topics or directed readings, that is, courses whose descriptions usually indicate further literary study.

In about half of the programs, the language to literature trajectory is complemented with a small range of further standard options. These include one or two courses on culture and civilization (which contextualize literature in history and society and are taught sometimes in German, but mostly in English or French),[5] language for business German (only Memorial, Queen's, and Waterloo offer more than two half-year courses), historical, socio-, or applied linguistics and SLA (taught in German, English, or French), translation (which is mostly, if not entirely, literary), and film (mostly taught in English or French).

The university calendars reveal a few unusual courses. Included in the language courses in Table 1 are Functional Contemporary German (Carleton), intermediate and/or advanced oral expression through the performance of a play (Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier), and a number of intermediate and/or advanced content-based language courses that use literature, the media, contemporary culture, or linguistics explicitly for language acquisition (Bishop's, Calgary, Guelph, Québec à Montréal, Queen's, Saint Mary's, Saskatchewan, Waterloo, Western Ontario).[6] In addition to these, Augustana teaches the language of German media, and Toronto offers Yiddish.[7]

Courses that deviate from the standard German literature offerings are particularly cultural studies courses, such as those on Berlin or other cities (Toronto, Western Ontario) and contemporary Germany (Montréal, Toronto, Wilfrid Laurier), as well as courses in media studies (Montréal), gender studies (Manitoba), and Canadian-German intercultural studies (British Columbia). Also,

[5] Two institutions (Alberta, Wilfrid Laurier) misleadingly name this course "Cultural Studies."
[6] Some other advanced language course descriptions (Manitoba, Memorial) emphasize the use of a variety of texts.
[7] Yiddish is offered under "GER" calendar numbers and can be combined with the study of German.

Queen's, Toronto, and Wilfrid Laurier teach Yiddish and/or Jewish literature and culture, and seven institutions (Guelph, Manitoba, McMaster, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Waterloo, Windsor) list courses on Holocaust literature (usually taught in English). Waterloo offers a course titled National Socialist Ideology and Culture (in English). Two literature and two culture courses taught in German at Toronto (Kafka, Weimar Republic, Berlin, Contemporary Germany) emphasize in their descriptions the study of a variety of text types. Otherwise, Augustana, Calgary, and Western Ontario provide added support for senior-level literary studies with courses on research skills and literary theory (in English).

One recent and noticeable departure from the standard curriculum is the inclusion of study abroad for credit under domestic course numbers at nine institutions (Calgary, Lethbridge, McGill, Memorial,[8] Mount Allison, Queen's, Toronto, Trent, Waterloo). These courses vary by name and in nature, may or may not be specifically articulated with the domestic curriculum, are designed for groups or individuals, and take on both guided and independent forms of study.

Both a relatively cursory survey of course listings at random examples of a large and more typical mid-size and smaller German programs as well as a synthesis of German course titles and descriptions published in the most recent calendars of Canadian universities reveal the recurrence of more or less the same curriculum on offer at the different institutions across a large and diverse country. This more or less uniform GFL curriculum begins with general language acquisition, but in the transition from junior-level to senior-level courses sets as its sole explicit curriculum goal the command of a singular form of highly literary language and relative expertise in specifically literary interpretation.[9]

I am surprised to observe that, despite the great range in Canada's natural and political geography and despite the diversity of its peoples both historically and in the present day of the first decade of the third millennium, there should be

[8] Study abroad at Memorial is integrated into three Web-based language courses (Rollmann, 2007b).

[9] At some institutions (Guelph, McMaster, New Brunswick, Ottawa, Saskatchewan, Victoria, York) this literary language is predominantly in English, not German.

uniformity in German programming between postsecondary institutions across the country — as if all the programs were catering to one kind of student in the same place and at one time. I also find it curious that, despite the many forms, uses, users, and contexts of language and culture, one form of language and one kind of text, namely the language of specifically literary text, holds such an exclusive command over the goals of the GFL curriculum. On the surface, GFL in Canada currently comprises of a content-oriented rather than learner-oriented or learning-oriented curriculum (Kumaravadivelu, 1993, 1994; see also Firth & Wagner, 1997; Graman, 1988; van Lier, 1996) where that content is singular in nature.

In seeking to understand more broadly how Canadian German programs have come to share the same curriculum with the same single goal, I turn to the history of the discipline for an overview of its evolution and to see whether other developments have come and gone. Here Batts (1998) provides information that is useful for a comparison between the present state of German at university in Canada and its past. The 1856/57 calendar of King's College in Windsor lists for German a grammar, a literary reader, and Schiller's poems and plays (p. 20). A similar course of study is listed at McGill for 1857/58: grammar, a literary reader, translations, and select literature (Goethe, Schiller, Tieck), and other mostly historical short prose fiction (p. 21). A Queen's senior in 1880/1881 was expected to study language, history of the German language since the Middle Ages, composition (based on the history of literature), and the standard classical works, including Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller (p. 28). Likewise, a fourth-year student at Toronto in 1880/81 had to study grammar, composition, history of German literature, Wieland, Goethe, Schiller, history of the German language, literature of the thirteenth century, and Old and Middle High German (p. 49). Ordinary courses at McGill in 1899/1900 comprised grammar and literature for aesthetic, critical, historical, and linguistic purposes, translation, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, and Scheffel. The honors courses comprised history of the language, history of the literature, composition and reading of texts, linguistic and Middle High German

readers, a literary history, and a number of individual authors (Klopstock, Lessing, Wieland, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Kleist, Grillparzer, Heine, Freytag, Heyse, Ebner-Eschenbach, Seidel, Suttner, Wildenbruch, Sudermann, Hauptmann) (pp. 29, 72). The general course at Toronto in 1900/01 included grammar, translation, periods of German literary history, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, and Freytag (pp. 29-30, 73). The honors course included all of the above and also history of the language, Middle High German, and excerpts from the *Nibelungenlied*, Walter von der Vogelweide, Grillparzer, Uhland, Heine, Keller, Scheffel, and Hauptmann (pp. 30, 73). In 1900/01, the course of study at Acadia comprised grammars and readers, history of German literature, Lessing, Schiller, and Freytag; at Western, literature from 1740 on; and at Saskatchewan, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Freytag, and Fulda (pp. 73).

Just as with the current curriculum, there is a very noticeable degree of similarity between programs at different institutions in the past. Moreover, the comparison between curricula from the beginning of German studies in Canada in the second half of the nineteenth century with those offered by departments and programs across the country today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, clearly indicates that little of substance has changed in all that time. Certainly some professors in some departments have tried to respond to the rise of new influences in economics, society, academic research, the media, or philosophical worldviews in the last couple of decades and so have introduced courses in business German, German women’s literature, German linguistics, and German film or arranged for courses in German culture, history, and political sciences to be cross-listed between programs under the rubric of “German studies.” But it would also be fair to say that these efforts (and their success) have been limited and remain somewhat anomalous. Though still listed in calendars, business courses are nowadays offered on a regular basis for more than one year only at Queen’s; women’s literature, translation, film, and Holocaust studies remain stand-alone courses and follow the pattern of literary interpretation; and

linguistics courses (with the exception of Waterloo) are neither integrated with the language acquisition stream nor meaningfully connected to literary or cultural analysis. An overall appraisal of the Canadian postsecondary GFL curricula of the past and the present shows that both begin with language acquisition at the junior level and both shift focus away from language acquisition to literary study at the senior level.

With regard to the unchanging curriculum model of the shift from language classes at junior levels to almost exclusive literary course offerings at senior levels, GFL in Canada now and in the past differs in no way from the situation in German and other modern languages in its closest neighbor to the south. Grittner (1990) quotes an 1886 speech by Calvin Thomas, an American professor of German and President of the Modern Language Association of America, that describes the study of German:

> "A pupil ... is first required to commit to memory the grammatical inflections of the language. For the purpose of aiding his memory in the retention of grammatical forms, and also for the purpose of giving him the beginning of a vocabulary, he reads as he goes along a certain number of easy ... exercises in German, and likewise translates a number of early English exercises into German. All of this study is essentially grammatical. The learner then takes up some German reader, with which he works for a few weeks or months ... the aim being to fix thoroughly in his mind the elementary principles of the language ... After this he takes up the study of literature, and his goal is henceforth to read German, as readily and as intelligently as possible." (Quoted in Grittner, 1990, p. 16)

Helt and Woloshin (1982) note the persistent predominance of grammar knowledge over communication in German language teaching in America. Weber (2000, p. 50) remarks that "little has changed over the years" regarding German courses offered at American universities and identifies the same uniform

curriculum across that country as I have in Canada. The issue of the persistence of the language-to-literature model is by no means confined to German in Canada or the United States. Carroll (1967) observes the continued exclusive focus on literature at the senior levels in French, German, Russian, and Spanish in the United States some four decades ago, and Graman (1987, 1988) reports again two decades later that the only kinds of courses offered in Spanish at Utah beyond the first two years are in literary analysis "but not in other areas of human experience or interest" (1988, p. 441). Furthermore, Peck (1985) criticizes American foreign language departments for continuing to study and teach literature in ways that are consistent with the German human sciences of the 1850s.

The curriculum model for GFL in Canada — as well as for the related examples I have just cited above — is consistent with an approach to teaching foreign languages founded in Europe in the preservation of Latin in text analysis in the Middle Ages and in the study of forms and rules in the Enlightenment (Kelly 1969). Indeed, the early days of teaching German in Canada through German philology, Middle High German, and the German national literary canon closely resembled the teaching of German as it was then practiced in Canada's colonial administrator Great Britain (Batts 1998: 24). The British study of German was influenced by the Germans' study of their own language and culture: "Germanistik." Thus today's GFL curriculum is rooted in the history of education in Europe and the colonial history of the Anglo-European settlement of Canada. This model accounts little for the Canadian location, since it is just as familiar to nineteenth-century Britain or Germany and the USA, and even to other foreign language disciplines. Not only is it possible to talk of *a* curriculum for German in the singular, since the literature-centered approach is uniform and the same everywhere across the country, but it is also possible to speak of *the* curriculum for German, for it has remained more or less static over one hundred and fifty years. This scenario begs the questions: Why is it the same everywhere? And why has it stayed the same for so long?

The Story According to a Brief Survey

I find it intriguing that, in contrast to the transnational and transhistorical general stability of postsecondary German in Canada, which I have outlined above, the comprehensive and thoughtfully researched quantitative history of "Germanic studies" in *A brief survey* (Batts, 1998) concludes by drawing the readers' attention to what is posed as the threat of change:

> The risk for Germanic studies lies in my [Batts's] view in shifting the emphasis, that is the bulk of the study area, outside the traditional borders of Germanic studies so that the core, which is the written record of German culture, the only aspect for which advanced knowledge of the language is essential, is de-emphasized and may eventually, at least in the eyes of administrations, become irrelevant. (1998, p. 177)

On one level, this concluding passage expresses a concern about a breakdown in the disciplinary and administrative coherence of the German department or program by including an increasing amount of credits from other disciplines or departments that could count toward a degree in German. Undeniably, this would be a reasonable personal-professional concern for any member of any longstanding unit in any educational institution. (Batts is an accomplished professor emeritus of the once Department of Germanic Studies of the University of British Columbia, which has evolved with the former program in Slavic Area Studies into the Department of Central, Eastern and Northern European Studies.[10]) On another level, of course, the conclusion is a reaction more specifically to any challenge, in the name of German studies, to the distinction and stability of literary study as the single defining element of the curriculum for

---

[10] In addition to courses focusing on content specific to one national or regional stream — including German — the department lists four courses in central, eastern, and northern European area studies, including a course in English on the Holocaust. (I have not included this course in Table 1 because it does not have a German course number.)

German.

My initial response on reading this conclusion was to wonder: Why the strong reaction? After all, my reading of *A brief survey* (Batts, 1998) reveals that there has been little substantive change (despite administrative restructuring). Then I also wondered what must lie beneath such a remarkable phenomenon as an appeal to prevent a change that for all intents and purposes is not really happening (at any rate, not with any great scope or impact), and what conditions would there have to be for genuine change to take place.

I find the conclusion of *A brief survey* (1998) telling for several reasons. It is telling because it understands risk only negatively. It is telling because it considers the discipline as holistic and sovereign: it is centered and historically delimited (an "area" with a "core" and "traditional borders"). It is telling because it conveys an assumption that one learns a language to an advanced level exclusively to read written cultural records, by which is meant masterpiece literature, and so devalues or ignores all other kinds of written text and communication as well as visual, audio, multimedial, and material text and communication. It is telling because it implies that what is "outside" bears no relation of significance to the literature that is considered inside. It is telling because it submits that change would make written culture seem irrelevant rather than more relevant, at least to some highly qualified professionals. That is, it argues that a program's singularity or isolation rather than its articulation makes that program formally relevant. It is especially telling because it gives the impression that the effort (of German studies) to demote and dismantle the literary "core" is practically a *fait accompli*, although, as mentioned above, prior research (Prokop, 1996) shows that this is patently not the case. The conclusion of *A brief survey* asserts that the curriculum for German and especially its "core" should be immune to change and free of any competing interests.

The conclusion of Batts's (1998) history of German in Canada is again

telling for at least three further reasons. First, in spite of the appeal for stasis, uniformity, wholeness, and isolation — none of which is in actuality as much at risk as readers are led to believe — the wording of the conclusion perhaps unwittingly draws attention to how movement ("shifting"), differentiation and division ("emphasis," "bulk," "outside," "core," "aspect," "advanced knowledge," and "de-emphasized"), and connection ("borders") play a very significant part in curriculum development. Thus the type of curriculum ultimately recommended by *A brief survey* to GFL in Canada is undermined by the type of process it inadvertently describes. (I will talk more about this process later.)

Second, in light of the static and uniform literature-centered approach to awarding degrees in German in Canada, it is difficult, at the level of courses that comprise the curriculum, to locate or identify the "outside" about which the conclusion of *A brief survey* (Batts, 1998) is so compelled to warn its readers. Unless, of course, this expression refers to courses in business German, German film, German linguistics, or those thematically adapted according to aspects of German society, history, politics, or philosophy? But these seem to me to be connected to and complement language and literature learning and, so, are ultimately as a part of stability as a part of change.

Third, the only people mentioned in the final summation of the history and future of German in Canada are those working for the all-too-often grossly misrepresented "administrations." There is no reference at this point to professors per se, or researchers and teachers, and students. There are only the author's "view" (Batts, 1998, p. 177) and the panoptical "eyes of administrations." In fairness to Batts, in many other places in his work, he does provide useful statistical information on the number and kinds of people who have taught, researched, and studied German in Canada over the last one hundred and fifty years. Yet, it seems that the final account of the state of the curriculum for German in Canada is eerily devoid of people: "the core [...] written record of

German culture" has no readers, just two divergent points of view overseeing it.

So here are the main problems that I see arising from the final assessment of *A brief survey* (Batts, 1998), assuming that this position represents a significant (or dominant) part of GFL in Canada. The first problem is that, for German in Canada, *the curriculum exists because of and for the written record of German culture*. That is, the proposal to adhere to the traditional literary study (Germanistik) does not give due and full consideration to the people teaching or studying it (or prevented from teaching it or choosing not to study it past the language courses). The proposal does not give any explicit explanation of the way that curriculum model relates to these different kinds of people. Why ever not? Do university teachers and students of German exist in relation to that curriculum of texts only as its impartial transmitters and passive disinterested recipients?

The second problem is *the antagonistic paradigm of two divergent object-positions* (of which only the briefest impression is given): The relevance of the "core" is knowable only in the inversion and (deemed) irrelevance of the "outside" and, likewise, any relevance of the "outside" is knowable only in the inversion and (lamentable) irrelevance of the "core." These positions find resolution as curriculum possibilities by being united in their contradiction. Yet does either position represent change, in the sense of the curriculum not just as a synonym for canon but rather as a set of knowledge that reflects the relations between that canon and other texts and people as well as interculturally between one group of people and another (i.e., not only between Germans and Canadians, but also between professors, researchers, or teachers and students)? Should there have to be such an exclusive choice between one or the other?

I believe that these two issues — of curriculum as an essentialized set of texts independent of lived human experience and of curriculum as the imaginary struggle between two contradictory versions (of sets of texts) — are inherently related. By this I mean that the absence or presence of certain people's interests is

connected to positions taken in regard to the curriculum. That is, people are omitted from the closing argument for the traditional curriculum for German in Canada not because the written record or "core" embodies the discipline autonomously, that is, in any self-sufficient, unchanging, transcendental, and essential way. Rather, people are left out of the equation because that dominant written record or "core" at once supports and conceals the dominant relation of one group of people at the "core" with another group of people positioned on the "outside" and thus considered irrelevant by the people at the "core." The omission of people at this point is no mere oversight (see Castenell & Pinar, 1993, p. 6).

... And Other(s') Stories

My experience working over the last nineteen years as a university teacher of German language and culture in Alberta, in Nova Scotia, and for the Canadian Summer School in Germany has taught me that many students who opt to take upper-level German courses are majors or minors in political science, history, or business, or intend to enter education. They often express a desire to make up for a lack of German language competence in those disciplines. Indeed, Prokop (1996, p. 31) observes an increasing number of students without a German background — the "Nichtdeutschsprachiger" or non-German-speakers — who are opting to study the language and that these students do not see German literature as a reason for learning the language. The overwhelming majority (92%) of students of German are not enrolled in literature courses: "Von den geschätzten 18.000 Einschreibungen in Deutschkursen an kanadischen Universitäten waren 1993-94 nur 8% in Literaturkursen zu finden" (Prokop, p. 31); according to the *CAUTG enrolment report 2006–2007* (Rollmann, 2007a), of the total 21,170 enrolments in German courses in Canada only 1,703 were in literature in German or in translation, also only 8%. Yet whatever the students' reasons for studying German, the professors offer them literature. The German program is founded in hierarchical modes of thinking that maintain that students should strive to become

German-like literati, or that all their linguistic and cultural learning needs are met by an especially literary pursuit. Such thinking does not account for local and individual learners' understandings of educational needs and choices. If asked to do so, a German professor would be hard-pressed to find a single student, say, in Alberta or Nova Scotia who aspires to become a German literary author. (And if students were to attain the ideal literary level of language ability, they would seldom encounter Germans who speak or write exclusively literary German.) This imbalance between the interests of students (particularly those students without a German background) as expressed by enrolment figures and the literature courses offered by fluently German-speaking professors makes me wonder whether the usual pattern of the curriculum for German that phases out language classes and progresses to the German national literary canon is having the opposite effect of what is intended: instead of encouraging interested students to continue to learn and use the German language particularly in advanced academic pursuits, the standard literary curriculum for GFL in Canada appeals to only very few. It turns the vast majority of students off.

A random sample of courses that I taught at the University of Calgary in 2002 shows that in three beginner's classes a 9% minority was registered in the Faculty of Humanities. The rest of the students were — encouragingly — in communication, science, management, social sciences, fine arts, and kinesiology. In an intermediate content course, 42% were in humanities. Depending on the perspective, this figure represents a positive-looking substantial percentage increase in Humanities students, or a less-than-encouraging substantial drop in the raw numbers of students from across the university. In contrast, a unique senior-level undergraduate research seminar on a nonliterary German topic in English — the history, uses, and meanings of photography in Germany (see Plews, 2003) — and using texts in English and German was split evenly between 4 humanities and 4 non-humanities students. Usually such a seminar would be on a literary topic and taken exclusively by humanities students, numbering 2, perhaps 3 (H. Joldersma, personal communication). My point here is not that there is no merit in

studying literature. Rather, students desire and require exposure to a greater variety of texts, tasks, and forms of language. The radical variation in the breakdown of the enrolment figures shows that the almost exclusive study of literature does not correspond with the variety of students' interests. But the thinking that underlies the curriculum for German in Canada neglects the numerous (i.e., multiple) other literary or nonliterary forms of cultural expression and their disciplinary, professional, technical, environmental, or behavior- and task-specific varieties of language. Or rather, such thinking neglects the interests of its actual and potential non-German-speaking and yet German-learning students.

Prokop (1996, p. 31) mentioned that the introduction of German studies meant that German departments have had to deal with the tension between student interest in the new components of the curriculum and professors' expectations of the maintenance of tradition. Could this tension not be rephrased more specifically as an intercultural one between the non-German-speaking language and culture learner and the fluently German-speaking literary expert? Could it be that the "outside" that seems so risky to the "traditional" Germanistik-style GFL in Canada is not so much the add-ons of German studies but in actuality the interests of student learners of German? Could it be that the good intention of teaching Germanistik or even the slightly modified German studies — by keeping L2 literature separate from the ongoing process of L2 acquisition, and by refusing to shift its curriculum emphasis from literature toward a broader multiple literacies approach (both to culture and to language) — is thus based in the dispossession of students' interests? After all, a curriculum for German that promotes professors' interests in literature over the students' will to acquire German language competency in multiple areas of literacy, that in fact remains silent in these other areas, is an instance in which "withheld knowledge articulates the curriculum" (Lewis, 1996, p. 36).

GFL in Canada, as practiced within "traditional borders," is very much

related to a particular part of the culture of broader society: it reflects and reproduces the dominance of the fluent native speaker while silencing the subordinate non-fluent speaker. As observed above, the overt grounds for the curriculum for German at university in Canada is an adherence and iteration of a traditional core. This core is founded in the self/other binary of core/outside or German/non-German. In turn, this overt binary translates as the less obvious binary of professors' interests/students' interests. In selecting to advance the core, traditional curriculum thinkers in Canadian postsecondary GFL have promoted and continue to promote only one part of the binary — self, German, or professors' interests — and necessarily ignore the second part — other, non-German (Canadian), or students' interests. To this effect, many Germanists in Canada have aligned themselves with those educational reformers who espouse the "Great Books approach" to the curriculum (see Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). Aronowitz and Giroux remark how this position

> has long been invoked for the reproduction of elites. It advocates a system in which a select cadre of intellectuals, economically privileged groups, and their professional servants are deemed fit to possess the culture's sacred canon of knowledge, which assures their supremacy. (p. 214)

Yet this position is not only about advancing the interests of one, elite group, it is also about limiting the opportunities of other, different groups, as Aronowitz and Giroux (1991) explain, it is

> a form of textual authority that not only legitimates a particular version of Western civilization as well as an elitist notion of the canon, but also serves to exclude all those other discourses, whether from the new social movements or from other sources of opposition, which attempt to establish different grounds for the production and organization of knowledge. (p. 215)

By turning attention toward defending the literary canon as the core of the curriculum while at once failing to recognize the power relation that underlies this position and the way it functions as a legitimating means of social reproduction, control, and discrimination, traditional curriculum thinking in GFL in Canada ignores the repressive side of curriculum (see Aronowitz & Giroux, p. 231). Yet this repression, an oppressive relation between language speakers and language learners, or Germans and their others, appears to be its underlying condition. The transmission of singularly focused, monocultural content knowledge is a strategic diversion from the constructive and empowering intercultural negotiation of teaching and learning a foreign language and culture. Should today's professors of GFL in Canada choose to follow such established patterns of curriculum thinking, they miss the real risk to the study of German at Canadian universities, namely, not any perceived or real challenge to the literary canon, but rather the ongoing *inequality* between specifically fluent or native speakers of German and non-fluent and not-yet-fluent or non-native learners, speakers, or users of German. By not responding to students' interest in becoming German language users in a variety of areas of human experience, today's professors would miss the opportunity to help German-using Canadians create intercultural dialogues with a multiplicity of German texts and media or other German users.

A Different Conclusion

Clearly, my critical approach to the curriculum for German in Canada differs from the long-lasting pattern of thought that underpins *A brief survey* (Batts, 1998). In my opinion, the curriculum for German exists as a set of knowledge not because there is a written record of German culture but because there are intersecting and interrelated groups of people — professors, teachers, researchers, students, readers, learners, and users — for whom that knowledge and its selection, reconstruction, and recirculation function as a point of interaction and meaning-making. The curriculum is the expression of their relation and the organization of that relation. In the extensive research of *A brief*

survey, professors and students, Germans and non-Germans, are continually referenced and yet in the final analysis they are poignantly and forever obscured. The tensions between them are suppressed beneath a bodiless competition between sets of texts. The role that these tensions play as the defining context for curriculum has been ignored in favor of an ultimate appeal to traditional borders (apparently between those sets of texts). These borders are not just between kinds of texts and course offerings; they are first and foremost between people. Yet it is by rethinking these borders between people at the core and people on the outside that more equal relations and a new curriculum with innovative, interculturally meaningful courses can emerge. Courses in such a curriculum might include student-oriented and learning-oriented approaches to German, more situational as well as content-based language instruction aimed at developing multiple literacies, and fully articulated intercultural contact or study abroad, where Canadian users of German can participate in complex dialogues and learn to negotiate with other German users and German culture. Some evidence of this kind of programming can be found in the few existing courses in university calendars that explicitly integrate cultural learning and language acquisition, that encourage students to engage with a variety of texts, develop their own projects, or prepare for public performances, and that actively immerse students in the target culture. My interest in continuing to think about the postsecondary curriculum for GFL in Canada is to explore this historical tension, to navigate the borders, to see how professors of German and students of German are historically positioned and represented in relation to each other in and through the selection or construction of the curriculum for German. In order to strive toward interculturally meaningful curriculum development for German at university in Canada, curriculum thinkers must bring the critical relations between professors and students, their history and experiences as language users, back into the open and offer new possibilities that challenge that history and those experiences. Canadian GFL curriculum thinkers must inhabit the borders and challenge the

notions of tradition, relevance, and taking up solid positions such as the core and the outside.

Table 1: *German programs at Canadian universities and colleges, by course categories (2007).*

	Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced	Other language	Culture & Civilization in German	Literature in German (of which: early, 18th & 19th centuries, 20th & 21st centuries, genre, social/cultural theme)	Literature, Culture, & Civilization taught entirely or primarily in English or French	Business	Philology, linguistics, & second language acquisition & pedagogy	Translation	Film	Holocaust	Study abroad	Special topics, directed study, honors thesis, etc.	Other
Acadia	2	4	2	0	1	8 (1, 3, 2, 0, 0)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Alberta	3	2	4	0	0	7 (1, 0, 0, 3, 3)	5	2	9	3	0	0	0	2	0
Augustana	2	4	7	1	0	5 (1, 2, 2, 0, 0)	7	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	1
Athabasca	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bishop's	3	4	6	0	0	9 (1, 2, 2, 2, 1)	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	0
Brandon	2	2	0	0	0	1 (0, 0, 1, 0, 0)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
British Columbia	3	7	4	0	0	8 (1, 2, 1, 1, 3)	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	1
Brock	1	1	1	0	1	1 (0, 0, 1, 0, 0)	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
Calgary	4	5	1	0	0	1	4	0	1	1	1	0	2	4	1
Carleton	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Concordia	4	4	3	0	1	4 (0, 1, 1, 2, 0)	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	9	0
Dalhousie	3	3	6	0	0	12 (0, 4, 1, 1, 5)	12	2	0	3	0	0	0	3	0
Guelph	2	3	2	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Kwantlen	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lakehead	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Laurentian	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Laval	3	3	4	0	0	2 (0, 1, 1, 0, 0)	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	0
Lethbridge	2	2	1	0	0	3 (0, 0, 1, 0, 0)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Manitoba (incl. Saint Boniface)	3	2	3	0	0	6 (0, 2, 0, 0, 2)	4	2	2	0	1	1	0	11	1
McGill	4	3	3	0	2	11 (1, 6, 4, 0, 0)	13	2	0	1	1	0	1	6	0
McMaster	1	5	2	0	1	0	8	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Memorial	2	6	6	0	0	12 (4, 4, 2, 0, 0)	6	4	0	0	2	0	0	10	0
Moncton	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montréal	13	7	7	0	0	5 (0, 3, 2, 0, 0)	4	0	4	3	1	0	0	4	3
Mount Allison	1	1	1	0	0	8 (0, 4, 2, 2, 0)	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0
Mount Saint Vincent	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Brunswick (both campuses)	7	3	4	0	0	2	13	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
Ottawa	5	3	2	0	0	1 (0, 0, 1, 0, 0)	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	0
Québec à Montréal	4	5	4	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Queen's	5	3	2	0	2	12 (1, 5, 4, 1, 1)	5	4	2	0	2	0	1	4	2
Regina	4	2	4	0	0	6 (0, 3, 2, 0, 0)	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Saint Mary's	2	2	2	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Saskatchewan	2	4	2	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	2	0	6	0
Simon Fraser	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thompson Rivers	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Toronto	3	1	1	3	0	12 (0, 3, 2, 1, 4)	9	2	0	0	1	0	1	7	6
Trent	3	3	2	0	1	4 (0, 2, 1, 1, 0)	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0
Trinity Western	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Victoria	3	2	5	0	0	0	24	0	2	1	4	0	0	3	0
Waterloo	2	5	2	0	2	2 (0, 0, 0, 2, 0)	3	4	2	1	1	1	6	3	0
Western Ontario	3	2	3	0	0	4 (1, 1, 1, 0, 0)	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	24	3
Wilfrid Laurier	2	2	3	0	1	4 (0, 1, 0, 0, 1)	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	3	2
Windsor	3	2	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Winnipeg	1	1	2	0	2	8 (0, 2, 2, 1, 2)	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
York	2	1	3	0	0	1 (0, 0, 1, 0, 0)	15	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	0

Part Three: Postsecondary Germanistik or GFL in Canada

as Seen From a Postcolonial Perspective

> "I did not want to be like some of my compatriots who were almost proud of their inability to adjust. […] Their constant vague and pseudo-sophisticated talk of European culture and American nonculture seemed exaggerated, merely proof that these people neither wanted to, nor could, fit in."
>
> — George Grosz, 1998, p. 249

Introduction

In the preceding, second part of my dissertation I inquired after the current state of the postsecondary GFL curriculum in Canada. I observed that it has more or less the same content and design across the country, that it can be considered singular rather than plural, and that this singularity of content and design has changed little in substance or degree since its inception approximately one hundred and fifty years ago. The discovery of the lack of difference between programs and of minimal change over the history of this curriculum makes a call for the prevention of further change in a recent survey of the field (Batts, 1998) seem all the more remarkable to me. This has led me to consider the history and current state of postsecondary GFL in Canada more critically by examining the material and discursive conditions of its development. My examination has revealed that traditional thinking in the field, which focuses on a particular set of literary texts as the exclusive core content and sole reason for the study of German, is founded in and at once obscures a neglectful and potentially oppressive relationship of power between fluent and native German-speaking university teachers and non-fluent non-native German-learning Canadian

university students. This relationship enables German professors to maintain their symbolic authority as the knowledge-keepers of masterpiece literature and to disavow the various and different linguistic and intercultural needs and interests of Canadian students of German. I believe that holding onto such a curriculum perspective is counterproductive to the aim of German L2 acquisition and foreign culture education and, thus, the best way to make the discipline irrelevant to those learners who do or might otherwise take an interest in German. I urge professors of German to radically rethink curriculum content, design, and delivery first by understanding how the curriculum is an expression of "interested knowledge" (Pennycook, 1989) and then by realizing their curricular place, role, and contribution differently from the way they have in the past. I wonder whether university teachers of German can imagine themselves no longer across a German/non-German or fluent native speaker/non-fluent non-native speaker divide that maintains their distinction and separation from their Canadian student-learners of German. I wonder whether it is possible for them to see themselves more from the perspective of an intercultural relation *with* students where, instead of standing apart and handing down the literary canon, they can come together as joint participants and negotiators in the communicative and interpretive dialogue of foreign language and culture education. In this way university teachers of German may better accommodate their students.

In the following, third part of my dissertation, I have further explored my research topic area of GFL at Canadian universities and the above questions of the relationship between university teachers and students and the resulting curriculum from the perspective of the identities of the people involved. In pursuit of a deeper and possibly different understanding of the human relations that underlie the history and current GFL curriculum, I draw on the postcolonial theories of especially Edward W. Said (1978) and Homi K. Bhabha (1994) as well as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1995). I believe it is both possible and momentous to apply the basic tenets of these theorists' works in order to interpret, critique, and

respond to GFL in Canada as a system of social organization that is produced by and supports particular relations of power. For sure, the study of German as a foreign language and culture at university in Canada seems at first sight to bear little relation to the primary concerns of postcolonialism for the oppressive experiences of past and present geographic, political, economic, social, and cultural colonialism and neocolonialism and their resolution. However, not only was the study of German at university in Canada established during Canada's experience of British colonialism, but also the subject positions discussed by postcolonialism comprise a complex and strategically useful theoretical map with which first critically to account for and then effectively to intervene in German in Canada. The critical terminology and perspectives of postcolonialism provide an opportunity to examine the institutional and pedagogical structure of GFL and to rethink the differences that constitute its power dynamic for the greater emancipatory end of cooperation among the full range of people who have a personal and professional interest in the field.

Edward W. Said

In *Orientalism*, Edward W. Said (1978) maintains that "the Orient" was "a European invention" in which "it seemed irrelevant that Orientals themselves had something at stake" (p. 87). Indeed, according to Said the "representation of the Orient" was of particular significance to the European since it "helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image" (p. 87). By inventing the Oriental other in a discursive network of social, cultural, and religious institutions, values and belief-systems, academic study, literature and journalism, art and advertising, administrative and educational policies and regulations, and so on, that necessarily referred back to the West (as center, standard, and place of utterance), the West was able to effect the sense of its own civilization, superiority, and privilege. This delimiting set of discourses that describe the Orient exclusively from a Western perspective and this process of hegemony by which Europeans

concoct their superiority, Said calls “Orientalism.”

In particular, Said (1978) identifies Orientalism as an academic study in which the Orientalist from the West (or “the Occident”) is the “main authority” over the Orient (p. 88); the Orientalist’s description of the Orient dominates it. Consequently, as Said asserts, “the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action” (p. 89). That is, it is unable to speak for itself or control its own representation. The Orient that emerges from Orientalism may have no connection to any “‘real’ Orient” and yet as an idea and obsession of the Western imagination it “has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence” (p. 89). The myth or fantasy stands in for and silences the real. Importantly, Said maintains that the mythological invention of the Orient did not “happen simply as a necessity of the imagination,” but rather it is the result of “a relationship of power, of domination” (p. 89). The discursive creation of the Orient, invented in the West’s material practice of politico-econo-militaristic domination of the East, establishes and repeats the West’s taken-for-granted role as the defining center of its relationship with the Orient and thus, in turn, maintains the West’s unquestionable domination in any relationship with the East (p. 90).

Said’s task in *Orientalism* is not the discovery of any correlations between the findings of Orientalism and the real Orient (for his work is not corrective in an empirical sense and does not mean to further the Orientalist tradition). Rather he examines the persistence of particular patterns of thought within Orientalism regardless of any connection with the real. Indeed, his object of study is Orientalism the discipline and not so much the Orient. That is, he is less concerned with the Orient in reality and more interested in the rendition of the Orient as it pertains to those in the West who created it and are legitimated by it. For to take Orientalism as an object of study is to examine the means and conditions by which the West supports its own ascendency.

An Orientalism of Canadian Germanistik / GFL

In his analysis of Orientalism as a dialectical discourse of representation and power, Said locates and interrelates a number of concepts: the Orient, the Oriental, Europe / the West / the Occident, the Orientalist, and, of course, Orientalism. These concepts reflect the self/other binary that underpins colonialism: colonizer/colonized. Here, the Oriental is the colonized, the Orientalist is the colonizer, Orient is the colonized space imagined by the colonizer and by the society to which s/he belongs, the West is the unchallenged defining center space — or metropole — and original home of the colonizer, and Orientalism is the network of cultural discourses — or discipline — concomitant with colonialism that is produced by and propels the binary of unequal power. Though seemingly worlds apart, Said's terms of reference in *Orientalism* may also prove useful in considering the historical nature and social organization of Germanistik or GFL in Canada. Like Orientalism, GFL in Canada is also underpinned by versions of a self/other binary. These include professor/student, language speaker/language learner, fluent native speaker/non-fluent non-native speaker, and especially German/Canadian. Also, GFL in Canada bears some relation to Orientalism on the plain of colonialism.

German was established as a discipline at Canadian universities during the continued Anglo-European resettlement of Canada under British administration in the nineteenth-century. Initially German in Canada closely resembled the teaching of German as it was then practiced in Great Britain (Batts, 1998, p. 24): the study of the standard German national literary canon through the grammar-translation method in order better to understand the German cousins of the British. By the second half of the twentieth century a larger percentage of German-born and German-trained professors (pp. 135-151) as well as a greater number (when not necessarily a greater percentage) of German-speaking immigrant students (p. 94; cf. pp. 84-85 & 91) placed an even stronger emphasis on literature courses for the

native-speaker than on language instruction (Joldersma, 1992, pp. 66 & 68). PhD dissertations and scholarly publications by faculty in German during this same period indicate that research remained predominantly within the scope of the standard traditional canon (Batts, p.148). Today, the selection of job candidates and faculty hiring practices continue to reveal a distinct preference for the German-born German-trained native-speaker literary scholar. From its inception the field of German in Canada has been marked especially by the enduring idea of a traditional program of literary study. A survey (in Part two of this dissertation; Plews, 2007) that compared curricula from the beginning of GFL in Canada in the second half of the nineteenth century with those offered by departments across the country today revealed that little of great substance has changed in all that time. As previously mentioned, my nineteen years of working as a university teacher of German language and culture in Alberta, in Nova Scotia, and for the Canadian Summer School in Germany has taught me that many senior-level students of German are majors in political science, history, or business, or intend to enter education. Those who are non-native speakers often regret the lack of opportunities to develop German language competence in those disciplines. Yet they are offered courses on literature for which they tend to be linguistically unprepared (see also Kord, 2002). The few (usually humanities) students who do continue to upper-level literary German conceal a much larger figure of students (from a diversity of faculties) who choose not to. It seems that the curriculum in German in Canada has been and still is of greater significance to the European scholar than to the Canadian student and language learner.

Considering the above very brief synopsis of the evolution and crystallization of Canadian German studies over the last one hundred and fifty years, the social organization of German in Canada and its ramifications compare with the colonial conditions of Orientalism especially as it figures as a pedagogical aesthetic. Greg Dimitriadis and Cameron McCarthy (2001) remark that

> a hegemonic approach is deeply informed by the long history of intellectual and academic colonialism in [...] educational institutions, where [those belonging to the dominant group] define the history and other groups serve as the objects of such definitions. Within this framework, curriculum works to divest youth of their identities and intellectual autonomy. (p. 116)

German studies too is a discipline with an invented object or course of study — the traditional, largely literary curriculum. The creation of this curriculum for German is dominated by one group — the "preferably" native-speaker university professors of German. This group commands full authority over the curriculum. The members of another group — the language-learning Canadian students of German — have little or no influence on the shape of this curriculum that represents their path of learning. These language-learning students can only be imagined or understood in contrast to fluent German speakers who they are not (and who they are required to emulate even though they may never become them). Thus, on the basis of a likeness between Orientalism and Canadian German studies, should we now analyze the subject positions of Canadian German studies by equating and conflating them with those of Said's *Orientalism*, then we would observe the orientalizing colonizer in the professor of German, the colonial fantasy of the Orient in the German curriculum in Canada, the silenced colonized in the Canadian non-native speaker student learner of German, and the unchallenged defining center as the privileged realm of the native speaker.

A study of German studies grounded in the subject positions treated by Said's postcolonial criticism of Orientalism reveals how the curriculum for GFL in Canada — like the Orient in Said's model — is not "a free subject." It is not born out of necessity and does not optimally, adequately, or proportionately reflect the reality of what there is of German to be learned. Rather, the German curriculum in Canada is the idea of a tradition with its own reality. The German curriculum in Canada is a myth and the product and expression of power

relations: the hegemony of German Germanists over Canadian students of German. That is, the administrative (e.g., hiring, grading, accreditation) and academic (e.g., teaching / lecturing and research / publishing) domination of the (native-speaker) professoriate over the study of German per se enables the (native-speaker) professors' central defining role in the curriculum, in the choice of knowledge, text, and variety of language (the kind of literacy permissible) over the students' silent acceptance. Consequently, the German curriculum in Canada expresses the unchallenged ascendency of the (native-speaker) professoriate; German studies is less concerned with the reality of things German to be studied than with a hegemony of knowers! In the Orientalist or colonial pedagogical aesthetic that shapes the curriculum of German studies in Canada knowledge connects with the professoriate and not with student; the benign intention of teaching German in Canada is based in the legitimation of the native speaker and the neglect or deprivation of the non-native speaker student. Clearly, there is a need for a postcolonial pedagogical aesthetic, for as Henry Giroux and Susan Searls Giroux (2000) maintain

> unless the pedagogical conditions exist to connect forms of knowledge to the lived experiences, histories, and cultures of students we engage, such knowledge is not only reified, but 'deposited' in the Freirian sense through transmission models that both ignore the living context in which knowledge is produced and silence as much as they deaden student interest. (p. 91)

The Limitations of an Orientalism of Canadian German Studies

Following Said's postcolonial reading of discourses supported by the hierarchical colonial binary, my study of Germanistik would look at this field not in order to check for accuracy between its representation of things German to study and the full actuality of German. Rather, a Saidian analysis of German

studies would call for the revelation of the ongoing conditions within its structure as they relate to and maintain the ascendency of the German Germanist, no matter their degree of correlation with the real. These conditions would most likely revolve about educational labeling that in turn hinges upon the self/other or native speaker/non-native speaker binary. But this is where I find limitations in Said's theory. While pointing out the workings of oppressive self/other structures in the name of the other, it ultimately turns its back on the other by being all-consumed by the activity of Western discourse. The Western tradition and academic power-relation reemerges precisely while Said critiques it, since that tradition again becomes the focus of special attention — albeit negative — through the subjection of the Eastern other (what the West has done to the East) for the sake of the West. The temptation is again to occupy oneself with the West and its version of the East, rather than with the material reality of the East. Said's work deconstructs the racism of Orientalism but does not rediscover the East or invite the East to present itself. Likewise, if I were to deconstruct German studies and the power relations that favor native-speaker Germanists, I must take care not to turn my critical attention *on* them only to ignore the opportunity to give voice to the silenced Canadian student of German. In my work I wish to understand, bring to voice, and listen to the Canadian student as historical subjects in their own right and not just as figures in another's history (see Slemon, 2001, p. 111). This means I must learn about and record the ways in which these students may have resisted the one-sided representation of their learning (see McLeod, 2000, p. 48). Likewise, I must remember not to homogenize the professoriate — as Said does the West — and so ignore instances of counterhegemony (resistant and alternative courses or programming) that question the authority of tradition (pp. 48-51). And I must take care not to turn on the native-speaker Germanist and invert their hegemony by replacing it with another that ignores their contribution. In my work, I wish to look beyond fixed binaries in order to recognize "the plurality of the subject positions operating at any given moment in the educational and cultural context" (Dimitriadis & McCarthy, 2001, p. 117). Thus, while Said offers

a model analysis of the discursive organization of colonialism in which he decenters the binary of Occidental metropole/colonial Orient, he does not go so far as to question the very organizing principle of the binary.

Homi K. Bhabha

In *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha (1994) rejects the self/other binary as an effective principle of theoretical analysis and political activity. He charges theory with the double task of subverting and replacing authority (p. 23), that is, it must both counter an authority and overcome its own expectations by transforming the object into something else, something differentiated from either and both of the previous positions. Bhabha theorizes this new political object of the "hybrid" in a critique of Marxism. Bhabha considers Marxism as an ineffective critical discourse since it is oppositional and predeterministic: it opposes one political object with the expectation of another previously understood political object (p. 25). In contrast, the hybrid object "opens up a space of translation"; it is "*neither the one nor the other*, [...] a space that can accept and regulate the differential structure of the moment of intervention without rushing to produce a unity of the social antagonism or contradiction" (p. 25). Key to Bhabha's theorization is the emphasis on cultural difference and the embrace of dissent as dynamic forces for exceptional change, for "the function of theory within the political process becomes double-edged. It makes us aware that our political referents and priorities [...] are not there in some primordial, naturalistic sense" (p. 26).

Bhabha refuses subject positions that exist only as if fixed and holistic in bounded subject-object antagonism with another. Instead of the stranglehold of a binary, where one side must overcome differentiation and invert the power and possibility of the other, Bhabha focuses on the codependence of these two positions and on the change that occurs in the negotiations that necessarily take

place in their points of contact, be they conflict or interaction. For, as Bhabha (1994) remarks, "each political object is determined in relation to the other, and displaced in that critical act" (p. 26). Thus Bhabha conceives a "Third Space" of translation that "acknowledges the historical connectedness between the subject and object of critique" (p. 26) and focuses on the commingling of differences, hybridization, and transformation that necessarily occurs in the will to meaning. In this Third Space Bhabha does not see merely contradicting antagonism, but rather recognizes both the articulation of cultural differences and their simultaneous contestation, ambivalent rearticulation, and transcendence as they cross-reference in the signifying process (p. 28). In this process the prior subject positions are translated, displaced, and changed — and the binary breaks down — in a hybrid moment where, because of difference, the other is included in the self's discourse and vice versa (p. 33, p. 35).

Bhabha reconsiders Said's analysis and the discursive structure of colonialism according to his theorization of the necessary Third Space of negotiation, translation, hybridization. This response to Said will also help me extend my critique of the oppressive, oppositional binary structure of German studies by providing the terms and new vantage point for questioning and disrupting the German native speaker/Canadian non-native speaker binary. Bhabha claims that the aim of colonialism to establish negative racial stereotypes in order to legitimate conquest is never met because "the 'discourse of colonialism' [...] is always pulling in two *contrary* directions" (McLeod, 2000, p. 52). By this, Bhabha means that the colonized are at once the negative other of the colonizer, located outside the metropole, and, because of colonialism's self-legitimating need to educate the colonized and so rid them of their negative otherness, they are also brought inside the sphere of the West (pp. 52-53). The colonized thus slides "*ambivalently* between the polarities of similarity and difference" (p. 53). The colonizer then repeatedly redeploys negative representations in order to fix the colonized (p. 53). Yet the fact of this constant

repetition is an indication that the negative representation of the other never sticks (p. 54). Bhabha explains that the colonizers' expectation of the colonized to mimic then acts as a moment of power for the colonized and a possibility for change. Because the colonized can and does resemble the colonizer, they can also disclose the ambivalence of discourse. The colonized mimic is an example of a hybrid, new-neither-nor subject position that negotiates prior positions and challenges and transcends the dualistic structure of discourse that would fix them (p. 55).

Following Bhabha's assertion of colonialism's contrary directions, it is possible to see how in Canadian German studies the identity of the student-other of the native speaker is not fixed outside the realm of the native speaker, but in actuality moves ambivalently between difference and similarity. In the intercultural negotiative act of teaching and learning German language and culture in Canada the Canadian non-native speaker student of German makes meanings that bring her/him ever further inside the understanding of German. The Canadian student of German becomes a mimic! That is, the Canadian non-native speaker student of German comes to resemble a German native speaker: neither a nonspeaker nor a native speaker, but a *near-native speaker*. This hybrid position of near-native speaker both makes ambivalent the discourse that would define native speakers and non-native speakers in opposition as contradictions and challenges any curriculum whose political aim is to maintain just such a divide.

Diaspora Identities

Another version of hybridity, which functions in much the same way as the mimic, is the subject position of the diaspora. Like the hybrid mimic, diaspora offers another theoretical vantage point from which to rethink the prior positions of the binary of the non-native speaker Canadian student of German and the native speaker German professor in Canada as they relate to curriculum thinking.

A diaspora is a group of people who reside in one particular country but who "'acknowledge that "the old country" — a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom and folklore — always has some claim on their loyalty and emotions'" (Cohen qtd. in McLeod, 2000, p. 207). Drawing on the work of V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, and Hanif Kureishi, John McLeod describes the effect of diaspora as the concrete loss of home; the old country or homeland "becomes illusory, like a dream [...] more imaginary than true [...] *discontinuous* with the real location. It exists primarily in the mind" (p. 209) and is available only in imagination. McLeod remarks that for the diaspora home is "a mental construct built from the incomplete odds and ends of memory that survive from the past. It exists in a fractured, discontinuous relationship with the present" (p. 211).

Theoretically speaking, this is what happens to the curriculum for German in Canada when it is constructed by German(-Canadian) Germanists. For the tradition they draw upon and present as holistic and real reveals itself in this theoretical perspective as an illusion that is discontinuous with Germany and things German. Yet far from criticizing German(-Canadian) Germanists for this, I would suggest that they recognize and embrace their diaspora identity position as a theoretical location from which meaningfully to continue to conceive the curriculum for German in Canada. For as a hybrid, the diaspora identity negotiates between opposing subject positions, integrating and switching the two. By realizing her/his diaspora identity the German Germanist in Canada will not delude her/himself that s/he occupies the one subject position of German in exclusion to the other of Canadian citizen or resident. Rather s/he will realize that her/his identity is constantly slipping back and forth and away from the even fixed imaginary position of German and Germany (whose reality also constantly evolves) and consequently is becoming (not dissimilarly to the near-native speaker) a distant or *less-native speaker*. As McLeod (2000) points out, "the process of setting up home in a new land [...] can also add to the ways in which the concept of home is disturbed" (p. 211). As diaspora the less-native German

occupies the Third Space of "living 'in-between' different nations, feeling neither here nor there" (p. 214). Consequently by abandoning the illusory convention of home and by adopting the in-between the less-native speaker German-Canadian Germanist will also challenge any notion of a static traditional national curriculum for German (regardless of Canada) and explore new possibilities beyond the fictional imaginary home that emerge from the intercultural space of the in-between.

Toward a Conclusion

Certainly Bhabha's theorization of a Third Space and hybridization enables the possibility of rethinking received identity positions and the way they establish competing hegemonies for representing such things as curriculum. This would be in keeping with Giroux and Searls Giroux's (2000) suggestion to consider teaching (and so also curriculum) "as a moral and political practice, as a deliberate attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced within particular relations of power" (p. 93). As McLeod (2000) indicates, "A crucial manoeuvre in this line of thought is the refusal to think of cultures as pure or holistic, with received wisdom handed down from generation to generation in a way which preserves knowledge" (p. 218). Likewise, Ingrid Johnston (2003) suggests that a postcolonial pedagogy would be one in which teachers and students alike should be continuously invited to question their own positionality and the conditionality of the curriculum and canon that they are asked to instruct and study (p. 40). If instead of being a "real" tradition, the hegemonic construction of German in Canada has thus far been a grand illusion, an exclusionary repetition of "discontinuous scraps and fragmentary remains" (McLeod, p. 218) founded in and propelled by a fallacious colonial self/other (native speaker/non-native speaker) binary, then the diaspora less-native speaker together with the mimic near-native speaker should feel encouraged to rewrite and deliver or pursue a new curriculum more in accordance with the cultural

differences inherent in the ambivalent and variable locations they each share. In my discussion I have consistently homogenized and essentialized the Canadian student. But in light of the work of Bhabha, Stuart Hall (McLeod, 2000, pp. 223-24, p. 231), and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, I must recognize the different subject positions among students. Thus, the ambivalent locations from which to perpetually reconstruct the curriculum would include essentialized and discontinuous old country and new country subject positions.

Indeed, Spivak's (1995) discussion in "Can the subaltern speak?" on whether and how the consciousness of the disempowered can be heard raises fundamental issues concerning subject positions and representation for curriculum thinkers in second language education who distinguish stakeholder positions and represent the unrepresented perspective of student experience. Spivak critiques French intellectuals (Foucault and Deleuze) for their Marxist supposition that the oppressed can come together and represent themselves. She asserts that the (colonial) oppressed cannot speak and be heard within the system of dominant discourses, of which the aforementioned representational theorists are a part. Pointing further to the work of the Subaltern Studies group, which attempted to rewrite Indian colonial historiography from the perspective of peasant insurgencies, Spivak argues that these Marxist historians overlook the differences between various disempowered subalterns (i.e., women, the illiterate peasantry, indigenous groups, and the urban subproletariat) and risk objectifying or controlling subalterns falsely as a coherent group in their elaborations of subaltern experience, even as they try to emancipate them. However, Spivak avows this risk of the dependence of the subaltern on the historian as necessary in effecting the political will of the subaltern. She makes the distinction that historians must disrupt the dominant narrative by acknowledging that they are part of the essentializing social text they describe, resisting the construction of a singular (subaltern) consciousness, and accounting for complexities, differences, and local particularities. My study of the experiences of Canadian students of German runs

the risk of silencing those I represent by being seen to speak for them and yet, following Spivak, this risk is worth it since interpretive representations can also strategically articulate these students' political identities. L. T. Smith (1999) also describes the imperial nature of traditional Western research methods, which classify, reduce, and measure representations of peoples and places without ever articulating their realities. In response she suggests "decolonizing" methods by "researching back" in ways that make the hierarchical structures of research transparent and create knowledge reciprocally at the local level. Canagarajah (1996) identifies using narratives as just such a way to include marginalized groups in the production of knowledge. Thus in choosing to provide student subject positions for reconstructing the curriculum in a non-exploitative way, I must recognize that I cannot fully know students' experiences and will inevitably essentialize them, and that I can strive to avoid this objectification by acknowledging my place in the discursive creation of knowledge, assuming a strategic attitude to partner with students' perspectives, and following a interpretive method that accounts for the complexity of students and their experiences.

Part Four: Conducting a Narrative Analysis of Canadian Students' Experiences of the Postsecondary Curriculum for German

How I Came to Be Interested in and Concerned About the Question

I begin my narrative emplotment of students' experiences of the curriculum for German in Canada by locating myself in relation to the topic and by describing how I came to be interested in and concerned about the question of its relevance to students. I first studied German at high school and sixth form college in my home town on the south coast of England. During this time I took part on a school exchange with a high school in a town in Schleswig-Holstein in northern Germany and continued to correspond and exchange with my German penfriend every year for six years. I then studied German language, literature, and linguistics as part of a Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages (French and German) at university in England. In the context of this degree, I taught as an English language assistant in a state comprehensive high school in the suburbs of Paris, France, and at a state grammar school in Cologne, Germany, for one year each. After completing my undergraduate degree I moved to Canada where I studied first for a Master's and then a PhD in German literature and culture. These two degrees were separated by two years spent working in Germany as a teacher in a private language school, freelance tutor, and translator. This educational journal of study in the home country and international experience in Germany is fairly typical for how so-called non-native or near-native German speakers become university teachers of German (while graduate students or if they are successful on the academic job market). Indeed, during my graduate career and since that time, as a postdoctoral fellow and as an assistant and associate professor, I have had the opportunity to instruct German language and culture

courses at the undergraduate level in modern languages departments at three different Canadian universities and for one study abroad program. (I have also taught second language teacher education.) Thus much of my professional life has concerned the learning and teaching of a second language and its culture, especially German as a foreign language.

While studying in Britain and Canada, I occasionally sensed a disconnection between my fascination for German culture and desire for a particular set of linguistic and analytical skills, on the one hand, and the nature, content, and relevance of the courses I was taking, on the other. While I enjoyed and learned a lot in most of my German courses, at both the undergraduate and graduate level I experienced a number of courses where the content was decontextualized from its immediate cultural reality and seemed repetitive in form and nature, where that content was presented for me to memorize and absorb passively, and where any interaction with the course content required of me was narrow in scope, overfamiliar, and rarely creative. Later, while teaching at the University of Calgary, I experienced "being on the other side." My quiet questioning of the relevance of the courses I was taking while an undergraduate or graduate student began to turn into a personal discomfort with delivering courses whose content and pedagogical approach seemed to me possibly to be inappropriate or irrelevant to students' interests and needs. I noticed that a very large percentage of students did not continue past first term or first year of language instruction and that even fewer would advance to the uppermost senior-level courses. I also noticed that several among those few who did continue with German were majors or minors in political science, history, English, or wanted to go into Education. I thought: *the curriculum for GFL had little or no connection with these students*.

Central to my learning and teaching has always been the notion of curriculum or a program of study — whether my own or my students', whether it was one with which I was happy or one for which I wish I had had the specific

knowledge, critical disciplinary vocabulary, or institutional power to rethink and change. My experience at the postsecondary level, both as a graduate student and as a university teacher of German in Canada, and my investigation into the history of the postsecondary GFL curriculum in Canada (see Part two above; Plews, 2007), have shown me that the curriculum is based on a continued adherence to a canonical tradition, the preferred native German-speaking linguistic identity of most of the professors hired to teach and research, and the research interests of those professors (itself largely a product of the enduring canonical tradition). As a result, the curriculum content and pedagogical approaches are often detached from the local institutional and local sociocultural and political contexts in which study and instruction occur. I have observed that the Canadian postsecondary GFL curriculum does not consider Canadian students' interests; to a large extent, it even disenfranchises the Canadian student. These realizations and observations have motivated me to ask how I can help to turn the GFL curriculum into something relevant and to pose the fundamental research question, *What would the curriculum look like if it were based on Canadian students' interests?* By pursuing this topic and this question I bring my scholarly and pedagogical interests, experiences, and commitments to a new arena of practice and inquiry for me, namely, the critical discussion of what students of German in Canada are taught, how they perceive the ways in which they are taught, and how those ways would change if the discipline of German were to place greater emphasis on the students' interests and learning needs. As I enter into the next loop of the spiral of my interpretive inquiry (J. L. Ellis, 1998), I ask Canadian students of German: What is it like to study German at university in Canada?

How I Conducted the Inquiry and My Reflections on the Process

In the following four parts of this dissertation, I present narrative accounts of four interviews. Each of the four interviewees had studied or was studying German at the same western Canadian university. Two of the interviewees were

students of German at the time of the interview; two were former students of German, one of whom was doing an after degree in Education while the other was doing a PhD in a social science subject at the time of the interview. Three were women and one was a man. One of the participants was a former student of mine; I came into contact with the others through a friend, through a former professor of mine, and by a chance encounter. I asked each of the four to complete one of a choice of three pre-interview creative art exercises and to do a sixty-minute one-on-one interview. The interviews were semi-structured in nature. I followed a set of prepared questions from which I was able to build a dialogue and I encouraged digression from the interviewees depending on the topic of the conversation. The conversation included such topics as how the student came to study German, what her/his experience at school was like, which activities or topics at school were the most enjoyable or interesting, what expectations and aims did s/he have while studying German at university, what German classes were like, what the instructor did that was effective, what s/he had learned in German classes, what else could have been done, and so on. I found the prepared questions useful in that they helped me to maintain a thematic order or coherence in and between the discussions. The prepared questions also enabled me to return from digressions in a way that was in keeping with the inherent logic of the conversation. The artwork was useful as an ice-breaker, to attain focus, to indicate the interviewees' (at least) initial emphasis, and to ground the self in the topic at issue. Words and stories soon took over from visual language, but the visual text remained and grew with me as an alternative meaningful perspective in its own right and so important reflective component of my interpretation. (I do not discuss this much further here, but I hope to return to this as a separate loop in my inquiry later beyond the exercise of writing this dissertation.)

While conducting the interviews, analyzing the transcribed data, and composing the narratives, I looked for confirmations, expansions, re-evaluations, and amendments of my preconceptions of the topic of the postsecondary GFL

curriculum in Canada. I soon realized that the interviews were an opportunity not just for me to learn about the students' experiences and perspectives and so expand the horizons of my understanding, but also and especially for the students to find their voice both to celebrate and query their experiences; they had a chance to move beyond their usual frame of reference and discover new possibilities for their own further engagement with German. The work of J. L. Ellis (1998), Boostrom (1994), and Polkinghorne (1995) as well as creative reflection and re-reading transcripts for emplotment were especially informative and useful in the process of inquiry and finding a meaningful way to present and analyze the qualitative data. The following presentations of data adopt Polkinghorne's (1995) concept of "narrative analysis" as "emplotment" (see part one above). That is, I understood my research writing task was not to sieve others' stories in order to classify their narrative structures but rather to self-consciously co-construct meanings by the interpretive and compositional process of creating narratives. I used the production of creative (non/)fictional text as analysis.

My writing process thus followed Polkinghorne's (1995) directions and also somewhat resembled those described by fellow story-builders Messinger (2001) and Vickers (2010). I surveyed the written documentation in order to establish the crux of how the participating students' gave meaning to their experiences and actions. In each case the crux expressed one idea (formulated by the participant or myself) in a single word or couple of words conveying the central significance of the particular narrative. The four cruxes are, respectively, love, quest, shame and fear, and anti-quest. I then analyzed the data for particularities, connections, and contradictions with which to configure thematic episodes and compose each narrative according to its crux. This involved using the entire transcript to enumerate themes, underscore particular words and phrases, make mind-maps, and draw outlines that ordered plot elements and action in relation to particular people in certain places and at certain times. During this stage I noted and frequently reviewed essential elements, connections

between them, emerging assumptions, and my personal responses. I then either searched for or created a fictional framework inspired by the crux in order to organize and elaborate on the fundamental story. The frame had to be an organic fit, that is, correspond with the crux and general plot of the story. I found culturally appropriate (German, literary) frames were especially auspicious. The frame served not as a cage in which to confine and control the story but as a support with which to open its full context and amplify its nuances and inherent relations. I completed my narrative analyses by moving back and forth between the data, my notes, the frames, and my imagination and composing prose fiction. The resulting narratives took shape over several rounds of writing.

My writing process was a personal learning process in several ways: I learned about my participant-students' experiences, the GFL curriculum, my own relation to it, and how to express this learning in narrative. I believe this learning process has made itself especially evident in the increasingly creative styles of the four narratives. As I became more literate in the production of narrative analysis, so my analyses shifted from nonfiction to creative fiction in which imagination took on a more probing and elaborating, yet still coherent, role. In addition to investigating the GFL curriculum from the perspective of a student's relation of love of German, the first narrative also documents my first attempt to work with narrate analysis and remnants of traditional classifying research habits all while I move toward a fictional frame (which is ironic since my background is in the Humanities and not the Social Sciences!). It is the most transparent with the interview transcript, with chunky direct quotations offered as much like objective evidence as illustration and standing apart from the interpretation. I unwittingly thus set up a distinction between the object of research and the authoritative researcher. Although the first narrative is not exactly a theme analysis as in analysis of narrative, it follows a linear episodic and thematically categorizing narrative process. However, the second, third, and fourth narratives make less use of obvious direct quotation, incorporate the strategy of using a framework more

consistently, and draw on a wide range of (often self-conscious) rhetorical techniques and discursive styles — including allegory, cultural allusions, contrasting text styles, narrator intrusions, varying perspective, poetry, escutcheon, fantasy, irony, critique, repetition, changing font, enjambement, telling names, subgenre elements, etc. — and thus operate more as fiction. By this I mean that I believe my four narratives (all four!) are able to provide broad, contextualized understandings of the students' storied experiences of the GFL curriculum in ways that may resonate both with the truth of their lived experiences and with the concerns and feelings of readers.

Part Five: A Story of Love Found and As Yet Unrequited

I. Introducing Kaye

Kaye (pseudonym) is studying comparative literature at university and taking German as her second language requirement. She likes German literature, film, and pop culture; she likes it for its dynamism, its emotional and intellectual depth, and its sheer breadth:

> I really like German literature, it's very, very energetic .... There's ... a lot there and there's a lot [of] passion behind it and you've quite the body of work coming out of Germany ... both in terms of literature and philosophy .... it seems to be a very ... intellectually fertile place. Which also appeals to me.

Kaye is very sporty. She likes to run, swim, and scuba-dive. When she was younger, she liked horseback-riding. She also likes to write, and she sees this as part of her future:

> one day I would like to be able to ... sit down and write my stories and poems in German ... just as easily as I could in English.

She likes to have a plan and her plans for the future include grad school, living or studying in Germany, or teaching in the academy. At any rate she wants to make a practical contribution, be creative, travel, and work with words and people.

> where I see myself is possibly in an academic setting, I would really like to teach .... I love to teach ... I love to give presentations and to explain things and wave my hands around a lot and make people understand.

II. When Kaye First Met German

Kaye turned to German because her degree requires her to study a second language, some of her cousins have taken German, and she had heard it was easy and fun to learn. But there were two other significant reasons: 1) she was generally aware of the cultural legacy of Germany and 2) she thought it would not be as boring as French over the long haul:

> there's so much history and so much culture and so many of the books that I like to read, and they come from Germany, and if I could ... get at those in their original language then I think that's had a big appeal to me.

> well I've got a bit of French, so I looked at the French courses and they looked boring, for whatever reason ... from all you can tell from a little blurb ... but that's kinda what they looked. And then I looked at the German courses and I was like, oh, well ... you can do culture and you can do literature and you can do translation and there's linguistics, and so I thought ... that's cool, because I knew I had to get up to the 400 level and do a couple courses there and ... have this 36 credits, which means you just have to take a lot of courses ... so I picked it, because it looked interesting

III. Kaye Travels

After one year of university-level German, Kaye took part in a six-week home-stay and study-abroad program known as the Canadian Summer School in Germany at the Universität Kassel in Germany. This is what Kaye chose to depict in her artistic impression of studying German.

> I had a great big back yard and they had something against lawnmowers, so there were weeds and grasses everywhere and there was just this foresty-type of backyard, and they had beehives and chickens and you

> name it there was one of it living in the backyard
>
> So there's a lot of green. German to me is green.

This experience is the pinnacle and permanent reference point of Kaye's study of German and of her future personal and professional aspirations:

> [the trip to Kassel] that's really what sticks out to me about my whole German education

The significance and centrality of Kaye's six-week experience in Germany (compared to four years of academic study of German in Canada) is stressed time and again. The Kassel trip remains with her in her thoughts and being.

> It's constantly there. It's always there. And that's the goal for me is to be able to go back and to use it [German] .... that's why I wanna learn German. That's one of the reasons why I enjoy German so much is that it's ... a pretty funky language to begin with and ... then there's also that sort of experience and adventure attached to it that sort of provides an additional motivation for me. So I think that would be how [the trip to Kassel] it's most relevant, as a motivator.

IV. The Picture Painted by Kaye

While Kaye's picture of her experience of learning German is predominantly green, signaling her trip to Germany and the prominence it holds for her, she also acknowledges that there are other features contributing to her picture:

> but there's other colors as well and a little more, they're smaller but they're vibrant and they're there

I believe that these colors indicate her experience of the curriculum for German in

Canada — not as outstanding or defining as her trip to Germany, but present and still significant. Kaye regards her experience with German at university in Canada positively and she falls into a discourse of love, although her role in this affair is passive:

> I've really enjoyed them all [all of the German courses]. I just, I love languages and I really like learning languages so I'm happy to sit and listen.

This positive rating of Kaye's experience of German in Canada has a lot to do with her professors' excellent performance, wherein a curriculum equates its teachers. But in her admiration for one of a her (male) teachers she loses herself to his thoughts and never mentions the development of her own:

> Dr. X. taught me the ... prose class last year and I've never had a prof that was so prolific with the handouts, and it's great ... 'cause he just gives you absolutely everything, so I have this huge binder of his thoughts on absolutely everything to do with the books, so that was very helpful.

She relates the curriculum for German in Canada to her personal interests, that is, to her emotional, intellectual, and potential professional preferences, but not to any geopolitical identity.

> I think it's relevant to me mostly in that I'm personally interested in it and that I personally have a use for it .... as to being in Canada it doesn't have that much of a relevance for me. But in terms of me personally, what I like and what I'm interested in and what I wanna do, it is quite relevant .... for me it's been just what I like.

In particular, Kaye likes those courses that connect the linguistic and cultural content with the lived reality of Germany, past and present.

> one of the things that I really liked about ... my [intermediate language]

> class in particular ... we learned a lot of ... German expressions and colloquialisms .... the instructors just kinda toss out little cultural tidbits every once in a while ... or pronunciation and how different dialects vary or just little superstitions or traditions .... I really enjoy learning about ... [*Parts of the everyday culture?*] Yeah!

But such contextualization seems to be the exception, rather than the rule. This is especially because contemporary German matters are not part of the curriculum:

> But we really don't do anything contemporary, like, what's going on in Germany now and ... contemporary writers ... like my Canadian lit course ... there's stuff that was written in ... the eighteen hundreds but there's also something written in 1970 ... and I don't see much of that in German

Kaye also likes those courses in which she realizes her personal creative engagement with her subject matter and begins to discover her identity as a second language user. However, at first she responds to her own creativity and ingenuity from a position of self-doubt and inhibition because she is clearly not used to being so self-aware or possessing agency regarding the development of her language skills. In German, the awakening of Kaye's creative second language identity would occur in a translation class (and no other):

> my study of German has really showed me ... what a creative thing translation is ... even reading something in translation now, knowing it came from German, or reading the English and reading the German, I'd look at something and it's like, I don't know if I would've chosen that word, and the first time I had that kinda reaction I was just ... horrified that I would ... even presume to question these people who obviously have ... more extensive knowledge of the language than me.

Her German courses are related to her other fields of study (English and comparative literature). But this is a relation of structural commonality and

replication; there is no horizontal articulation in content. A structural and content replication exists between German courses.

> all the assignments were similar in that you did a presentation or a report and you had ... a term paper and a final, and the final would be composed of a couple a essays. So it was essentially the same just in a different language.

> there was a lot of overlap between the authors and the basic subject matter .... So, there was Kafka, there was Tieck, there was Kleist ... I'm studying Kleist again now in my drama class.

Kaye has studied Kleist in a total of three courses. Compounding the replication between German and English or comparative literature is Kaye 's decision to write her assignments for her German classes in English.

> thus far I've been writing in English because I'm not a German major. I don't have to write in German ... and as much as I would like to, it's like I could spend twenty hours on it doing it in German, or six hours doing it in English, and then get on to all the other stuff that I have to do. So just for a kind of a economy of time thing I've been doing it pretty much in English.

In contrast, for the sake of deeper comprehension and accuracy, Kaye invests extra time in reading some of her assigned texts both in the original German and in English translation. Clearly this linguistic doubling of her readings is a preferred learning strategy that Kaye has discovered works well for her. But, as a senior-level student of German with many language and literature courses behind her, she is not comfortable enough or does not believe that she has sufficient German language literacy skills to write creatively in the target language in a reasonable amount of time.

V. Kaye Denied

While enjoying some “vibrant” curriculum experiences in German in Canada, these events pale in comparison to Kaye’s short time in Germany:

> I learned more in six weeks there than I think I had in the whole, in the whole, like, grand whole of my previous German education.

To achieve what she wants, Kaye realizes she will have to look beyond her program in Canada:

> I think to be able to [write in German], I’d have to ... go to Germany and ... immerse myself in it for ... quite a while ‘cause I’m not there yet. I mean I’m kinda at the point where I can understand pretty much anything. I can follow a relatively complicated literary type discussion and ... I can pick up a novel and read it and if not understand all of it, definitely follow the story and get the gist. I can analyze German works like I would English works. But when it comes to actually producing it, my production is way behind my ... ability to comprehend.

The current curriculum does not lead to confident language production, and certainly not like the program Kaye experienced in Germany. This is because the curriculum and the way it is taught do not require much oral or written language production. The focus of class is on passive text comprehension, where that text is exclusively traditional literary prose, and little time is given to nurturing a student’s interaction with or written response in the target language.

> [reading] slightly below listening comprehension but probably in the same ball park ... if I have a dictionary I’m all good.

> Writing’s probably down there with speaking. You don’t have to worry about spelling and stuff when you speak

> writing gets much easier and the easiness curve is quite steep when I

> actually do it ... which I don't have to do much of .... writing would be harder than speaking, or maybe not ... we'll put those two together and we'll just say that because I don't do much of either, they're definitely the hardest.
>
> [Class time] It's pretty much exclusively on the text .... they are assuming that by this point we kinda have the technique down .... We'll discuss essays ... like what would you like, how would you like us to ... d'you wannit comparative, how many [examples] do we have to bring in .... But it's never ... the structure of ... it's not writing specifically .... we'll discuss the assignment but not how to write an essay or how to respond to a text.

Ultimately, Kaye is being denied the very skills one might expect a German as a foreign language program to develop in its brightest and most committed students: Kaye is an A+ student!

VI. Kaye Envisions

Kaye's experiences elsewhere on campus indicate how to emphasize the adventure, contextualization, creativity, and personal relevance that she prefers. She describes a task-based teaching and learning style in a comparative literature class on popular culture and at once her development of analytical and critical thinking skills (that are absent from her discussion of her German culture classes):

> We were given ... free rein to find our own texts. We had to do reading responses to each of the theoretical responses we did .... we ... had to basically summarize what the [critics] were saying and then find a practical example ... like a magazine advertisement or ... an example from a movie or something where that was ... put into practice .... someone threw out the idea that Playboy was a lot like the Book of the Courtier written a long, long time ago. It was basically a book of ... how to act like

> a proper young man ... then this same person ... went on to say that Cosmo was more of a female bildungsroman, kinda like a Jane Austen ... and so what I did was take a Playboy and a Cosmo and I just put little green stickies all through them for examples of ... why this was true and why this was not true, because my contention was that ... Cosmo was actually more of a Book of Manners than Playboy was. Because it was much more practically oriented.

Kaye indicates her interest in an array of courses in German on contemporary German culture. These relate to her personal intellectual and general academic interests and, being contemporary, perhaps substitute for the physical presence of Germany. They include courses in German on German film, everyday culture, literary theory, social sciences, the arts, drama, and fine art. She's talking about the phenomenon of "language across the curriculum."

Kaye outlined the general details of a cultural studies course on sport in Germany. Her horizon of possibilities for German as taught in Canada has expanded.

> I would probably have to pick a time period first of all, so let's say twentieth-century German sport .... it would definitely have to be tied in with the socio-cultural context again ... like sport in Nazi Germany would be very different than sport in the nineties or ... in the twenties or ... in the Weimar Republic. It would be really different in all those different eras, so probably ... work through it historically and ... why things were the way they were and why particular sports have changed the way they have ... in terms of the society and the culture. And then ... because I'm kinda into the pop culture thing, go for ... a little bit more of a focus on currently what's going on. Comparing the, sorry, this is really cool, I want this course now! .... sport in East and West Germany during the [Cold War] when they were separated ... 'cause like you hear about all these sort of, in

> the Eastern Bloc countries ... all these doping scandals and all this ... horrible experimentation ... and really compare ... how under different social systems, how sport works and how it either thrives or not, 'cause Germany over the twentieth century, you've got pretty much every different political and social system that ... you could ever want to study.
>
> you could do a Master's on the evolution of sport in Germany .... That would be awesome.

Kaye envisions a course so exciting that she wants to not only take it but also turn it into a Master's topic; she envisions a better kind of study of German in her future: one that she constructs, one that caters to her interests.

My Expectations

I had set out to interview students who had studied German only for a while as well as those who were majoring or minoring in German. I had expected the students who decide to drop German do so because of administrative reasons or boredom either with the teaching approach (comprised of lecturing, deductive, passive, decontextualized methods) and/or with the repetitive and hardly relevant content. I thought that the students would be explicitly critical of the program and that they would be eloquent about this by giving details about good and bad points (although one professorial colleague had suggested that I would not learn much by talking to the students). As it turned out, the four students I interviewed were all high academic achievers. While I was initially disappointed that I did not find a greater variety of students, academically speaking, I later usefully realized that the voices, experiences, and concerns of students who had chosen to concentrate on German and who were evaluated highly by professors of German would be more difficult for those same professors to ignore since these were their prize students.

I expected the students to indicate a lack of connection between the GFL curriculum and who they are as young Canadians and, similarly, to point out that the program content is not up to date. In Kaye's case, she did express a personal connection to German, but this was more in spite of the curriculum than because of it. Certainly, she was concerned that she was never assigned any contemporary German culture. As presented to Kaye, German culture was exclusively a series of products from the past and there seemed to have been little or no effort to make their relevance to today's German or Canadian cultural world. I also expected the students would express a desire for more and varied language practice. Kaye at least indicated a lack of opportunity and guidance in oral and written language production.

Surprises That Surfaced in the Findings

At first I was surprised by Kaye's uncritical love of German literature. But then I thought that I should not be so surprised by this since I too simply loved German literature when I was a student! It was my enjoyment particularly of German Romanticism and the nineteenth-century poet Heinrich Heine that first motivated me to apply to graduate school. I found it curious that Kaye was not so explicitly critical of her program. Kaye's attitude was more of a "checklist" approach: she checked off the courses one by one that she had done in language and culture in order to accumulate the credits for her degree. Nonetheless this engaged student implicitly indicates shortcomings: she raised several areas of concern, including the modest attention to foreign language literacy development, the limited opportunities for her to speak and write (or learn to write) in the target language, the pedagogical emphasis on content-to-be-learned as opposed to the learner's needs or learning needs, the lack of variety in course content, the absence of contemporary texts, etc. But she can easily elaborate on new possibilities and suggestions for curriculum development.

Clearly, this engaged student has an intensely personal relation to or connection with the curriculum, but this connection remains largely passive, unnoticed, and left uncultivated — or unrequited. *The issue for me and my colleagues in German in Canada is how this love of which she speaks is not realized in the curriculum*. I also had not realized until listening to this student (and the other students) how significant and how much an issue was full literacy and the development of multiple literacies in the foreign language. *It is the content issue*.

How My Question Has Been Reframed, Altered, or Redirected

I learned that this student loves German because it is "funky" and wide-ranging and because her professors are meticulous. Kaye's positive reception of German indicates that programming strengths lie in drawing more attention to the very particular nature of the German language, incorporating a fuller array of cultural products (rather than just one kind of text), and committed university teachers. But she possesses greater abilities and far more potential than the GFL curriculum currently encourages. Kaye does relate to the German curriculum in personal, emotional, intellectual, administrative, and professional ways, but she does not necessarily relate to it geopolitically and certainly does not choose to study German for the sake of a tradition. I believe there is a tension between the individual learner and tradition that could be productively explored. My concern and understanding of the Canadian postsecondary curriculum has been advanced by encountering Kaye and listening to and analyzing her story. In many ways Kaye has brought me back to myself: "I am this student." I too was fascinated with all things and sounds German and had the good fortune to go to Germany to begin the development of a new linguistic identity in a second language. But Kaye confirms what I had suspected: the GFL curriculum that she and I followed, and that tradition expects me to teach, at best is blind to and at worst disavows her of

her interests and needs, restricts her voice, limits her expression, and neglects her identity as a second language user of German.

The curriculum is currently so arranged and delivered that it operates as a standard that can be evaluated only by reference to itself. It is a transcendental signified. It takes for granted that "this is what it means to study German," regardless of who you are. Its connection to students is real, arbitrary, and underexplored. My research and entry questions have not changed as much in kind as in degree, so that I now ask, *How can I help to turn the GFL curriculum in Canada into something more personally relevant and more linguistically effective for students?* Students clearly want and need to engage with more varied kinds of texts, to produce language, and to participate in or construct their learning. Professors and instructors who are involved in curriculum design and delivery should encourage greater student agency. Perhaps helpful questions to ask students, as I discovered in my interviews, would be: What kinds of courses would you like? and How would you like such a course on a given theme to look? Certainly, a positive start would be to adapt course plans in order to incorporate greater student agency regarding the course content and the ways in which students select and develop gradable oral and written assignments. The intention of such changes is to better enable students to recognize and achieve their learning objectives and construct their own understandings of German language and culture in the context of their own interests.

Part Six: The Story of Passivail and the End Produkt

Introduction

Generally speaking, the outcomes of the second participant's experiences of postsecondary German reminded me of some kind of scholar-adventurer such as Indiana Jones or even a knight errant following his dream or pursuing a quest, leaving the grey world in search of fulfilling his vision and progressing toward that goal or Holy Grail in incremental fashion through a series of journeys or trials and challenges. The crux of this participant's story is that he is initially crippled by the curriculum and must overcome this condition to truly progress. Also, his attitude toward his experiences is generous, seeing the positive in the negative. Eventually he gains agency through the experience of one particular course (and instructor) and subsequently somewhat consciously constructs his own curricular path according to a purposeful professional code. With continued reflection I came to realize that the second participant's story echoed and could be framed in terms of the story of the Arthurian knight Percival.

In the German tradition this story is known through the epic tale *Parzival* written by Wolfgang von Eschenbach (c. 1200-1210 / 2006) in the first quarter of the thirteen century. That story begins with a long account of Parzival's courtly, but also sad and bloody, heritage that serves as motivation for his mother's attempts to raise Parzival in seclusion and ignorant of the ways of knighthood. This seclusion is shattered by four passing knights who tell stories of King Arthur. Parzival soon leaves for court; his mother is heartbroken and dies. Parzival learns the duties of a knight, falls in love, and marries. He leaves his wife in order to seek news of his mother, but arrives at the Gralsburg, the castle of the Holy Grail. Here he encounters a wounded king (the Fisher King), but does not ask after the king's wounds despite attempts by others to raise his curiosity. He tries to respect

the knight's duty to avoid curiosity, rather than show empathy for the king. When he awakes he thinks he had seen a dream but he soon learns that he would have become king if he had asked after the wounded king. Parzival returns to the Round Table, but leaves again upon being accused of losing his honor by the Grail messenger. Parzival wanders and fights for the good for five years, yet remains distant from god. Eventually he is led to a holy man (Trevrizent) from whom he learns about the meaning of life (god's mercy), the power of the Grail (everlasting life), and the sinful extent of his previous ways (he had not helped the wounded king, among other things). Subsequently Parzival meets and fights a worthy knight who breaks his sword. Instead of killing Parzival, the two discover that they are brothers. They ride together to the wounded king in order to release him from his wounds and Parzival is told that he is to be the new king. Eschenbach's epic tale reveals the complexity of life: nothing is black or white. It also stresses the importance of compassion, wisdom, and the spiritual quest.

I evoke *Parzival* as a frame with which to account for the second participant's lived experiences of postsecondary German in Canada. I have adapted various aspects of the medieval tale in order not to retell that story but rather to better illustrate the *particularity* of the second participant's stories. I have organized the narrative into six "books" for medieval effect. The protagonist has been renamed "Passivail" in order to allude to the story and character of Parzival but also to reflect the contemporary figure's primarily passive acquisition of German ("passiv-"), his limited initial pedagogical circumstance ("-ail"), and the failing that precedes his success ("-vail," where in German "v" would be pronounced as "f"; and "pass-"). Indeed, I have collapsed the two figures of Parzival and the wounded king into the singular person of Passivail. Also, Trevrizent appears here as "Translatus," and texts read by the participant appear as figures (e.g., *Der Besuch der alten Dame* by Friedrich Dürrenmatt appears as "the Old Dame Be Such"). In composing this narrative to reflect the appearance and sometimes the style of an epic poem, I used a few poetic devices such as

visual line breaks and enjambement to force subtle or not-so-subtle ambiguities. I have included stock features of medieval epics, such as the Round Table ("Tafelrunde"), knights ("Ritter," with anglicized plural "Ritters"), and a castle — I renamed the Gralsburg as the "Zwecksburg" (i.e., "castle of purpose"). The Grail is reconfigured as the "End Produkt" ("final product" in the participant's original words, or properly "Endprodukt" in German). I have made extensive use of the participant's own words and have frequently kept aspects of his idiolect, thus remaining more authentic or truer to the contemporary person instead of the medieval frame. However, for the sake of fluency or ease of reading, I necessarily changed the pronominal perspective from "I," "we," and "you" to "he," "you," and "they." Likewise, I often changed the verb tense from present to past, though on a few occasions did keep the present tense so as to interrupt the sense of fiction.

The Story of Passivail and the End Produkt

Book I: Passivail's Schooling

In the middle of the Country
called Wide-Open-Spaces
was a peaceful and secluded town
through which ran streets so broad and straight
where once did live Mother Tongue
with Passivail, her only son.

Mother Tongue was wise to the world
and raised Passivail with loving kindness,
keeping him distant from distraction:
Passivail passed the time making music
and playing with computers.
But the day came when this seclusion
was shattered by four Ritters passing by
telling tales of Courts, Quests, and Kings.

Well, Passivail was a brave young man,
pretty smart too, with a vivid imagination,
so off he trotted after the Ritters:
his destination, Tafelrunde High.

Some say Mother Tongue did so try
to guard her son from destiny
dressing Passivail in fool's garb
that none would take him too seriously,
but that's just the stuff of legend.

Twas at Tafelrunde High that Passivail
practiced the Codes of the Ritters.

You may picture children speaking

or imagine young people speaking,

but that really wouldn't fit here

because the learning experience was part in German

ten, twenty, and thirty

so there hasn't been very much Speaking and oral Communication.

It's mostly been Reading and Writing.

Well, at Tafelrunde High

it was basically the same throughout

and it was maybe fifteen or five-and-twenty children

all at desks, and the Teacher

sometimes at the front,

but sometimes in the middle

in the sense that you would be having a Conversation

with her in the class to practice your Speaking skills

controlled by her to talk on something

that comes up during Exercises or something like that.

Generally the Teacher led,

you studied at home, did your Exercises,

went over them in class

and talked about them a little

and got a Grammar lesson or something.

So learning German at Tafelrunde High

was basically Reading and doing Exercises

and writing stuff on the computer

to hand in for assignments.

Passivail found it easy

to word process on the computer,

especially if doing an essay or something.

At first, it was troublesome

trying to figure out what to do

about the Umlauts and the Eszett

and the Quotation Mark,

the one at the bottom before a quote.

Thus at Tafelrunde High School
especially

you'd learn about things that are
quote-unquote:

relevant to High School children,

like sports, games, food, housework,

and school was like the main focus.

You'd learn all the Vocabulary

to do with school.

You'd learn about the difference

between our system

and the German system.

With his head spinning from
Tafelrunde German lessons

of middle ages-appropriate topics,

self-controlled pattern Practice,

discussing the Rules,

and a moderation of Speaking,

Passivail was proudly ready to set off
for Germany

or some place in that area,

though as legend would have it

under his Ritter's robes he was

still fitted in the fashion of a fool.

Book II: Failure at the Zwecksburg

Passivail wanted to see first hand

what's going on in Germany.

So he went there once for a month

on a trip with Tafelrunde High.

He arrived at an ancient fortified city

called the Zwecksburg.

The most interesting thing was the stark contrast.

Because everything there

was so much older than here,

and the way that the city was set up.

There was old and new together

and it didn't necessarily clash

and that everything was so much smaller,

yet there were so many more people,

it was much more dense.

Encouraged by his positive reaction,

the Burgers took him all around town,

but mindful of his spoken moderation

he did not ask the questions

they were willing to answer.

To him that was the way

cities were supposed to look:

They should be dense not sprawling.

So what he liked especially

was the one way streets, for example,

and the narrow streets and the tall houses,

and just the way the city was set up made sense.

But Passivail didn't dare to share

these thoughts with his hosts the Burgers

for his awareness of his spoken moderation.

The Burgers continued to show him
around:

He saw the German school system

and was served up the ways and
wares

of German culture, he supposed.

Yet he still failed to bring himself

to ask after it all, no matter his
curiosity,

for respect for his spoken moderation

and for his Practice its limitation;

besides, a knot formed in his tongue.

For the whole time when he went
there

Passivail was like crippled.

When he went to Germany with
Tafelrunde

he couldn't really speak.

When he heard he could understand
quite well

and Reading he understood quite
well,

in terms of Writing, you know, that
was ok,

but Speaking was not very good at
all.

There were many things that he saw

that made him curious at the
Zwecksburg,

especially this thinking

along the lines of city planning,

and Green Politik, which was new to
him.

None of that at all had been reflected

in his German ten, twenty, thirty

in terms of the Exercises and things

that he'd been asked to do in
Tafelrunde High.

Maybe he wasn't really into Politik,

but, you know, in his eyes, it was
because

he became interested in Politik at the
Zwecksburg,

but he couldn't communicate

and satisfy his curiosity.

German Politik was never, never
really

touched upon at Tafelrunde High

and to Passivail the Germans knew

what they were doing with respect to
Politik.

If you're going to compare school
systems

because they're so different,

even though, you know they're
different

but basically the same model,

why not talk about Politik

because that is something

that is actually quite different

and interesting in Passivail's eyes.

Like the whole world sort of listens

when the German government says
something

because it's cutting edge

and no one else is doing it.

But despite their best efforts

the Burgers could not bring

knotted Passivail to speak. And later

when he thinks of what he saw

he wondered whether it was just an
illusion

or some missed opportunity.

Book III: Wandering at Ritters' University

After returning from the Zwecksburg,

Passivail betook himself to

the Ritters' University where he was to learn

more about Germany and German culture,

where he would come to realize

what treasures would have been in his grasp

but for his failure to speak and the knot in his tongue.

For it was at the Zwecksburg

he had surely seen the End Produkt which

his speechlessness kept out of reach.

Seeking to become a Bachelor at the Ritters' University

Passivail's first Test was with Placement,

from which Rank and Class are assigned.

Having excelled in German ten, twenty, thirty,

he aspired to the Third Level, the Senior Order of German;

Well, in any case, the full-year Credit Course.

Learning at the University sort of branched out:

You would all be sitting around

and there would be this same sort of thing

as at Tafelrunde High,

but it wasn't so much Teacher-led.

You would still do Exercises,

but there was a lot more Conversation

and there would actually be

a specific amount of time set aside to,

you know, let's talk about the environment

in a sort of seemingly trite way.

But you didn't have the words to express,

you know, as well as you could

in your mother tongue,

so you have to talk in That Manner.

There was sort of content like in the Exercise book

in the sense that you have

some Vocabulary items like,

"The government promises to lower taxes,

but when they get in they raise taxes."

So trite government Vocabulary

that you'd sort of expect to see.

And that was sort of the last

learning-the-language Course Passivail took.

His next Test from there was to go

to Courses where you started

learning and reading Literature

and critically think about it.

You would get to the Fourth Level,

where it would almost revert back

to the Teacher leading again,

where you sort of were done learning the language,

in the sense that you knew the basics

and you knew how it's set out

and the only problems you may encounter

are Idioms and perhaps more complex Lexical Items

and so you're assumed to

basically have a grasp of what was going on

and the Teacher goes back to,

"Ok, this is what's going on,"

reading this story and explaining the things to you and,

you know, giving you the
appropriate wait

of like five seconds to chip in every
once in a while.

Thus Passivail wandered the Courses

learning for the good of it.

And in this Course, he was giving
Reports about some topic

and we had to do a book report

and sort of School kind of stuff,

but generally it was Teacher-based
again,

and you'd have time to present
something that you did for
part of your Credit.

So, it sort of went from being half
and half

to more participatory from young
Ritters,

to going back to mainly Teacher-
based instruction.

For example, you got to choose

your Projects generally, right?

It had to be this long,

but it didn't matter what it says,

since Teacher was only looking for
Grammar.

So, there may be Courses in culture,

but from what he'd seen it's
basically been:

"Read this novel or read this short
story,

read these poems and talk about
them in class

and pick a few and write an essay
about it

for a term paper or for a final."

Well, it was sort of what you'd
expect

in a Literature Course. You read it

and then you think and write about it

and it's always sort of the same.

And thus was goodly Passivail's
refrain:

It's what you expect and it's what
you get;

Well, in a way everything was
worthwhile

because even if you didn't enjoy it

you'll learn from it, whether it's one
Word

or a new Structure or Idiom or
something.

Passivail's greatest Test was
Advanced Literature.

Here he came upon Kafka's
Judgment,

narrowly escaping drowning by
reading,

and he'll never forget Maria Stuart of
Schiller:

That was hell.

He had not met much of a challenge

with Reading in the Third Level,

except for crossing the path

of the Old Dame Be Such,

who tried to corrupt his morals,

but that one was fairly easy going

because of the language and the
content

and because it was weird, he
guessed,

and interesting and modern,

like 1950s as opposed to 1750s.

But Maria Stuart of Schiller was

hell to get through.

There was an encounter with Four
Lay Sirs

and that was quite easy,

but also in the middle it got a little
bit hard

with the Court scenes and stuff,

and he never fully understood the
guilt,

the shame of failing to communicate

of which he was, according to
legend,

accused by a Zwecksburg
messenger.

(Remember Reading seemed no
problem

for Passivail; Speaking was the issue!)

Well, Maria Stuart of Schiller was hell

because generally he liked things

that made sense in today's language.

So something from Whenever-It-Was,

it was a bit tricky for pretty smart Passivail.

So, then, with his experience in German

it was too much to ask at that point.

He hated Maria Stuart of Schiller,

but got to like it more and more.

Because that was the Course

where he broke from the Tafelrunde High

way of doing Exercises

to actually reading and doing Literature.

Because that was the Course

where Passivail realized what could have been his

if he had been able to speak at the Zwecksburg.

But all the teachings at the Ritters' University,

What kind of help did it give him

with those challenging Texts?

Not a lot.

What support did he get in the classroom context

from the Teacher or any extra material?

There was a package, like for the Course,

that had Summaries of each scene

that sort of guided you along in English,

that would sort of say,

"Ok, this is basically what happens."

So that would give you a context to read it in

because without that Passivail just
basically

wouldn't have understood hardly
anything.

Thus again was Passivail's refrain:

It all seemed like the kind of thing
you would do

in a Senior Order German Course.

Well, he supposed he had a slight
grasp

on the sort of feudal system

of Maria Stuart of Schiller.

And he didn't really know anything

about the whole pseudo-mythology.

That's maybe why it was hard,

because the student Ritter Passivail

was not interested in it,

because our epic young hero

had no relationship to what he was
reading.

Yet, still not overcoming his
speechlessness,

Once more we hear Passivail's
refrain:

You know, with Literature,

that's what you expect, it's what you
get.

You take it knowing that and

while it may not be the greatest
thing,

you know, you still learn a lot

but by reading and by responding to
it.

So in terms of something that was
hard to get through

and seemed like a waste of time,

you learn just by doing stuff

and the stuff that is assigned.

Book IV: Passivail and Translatus

Three years at Tafelrunde,

with the Ritters three years further,

had Passivail quested in the German language,

till in the seventh year he encountered

Course Fourhundred-And-Something,

where it's not so much Teacher-based,

like you did Exercises and stuff,

but the premise of the Course was

to practice Speaking, it seemed like,

and Passivail thought that's very valuable.

But he wondered why he was taking that

after six years of German.

So just now he was taking a Course

and learning how to speak,

not so, like, not to give a Presentation

where it's prepared,

but just to on the fly sort of give answers

and actually have a Conversation

and he sort of found himself

tripping over thinking in his mind

about the proper Syntax and Structure to use

while trying to get out what he wanted to say

and struggling with his active Vocabulary

versus his passive Vocabulary

that he had from just Reading,

but he didn't use those Words.

So was he realizing his regret, his crippling sin,

ever since he had to the Zwecksburg been?

And so it was among all the stuff

that Passivail for years had been
reading

he finally took a Course of action

that in turn next led him to
redeeming:

Well, that was Translatus's Course,

which in that respect was quite good.

In Translatus's Courses it was good

because he could read whatever

he wanted to read and translate it.

Translatus's Course was and has
been

Passivail's favorite. Just because

he'd taken and learned and read
German,

but he hadn't really, didn't do
anything

with it because obviously

he was not capable enough

to write a quality Essay. At this point

he was still learning

so it sounded like he was learning.

But through Translatus he got to be

almost like already a professional

and he became very advanced while
learning.

He got to see the hidden meaning;

He got to learn the true meaning:

Like the products that you turn out

were of a high quality

because you're so capable in English

and that's the End Produkt,

but to get that End Produkt you
needed

a lot of German experience

and knowing the Rules and the
Vocabulary.

So Passivail got to take

what he'd learned in German and

not just turn out the equivalent Essay

of a Grade Two German Kind

that just showed his speechlessness.

Given a choice with Translatus,

he did a translation Report on wind power.

There was a study put out

by the German government, it was,

about wind power utilization

and so Passivail translated that over

and that was great. He got an A

or an A+ on it, because he enjoyed

the content as well as the process with Translatus.

He got to turn out a professional English translation.

So, that was amazing for him to see

that, you know, these six years

have actually paid off

because he could produce this quality work,

and End Produkt, not just: still learning.

Book V: The Healing

Having
experienced,
thanks

to Translatus,
what it means

to aspire to an
End Produkt,

the knot in
Passivail's tongue

started somewhat to unravel

and he set himself a meaningful
standard:

"For me, one should live one's life

according to some sort of Code."

Thus, with support from Translatus,

he opted for a German-to-English
Certificate

while seeking his Bachelor.

Since he learned so much about

language and process, he figured,

well, why not put it to good use,
right?

What's the point in becoming a
Bachelor

if you can't use it at all?

He knew from Zwecksburg

the German Greens were doing
interesting things

and, er, he wanted to see those things
done here,

so if he knew German well,

maybe he could connect the two
Countries;

He could like have a part-time job

or be self-employed doing
translations.

As Passivail embarked on his Quest
again,

he encountered three Playful Ritters:

Sir Egmont, Sir Homburg, and
deadly Sir Danton.

No more formidable Ritters were
there

to test his accompaniments of

new awareness, meaning, and purpose.

If he had just met them on his own

he wouldn't've walked away

with anything from it.

But Passivail spent time engaged

in Conversation with them —

and maybe especially because Translatus

had done what he did — he'd come to

appreciate Ritters like that,

older Playful Ritters within their context,

whose Words, instead of killing him,

helped unknot his tongue and heal

his crippling speechlessness.

The three Ritters and Passivail

began to relate and recount

how different things would be

with a wiser Ritters' University.

Thus the story goes back to what started it all

an interest in Politik and Green stuff n' all.

Well, the Teacher would facilitate

Discussion and present the facts.

The student Ritters should also be involved

in Projects, where they research certain topics

and the differences in the way things are

done here and there with respects

to Politik and government; the Teacher

presents a few ideas and then

the young Ritters would find out

the differences and the similarities

and you would discuss it,

and not just write and read Reports or something.

You would talk about it.

Well, you shouldn't be reading

German ecology textbooks or
something.

That would be asking a bit much.

Perhaps a few overviews of
something,

a generalization at the start of a
Chapter

that talks about here are some issues
about ecology

without getting too deep into it.

That would be for the Teacher to
disseminate

and we'll talk about it next class

after you have familiarized yourself
with it.

What would be interesting

is maybe newspaper articles.

It's good to get through.

Also, magazine articles

or websites are generally pretty
good.

You know, look at the different

Politik Parties here and different

Politik Parties there for example,

they'll probably use the same sort of
language,

if you know it in English and see it
in German

it'll click in your mind — You'll get
it —

but the things that they're saying

are quite different. Otherwise

it's always the same method of
instruction:

here's an essay title and go write it.

But now that you get

to choose your own topics

it gets more interesting.

And why not have a Course

in classic German Philosophie?

That's always something

that they thought was weird,

that in German you have Literature

and you have Linguistics

but where is the Philosophie?

It would be tricky in terms of the language,

so reading it in German we wouldn't get

as much out of it at this point.

But they wanted to talk about it

because lots of the Philosophers —

half of them — are German.

It's just like there should be

at least one Course dealing with it.

It always seemed weird there wasn't one.

Perhaps the texts could be chosen

so that they're easier,

it could work and it should be there.

They wanted to see more stuff like Soziologie;

It's sort of a step away

from the typical kinda work that you do.

Once you're in Third or Fourth Level

you can handle maybe not really deep Discussion,

but you can have the ideas in English

and a sort of working Vocabulary

in the language. So why not

learn about it in German as well?

Philosophie may be relevant,

but still it's not exactly everyday stuff,

so probably Soziologie or a Course

where you're learning about Interculture:

The way people interact and

the way they interact with the environment

and what different societies do

in terms of how they live,

because we are different.

Legend describes the three Ritters

and Passivail riding together

as if with a long lost brother

and together they imagined how

they could seek the End Produkt

in all the things they tried to do.

For example, a homework Project:

Go into a Yahoo.de chatroom

and talk with people in Germany

about something that's interesting to you.

Like why not? So learn German through it.

Or emails between Ritters in the class.

Or have like a pen pal set up

between your school and a German school.

They're learning English,

so you're learning German;

It's the same process just different direction.

So more, more Communication would be,

like the point of language is Communication,

so to learn a language: Obviously

you know how to communicate in one language

and you are learning the Vocabulary

and Words and Syntax,

but you're not really communicating;

You're learning how to communicate

but you're not doing it. You're like,

"Ok I'm learning a lot of stuff,

I'm going to be able to do it one day."

Why not do it all along

so that you're building your ability

as you build your base of knowledge.

Book VI: Return to the Zwecksburg

So onward they quested together

the three Ritters and Passivail,

and our hero began to envision

his name one day appear on the End Produkt:

Well, if the Green thing panned out

and the translation thing panned out

then he would like to see ties

between the German Greens

and the Federal Greens of Wide-Open-Spaces

or possibly between his Province

and some State Level of Germany.

He saw himself as sort of a go-between,

to say, "Well, here's what they are doing there

and this is what the experience is they're having

and what's working and what's not";

sort of be the liaison, doing that

because he liked to follow the Code of Translatus.

So if they were to publish a Report,

for example, on wind power

that is of particular relevance

to Wide-Open-Spaces,

well, he could be the guy putting it into English.

But in order to do that

Passivail would have to be

quite proficient in German,

and he was not right now.

So, was he let down

because he was not proficient in German?

No. Obviously, he knew a lot

more than before he took German:

so it was working. It just takes time
and practice.

The reason he thought

that he was not as proficient

as he probably should be after six
years

was because he was learning in a
classroom

and it's compartmentalized. It's not
every day,

he wasn't speaking with peers and he
should've been.

If he had Family or someone who
spoke German,

like he would be leaps and bounds
ahead

of where he was right now

just in terms of being able to speak,

being able to express himself

and understand the oral Structure of
the language.

Or the same if he had peers

speaking German outside of classes
too.

So that was an issue. And going

back to Zwecksburg, for example,

for a period of time, would help a lot,

being in the context of the whole
language

and just being forced to acclimatize
to it.

It's a learning process that

by seeing road signs

and acclamation through signs

and newspaper headlines

and stuff like that

or packages of products,

you would see Words

that would only come up
occasionally

in your Readings that you know

what it is, but when you go to speak
it

you don't know how,

but then by seeing it so much, you're
like,

"Ok I know what that is

because I've seen it so many times."

That's kind of the situation

when he was in Zwecksburg:

It became much more automatic.

Passivail was looking at doing that.

Like he went there in Tafelrunde
High School

and he found out he wasn't ready for
it then,

because he was like Grade Twelve

and only had a few years of German.

So at this point it would be
particularly better.

It would be more relevant.

(Here our manuscript does run dry:

some say he made it did our guy;

still other sources do suggest

Passivail forever pursues his Quest.)

My Expectations, Surprises, and Revised Question

The participating student who originated the figure of Passivail was again a German major. Given the nature of the first narrative, I expected this student also to declare a love of German that would not be returned by the program by attending closely to his interests. I thought that he too would not necessarily be able to study those things he most wanted to, which he would nonetheless be more than able to describe. He would explain his love of German language and perhaps also literature in regard to a particular personal — maybe even pedagogical or curricular — reason such as a particular teacher or professor, course, novel, personal interest, or experience in Germany. Regarding curriculum and instruction, I expected the same descriptions of analytical grammar study and lack of contemporary literary and cultural texts. I imagined he would indicate the role of certain good teachers or professors, that he would do well in class and yet provide only inexact definitions of the German knowledge and skills he had acquired. I presumed he would tell me of a lack of opportunities to speak German or develop skills in written language in class. Like Kaye, the first participant, I expected Passivail to view his degree in German as an administrative list of courses to progress through and course numbers to check off, rather than a personal progression of linguistic and cultural skills development. I believed Passivail would also lack a connection to the curriculum as taught, that his own interests would contrast a diet of textbook topics, routine and arbitrary assignments, and canonical literature. His potential would not be met by the curriculum. Finally, I anticipated seeing myself again reflected in this student.

Most, if not all, of my expectations were confirmed during the interview. Passivail's primary motivation for studying German was a trip to Germany before he began his undergraduate degree. There he observed and already started to adopt other cultural ways of doing all sorts of things. This experience encourage a shift in his system of cultural values (and likely also his personal and professional identity), which however was not matched by the development of a new language ego. At university, he experienced a limited sequence of language learning classes

with uncreative, traditional teaching agendas, in which he remained passive and hardly spoke, and senior-level literature courses that often reverted to the analytical approach to language he experienced at school and the junior levels while also finally — importantly — providing access to (initially too) substantive authentic text in the original German. Passivail's inability to communicate appropriately — represented in the narrative by the infliction of a knotted tongue — was maintained by the curriculum until his last year when he finally could take a conversational German course and a particularly learning- and learner-centered translation course taught by an especially thoughtful professor. The most part of the curriculum hampered Passivail's linguistic and cultural learning, delaying useful learning strategies and textual analyses until a point in his course of study where he would no longer be able to capitalize on it within the guiding context of a second language and culture program.

I was surprised to learn how the postsecondary curriculum for German not only left Passivail's interests unrequited but, rather, almost impeded his progress. I had the impression that until his final year he had received school and university curricula that approximated disinformation. Yet where a less patient person would have given up, he strove on. He had already reflected on his learning, was aware of its shortcomings and the opportunities it still presented, strategized, and persevered by working hard to make up for the curriculum. Passivail's narrative tells the story of a student who musters sufficient mindful self-awareness to make a mediocre language learning situation good. He has evolved a pronounced sense of compassion for his own experience. His effort reveals the complexities of his educational situation and the kinds of language exposure and cultural analyses he requires in order to attain personal and professional goals. It also shows how some students are quite aware of the connection between functional second language communicative needs and intercultural intellectual inquiry, of which some scholars (Kramsch, Howell, Warner, & Wellmon, 2007) are still trying to convince their professorial colleagues. Indeed, Passivail's narrative underscores the need for curricula to acknowledge the central importance of meaningful communication, focused attention to a range of categories of specialized language

(not only literary, but also political, environmental, geographical, administrative, scientific, economic, etc.), genuinely purposeful learning activities and assignments, integration of productive goals from the beginning, and especially student agency in the arrangement of their own education. By listening to and learning from Passivail, I realize more than ever that my own quest to help make the postsecondary curriculum in Canada more personally relevant to students must point toward both linguistically and interculturally effective teaching and learning. I wonder how students of German can take greater charge of their learning, that is, be empowered to direct more of their own curriculum.

Part Seven: The Story of the Mask and the Apparatus

1.

This is the story of the psychological dimension of one student's experience of the postsecondary German curriculum. The student is called Carmen. Her narrative is made up in part by a particular sequence of courses, the selection of texts and topics, and class activities and assignments. It is also as much the tale of the overall effect of the lived experience of postsecondary German as a protracted existential linguistic crisis in the mind and being of the participating student. Amid her enthusiasm and learning, Carmen reveals her compliant suffering: her reactions to, ways of coping with, and attempts to find meaning in the curriculum. Her story is a gift to professors and curriculum thinkers who are concerned with the nature of language teaching and learning at university and the linguistic well-being of the participating student.

2.

Let's be clear: Carmen is a bright, joyful, engaged, caring, and happy individual. She is the kind of person other people would describe as emotionally together and in tune with her world. Carmen has no abnormal emotional or mental health issues. She laughs a lot, loves her family and friends, is concerned for the well-being of animals, regularly attends church, has traveled, has read widely, and is politically aware and critically astute. She is her own person. No one forced Carmen to study German alongside her honors in History. She insists she enjoyed studying German. Yet she laughs nervously, joking that she is on the psychologist's couch. There she lies: she and German "anxieties." She jests again, is this going to be a traumatic experience?

3.

Carmen first studied German at high school, where she completed the sequence of German 10, 20, and 30 in grades 10 through 12. German seemed like the obvious choice. Carmen's family background is partly German and partly Mediterranean and even before high school she was familiar enough with the German language to be able to speak it at home with her mother and sister. But she was not able to write it. Given her background, and since it was necessary to have a second language for high school matriculation, she could improve her heritage language skills while at the same time fulfilling the requirements for her high school diploma.

Carmen's first high school German teacher — in grade 10 — was Ms. Bellows. She was a severe task master of an Englishwoman with a thundering voice, yet also with a sense of humor. Carmen believed she taught German well: she clearly understood the language as she ushered her students through explanations and exercises. Carmen's second German teacher — in grades 11 and 12 — was Mr. Brandt. He was a more laid-back individual, who would encourage more discussions about Germany. One such discussion was about how German students in the sixties began learning about Nazism and so discovered what had happened in Germany in the thirties and forties. Mr. Brandt described the anger felt subsequently by the postwar generations toward their parents. Carmen sensed their shock and frustration: was it the casual deception that bothered them or guilt and responsibility? Mr. Brandt organized a high school trip to Germany, on which he again encouraged students to engage with understanding Germany as a culture as opposed to only acquiring German the language. Although all of Carmen's high school German classes were organized around the accurate completion of grammar exercises, Mr. Brandt's discussions sparked in her an interest in cultural history, an interest that she would choose to pursue at university. On leaving high school, Carmen could see past strict language practice to the fascinating world of cultural inquiry that a second language opened up.

4.

Carmen's high school German enabled her to skip the first-year university course on German language for beginners and instead enroll in an intermediate German language course. This placement is standard for students who take German at school or have prior linguistic knowledge because of their heritage. In addition to the usual continuation from intermediate to lower and then upper advanced language classes, Carmen took university courses on German literature that were read and taught in German as well as conversation classes through Continuing Education and a summer seminar on German culture. She continued with German language and literature at university because of her interest in German cultural history and her new intention to pursue her questions about it at the level of graduate studies. Her motivation for learning German shifted from a general attachment to her ethnic and linguistic heritage and a wish to matriculate efficiently from school — and likewise from university — to an intrinsic curiosity for cultural phenomena, values, and issues. Her area of specialization in History also required her to have German language skills in order to read primary and secondary sources. Being able to read German literature in the original language gave her insight into the Weltanschauung of a certain place and time. It was crucial for her to understand a document in her own way, from having a good grasp of the language, and without relying on translations that can vary or impart their own inflections. Likewise, she appreciated being aware of what the German experts in her field have to say.

5.

Carmen enjoyed all the German courses she took at university. She particularly enjoyed the German literature courses and the summer seminar where she immersed herself in the language. It felt good to use the language to access the literature and culture. She took pleasure in being able to read just for the sake

of reading. Learning about the historical contexts of the literature also appealed to her since that is one of her personal interests.

She found some of the older texts in the first survey course especially interesting. She was fascinated by a poem that discussed the contact between pagans and Christians as well as texts used by missionaries for converting the pagans. Here she found the expression of the different ideals of polytheism and monotheism. She was also taken by *Das Hildebrandslied*, the unfinished text of a heroic lay from the time of the Germanic tribes that recounts the tragic encounter in battle between a son and his father and the issue of a warrior's honor. She particularly liked the medieval German epic poem *Parzival*. In that first survey course, she "actually loved it all."

In the survey course on modern German literature the instructor ran out of time and so did not cover the whole syllabus. This meant that Carmen did not get to read Brecht or any texts from the Weimar Republic, the period in German history and culture from 1919 to 1933, which also was the area she had been most interested in studying. In her studies, it was as if German literature just seemed to fade out around the First World War. She did read some of Thomas Mann's earlier works. Though she found him too egotistical an author, she wrote a term paper about his novella *Tonio Kröger*. The character's and author's combined and conflicting Nordic and Mediterranean identities spoke to her personally. She also read *Der Prozeß* (*The Trial*) by Kafka, which she liked because it was so "strange" to her, "does not come to a neat conclusion," and left her "pondering" for a long time afterward. Carmen would have liked to have read Kafka's short story *In der Strafkolonie* (*In the Penal Colony*) — which is about a machine that is designed to write an accused criminal's sentence on his body, thereby torturing and killing him. She had read the story in a literature course in the English Department, but she wanted to come back to it in the original German. She thought she could probably get more out of it in the original. Right?

Reading German literature in the original language enabled Carmen to gain access to and develop an understanding of the worldview of another culture,

another place, and other time periods. This made her feel “fairly comfortable” with German culture. While she did not know everything there is to know about Germany and German culture, she was “aware of the differences between [German and Canadian] cultures and their norms.”

6.

What Carmen enjoyed about the German literature courses was the opportunity she had to engage with meaningful content. In the literature courses the focus was “not just straightforward grammar and exercises.” Like her high school courses, the intermediate and advanced German language courses at university were concerned primarily 1) __________ completing grammar manipulation exercises. They also required some essays written 2) __________ German, graded predominantly 3) __________ grammar accuracy. At first Carmen found nothing about grammar exercises that she particularly liked or disliked. She was used 4) __________ them already from school and was simply “not as keen 5) __________ doing formal exercises.” She was comfortable when doing the exercises because she knew the patterns and found them “relatively easy” and “predictable.” She performed well, making mistakes only 6) __________ the more difficult exercises, for example, when there are lots of the less common subjunctive verb forms to recall. Perhaps the exercises helped her, for instance, when writing letters, since then she would “work harder at the grammar.” Yet, all in all, she was resigned: she had come to accept that formal grammar exercises “are just things that one has to do if you want to really learn a language.”

7.

Answers: 1) with, 2) in, 3) for, 4) to, 5) on, 6) on.

8.

Carmen obeyed the pattern of the German class. Sitting in the Structured Exercise, she just knew what was expected of her. Fill in the blank. Fill in the blank in the sentence. Rewrite the sentence in such a way as to fulfill whatever the demands of the Structured Exercise are to illustrate the Lesson. She would feel pinpricks in her fingers. The Professors and Instructors were not particularly aware of her feelings, her background, or her learning. Focus on the Lesson. She would answer, obediently following the pattern. They perceived her as studious, wanting to learn, and diligent. This is right. So in that case it was very easy for her to roll with the Structured Exercise: by the end of it they probably thought she was just good at languages. She was good at filling in the blanks. Blankly filling in the blanks. Blankly receiving the blank Lesson. Rolling with the pinpricks. The less the Instructors seemed aware of how or whether she was learning, the more she was sensitive to their desire to teach her a Lesson. Blank. Nod. Prick. Roll. Blank. Fill. Blank. One instructor "would teach to her, because she was there nodding in attention and that was something going right [for the instructor] in a class that was particularly bad." This is right. The mask that Carmen wore for her Instructors pleased them. It respected them. It respected their blanks. They believed in the Structured Exercise. This is right. Carmen's mask was a mirror to the Instructors. Carmen's mask concealed her shame. This is right. Nod. It concealed her shame of an inattentive class. Bad. This is right. It concealed her shame of a lack of acquisition. Nod. Blank. Fill. Nod. Mask. Diligent.

9.

Not only the language classes, but all of the regular scheduled university courses were structured around written assignments. (Only the Continuing Education courses and the summer seminar had no written components in German.) Assessment in the German literature courses was almost exclusively based on writing essays in German. Carmen had to work very hard and long on

the essays in the German literature classes, requiring a lot of help with the grammar. Indeed, these essays were graded mostly according to the quantity of grammatical errors and the quality of expression, with only minimal evaluation of the content or the student's ideas.

10.

Yet grammar accuracy counted for the majority of the final grade for the essay assignments in the literature and culture courses.

11.

Nowadays we know that despite the countless grammar exercises that Carmen has done for German language classes, they have not been effective when speaking or writing in German. Despite her initial comfort with exercises, she regards grammar as her "weakness." That is, while she can do the exercises, she cannot transfer the grammar to her real-time language usage. She does not remember the German grammar rules very easily even though she learned them in class, year after year. She is particularly impressed by students with no background in German who are able to learn the language and, from her perspective, now speak it better than she. The other students are able to recall the rules more readily, explain language structures, such as the cases, and then apply the rules when writing. But Carmen tends to use the rules secondarily as a "backup" or "fall back." Grammar knowledge and doing grammar exercises have hindered her confidence. Her language courses have taught her how much there is to know about grammar, and whenever she cannot recall the correct grammar she repeatedly becomes aware of the gap in her active knowledge.

Carmen feels "very comfortable" with reading because she can always refer to a dictionary and the more she reads the easier it comes. Whenever she stumbles upon "one of these terrible German sentences that goes on for a

paragraph," she just reads it over and over until she gets it. Carmen also feels "very comfortable" and "quite confident" using conversational German in everyday situations, partly because she worries less about making a *Wortsalat* ("word salad") — to use her German mother's phrase. In informal situations she speaks spontaneously, relying on her "feeling" for the language — as a heritage speaker of German — and only after speaking does she think about the words and grammar — as an undergraduate speaker of German. She speaks before she thinks and she knows she makes mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes in casual conversation and so Carmen considers her own mistakes in such situations as likewise a function of her reliance only on her feel for the language, rather than thinking through the grammar. In casual situations, if she does not know the right word she just asks.

Although making mistakes generally does not bother Carmen if she is on the street asking for directions or having coffee with someone, she does feel bad about speaking with errors despite knowing the grammar rules, and her confidence in her language abilities diminishes for not having applied them. For example, Carmen's nephew is being raised by her sister to speak German. While his whole world was at home, he only spoke German. But now that he has started school and is being introduced to and influenced by English, he is very rapidly losing his German. So Carmen and her sister try hard to make him believe that they do not understand any English and he easily switches to German with them. However, Carmen finds it "a little degrading" when her nephew has to give her a word in German. For instance, her nephew likes trucks and such mechanical things and her sister knows the German for every piece and kind of construction equipment, whereas Carmen does not. He also likes nature and while Carmen knows the basics, such as the German for cat, dog, horse, etc., she does not necessarily know more complex or specific vocabulary items such as the German for kinds of fish or more uncommon animals.

Also, especially in a situation where she feels her language is to be carefully assessed, she is self-conscious and realizes that there are probably gross

inadequacies in the overall quality (i.e., accuracy) of her spoken German. The academic context of attending conferences as a graduate student, for example, decreases her linguistic comfort and confidence. Whenever she is with other German-speaking scholars she is insecure about her language ability, she is hesitant to speak in German, and even if she only has to listen she still gets anxious because they may use words she does not know. As with speaking, Carmen's comfort and confidence regarding listening comprehension also depends on context. At conferences conducted in German her comprehension is weak because she does not have the appropriate academic vocabulary. She is discouraged by what seems like "just a barrage of words" being fired at her from all the presenters. To some extent Carmen feels most confident within the confines of her university classes — rather than outside at all. This is because of the way people would correct her outside. In university classes, instructors function according to certain expectations of linguistic accuracy depending on certain levels of acquisition and so follow a measured form of correction — usually based on measured artificial input. Whereas outside of the academic institution people notice Carmen's degree of fluency and so insist on "fixing her language." Outside the university classes the expectations are often higher. Carmen welcomes the correction up to a certain point, but also feels overwhelmed, discouraged, and doubts her abilities when being corrected "over and over and over."

Carmen also contrasts the ease with which she completes most grammar exercises with the difficulties and complexities of writing essays or conducting other formal written tasks in German. Practice in the former has not led to aptitude in the latter. The grammar exercises she has had to complete attend only to the accuracy of forms and not to meaning creation, which is central to essays, letters, and other authentic written communication. She can write in German, but she lacks confidence in it because she knows that she will "invariably still make mistakes." She finds it difficult to work on morphology and syntax while simultaneously thinking about the meaning she is trying to convey by choosing appropriate words and expressions. When writing an essay she has to deal with

"building a sentence with proper cases, and the right endings for all these cases," but also with the right usage of words. She uses her dictionary to find "perfectly wonderful words," but she does not always know the word or in which context it is used and so she may end up conveying something that she did not intend. When she reads through her own writing, she doubts whether something is right or wrong: "Somehow, there is always some confusion for [her]."

Similarly, because of the nature of Carmen's graduate research, she has to write letters of request and introduction in German to the archives in Germany where she wants to study. She is already anticipating this professional aspect of using German with some discomfort and dread. She finds writing formal professional correspondence "terribly difficult and daunting" and she does not want "to look like a fool" in front of her peers by making grammar errors. While Carmen wishes to communicate meaning with her writing she has become preoccupied with grammar accuracy (rather than realizing her meaning with the help of grammar knowledge).

The postsecondary German curriculum has instilled in Carmen the greater importance of grammar accuracy and knowing grammar rules. Such an emphasis on grammar accuracy has taught her that, because she still makes errors in spontaneous speaking and formal writing, her communicative competence is not worthy. Her concern is that speaking and writing German is something that she wants to do well because she wants to feel comfortable within German culture. But comfort is not the result of the curriculum. Despite her heritage, despite studying German at university, she declares having always found German "difficult."

12.

What is difficulty? For sure, it is morphology, syntax, and lexicon. It is also tedium or disenchantment. It is a discomfort with error production — rather than its embrace and analysis — and a consequent lack of confidence in her real

use of the language, which she sees others regarding only as erroneous rather than articulate. Carmen's difficulty is the shame she bears diligently under her mask for never quite being the replica German native speaker as required by the primacy of linguistic accuracy in all areas of the curriculum. Her interest in German culture, which has motivated her to endure the curriculum, is always already subjugated to the impossible linguistic performance of native-like grammatical exactness.

Carmen wants to learn about German culture from her vantage point as a Canadian, but the curriculum wants to compare her to a German native speaker. It acknowledges students in terms of grammatical success. It suppresses her deep interest in culture with grammar assessment. She achieves only as the curriculum would have her — always the language-learning grammar exerciser — but not as she would like to — the cultural interpreter. She also knows that the grammar standard is much higher than she can attain by doing grammar exercises alone. For each time she has achieved success with the grammar exercises, she is left unfulfilled, empty of the activation of transferable language skills, uncertain even of her linguistic identity: "I'm bilingual — I never know if I should say that because of all my grammatical errors. So, you know, I'm bilingual, but not officially bilingual, and that's what I say to people." *Carmen does not question the official curriculum. Given no choice to be her linguistic and cultural self, she puts on a mask and continues "nodding in attention" as the grammar exerciser.*

13.

THERE IS ONLY SO MUCH GRAMMAR. IT RUNS OUT EVENTUALLY, YOU KNOW. AND WHAT HAPPENS THEN? OVER AND OVER AND OVER AND OUT. WHO TAKES OVER WHEN THE GRAMMAR RUNS OUT? WHO?

14.

“It is a remarkable apparatus,” said the Instructor as she took care of the preparations with enthusiasm. The Foreigner had responded to the New Professor’s invitation out of polite curiosity. Apart from the Instructor and the Foreigner, there was only the Student present.

“There’s a lot of courses in the calendar,” the Foreigner said, instead of asking questions about the apparatus.

“True, true,” said the Instructor. “They remind me of when I was back in the homeland.” She pointed to the apparatus. “Up to now I have had to do some of the work myself, but now the apparatus works on its own. It can keep going for four years.” The Instructor offered the Foreigner a chair. “The apparatus is the Old Professor’s invention. Even if the New Professor were to have some new ideas, he couldn’t avoid using the apparatus. Not for years.” The Instructor cleared her throat: “It consists of three parts. The one underneath is the Couch, the one above is the Drill, and the one in the middle is the Roller.”

“The Roller?” the Foreigner asked, half listening, half trying not to look, noticing the Student winding a string of verbs and adjective endings tighter around her own neck and wrists.

The Instructor spoke with the Foreigner in her Native German, and clearly the Student could not understand the language. So it was all the more remarkable that the Student seemed to try to follow the Instructor’s explanations.

“Yes, the Roller,” said the Instructor. “It’s a fitting name. The blanks are arranged in lines and the whole thing is operated just like a steamroller. The student is laid out here on the Couch. Clueless, of course. Protruding from the arm of the Couch, where the student is lying face down, is this small lump of paper, which can be so arranged as to fit right in the student’s mouth. Its purpose is to stop her from screaming out gibberish or using her tongue at all. The Drill is set above the Couch over the student’s head and the Roller hangs just to the side.”

"So the student is supposed to be slumped in the apparatus," the Foreigner observed.

"Yes. As soon as the student is strapped in using the string of verbs, the Couch is set in motion. It shakes a little from side to side, timed precisely with the movements of the Roller. But it is the Roller that has the task of implementing the Structured Exercise."

"What is the Structured Exercise?" the Foreigner asked.

"What? You don't know that?" asked the Instructor. "Forgive me. The Old Professor used to explain the Structured Exercise. So I do apologize that the New Professor has not explained the Structured Exercise to you. But I still carry with me the Old Professor's explanations. Now, the Structured Exercise is not so severe: The Grammar Rule that a student has violated is drilled into the back of the head with the Roller. This Student, for example, will have drilled into the back of her head, 'Honor your subjunctives!'"

After looking at the Student, the Foreigner asked, "Does she understand the Structured Exercise? The Grammar Rule?"

"No," said the Instructor. "It would be useless to give her that information. She is to experience it only as a manipulation of form in her head."

The Foreigner leaned forward, "But does she not get some idea of the language context contained in the Grammar Rule?"

"No."

"So the student does not know the point of using this Grammar Rule?" the Foreigner persisted.

"She has had no opportunity to use the Grammar Rule," said the Instructor.

"But she must surely have had a chance, a need, to use the Grammar Rule?" the Foreigner said, standing up.

"It's like this. I am in charge here. For years I stood by the Old Professor and now I am the one in charge of the apparatus. This morning the textbook says the students should attend to the subjunctive. Now that's not such a difficult task — but it is necessary. But instead of speaking in subjunctives this Student grabs a bunch of words and makes a right old salad out of them. So I had the Student strapped in with a string of verb tables and adjective endings. Simple as that. If I had first asked the Student if she knew the point of subjunctives, if she had attended to them, she would have only made mistakes. But now I have her and the Roller will fix everything." The Instructor pointed the Foreigner to his chair. "But I have not quite finished explaining the apparatus to you. The Roller is a perfect fit for the mind of a student."

The Foreigner frowned at the Roller. The information about the Structured Exercise had not satisfied him. But he had to tell himself that this was not his concern. The New professor surely would introduce some other Methods.

The Instructor continued her explanation: "When the student's head is slumped on the Couch and it starts shaking, the Roller pushes into the back of the head. At first, the Drill touches the mind only lightly. It is so subtle that to the uninitiated observer it would appear that there is no difference in effect of one Structured Exercise from another."

As the Instructor explained the apparatus to the Foreigner, the Student also inspected the Roller up close. With a confused gaze she looked at what the other two had been discussing in German, a language that seemed to be just beyond her grasp.

The Instructor seized the Foreigner by the arm and pointed to the Drill. "In there is the impulse that drives the movement of the Roller, and this impulse corresponds to the Explanation of the Grammar Rule on which the Structured Exercise is set. I still use the Explanations of the Old Professor. Of course, I can

only show you these Explanations from a distance. They are most precious." At that the Instructor pulled out some brittle Overheads: "Can you see?"

"They look very complicated," said the Foreigner as he squinted at the charts, underlines, arrows, highlighted morphemes, crossed out morphemes, asterisks, and footnotes. "It looks forbidding, decontextualized."

"Of course. We can't make it simple. It is not supposed to kill student motivation straight away, but only after about four years, sometimes less."

With this, the Instructor set the apparatus in motion. "Look!" she exclaimed, "The Roller pushes the Drill into the back of the student's head. And look, with each gentle shake of the Couch, the student's head nods and slumps over to one side and then again to the other side, giving the Roller a new line to work on. That's right. The student's head slumps one way and then the other, back and forth, nodding the whole time. Now, with each nod and slump of the head, the Roller is activated again and so the Drill is very gradually pushed in deeper. The blanks left by the Roller are filled by the Drill. For the first couple of years students can more or less keep their motivation. They suffer nothing but pain. A little discomfort. After two years, the lump of paper is removed. It's pointless by then since the students would have no energy left to utter words of their own, let alone emit a scream. With the mouth unobstructed we feed the students a bit of culture, but by this time they have lost all pleasure in eating. They swallow, they spit it out. There's always a bucket-load of culture but we never get through it all. By that point they understand the Drill. The Roller finally rolls them out. That's when they graduate."

15.

Looking back on the German program, Carmen divides the courses into two groups, with each group further divided in two. The first group is comprised of "actual courses" she took: the curriculum as lived or experienced in real time.

She divides this group of actual courses into what she calls "official" and "less official courses." She sees the official courses as proportionately larger not because they are more numerous but, rather, because she invested much more time in each of those courses. Thus, she includes the two-week summer seminar, which was conducted in both English and German, in the subgroup of official actual courses because it was intensive and she felt she spent a lot of time on it. The Continuing Education classes make up the subgroup of less official actual courses.

16.

The second group represents courses that Carmen "would have taken if they had been offered in German": the curriculum as imagined or experienced as lack. Here, she immediately names women's literature, which alone forms the first subgroup of courses that she would have taken. In one of the German literature survey courses she took, the female instructor consciously incorporated women's literature in order to reveal a different perspective. Carmen would like a course specifically on women's literature in German to include not only canonical works, but contemporary works that are highly regarded.

But everything else, she says, is "blank," "vague," or "general." She provides no course titles, no topics, themes, or texts for the second subgroup of courses she would have taken. They appear without appearance, as empty space. She specifies that she was not sure if in these courses she would also have to be assessed on the accuracy of her written skills in German. She explains:

> If it was just conducted in German and I just had to nod my head — uh-huh, I understand — and read the literature, I would feel very comfortable with that. And I could speak to some extent. But in terms of my written work, I don't feel that confident, I would not be very comfortable.

Thus, among the courses that Carmen would have taken if they had been offered in German are two distinct subgroups: most simply, they can be called identified and unidentified imagined courses. Both of these subgroups represent a lack in the curriculum from Carmen's perspective. Carmen's interest in the succinct, former subgroup of imagined courses is unhindered: she affirms she would have taken a course on women's literature in German, without conditions, if it had been offered. However, her curiosity and motivation with the latter group is blocked: she would like to have taken these unidentified courses but at once excludes herself from them should they involve written language assessment.

> If I was marked in the same way that I would be for an exam, or an essay that I was submitting in English, then I would be quite anxious about doing that in German ... The absence [of any titles for courses I would like to have taken] is my own anxieties and hesitations about my abilities in German.

In place of actual, official, and identifiable courses, Carmen speaks of blankness and discomfort. The blankness stands as the vacant veneer of her repressed desire for other courses. She invokes ineffability in order to smooth over her disappointment and to relieve the anxiety aroused just by the thought of being graded for German language competence in a content-based course. Her hope for the curriculum is at once her fear, a hope and fear from which she pulls back.

17.

WITH HER MASK OF DILIGENCE, HER MASK OF SHAME AND FEAR, PULLED DOWN TIGHT SHE UNIMAGINES HER OWN IMAGINATION.

18.

Carmen's experience of postsecondary German can be understood only by accounting for her connections to the full range of groups and subgroups of actual and un/imagined courses and by acknowledging that these categories combined express the nature and extent of her linguistic being as shaped by the curriculum. That is, we must regard the nature of, her actions in, and responses to the courses that she actually took and subsequent pertinent real-life situations — enjoyment, diligence, obedience, lack of confidence, discomfort — and also closely investigate them as the curricular origins of the mental constructs — hope, fear — underlying the courses she imagines that she would like to have taken and yet, seemingly contradictorily, still would not have taken. We more fully understand the curriculum for German by looking at the storyline of its apparent official existence — mask of diligence — as well as the concepts that inhabit the empty space of its glimpsed nonexistence. By paying attention to Carmen's insecurity and discomfort — her anxiety, fear, and shame — attached to her absent, blank, unidentified imagined courses, one clearly recognizes the essential pedagogical issues or conflicts of her so-called official courses or the existent postsecondary German curriculum: in any course she can listen obediently ("I just had to nod my head — uh-huh")*, while an imagined content course only becomes an actual official course if the ultimate focus is assessing students' written German* ("But in terms of my written work")*. In the mind of the participating student, German counts most in the world when it is assessed primarily in terms of the native-speaker accuracy of written language production* ("If I was marked in the same way [as] in English")*, no matter whether the content of the course focuses on the language system or on other aspects of culture. Yet this prescient disadvantage is not what she wants. This comparison makes her uncomfortable because it forces her to be inadequate. She learns the only legitimacy of nodding back to her instructor, as if comprehending like a native speaker, but she is illegitimate as a Canadian user of German with her own interests. She empties out of herself the possibility of the courses she most desires. She even puts those desired courses beyond the reach of her own imagination.*

Underlying Carmen's experience of the German curriculum is the shaming adjudication of her always impossible emulation of a German native speaker rather than her curiosity — her interest and commitment — as a Canadian user of German.

19.

The Foreigner watched the apparatus as it did its work. The Student also watched, without totally comprehending. The Instructor turned the apparatus off, made the Student tighten the string of verbs and adjective endings, and sat her down on the Couch. The Instructor silently lowered the Roller so that the Drill was barely touching the back of the Student's head. The Student shuddered. The strings of verbs looked well worn, so the Instructor added some verb and preposition combinations, which she always kept in reserve. Next she shoved the lump of paper into the Student's mouth, causing her to retch. "If only the New Professor could understand: The paper's the only bit we need to replace! It's just disgusting how we can't get nice new paper!"

The Instructor seized the Foreigner, "Look how loyal I am to the Old Professor, to the legacy of his age-old, tried and tested ways! But, you know, I am sure there are people who want to change all of this. Ah, you should have seen all the Structured Exercises we used to put into the students' heads with the Roller! We couldn't get enough of it! Now they try and feed the students all that culture, but — I don't want to upset you — the apparatus still works. It keeps on working."

The Foreigner wanted to look away, so the Instructor grabbed him in order to capture his full attention. She asked, "Don't you see the shame of it?"

The Instructor looked at the ground, then turned again to the Foreigner and said, "I suppose, with you here, the New Professor is putting me under some kind of review by a respected external assessor. I suppose you are opposed to the old

apparatus. One could imagine that you would not see the value in it. One could imagine that you might make a passing remark to the New Professor. I can hear the New Professor now: 'A respected Foreigner, who has graciously agreed to observe and assess Methods across the lands, has deemed our old apparatus inhuman.'"

"You exaggerate my influence," responded the Foreigner. "New Professors can do pretty much whatever they like. They don't need any help from me."

"But you could help me. Don't say too much. When you get together with the New Professor, keep it simple. Keep it to a minimum. You don't even have to mention how the strings of verbs are fraying."

But from the beginning the Foreigner had known what his answer would be. He had traveled far and seen enough in his time not to be honest now. He paused momentarily and said, "No." The Instructor blinked. "I am opposed to this apparatus," the Foreigner continued. "I had been wondering how I could intervene in a way that could be successful, and you have clarified whom I should first talk to — the New Professor, of course."

The Instructor looked at the apparatus, at the Drill, checking that everything was in order. "So the apparatus did not convince you," she said, as much to herself as to the Foreigner.

With that the Instructor turned to the Student and in her own language told her, "You are free." At first the Student did not believe what she heard. "You are free," the Instructor repeated. Suddenly the Student's face showed signs of real life. She began to rattle about in between the Roller and the Couch. The strings of verbs looked like they would tear for good. It was at this point that she incurred a few bruises on her head and some grazes about her wrists.

"Watch out!" cried the Instructor, and pulled the Student out of the apparatus.

But as soon as the Student was out the Instructor paid no more attention to her. Instead she rummaged around looking for an Overhead, which she then showed the Foreigner.

"I can't make it out," said the Foreigner.

"It says: Be just!"

Somewhat satisfied, the Instructor climbed onto the apparatus and set the Overhead against the Drill. She brushed herself down and then placed one hand on the Roller, raising it just enough to enable her to climb under it. She only had to clasp the arms of the Couch before it began to shake. The lump of paper came to her mouth and, although it appeared all chewed, she bit down. One quick kick to the Drill and it was set in motion. The Couch shook, the Roller swung from side to side, pushing the Drill against the back of the Instructor's slumping, nodding head.

The Foreigner looked at the Student. "Go home," he said.

But then the Drill emitted a whirring noise that caught their immediate attention. The apparatus was clearly breaking up. The Roller was not rolling out blanks anymore, but only rolling, rolling. The Couch was not shaking anymore, just rising up toward the Roller, up against the Drill. It pushed and squeezed with a relentless groan. This was not the torture the Instructor wanted. It was like bloody murder. What had she imagined? Surely, not this. She stretched out her hands, as if grasping for the useless, fraying strings of verbs, but by then the Roller had done its work, as it always did, just not over four years.

"Quick! Help!" yelled the Foreigner to the Student, and they grabbed the Instructor to lift her off the apparatus. It was only at this point that the Foreigner could bring himself to look at her face. It was the pale face of a corpse. There was no change in the expression, no sign of the promised transfiguration of knowledge to skillful proficiency as had been promised to all the others who had been placed in the apparatus. Just the tip of a subjunctive was sticking out of her forehead.

20.

CURRICULUM =	

Fill in this blank.

21.

Carmen received an invitation to take off her mask. Having learned not to be herself, she was hesitant at first. She was not used to articulating what she really wanted from a senior-level content-based seminar in German. Still hesitant, thinking that she would still be graded according to the grammatical accuracy of her written German, she insisted that the course would have to be about something she was "*very* interested in." She would not do just any course because of the extra effort she would have to make when writing in German. If the course was about something outside her immediate interests, "that just wouldn't be any fun"; it would be too much of a challenge for the content knowledge she would gain. But if the course were about something she was interested in, she would want to acquire the relevant vocabulary because she would want to apply the new knowledge to her other work. One such course was German women's literature. Another could be contemporary German literature since she had not read any at university at all, other than Bernhard Schlink's *Der Vorleser* (*The Reader*). Another could be a cultural studies course on German history. That course could be built around film. For example, a film like *Good-Bye Lenin* raises all of the issues about what Germany was like before the Berlin Wall came down, what it became afterward, and what people did to deal with the changes.

"This would be an awesome course."

Even then, Carmen would still be hesitant and would only take such a course on German history through film depending on how she would be evaluated.

Carmen was invited to take off her mask just a little more: what if she was not marked based on writing assignments in German? She would not have to worry about "crashing" her grade point average. In that case, she could more easily imagine all sorts of courses that would interest her. They would concern literature, culture, history, film, and classical music. There would be a course on Brecht's theatrical productions. She would be interested in a course that dealt with understanding German society when it was divided in the sixties and seventies, on the GDR, and also now that it is reunified, or otherwise on contemporary politics, like the green party.

In a German history course, taught in German and in which Carmen was not to be graded for grammatical accuracy on written assignments in German, she would like the emphasis placed on studying the cultural context of historical events. It might include politics and economics, but it would emphasize the literature and developments in culture: how people spend their time, the social structures, mass cultural institutions, the kind of government, if there is an economic crisis, like in the nineteenth century or the Weimar period. If it was a seminar course there would be articles relating to whatever debates there are about German history. But if it were a survey course it would be driven more by lectures that would illuminate these social structures and cultural institutions. She would include at least one or two novel-sized, 200-page readings for the term, such as Erich Maria Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues* (*All Quiet on the Western Front*). The readings would be accessible to students, compelling, and tell students a lot about what people were thinking and feeling.

22.

"I know the Professors and Instructors don't want to hear this. But if there were a course explicitly on writing in German, because that's the difficult thing, I would not be interested. I would not want to take it for marks, because I would

not want to get bogged down. I mean, I would want to take it just to be able to get as much out of it as I could. But not for marks."

23.

Carmen laughs. She can see that German writing course and it does not scare her: "Oh, that would have been great!" If she could start the course like she is and finish it as if she had taken a course at the Goethe Institut in Germany, she would not begrudge the effort required on her part. There would be a tangible outcome for her other than just learning formal rules and being able to discern cases.

She laughs, "I want a miracle!"

The course would take place once a week, in the evening. It would have to be immersion based, although Carmen would find that daunting. Only German would be spoken and the students would have to do the speaking in order to enable their confidence. The materials would be wide-ranging and there would be several examples for each kind of writing, so that she could develop familiarity and comfort. Students would deal with materials that interest them and they would set their own goals for the course: hers would be to become comfortable writing letters, for example, to an archive, to get a visa, or even to a friend. She admits that letter writing is dry, but in her case it would be immediately useful for her work. She would write a real letter to a real archive where she intended to work. Her letter would be related to what was going on in her life — she had never done anything like this in her classes before — and she would share her experience with the other students. The other students would be busy doing their own writing and likewise report on their experiences. They would learn how to share this information informally.

Carmen puts her nervousness behind her and continues to design courses for her German curriculum. She is particularly excited about a course on Weimar

mass media and its historical context: As far as she is concerned, Weimar film surpassed Hollywood in the twenties. She suggests examining not only high brow films like Robert Wiene's *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*), or *M* and *Metropolis*, or something else by Fritz Lang, but also shlockier potboilers and sensational films — *Unterhaltungsfilme* — like Ernst Lubitsch's *Madame Du Barry* (*Passion*), which is about the French Revolution, or especially a film that depicts the 1920s New Woman. This course could include film posters as well as newsreels, documentary, and propaganda. It would discuss Nazi films, showing the ways they changed. Students would discuss the films or posters and do written work on them, if it were in a seminar format. They would have to talk about what they see, why those things are there, and what they convey.

"I'm really excited now, I would even want to teach this."

24.

Answers: 1) about, 2) for, 3) with, 4) up, 5) about, 6) with.

25.

The Foreigner glanced at his watch while drinking a cup of coffee at the airport café. He had a while before he would have to go through security. He had said his farewells to Carmen at the check-in. They had met the day after the Instructor's dignified burial, when she took him to the library. She had pointed out where the old curriculum documents were archived. The Foreigner had had the sickening feeling that some still believed they would be used again. He was ashamed to think now that they probably were already. He put his coffee back down on the table and ran a finger down the grubby spine of a secondhand book he had bought for the plane journey home.

He had enjoyed meeting Carmen. She was so talkative. He had known she was already a graduate student and learned from her all about her part-German background. He had thought she would be able to tell him about her experiences in ways that would clearly distinguish aspects of her study of German that were related and useful for her continued intellectual and professional pursuits. Given that she worked with culture, he had expected her to single out particular texts and critical content that had inspired her, intrigued her, or were applicable to her studies. He thought she would talk about essays she had written on literature, that she would discuss her arguments and findings, and how they had led to further inquiry. He had imagined she would map out her undergraduate degree according to books she had read and that she would recall having more say in her degree and a clear direction.

The Foreigner brushed the front cover of his book. He had not expected Carmen to talk quite so much about language instruction. Perhaps how tests and exams got in the way of interpreting culture. But not all the exercises. He had not been expecting to hear that from her. None of those grammar exercises had led to proficient writing. He would have thought her needs and potential would have been better satisfied. Better than the other students he had talked to. It was something about her focus — and, perhaps, background — that had made him think that. He was surprised by her criticism, her existential struggles, performance fears, issues of self-efficacy, her fragile language ego, her ineffable courses. And yet she was a confident young woman. With ideas and goals. Like the other students, she too had made the link between functional language needs, cultural criticism, and the professional communities in which she operated. He was amazed by her strategies and the extent to which her professors and instructors had missed her needs and interests, although she — like the other students he had talked to — was exactly the kind of student — interested in literature and culture, and determined to learn the language — that they most desired in their classes.

For a moment the Foreigner contemplated whether Carmen was even just a little bit complicit in her being ignored, by nodding, by putting on a mask. But surely this was a coping mechanism, a drama she could act, a sign of her intelligence. Let's not blame the victim here! Once she had survived that curriculum, he thought, she could throw that mask away and start a new narrative. Perhaps in the end she was less hampered by the curriculum than overwhelmed by its native-speaker inappropriateness, or misunderstood by it. As if the curriculum had a will of its own, he argued again with himself and smiled. But his smile soon faded: She had been put on a machine that was a misfit for her and pretty much every other student. Perhaps it was not completely irrelevant, but it certainly fell short of what was expected of it. It was hardly effective. He had always thought about how students learned language and culture; but what about how they felt when they were learning? What about their linguistic well-being?

He opened the book from the secondhand bookstore: Kafka's *Metamorphosis and other stories* (1986). He turned to the table of contents … It included a translation of *In der Strafkolonie* … The idea had come to him from the Student. Plenty of time to reread that before security.

26.

Nowadays the Student speaks her own language with all her family members. Only her nephew speaks a kind of Native German because he attends a bilingual school. Everything he does at school seems to be related to his daily life and the world around him. He has not mentioned any Apparatus. But he is still young. The Student uses her Version of German when relatives visit from Germany or when she travels there in her new Academic Position. She makes every effort to converse as fluently as possible in German rather than relying on her own language. On the first couple of trips, for good measure, she even packed her mask and a few of the strings of verbs, which she had taken with her. But later she did not bother with them anymore.

The Student still thinks back on the materials that she dealt with in her Literature Courses and even still uses them from time to time because they are relevant to her current work. She has not taken any miracle course at the Goethe Institut. (Maybe she'll pack her mask if she does.) But she plans on offering that Weimar mass media course, in her own language.

Part Eight: The Story of Selma and the Clothespins

> "We're beginning to see through our ignorance — the everyday vigil we sustain to confirm that we exist in some permanent way."
>
> — Sakyong Mipham, 2005, p. 150.

First Vigil

Selma knocks over the handouts — Selma sits at the wall — The copyist job — The tree with the voices of the three fantasies: the Skipping Girl, the Church Mother, and the Eccentric Teacher

Three o'clock one afternoon is too soon to tell if the young student would get to where she was going, for she was feeling rather small and tired, despite her obvious excitement and apparent confidence, her new outfit, and the encouragement of the warm Prairie sun. She certainly would not get there by idling by the North River all day, dreaming and yawning while contemplating the birch trees as if they were the walls of an impenetrable fortress. One hundred, two hundred, three hundred, four hundred of these trees her mind's eye could count in the split seconds between the first, second, and third dings of the university bells, reminding her of the beginning of the final study session. She sped on through the campus gates, her head occupied with memories of the last few years, thoughts of her final three courses, and anticipation of the future.

This was the young woman's last year as a student and soon she would be starting her apprenticeship as a copyist. She was wondering with whom she would

apprentice when suddenly she collided with a heap of papers, which cascaded up into the air, and under which she perceived only the dark brown leather lace-up shoes and ironed-down petticoats of an elderly lady. Immediately, Selma — for that was the student's name — grabbed at the papers flying about her before they could all fall to the ground, quickly handing crumpled bundles of them to random individuals in the crowd assembling around her, as if distributing candies at Carnival. "Stoppit! Juss' stoppit!" hissed the elderly woman. "What on God's earth d'you think you're doing? These handouts are not for handing out! Not right now! They're not for handing out!" she screeched with considerable anger and frustration. But by this point it was too late for Selma, for in her hurry to prevent any of the elderly lady's papers from touching the ground she had handed them all out to all the guffawing fellow students around her. Sensing the elderly lady's fury rising further, Selma averted her eyes — exactly in the hopeful yet deluded manner in which one person avoids making eye contact with another in order, no matter the sheer unlikelihood, to prevent that other from possibly recognizing or even seeing the first person at all. At once Selma dashed back through the gates and slid down the riverbank toward the birch trees, though not before hearing the elderly woman curse: "I'll see you at the bottom of your pint glass, young lady!"

"Who was that?" wondered Selma as she slipped through the shadowy cracks between the birches, already out of breath. "She must've thought I was a raving drunk! I'm glad she's not one of my professors!" she giggled to herself and thought no more of the old crone. Selma slumped down next to one of the birches that appeared to have grown through an old concrete wall. "Oh, but I don't know if this bodes so well for my job as a copyist," she sighed, feeling smaller than ever. "How will I ever get such a job if I can't look where I am going and all I end up doing is knocking over papers. I'll have my own students one day, and how will I ever be able to answer their questions if I am lost in papers strewn about me?"

Although Selma thought she was sitting with her back against the wall, she could feel her feet slipping. And this was a rather long slip and slide further

through the trees, parallel to the university above the embankment. Selma swore that she could sense the passing of many a school year, though she was not so sure how many. In among the birches Selma noticed thousands upon thousands of baskets full of clothespins, which she could not entirely avoid knocking over as she slid on, their rewards scattered. There were also thousands upon thousands of glass bottles and jars filled to the brim with apples, some half eaten and with worms protruding from the bite marks, and others with music notes, alphabets, with foreign letters, or numbers in all shapes and sizes, with plus signs and equals signs. Still others looked like they contained manuscripts and there were many with historical artifacts, magazines, and children's books, too. As she slid on, she thought she could make out three voices. They were fantastical voices, whose pronunciation was so crystal clear that the resonance of their words seemed to take shape before Selma's eyes.

The first and most enchanting voice belonged to a young schoolgirl with vivid pink and blue eyes and coils of red and black about her skirt and blouse, who was skipping in and out among the trees, carrying a tiny chalk board and a very large red leather-bound book, upon which was written the letters: R E C H T S C H R E I B U N G. Skipping, the schoolgirl recited the spelling of words to herself and for each word she deemed herself to have spelled correctly she pulled a wooden clothespin of one color or another from a tiny silk wallet tucked beneath her blouse at her right hip, attaching the pin to her blouse as she skipped along. "Will I remember the words? Will I spell them all very correctly?" Selma could hear the schoolgirl ask herself.

The second fantastical voice belonged to an eccentric tall small woman — she was small, yet appeared tall for all her diminutiveness — who seemed to enjoy her own company so very much that her positive spirit infected the others around her. Every time the Skipping girl, or Selma, for that matter, caught her eye the two giggled at each other and easily finished spelling each others' words. The woman whispered into Selma's ears with genuine politeness, "Excuse me, my dear, but could you would you possibly not mind but only if you might be able at

all to be so willing and without causing any inconvenience of course of course you can?" Selma very much enjoyed the eccentric tall small woman and soon found that if she were to make polite gestures toward her, the tall small woman would in turn offer Selma much respect. "You are so and you really are, aren't you, and just so very well, well, well, and good for you really very much!" But Selma sensed — perhaps from the eccentric way the tall small woman was dressed, with those particularly cultural kinds of clothing — that if she, Selma, were to make a problem for the tall small woman, then there would be consequences to pay. Nothing bad, just consequences.

The third voice that began to demand Selma's attention belonged to a durante of brilliant toucans who all spoke at once and in several tongues, though particularly Portuguese and German, and sometimes Spanish. The toucans busied themselves like city traffic but whenever they managed to settle they gave Selma the impression that they were attending church, their dark wings folded back like frock coats and their big yellow beaks a clattering congregation harmonizing a most singular sermon. Selma was at home among the toucans, moved by their familiarity, speaking back to them in German, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Selma felt herself jump to her feet, as if pricked to attention by the pinch of one of the Skipping schoolgirl's clothespins, for indeed the little girl never seemed so real as at that very moment, laughing with the tall small woman and surrounded by all the toucans. With a clumsy curiosity Selma wanted so much to run after the girl, who skipped on between the birch trees, but yet another voice was dragging her to her feet.

"Who's this we have here, then?" he asked.

Second Vigil

The Sexist — The Six to Eight girlfriends — The bus ride and the three fantasies — Going to school — The apprenticeship — The Scatterbox

"Only drunks and stupid little girls talk to the trees," the voice continued as Selma regained her senses and found her feet again on solid ground. "And what's this?" he snarled again, pointing at a little chalk board. "Don't tell me this is yours? Good grief! Don't tell me they're letting little girlies play at being teachers now? Oh for Heaven's sake! My teaching's a profession and it's not for any little Harriet to make a mockery of," the Sexist sneered at Selma ferociously.

Picking up the chalk board, the man flushed, "And what in Heaven's name is this supposed to mean?" The Sexist thrust the board in front of Selma's nose: T E A C H M E ! was etched on it. The Sexist punched the fleshy side of his fist flat on the board and in a single short swipe of his arm he erased the words. Selma sensed one of her least favorite awkward feelings coming on. The Sexist then helped himself to some chalk that had been lying on the ground next to the board and scratched out two words: L E A R N M E !

"That's what the likes of you need to know. You girls, you can't do nothing right. All you really want is special privileges. You're always fighting for attention. Well, you aren't getting it from me. You think it's your automatic right," the Sexist burst forth in a shocking tone. Selma, who had never really sought anyone's particular attention, and who even now thought that the Sexist was more engaged with himself than being especially aware of her, wondered how she could ever escape the Sexist without causing him to notice her for real. In the meantime, the Sexist droned on dreadfully, "Maybe, just maybe if some of you girls had some athletic ability or if you could act a bit more macho, then, and only then, would you deserve some attention. But it's all your own fault. You deserve what's coming to you." Selma thought the Sexist might just about go on pontificating for a solid year and she started to become a little self-conscious. "I wonder if I shouldn't have been talking with the three voices. In a sense, I suppose it is a little odd for today's culture. But in a sense, it was as if I had always known the toucans. Speaking directly with them in all their languages had seemed the most natural thing to do."

All the Sexist's whinging was making him appear quite small and indeed Selma found that she was growing considerably taller, eventually casting such a great shadow over the Sexist that he and his grumbles vanished into darkness. Just as she began to ponder her newfound stature, Selma heard some girls approaching, laughing. "We've been waiting for you," said one, carefully looking up and down her full height. It was One of her Six to Eight girlfriends, who she had known since preschool and through kindergarten and elementary school. They had all grown up bilingually together and still had regular get-togethers to catch up and gossip. They had even been in some of the same university courses. Selma valued her Six to Eight girlfriends more than anything, since they had been through almost everything together. Yet despite their common history, Selma noticed that she was somehow different from the others. For one thing, she seemed taller now. "But have I really changed so much since we were all at school together," she thought aloud. "Have I slipped through the cracks? Am I influenced by different things?"

"Come on, Selma, we've been waiting for you!" One of the Six to Eight girlfriends cried, waking Selma momentarily from her ruminations and encouraging her to catch the bus with them. Skipping over to the others she wondered whether she could change places with each or any one of them without anyone noticing. "I could not possibly be One of them now," she asserted. "They had all given up on learning German, for example, hadn't they?" Growing tired, Selma realized that in her absentmindedness she had picked up a red leather-bound book from the seat on the bus and had been leafing through it with one hand, creating quite a flutter of pages, while with the other hand she had been fanning herself with the little chalk board. All those words written out in large, with bolding and underlining and sometimes even dashes between syllables, made Selma feel really quite small again, so small that she thought her feet could not reach the ground while she was sitting in the bus. She found herself staring curiously into the trees, smiling, and talking enthusiastically to the tall small woman, minding to bow to her on occasion, "Why, yes, if you don't mind wouldn't that be quite, quite, of course, and ever so really." And then the toucans

chirped in creating quite an involved conversation with all their languages interchanging. They began debating whether country or city dialects were more appropriate; after all, they were technically on a bus on a city street, but equitechnically they were still between the trees. “We have this discussion every week,” said one toucan. “I would say always,” said another. “More like Sundays,” remarked still another.” “Always Sundays?” “Or all the time on Sundays?” “How about Sundays all the time?” “Sunday all the time?” “It was always Sunday.” “Every week?” and so they continued until Selma was feeling as affected by the conversation as she was enjoying it. She was happily adding her own ponderings when suddenly she was interrupted by the Skipping schoolgirl: “Oh the Scatterbox! Oh the Scatterbox!” she yelped, jumping up and down, and dropping a few of her clothespins. Selma intended to ask the Skipping schoolgirl what the problem appeared to be but all she could say was: “ich lerne, du lernst, er-sie-es lernt, wir lernen, ihr lernt, Sie lernen, sie lernen.” It seemed that Selma and the Skipping schoolgirl were not able to communicate fully in German that day and so Selma began again in Portuguese: “eu aprendo, tu aprendas, você ...”

“Oh, Selma!” laughed One of the Six to Eight girlfriends. “You always make me laugh. Fancy you recalling our school days like that!”

“It wasn’t always a lot of fun,” added Two of the Six to Eight girlfriends. “Do you remember how the teacher would stand at the front of the classroom? That was the teacher’s place. And whatever the teacher said or wrote on the board, we’d write it down.”

“We did a lot of that,” said Three of the Six to Eight girlfriends. “We did just a lot of copying.”

“Very much,” Four chimed.

“Just at the front of the classroom and teaching. Just standing there, teaching away; and we’d never actually use what we were taught,” reminisced Five.

“Pure grammar! Nothing we could relate to!” chipped in Six to Eight together.

“But there was that one teacher. She brought in culture to some extent. Remember?” reminded One.

“Oh, yeah. She dressed all cultural too,” laughed Two.” That was fun.”

“But other than her, the teachers were all the same: ‘This is your homework! OK, this is the lesson for today!’” Three of the Six to Eight girlfriends imitated with a stiff head and shoulders. “And only once in a while would they incorporate something fun.”

“We once played a game,” remarked Four.

“And once in a while we’d go to the language lab,” recalled Five.

“But mostly we were just sitting there for an hour, going through the tape. A lot of it was boring,” sulked Six to Eight in unison.

“Yeah, a lot of it was boring,” they all chorused. Selma and the Six to Eight girlfriends became silent.

“Oh!” perked up One. “I have some fantastic news.” Selma smiled since One of the Six to Eight girlfriends always had something positive to say. Perhaps that’s why they all still got together. “It concerns the Archivist,” One said. “I mean, it concerns Selma.” They didn’t know who to look at, Selma or One of the Six to Eight girlfriends. One continued, “He, the Archivist, of course, is looking for a new apprentice copyist and, since I know she, you, Selma, to have such a splendid hand, I suggested you to him for the position. He seemed all for it, you, Selma. You could start as early as tomorrow at twelve noon.” Selma just about fainted.

“But you’ll have to be careful,” warned Two. “I’ve heard the Archivist is very particular.”

The next morning Selma set off for the Archivist's. Soon she was standing in front of a large building in the Baroque style. It was a broad mostly mustard yellow building, with three rows of windows spaced at regular intervals on either side of an impressively ornate oval entrance. Most of the windows were rectangular and made of brilliant crystal. The top row, however, was comprised of circles of turquoise stained glass. Sculptures of angels and acrobats stood astride a broad sweep of steps leading to a gilded door, intricately carved with blossoms and flowing ivy. After climbing the steps, Selma reached for the door handle and was suddenly taken with another of her least favorite awkward feelings. The door increased in size before her eyes and the door handle shot up to almost a meter above her head. Scared she would miss her opportunity, Selma jumped, reaching out for the handle. As she did, a wrinkled hand darted out of the door, grabbing her.

"So you don't think I can help you, eh?" a voice crackled. "Who cares if you don't like me. You don't really have a choice, young lady," it menaced. "I'm a very nice old lady, don't you know," it asserted, but sounding very mean. Alarmed, Selma, shrank away from the voice issuing from the door. Literally, she shrank. She shrank until she was small enough to slip out of the wrinkled hand's clutches.

Third Vigil

The Skipping Girl's tale — The Six to Eight girlfriends go to the university coffeehouse — Meeting the Archivist

"There was once a grandfather who lived in the forests of Brazil and spoke several tongues. In this way the grandfather was able to converse with the toucans, who helped organize family life as well as conduct various affairs. There was, of course, a grandmother who also lived in Brazil. She cooked by day and

danced by night, and often put her recipes to music. Then there was a grandfather in Germany. He consumed book after book, feeding on every word. Finally, there was another grandmother also in Germany. This grandmother spent years carefully listening to the creatures that lived inside her television set so that she was eventually able to comprehend them. The Brazilian grandparents and the German grandparents each produced a child: to the Brazilians, a daughter; the Germans, a son. One day, the German grandparents inexplicably moved with their son to Brazil, settling in the same village as the Brazilian grandparents. As the German son grew up between books and the television, he could smell the most tantalizing smells and hear the most infectious rhythms wafting together through the window of the kitchen next door, along with considerable bird clatter. And from time to time in that window would sit the Brazilian daughter. Soon the German son could hardly tear himself from the window of his home, for he yearned so much to get to know the Brazilian daughter. Eventually the four grandparents got together and decided to introduce their respective son and daughter to each other, not without considerable assistance from the interpreting toucans, whose beaks were polished especially for the occasion. There ensued the most loving of relationships and daily life in the village was bolstered by frequent dances, expanded library holdings, a new antenna that could receive more television channels, and a particularly busy sanctuary for lost and abandoned toucans, not to mention the auspicious birth of the son and daughter's own girl child. The girl child was taught to skip straight away and likewise required to speak right from birth, even with the little vocabulary that she had at that time. Throughout her tender years she had to keep speaking, but her parents and grandparents fostered this first with food, next with television, and then with books, and of course there was always help from the toucans. But soon enough circumstances in the Brazilian forest village changed. The young couple first moved to the city and then they decided to seek a better life for their child by emigrating to Canada. At first, life was not easy in Canada. But a durante of expatriate German catholic toucans helped the young family settle, and the Skipping girl was also able to attend a German-English bilingual school so she

soon taught her parents the local language. The Skipping girl enjoyed going to school. There, each time she expressed something of particular complexity or beauty she was awarded a clothespin. She took great care to look after the clothespins for once she had collected enough she would be allowed to exchange them for sashes and crowns. One day those garments would afford her entry into a mythical land. But if she lost her vocabulary, she would forfeit or even have to surrender her clothespins."

"Oh Archivist! You do spin the most fantastic of tales," interrupted Two of the Six to Eight girlfriends.

"Yes! And your method of delivery," laughed Three, "is unreal."

Four added, "And I thought you were going to tell us one of your tales from your life. But that can't poss …"

"But I tell you," insisted the Archivist, "I come from just such a Brazilian forest village!" But this only met with laughter from all, except Selma, who was looking somewhat reflective.

"Oh, come on now Selma," said One of the Six to Eight girlfriends. "You're not still feeling down from this morning, are you?" Around noon earlier that day, One had come across Selma on the threshold of the Archivist's house, being tended by an elderly woman with dark brown leather lace-up shoes. Selma was not sure if she had been coming or going, but then neither did One of the Six to Eight girlfriends. And neither was really all that certain what the lady in the brown leather shoes had wanted. One of the Six to Eight girlfriends decided to take Selma to the university coffeehouse for a brew. There they stayed all afternoon and into the evening, for One had thought it would be the likeliest place for Selma to meet the Archivist and secure her apprenticeship. All Six to Eight girlfriends eventually showed up and, sure enough, so did the Archivist. The Six to Eight girlfriends all stood up.

"Sit down, sit down," commanded the Archivist. "I have the perfect story for you all. There won't be a dry eye in the house!" Thus the Archivist launched into typical narrative form, telling tales about his life and works until he eventually was hovering above the girlfriends' heads and all they could do was laugh. But noticing Selma's lethargy, One of the Six to Eight girlfriends took the opportunity to liven her up by introducing her to the Archivist.

"Are you all laughed and cried out?" asked the Archivist.

"I'm afraid, I haven't laughed or cried since lunchtime," replied Selma.

"Well maybe I should end my stories right here right now. So I'll be seeing you at noon tomorrow, young lady!" said the Archivist bluntly.

"No, please do carry on. I rather …" began Selma, but no sooner had she opened her mouth was he gone.

"Oh, look what I've just found in my pocket!" gleefully cried One of the Six to Eight girlfriends.

"A clothespin! Me too!" joined in Two. And so each of the Six to Eight girlfriends found a clothespin in her pocket. Only Selma did not find a clothespin in her pocket. But they all agreed that she had the best prize of all: the promise of a copying apprenticeship with the Archivist!

"But I do wish he had continued his story," said Selma, half in a daydream about the Skipping girl and jars full of clothespins. One after Two and Three after Four until there were no more of the Six to Eight girlfriends said their polite goodbyes, leaving Selma alone in the coffeehouse. Still half in a dream, she thought she could hear the Archivist's voice in among the other customers and wondered if he had returned in order to finish his story. Looking around, she instructed herself, "Noon tomorrow, young lady!"

Fourth Vigil

The Narrator's explanation of Selma's good mood — Selma and the three fantasies — The call to class — The Wall

Has there ever been a time in your life, dear Reader, when in the middle of your everyday habits, in the middle of your class prep, your teaching, or even your scholarly pursuits — now or, for that matter, when you were a student yourself — that you have sensed a peculiar, that certain uncomfortable feeling? That the tiniest crack appears and you yearn for something else, something as yet unknown and somehow strangely familiar? And so you find yourself in a curious predicament, going through the motions in your usual world, but as if you have outgrown the skin you are in and waiting for the next layer to properly form. As if suspended between routine and a fairy tale that you might have once read but never thought could actually happen, you are neither happy nor sad for the people around you, seeing them as they are, knowing that they are doing their jobs, learning their lessons, living their lives, and you are feeling that, as much as you belong to this world, that something extra helps you to make meaning in ways that the world would desire and are far beyond its scope. If you have had this peculiar feeling, then you have experienced what Selma was experiencing. For she found herself in just such a fairy tale of things that surely could never happen and yet also stuck in a place where there were always lessons to learn. But, dear Reader, do not fret, for it is my duty to tell this tale, of how the fantastic extraneous seized the inward ordinary taking it to another dimension. And yet I fear that by tale's end you will believe little in either Selma or the Archivist, and perhaps even doubt the existence of the Six to Eight girlfriends. Strive as I may, dear Reader, to involve you in this story, I beseech you to try, please try to understand! For this fantastic realm is closer to you than you think.

Thus Selma felt in the best of moods, in the most painful of pleasures, ever since meeting the Archivist. It was as if she were walking through a forest of

birch trees, lost in thought, cut loose from the ties of the habitual world, staring at unfathomable sounds and speeches that rose from within her. She knew then that she wanted everything to be pretty much the opposite of what most of her other teachers had shown her, because that had left a lot of her friends with little to enjoy, while she, as if having slipped through a crack and sniffed the texture of another, broader realm, was very much enjoying it all. She thought of one day having her own students and wanting them to be able to experience that as well, and just be. She wanted to make things worthwhile and enjoyable for them at that time. "I don't wanna be that person," she said to herself, "who's just at the front of the classroom and teaching. Class can be more interactive and incorporate a lot more highbrow culture and daily culture too. Not just pure grammar." She thought of the Brazilian grandmother's cooking and dances and saw herself eating and waltzing with a bunch of kids. She imagined a toucan orchestra playing music — like Robert Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48, after the poems of Heinrich Heine — while the kids were studying, to help them learn. And the kids would have to conduct all sorts of long conversations and negotiations with the toucans. Of course, not everyone learns the same and so it just bothered Selma a lot that she and her Six to Eight girlfriends were not accommodated enough by the habitual world when they were growing up. She promised herself that she would make sure to get her kids more involved. She wanted to know what they thought they needed or would work for them. It was because of her personal experiences of her fantastic family and its heritage that she wanted to learn more. It made her want to pass this experience on to others, to teach it. Although many of her classes had been boring, she wanted to build on those experiences, to make them fuller by incorporating her fantastic experiences. She had started university and was going to finish it with a diploma. She was going to make good use of her diploma.

And so Selma found herself once more sitting beneath the birch tree growing through the old concrete wall, compensating for the habitual world, for as soon as she sat down she slid into her dreams as before, of the vivid pink and blue eyes of the Skipping schoolgirl in the coiled red and black skirt, carrying her chalk board and the Rechtschreibung book, of the positive eccentric tall small

woman with her respect and consequences, of the durante of piously tittle-tattling polyglot toucans. She loved her fantastic family and wished for her dreamworld of another, broader realm to come true. But then she felt for a moment that she was left only with her regular courses and this did not seem enough for her. She saw herself teaching and she was barely taller than her students. She tried hard to add something extra to their experience, spicing up the grammar with a little history and culture. Her initial nerves began to fade, but just as she was relaxing again into her dream her students began to grow taller and ask her all sorts of prepared questions about the grammar, history, and culture that she was unable to answer on the spot. She felt herself grow small from worry as she wept her responses: "I'll get back to you" and "Can you just email me that?" or "I don't know, but I'll figure it out." "If only she knew some tricks," she thought, "then I would be able to get all this into proportion. It was certainly more pleasant before the kids got bigger than me." So she threw a little general knowledge at her students, making them jump around the class and interact for thirty minutes.

As Selma wept under the birch tree, the Archivist appeared, "Why haven't you shown up for work on my manuscripts yet?"

"It has been my very resolve, sir, to …" Selma began to reply, wiping away her tears and already feeling a little more like her right size. She explained that she had been on her way when suddenly she encountered the three fantasies in the tree by the wall. She told the Archivist of her experiences, of her necessary fantastic conversations, and of her lessons in future reality. All the while the Archivist stared at Selma with an expression that seemed to say "Who are you?" and she began to fear that the older man was thinking that she was making everything up.

But then the Archivist said as a matter of fact, "I am well aware of the events of your life and it is clear to me that you are much connected to a broader experience than actuality." Selma felt as if the birch tree, the wall, and all other things were spinning around her. The Archivist showed her the Rechtschreibung book — hadn't she held this in her own hands on the bus just the other day? —

and Selma could see the Skipping schoolgirl on its shining red front cover, as clear as the most indelible childhood memory. “You may read from the Rechtschreibung book with the Skipping schoolgirl every day if you do a good job of copying for me. And you will earn a clothespin from her should you be able to spell and pronounce your words correctly,” said the Archivist. “I shall expect you tomorrow at noon.” With this the Archivist turned into an orange, white, red, blue, and yellow balloon and floated away over the concrete wall that divided the classroom in which Selma suddenly found herself. There were other students in the class and those on one side started to clear away the desks that were close to the wall. The students on the eastern side confiscated everyone’s shoes any time a student from the western side crossed in or out of that side. This seemed to go on all day for days. Sometimes a student from the eastern side would climb over to the western side and not return, so all the eastern-siders would take away all her stuff and ruin it. There were rules and limits, so nothing was completely ruined, but the stuff did not belong to the former eastern-sider anymore and she felt sad. But the other eastern-siders felt sad too so they all came over to the western side and then all the western-siders went over to the eastern side and took away everything. Then everyone felt happy and sad. Selma noticed that all the eastern-siders and western-siders’ faces were changing into futuristic figures and that she herself had grown considerably while she had been in the wall classroom. “Now all these fantastic things of which I have dreamed,” she remarked with confidence, “are entering my life.”

Fifth Vigil

The dry classes of the habitual world — The Six to Eight girlfriends tell Selma about the Scatterbox — Selma visits the Scatterbox

“You know what comes to mind?” asked Two of the Six to Eight girlfriends, “when thinking of Selma teaching German one day? Her standing at

the front of the classroom with her students copying what she writes on the board."

"And she'll just tell them: 'It's just that way. You just need to know it.' Just like we were told," added Three.

Four began to reminisce: "We copied a lot. You had the slide and that was what you were copying for notes. And you could choose to copy it or you didn't really have to."

"I think it was just odd," critiqued Five. "Ironic in a way. Because 40% of our final grade was from class participation and involvement. Yet you very rarely asked questions or got to comment on things, so you'd get that mark just from showing up!"

"I think there were 20 people that started in that class," recalled Six to Eight. "And then it went down to about 11, but on average there was just the six to eight of us."

"Well, that's because another part of the mark was like a 40% term paper, right? So you didn't — technically — have to be there for that anyways, right?" reasoned Two, shifting.

"I don't know, the classes usually were very enjoyable when it was just the few of us," One inserted. "And we got to know each other very well. And you have a lot of attention from the teacher," she continued enthusiastically.

"But at the same time, he just stood up there and talked, and you took notes," repeated Four. "That was the class. And we learned."

"We had to," cautioned Three with a smile.

"I mean, I went 'cause 40% of the mark was class participation," said Five caught up in her earlier remarks. "So I showed up."

"Well, I learned a very general piece of knowledge from that course. It was history of culture and how it evolved. So that was very interesting," persisted One.

"But at the same time it could be very dry material," reminded Six to Eight, and each of the girlfriends shuddered.

"I remember now," said One. "It didn't matter how much water or eye-drops or moisturizer we took into those classes, we always came out bone dry."

"I used to carry my own aloe plant around with me!" exclaimed Two.

"I used to get nosebleeds," added Three.

"My skin would crack so bad," winced Four.

"I would get headaches," lamented Five.

"We felt like we could've crumbled into dust at any second," concluded Six to Eight, not to be outdone. "And the teacher just was not as approachable as he could have been."

"You'd just get drier and drier," they cried out in unison.

One started over, "It was good, I suppose, because you were getting the main aspects of that ..." She paused to reflect. "And I can tell you what's important and blah, blah, blah ... Oh dear!" she looked uncertain. "And I took those notes so in that sense I learned something from that class." She paused again, then admitted: "But it was a class I went to because I had to, not because I wanted to."

"But don't you think it was all lost on us?" inquired Two, fairly. "I mean, we grew up not enjoying those language classes. We certainly weren't able to do a lot with it at the time."

"But it's something that I thought I would really use someday, or go back to," said Three hopefully. "There might be bits of it. But nothing that I'm finding incredibly useful."

"And the textbook was so very dry," recalled Four. "I could hardly touch it without my fingers becoming sore. Or look at it without my eyes hurting."

"But it was just a little book. It wasn't even like a proper textbook," One interrupted, trying to see the positive side again. "So that, that wasn't that bad."

"But as a student," interjected Five, "there wasn't much of an invitation for you to engage with the material that you were learning."

"You had to show up and you had to write a term paper," continued Six to Eight.

"But there were two out of three courses that are quite enjoyable," One tried again.

"And one not so much," insisted Two. "That teacher stood there at the front of the classroom and wasn't very approachable or he didn't try to make the class fun or anything that you could relate to."

"... Just trying as much as possible not to be very interactive," continued Three.

"They were so dry!" repeated Four.

"A lot of it was boring," confirmed Five, absorbed by a yawn. "We did the history of Germany, which means we did the war, like every single year. So you pretty much know those two wars!" she tried to laugh. "The whole Hitler thing," she groaned.

"It wasn't that much fun," concluded Six to Eight.

Two returned to her earlier remarks, “And ‘cause a lot of our teachers did it that way, she won’t know any different. She’s just going to end up doing it like that at least 85% of the time.”

“But Selma enjoyed those classes,” countered One.

“But Selma learned differently,” offered Three. “She didn’t usually learn the same as the majority of the class.”

“She had other influences growing up that just made her be involved in her languages,” added Four.

“She was definitely involved in them all the time,” Five agreed.

The Six to Eight girlfriends reflected on themselves, “The people she grew up with going to school and university in German didn’t have all those influences.”

Thus One persisted, “Besides, she’s already spent a few weeks copying at the Archivist’s house. Something is going to come of Selma for sure. Why, she’s going to become one of the best high school teachers ever.” Yet One quietly admitted to herself that she too had doubts. Regaining her more positive thoughts, she resumed, “Her students are actually going to use what she teaches them. She’ll make it worthwhile and enjoyable at the same time,” she continued, trying to convince herself.

“She’ll pull something out of her pocket!” they all agreed.

At this point, Selma appeared at the coffeehouse where the Six to Eight girlfriends gather, looking for the red book and chalk board. But none had seen either.

They continued their conversation about their university studies, since they knew it was a topic Selma enjoyed. One began to tell of her experience of one professor in particular, a figure easily recalled by all, it seemed, except Selma. “You know, she was a very nice lady outside of class. But I cannot say

that I liked her very much. I don't want to sound mean, but she'd forget that she'd tell us something or she'd think she told us something, that an assignment was due, and we'd have no clue, and just constantly things like that for that whole semester. It was just a very stressful semester, because it wasn't beneficial. Nobody really concentrated on any of the content either because you were so worried of what she'd come to class saying or doing." She paused, shaken, "And you'd have to recite all kinds of wordy grammar rules because she would tell you to do so and that's just the way it was, but you'd have no idea what they had really meant. Oh, there was no way around her. You had to do her class because without it you could not advance, you wouldn't know the rules and limits, and that was essential." One's eyes widened, "Scatterbox! That's what we'd call her. The old Scatterbox! She was formidable, you know. You wouldn't want to cross her. But you needed her course for sure. She's still there, you know, up in the little red office."

Selma left the coffeehouse with her Six to Eight girlfriends after they had finished their conversation. Once each had turned in the direction of home, Selma decided to seek out the Scatterbox in her little red office at the university, for surely she would have to take her course. Selma wandered the corridors of the general building, at first not sure where she should be going. Some parts of the building seemed inaccessible and she was beginning to have one of her least favorite awkward feelings when she thought she saw the Skipping schoolgirl in her coiled skirt. "Oh, the Scatterbox! Oh, the Scatterbox!" she thought she heard her say. "May I? Am I to? Must I? Can I? Do I like to? Do I want to remember all these words?" She appeared to be looking around herself as if something had dropped out of her mind. Selma thought nothing of running as fast as she could after the Skipping girl in order to slip through the cracks behind her. No sooner had she lost sight of the Skipping girl again did she run into the little red office in which a tall, lean, weathered woman was standing, wearing dark brown leather lace-ups. The old woman beckoned her further into the office, which contained many animals, birds, and odd instruments. Selma immediately noticed a stack of papers on the woman's desk and she began to feel smaller, so small, and yet she

feared that the room would suffocate her. “I know what you want to know,” the old woman barked, tapping her fingers on a red leather-bound book. “You want to know if you will become a language teacher. After all, you’ve been in one of my classes before.” Selma tried hard to recall. “But you’re just like all the other students, aren’t you? You don’t have anything to say that’s important. You don’t even remember upsetting all my papers, etc., do you?” the old woman carried on as Selma began to realize exactly who she was dealing with. The Scatterbox continued, snarling, “You want to be just like the Skipping schoolgirl. Another good for nothing who can never remember how to spell right.” Selma was definitely having one of her least favorite awkward feelings now. But the old Scatterbox would not let her go: “Do I have to spell it out for you? You have fallen into the hands of the Archivist and he is filling your head with thoughts that you can be just like the Skipping schoolgirl. Nonsense!” she screeched, her voice like chalk scraped across a board. “That’s nothing but the talentless twittering of a clothespin-pinching birdbrained greenhorn!” she aspersed. “But I know of one way of being better than that. You might think that I haven’t been overly willing to help you. But you will see. You must return this assignment to me at eleven tomorrow night.” The Scatterbox thrust a piece of paper at Selma with one hand and swept her out of the room with the other while ordering: “Go away! Research! Write it up in another language! Come back! And hand it in!” Selma ran for the woods.

Sixth Vigil

The Archivist inspects Selma’s written work

Selma wonders whether she had still been a little queasy from traveling on the bus when she thought she had seen the wrinkled talking hand at the Archivist’s door. And she must surely have been buzzing from too much coffee the day before. “Wasn’t that really just her advanced grammar instructor Ms.

Comfrey, with whom she had an office hour appointment?" Selma got a sudden prickly sensation in her fingers. But even if she had been imagining things, it was time to set her mind to the task at hand. Nothing seemed more real, more authentic to Selma, than to gather all her writing materials — her pens and notepad, her big dictionary — and head to the Archivist's each day for noon. She reflected on the various copying she had been doing for the Archivist and her daily reward of reading the Rechtschreibung book with the Skipping schoolgirl, spelling words in the context of what she had been copying and receiving clothespins. Every day now she would enter the Archivist's house, he would greet her, ask her if she had any particular needs, and lead her to the lab, which was really a plush media library with individual cushioned booths and a fantastic collection of children's books, novels, newspapers and magazines, music, board games, films, and manuscripts stacked to the ceiling. Some of the holdings would just fling themselves at the Archivist: One hefty novel would always flutter its pages hoping to get its spine cracked and the myriad children's books in particular were constantly crying out to be read. After rearranging the magazines the Archivist would disappear and Selma would choose a text from any number of manuscripts the Archivist left for her. Soon enough she would be immersed in another world of history, politics, or culture, all the while surrounded by chattering, bantering toucans. The Archivist would then return as a green-billed toucan and lead Selma to the Skipping schoolgirl, who would be holding the perfectly polished, red leather-bound Rechtschreibung book and a silk wallet of clothespins. Selma would practically weep tears of joy. Here the Archivist would inspect sections of Selma's copying work from that afternoon.

On the first such occasion the Archivist had simply smiled, painfully. Selma had done lots of copying before, just because of the essays and such all the time both in school and at university. She had even written many German essays in German. But on inspecting Selma's first attempts at copying for him, the Archivist politely suggested that her work was perhaps the product of poor materials, a lack of writing support, or insufficient timely feedback. The Archivist placed Selma's work under a microscope and they looked again together from

every which way possible. Selma noticed how childish, how amateurish, her copying appeared, with her writing unstylishly floating above the line. Some words were smudged and looked more like a science experiment that had gone horribly wrong, while certain other letters were growing crowfeet and threatening to walk right off the page in protest. “Uh-oh, ah!” squawked the green-billed Archivist, “Aber dein Deutsch ist gar nicht so schlecht!” This remark took Selma quite by surprise and she felt a little embarrassed. The Archivist continued his assessment, “But, you know, dah, de-de, dah-dah, daah” and fetched a pen with his beak to add a few dots, circle some words, bracket a few others, supplying them also with tiny arrows, and finally encourage those cawing and stamping letters to settle into a more comfortable position. Selma did not know quite how to take the Archivist’s assessment, let alone fully comprehend it. But despite her slight discomfort, she soon realized that he had paid her a complement and that he was being proactive in regards to all the other copying she had before her. She now could see that her work was not so horrible, after all. She even would have probably given herself a B+ for it. The Archivist then handed Selma a manuscript that looked like it might as well have come from the Alhambra or the Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil, but in fact was from the university archive in Heidelberg. At any rate it might as well have been in Arabic, for that kind of German was all Spanish to Selma.

So Selma copied that manuscript, and many more, working diligently and happily in the thought of spelling words with the Skipping schoolgirl and accumulating her own wallet of clothespins. Each day the Archivist returned with a broad smile on his bill, would turn gently serious when looking through Selma’s copy-in-progress and help her with particular matters of style and content. Should Selma have her own questions or want feedback on an early draft or outline of her copying or need help figuring out what next to write, the Archivist was always approachable at convenient hours so she could go and discuss things with him — even when it was time for her to be at her desk in the lab-cum-library copying among the toucans. And each day the Archivist brought a different manuscript for her to copy. Early on they were at a lower level of language and definitely

focused on some specific forms of writing, such as a proper German humanities essay and then a proper German social studies essay. These were easiest for Selma to incorporate and she learned how useful it was to notice the differences between the manuscripts, as the Archivist brought her all different kinds of literatures one after the other, some cultural, some social, some even scientific, though she absolutely avoided the mathematical ones. Gradually she gained a sense of being well equipped to copy even some of the most challenging manuscripts. She saw how to make her work more effective as if she were studying in Germany for a semester and had to hand it in there.

The Archivist praised Selma's work and one day told her that the Skipping schoolgirl had told him that she wanted to share all her books and words with Selma, that she wants them to grow up and mature together, and that she wanted Selma to receive as many clothespins as necessary to fill her own silk wallet. "Should you carry on with your work," the Archivist explained, "you will certainly receive your own Rechtschreibung book and enough clothespins to obtain a very bright sash and thus reach ..." And this is where I must apologize, dear Reader, for the Archivist's words concerned Selma's future but, unlike him, I am no clairvoyant.

Seventh Vigil

Selma's eleventh-hour assignment — The Reader's illusion — The battle in Selma's mind

Selma did not mention Ms. Comfrey's assignment to the Archivist and as soon as her copying for him was done that day she ran straight home, avoiding the coffeehouse and the Six to Eight girlfriends, to stew and sweat all evening over her paper. Finally she could delay her departure for her meeting with Ms. Comfrey no longer. As she crept toward campus she envied the world about her,

half of which was fast asleep, while the other half was surely distracted in the pursuit of more pleasurable things than completing an assignment for Ms. Comfrey. The snow was falling thick about her, but her mind was not on the worsening weather.

“I didn’t have any books,” she told herself sulkily. “Like I had certain books, which I had to read for book reports or whatever. But that was about the only reading I ever had to do,” she continued, talking to herself. “I didn’t have to read very much in my German classes,” she reasoned with herself, “But that’s because I’ve done mostly language and translation and grammar type courses, rather than the literature courses.” Selma momentarily became aware of the snow, which seemed to her to be settling and accumulating. “Because a lot of the courses that I’ve wanted to take in German haven’t been offered when I could take them,” she began to plead her own case with herself. “And a couple of those were literature courses. But I haven’t taken any German language classes where I’ve had to read certain specific German novels,” she brooded. “Like, just textbooks are pretty much all I have from school and university.” The snow seemed to Selma to be up to her hips. “So it was impossible.” Selma glanced gloomily to her left and realized that she was not alone. “It was impossible,” she repeated, but Ms. Comfrey did not reply, scowled ever so slightly, and trudged forward, forcing a glass jar into Selma’s hands.

“I found it very difficult to write the assignment for you,” Selma braved an excuse, “‘Cause I’m doing like the role of women in the Weimar Republic era, and I don’t even know where to look for that in the library.” She glanced at Ms. Comfrey, fearing whatever response she would get from the old woman, who had given Selma the nightmarish assignment, but was now marching tall above the snow. Nothing. Selma persisted, meekly, “There are so few resources on it. It’s very frustrating for me. I would like to have read some women authors.” Ms. Comfrey did not seem to care as Selma made one last attempt to justify what she had managed to write, “But the internet was a good resource.” It was as if Ms. Comfrey had not been listening at all.

Finally the two found themselves in front of an enormous tower on campus, which Selma was sure she had never noticed before. Ms. Comfrey knocked on the door, which swung open immediately, releasing such a noise from inside that the initial blast blew away the snow from Selma's and Ms. Comfrey's jackets as if it had been chalk dust. Ms. Comfrey pushed Selma inside the tower and into a classroom, steaming with the sweat from the brow of many an anxious student. Everyone was talking. Everyone was on edge.

"Stop your talking right now!" Ms. Comfrey's voice scratched through the classroom. "This is a university language class and it's absolutely forbidden for students to talk before you have all memorized the conjugation of 501 German verbs." This was a rule that the students knew would be strictly enforced. In fact the now silent students were so nervous that they were trying to memorize 555 German verbs for good measure. Ms. Comfrey continued to recite the rules, "It is absolutely forbidden for students to talk unless they are first spoken to by the instructor: me. Once spoken to, it is absolutely forbidden for students' responses to contain any meaning, have any bearing on their lives, or communicate anything that I do not already know." Selma quietly found a seat at one side of the classroom and assumed the same slumped pose as the other students. "Under no circumstances are students to talk among themselves," Ms. Comfrey went on, "without using a lot of English." Selma wondered briefly whether this was a contradiction, but then she was not really paying attention to Ms. Comfrey any more at all — and in that she was not alone. Instead, Selma was staring at the clock on the wall behind the droning instructor: One hand was moving forward with a very rapid ticktock, as if using up all the time in the clock, while the other hand was slowly turning backwards to the sound of ticktack and almost seemed to be getting stuck as if the few seconds it traveled were the only time it would ever have. Selma felt mesmerized by the loud — ever more deafening — ticktock of the rapidly moving clockhand. Only occasionally, between all the ticktocks, could she just about detect a little ticktack. Unable to keep up with all the ticktocks, Selma found herself slumping further in her seat whenever she heard a ticktack. Some of the other students had slumped completely out of their seats and were

sliding listlessly toward the classroom door, where, upon exiting the class, they seemed barely able to speak at all.

The ticktocking hand began to whirr very rapidly round the clockface, coming to a sudden halt with the strike of eleven. Selma sprang to attention in her seat. “But it’s not really eleven,” she thought. She looked around for mutual support from her fellow students, only to realize that she was alone in the class with Ms. Comfrey, glaring right at her.

“Give me that glass jar and hand me your assignment!” she ordered. Selma handed Ms. Comfrey the glass jar, which she had carried through the snow, realizing for the first time that is was full of single pages of notepaper, each with numbers, headings, or short sentences, each with different handwriting. “Your assignment!” Ms. Comfrey snapped, dipping her wrinkled hand inside the jar and pulling out one of the pages, shaking it as if the ink were not quite dry.

Selma sensed one of her least favorite awkward feelings coming on, “But it is not due until eleven and it is not really eleven!” Selma motioned toward the clock, which was whirring again.

“I believe I told you to hand this assignment in at one o’clock sharp!” Ms. Comfrey pronounced, confusing Selma, and pointing directly at the clock whose ticktock hand was now vibrating pompously and clearly signaling one o’clock, much to Selma’s surprise.

“But you had said eleven!” Selma persisted.

“Is it eleven or isn’t it eleven? Make up your mind!” Ms. Comfrey spat scornfully and Selma noticed the ticktock hand automatically winding forward. “At any rate, it is getting on for two o’clock already and your assignment is as due as yesterday!” Ms. Comfrey added, rather unhelpfully, yet prompting the clock to change times again, so that, with the ticktack hand somewhere between ten and eleven and the ticktock hand around two, it appeared to be grinning triumphantly at Selma.

“But how can I hand in my assignment when we haven’t had our office hour yet?” Selma inquired. Ms. Comfrey was already extracting another page from the jar. “I need some support with writing this paper and I haven’t had any yet,” Selma remarked.

Ms. Comfrey continued to pull the pages out of the jar and stare right through them. “Do you think it is my choice to help you?” she asked not waiting for an answer. “You know when my office hours are.” She stacked the individual pages into a neat pile beside the jar.

“But they’re only at a very specific time and I happen to have a class during that time. I wanted to discuss things with you,” Selma explained.

“You should have emailed me your outline. I expect very much every student to contact me beforehand with an outline. This is regulation: Under no circumstances are students to complete their essays without having first given me an outline.”

“But I did email it to you!” Selma contested.

“Then where is your essay?” demanded Ms. Comfrey. “Your essay is due!”

Selma reluctantly handed over her paper, knowing that she still needed help with it.

“And here you are,” said Ms. Comfrey immediately handing back another piece of paper to Selma. Sure enough, Selma was looking at her essay outline. There was no written feedback on it at all. But she had no chance to ask what that meant, or to point out that her outline was returned after she handed her essay in. For almost at once Ms. Comfrey slammed Selma’s paper down on the desk. “Look at this!” Ms. Comfrey bawled. “This is wrong, and that is wrong, and this is wrong in every which way!” Her critique carried on, “Where’s your content? And what’s this style? And this is no good, and that is no good. I guess you think that’s a pro ... Ah but look at this con!” Ms. Comfrey picked up Selma’s paper

again and then slammed it again, as if the force alone of being slammed on the desk would knock it into better shape. “This will really not do,” she concluded. “We’re going to have to help you figure this out for the next essay you write.”

Ms. Comfrey ordered Selma to take a closer look at her work as she scratched out words and threw out entire sentences. She interrupted her corrections only to tell Selma to forget about all the wonderful books and manuscripts she had seen in the Archivist’s library. She reminded her that what she needed was the rules and limits, that she should rid her mind of fanciful conversations with the Skipping schoolgirl. She insisted she would lead her to becoming a proper high school teacher and suggested a few stories about the war that Selma should read and that would interest future generations.

“But what about the women authors? Wouldn’t reading them have improved my essay?” Selma inquired.

“I went through completing my PhD with never having studied any female authors, except for one in one course, and that’s because ...” Ms. Comfrey trailed off momentarily. “That’s because ... Women authors? There just weren’t any and it’s just like that.”

“You’re kidding me, right?” Selma could not believe her professor just said that.

“Starting with the Middle Ages, for that time, you know, there weren’t any.”

“But in the later eras? There were definitely German women writers then?”

“Well, they’re not as well known, so we don’t focus on them. You don’t focus on them!” Ms. Comfrey insisted.

Thus, dear Reader, a sight familiar to you: lights burning in a classroom with two figures leaning over the desk close to the board. Ms Comfrey exhaled

knowledge from the goodness of her heart, while Selma was eager to catch a spark. And so, dear Reader, you project and check your preconceptions: The curriculum was indistinguishable from normative methodology dictated by a textbook and an accidental collection of courses; little guidance in literacy development; language and culture learning happening more by default than by design. Then, just as you are about to cry out, the sudden honk of a horn blasted away everything ever held to be real. At that moment a cacophony clattered from somewhere within the classroom. A dozen or so toucans descended upon the two figures. Their variously colored bills — some golden with black tips, others mostly green with yellow, red, and turquoise touches, still others black except for a bold yellow stripe — snapped at the stacked outlines, each ripping one from the pile. Ms. Comfrey flung her arms at the toucans' flapping wings, her boney fingers seemed longer than ever as she snatched at their feet, grasped at the pages in their beaks. Her jerky uncoordinated movements made her take on the appearance of the old Scatterbox more than ever. The toucans pecked at the students' essay outlines, adding comments and vocabulary, circling aspects of language that they should revise. One worked busily on Selma's outline as she held it in her hands. "She has had the option to write her German essays in English all along," argued the Scatterbox. But the toucans were intent on equipping the students to write their papers in German.

Then another dozen toucans appeared carrying books, which they dropped into Selma's hands. One after another, they brought her books that she had never seen before, let alone read. Some of the toucans squawked excitedly as they pulled Selma away from the Scatterbox, sitting her down to read, while the others joined the fray keeping the Scatterbox away and tending to the student outlines.

"Oh my goodness!" laughed Selma, "You're kidding me right, like reading a book?"

"No!" screamed the old Scatterbox, dashing at Selma, trying to pull the books from her hands while beating back the toucans. "No! Just textbooks! Just textbooks for her!" But as the Scatterbox cried out, Selma saw even more toucans

fly into the classroom bringing even more books, tons of German books, dropping them all about Selma.

"I recognize these books," thought Selma. "These are the books from the Skipping schoolgirl's childhood whose story the Archivist told me about." The latest troupe of toucans cawed together in German as if, like approving aunts and uncles, they were confirming exactly what Selma was thinking. "I could read some of these on my own," Selma muttered to herself and the German-speaking toucans cawed once more before realizing that they were dallying too much and were needed in the ongoing battle with the flapping and flailing Scatterbox. "I could use this variety of books in a classroom," Selma continued, picturing herself as a teacher. "There are all sorts of books here appropriate for different reading levels and age groups. Children's books, and books on social themes and current topics. I would even incorporate that and use that each week or every second week to actually get kids to read." Then she noticed her paper in her hand again, "I could have done with those books in class! ... I could have done with a class on reading?"

Selma could hardly see the Scatterbox for the cloud of feathers and claws, and beaks commenting on plans for papers. Then she saw the unmistakable green bill of the Archivist, carrying a net with a large crate of books marked "German women authors."

"No!" cried the Scatterbox from somewhere under the durante of toucans.

The green-billed Archivist landed on the desk next to the dueling Scatterbox and toucans. He prized open the crate with his bill and spread out the books. Selma felt really happy, "It's like a course I always wanted." The Archivist tapped one book by Hildegard von Bingen, which released wheels of color as he began to chant a song for Selma.

"F-f-f-fo-cusszz!" a meager voice dimly wheezed from under the toucans. But Selma was happily scanning the books around her. "That just plays a definite, definite underlying role," she thought. "A course on women's lit or women's

culture," she continued to ponder. "What motivated these women to write literature? How did they do it? And there are just so many other aspects definitely playing into things all the time. Look! A book on women in Weimar by Doctor Deborah Tallsmall!"

Selma was roused by all the toucans' chatter about her. She had never heard so much German spoken in the classroom before; despite all the rules, it was never enforced. It was as if she was no longer at the university. There were so many other influences around her. Right at that moment she could see one of the Skipping girl's grandmothers swaying in time to the Archivist's singing. One minute she was babbling in German, the next in Portuguese. Selma felt herself grow taller and start to take flight with the toucans. She was surprised that she was able to keep up with them so well. They were taking her home.

Selma woke with a jolt the next morning: "Was it all a dream? Did I not meet with Ms. Comfrey yesterday evening? Or was I ill? Sick with worry about my assignment for her?" She glanced toward her window, there was snow on the ground outside, and her jacket — looking damp from being worn in the snowfall — was tossed over a chair. "So I was on campus last night after all." She looked more closely at her jacket and saw paper sticking out of a pocket. Even from her bed she could make out that it was her outline and essay returned to her by Ms. Comfrey, yet she could see all kinds of feedback on the paper, whose pages were clipped together by a brand new clothespin.

Eighth Vigil

The portfolio of copying — The class that defies time — The singing-talking text

Selma had been working for several weeks at the Archivist's. She enjoyed her copying and always looked forward to the time at the end of the workday when she would spell from the Rechtschreibung book and talk in foreign

languages with the Skipping girl. She would think of the new clothespin she would earn and the ever closer realization of her new world. As her portfolio of copying grew it even appeared to Selma that she was copying texts that were long known to her. While at school and university she had become so familiar especially with ubiquitous stories about war, but also with texts on the history of German culture from year dot to year now, that with those texts she hardly needed to look at the original in order to copy them out. The Archivist noticed Selma's diligence and so let himself be seen more sparingly during copying time, and yet he always knew to appear exactly at the moment when Selma had a question or was finishing one text and ready for another.

One day, the Archivist escorted Selma to the lab-cum-library again only for her to encounter all sorts of new interactive books that engaged her on ever varying topics and wanted to debate particular words and phrases. The Archivist was particularly good-humored, cracking jokes as he ushered Selma on and indicated to her a new set of texts to be copied, wrapped in a cobalt blue sash and placed carefully on the seat where the Skipping girl would normally sit with her silk wallet of clothespins. Pointing at Selma, the Archivist looked at the fledgling toucans — six of them, to be precise — who had gathered in the room in an orderly manner and explained her latest task, "Class! Ok, it's her turn for these next sentences. Every single person — ahem, or toucan — who comes to this class in this part of the fantastic library has to be involved. Every person — or toucan — has to take her or his turn with these texts. Ok, let's move on to this person." Selma noticed that her writing materials had already been set next to the new texts. The Archivist turned to the young student: "Selma, you are to copy these manuscripts along with these six toucans. The manuscripts are not to be removed from the library." The Archivist looked thoughtfully at Selma with a solemn smile and gave her an idea that unfurled on her hand and whispered "I want you to succeed" before tenderly evaporating with an almost imperceptible chime. The Archivist continued, "I am open to all questions and if you need to ask something, speak up, I will not be far away." But then he warned: "Do not make a mistake or render the original inaccurately, for then a great misfortune will befall

you." With this the Archivist also evaporated into music that issued from the spot where he had been standing.

Selma and the six fledgling toucans began to study the strangest German script they had ever seen. "He is very much open and if you need to ask something he will always help," the toucans agreed among themselves as they peered at the strange text, albeit it with an expectant eye on Selma.

"So, ok, wait, wait, wait, I don't understand this," admitted Selma. "Do you? Do you know how to help me out with this?" she asked them.

The toucans shuffled about. "You can e-mail him at any time," they chorused.

Then one particularly pretty ariel toucan twittered, "He's like, oh, ok, well Selma has a question and so he's e-mailed it out to everyone in case we all have this problem as well."

"Yes," tweeted a rather formal-looking toco toucan. "He sends out little tips all the time: Oh, he says don't forget this or make sure you check that."

"He wants you to do well in this class," they chorused again as if to explain how the Archivist knew Selma's question before she had even posed it.

Selma and the six fledgling toucans returned to their copying assignment, bolstered by the Archivist's tips. They copied constantly all afternoon. The Archivist had already given them four texts, from which each had selected two to work on simultaneously. Selma worked well and felt like she was getting ahead. She soon had her first two texts well on the go and even started on the third. Selma and the fledglings circulated their different versions and compared notes. Just as one person — or toucan — focused on one text, they tried to overlap the work. The different texts and group interaction made this one of the most enjoyable experiences of working and learning in German that Selma had ever had. "Honestly, this just lets me very much use the language," she said to herself. "It's one of the funnest classes I've had. And one of the most useful, too!"

"Yes!" croaked the toucans most emphatically, having read her mind. "Very much so!" they agreed again and then distributed the seven clothespins for their job was done for that day.

Over the following afternoons Selma and the six toucans carried on their work with the four texts. She noticed that she wanted to be very accurate with the texts and so each afternoon she brought along her own very huge Collins German Dictionary from home. She deliberated, "Oh well, how would I make complete sense of this? Or do I want just the general idea of that? Or do I need exactly every single word? Not that I need every single word, I just need to get the meaning." The pain in her back from schlepping the very huge dictionary everywhere was practically killing her but she thought it was worth it. She found the copywork very useful because she realized that she would be able to apply her new skills with texts for her own future students. As much as Selma enjoyed the copywork and saw its wider application, it was the most work Selma had ever done in German and the most time consuming, too. It was almost magical how quickly the class would go by, for no sooner would she and the fledgling toucans start their work than all of a sudden time would be up and they would be done again for another day. Each time Selma would cry, "Are you kidding me? I thought we just started the class? This class goes by so incredibly quick." The toucans would all shake and squeeze their watches, but there was not another drop of time to spare.

As the afternoons passed Selma saw how the four texts were connected and started to understand the full meaning of the words written in the strange script: It was the story of a green-billed toucan. Sometimes Selma thought the meaning was even singing to her from the texts:

> *Once upon a time there was a Skipping schoolgirl who made every effort to collect as many clothespins as she could possibly carry. Each clothespin was a token of work well done — of fitting words and sentences lined up more or less straight and proper — symbols of fulfilled wishes, prizes for goals attained. She was the descendant of a long line of prickly*

characters, of bird-fanciers, culinary wizards, and court jesters, who over many generations had worked hard to advance the knowhow of their respective professions. Compiling tomes of learning in all relevant subject areas, these characters had given birth to all sorts of new, different, and parallel Realities that had quietly begun to inhabit the World That Apparently Had Always Been. One of the Skipping girl's antecedents, a passionate green-billed toucan, who occupied himself with creating meaningful rhymes, fell in love with the fairy Language. He sent her florid prose, tragicomedies, dinner invitations, and scientific declarations; no gift was too diverse, no task too tall, for him in his endeavor to woo and acquire the object of his love. But Language had dwelled for many a year under the pristine petticoats of Queen Quo, who had wholly other intentions for Language. Indeed, the Queen took great exception to the toucan's presence within the realm she had had built to precise specifications; she insisted that Language ignore his advances and accused the toucan of undermining the World That Apparently Had Always Been. Queen Quo even threw the book of clichés at the lovesick toucan and subsequently had him banished from one Reality to the next. The Queen evoked the divinities of Rule and Regulation to undo the toucan's rhymes and all the learning they embodied. Rule and Regulation could be found in all corners of the land ready to enforce a Single Reality with an accuracy, the likes of which had never been seen before, and with which it was nearly impossible to make much sense. Still the toucan believed in his love, and in an effort to restore Different Realities, he took flight to Fantasy, Family, Fiction, and Function. With his friends by his side, he was able to appeal to the very heart of Reality, to reveal to it its many facets, causing Reality to open up and provide Language with contexts no Rule or Regulation could ever determine forever.

Selma woke as if from a dream and noticed it was six o'clock. She looked at her version of the manuscript before her and thought that she had hardly copied a thing. Where had the time gone? Then she realized that the fledglings had

already flown, she had indeed finished the manuscript, and — sure enough — the Archivist had left the daily clothespin for her. Selma went home humming a tune.

Ninth Vigil

Selma visits the Six to Eight girlfriends — Lunch of crackers and soup — The eating song — The Six to Eight girlfriends defend the Scatterbox — The Archivist's email — The difficult text

The fantastic replaced the ordinary in Selma's life as she spent her afternoons copying at the Archivist's with the fledgling toucans and interacting with the Skipping schoolgirl. In the evenings she took turns reading from the Skipping girl's children's books and the book by Dr. Tallsmall. Yet Selma would still sometimes think of her Six to Eight girlfriends and one morning, while on her way to the Archivist's, she bumped into One, who told her that all Six to Eight girlfriends were missing her and longing to see her. No sooner had One mentioned this than Selma found herself at Two's place. Three and Four were looking at an assignment that Five had just got back. On seeing the paper Selma's mind immediately swam with all the fantastical images from before and she thought that the green-billed toucan she read about in the dreampoem must surely have been the Archivist and that his and the Skipping girl's influences must somehow be related to her newfound confidence. "For sure," Selma informed Three, Four, and Five, pointing at the assignment, "Those are the marks of toucans hard at work." The Six to Eight girlfriends all laughed, agreeing that Selma was going to make an awesome teacher, with her vivid imagination.

"Oh, Selma. You have to stay for lunch!" suggested One. "Maybe you can tell us more about these toucans," she added with irony.

Selma had to go to the Archivist's, but it was already twelve thirty and Two had already brought out the grammar crackers as an appetizer. "Here you go. Start with this," she offered.

"Straight forward grammar crackers," thought Selma. "That's not much fun." Although they were not very enjoyable, Selma politely munched on the grammar crackers, quietly trying to convince herself that they were healthy and beneficial. Besides, the Brazilian grandmother had been cooking up all sorts of elaborate things for her at the Archivist's recently, things that seemed to taste just right because they were the sort of things she imagined growing up with. But Selma knew very well that for every recipe there had to be a list of ingredients and a system to follow and she herself only knew the basics. These grammar crackers were a useful reminder of the reason why other food tasted so good. Selma crunched the grammar crackers, mindfully taking notice of their shape and texture. And with every bite she felt herself becoming just that little bit smaller. It was like she was going back and re-learning how to taste. "I know this taste," she thought, "but why does it taste this way?" This simple food just brought her right back down to size. She had had to swallow a lot of these grammar crackers in the past — they had been a routine part of her diet. But they never left much of an impression on her. Not until then. Not until she had had other experiences would she have ever been able to appreciate the grammar crackers in the very focused way she was then. "If that's all there was," she reflected, "I would have croaked! But this time I'm not starting with nothing but crackers. It's like all that other stuff is the basis of something to work with," she chewed.

Finally, Three put a large terrine of vocabulary soup on the lunch table. Selma was familiar with German vocabulary soup, but this was some kind of Spanish vocabulary soup. Like the Six to Eight girlfriends, she sat there at the table just wanting to know what to do. As the vocabulary floated on the surface of the soup, they silently wondered how to ask what the ingredients were, to find out if anyone had any food allergies, and whether anyone could pass the soup or would like to serve. Their mouths were all open but they were not able to eat. No

one knew how to start eating the soup because all they had to use were grammar crackers. Four even had some Spanish grammar crackers on her plate, but as she dunked them into the soup to spoon it out, they just came apart. They peered into the soup but no one could find the words for spoons and bowls. Five — who had eaten Spanish vocabulary soup once before — put her mouth to the big bowl and began slurping at the vocabulary. At first she found it difficult because the vocabulary in this soup was different from the vocabulary in the one she had had before. She rather liked the soup and really meant to praise the chef, but no matter how she moved all the random words from the soup together in her mouth she was unable to string them into anything meaningful. Their stomachs rumbling, soon all of the Six to Eight girlfriends were slurping directly out of the soup terrine.

"Oh!" said One in surprise, "I know how to say my name in Spanish."

"I think I have just swallowed some numbers," added Two.

"I could tell you the color of the soup," claimed Three, revealing a piece of rojo on her tongue.

"I know how to conjugate the verb to eat in the present indicative," boasted Four, as she munched on some grammar crackers between slurps.

Five was getting full, yet she was still unsatisfied: "I got all the words for school materials. But that's about it. I can't use those anywhere."

None of the Six to Eight girlfriends could find the words for spoon or bowl and, since they just kept bumping each others' heads as they slurped from the terrine, they all gradually gave up on the Spanish vocabulary soup. They had only managed to drink the very surface of the soup and sat silently watching the rest of it turn cold, uneaten. They all agreed it was much like when they had German vocabulary soup, or French vocabulary soup. There was really no difference in flavor.

To help take her friends' minds off their unsatiated appetites, Selma decided to teach them a fantastic song she had copied at the Archivist's. "It was in his file marked 'Let's Do Food Today'," she informed them. "It was by Rolf Zuckowski (1983) — a German composer of songs for children — and is called 'Theo — Der Bananenbrot-Song'. It goes to the tune of 'Day-O — The Banana Boat Song.'[1] Here are the words[2]:

'Theo, The-e-e-o!
Komm und hilf mir in meiner Not!
The-, lieber The-, lieber The-, lieber The-,
lieber The-, lieber The-e-e-o,
bitte mach mir ein Bananenbrot!
Ich komm halb vor Hunger um.
Theo, mach mir ein Bananenbrot.
Egal, ob sie grade ist oder krumm.
Theo, mach mir ein Bananenbrot.
Mach ein bisschen dalli, Mann,
denn mir knurrt der Magen.
Theo, mach mir ein Bananenbrot.
Ich kann das Gefühl im Bauch
nicht mehr lang ertragen.
Theo, mach mir ein Bananenbrot.
The-, lieber The-e-e-o,
komm und hilf mir in meiner Not.
The-, lieber The-e-e-o,
bitte mach mir ein Bananenbrot.
Ich hab Kohldampf wie ein Tier,
Theo, mach mir ein Bananenbrot.
Soll ich etwa verhungern hier?
Theo, mach mir ein Bananenbrot.

[1] See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THn3RoIK36k
[2] See Appendix for English translation.

Mach ein bisschen dalli, Mann,
denn mir knurrt der Magen.
Theo, mach mir ein Bananenbrot.
Ich kann das Gefühl im Bauch
nicht mehr lang ertragen.
Theo, mach mir ein Bananenbrot.
The-, lieber The-e-e-o,
komm und hilf mir in meiner Not.
The-, lieber The-e-e-o,
bitte mach mir ein Bananenbrot.
Ich verdrück ein ganzes Pfund,
Theo, mach mir ein Bananenbrot.
Bananen sind ja so gesund!
Theo, mach mir ein Bananenbrot.
The-, lieber The-e-e-o,
komm und hilf mir in meiner Not.
The-, lieber The-e-e-o,
bitte mach mir ein Bananenbrot.'"

"Are you kidding us? We're not singing," said the Six to Eight girlfriends. "We're not in grade seven!" They were mad at Selma for suggesting the song, but she persisted against their chorus of protests: "We're too cool to sing this! We're gonna hate you for this!" But by the end of learning the song, they were all so happy. One had found a loaf of German rye bread where the crackers were kept and, while Two cut it into slices, Three peeled some bananas she took from a fruit bowl that looked just like the terrine.

Four began to laugh and plea, "Hilf mir in meiner Not!"

Quickly followed by a rhyming Five, "Bitte mach mir ein Bananenbrot!"

They all laughed: They were so ecstatic because they could use the song to say something they needed and wanted to say. The Six to Eight girlfriends danced around the room humming the Bananenbrot song and making open-face banana

sandwiches. Selma could tell just by looking at them that she had done the right thing by giving them some authentic input on lunch and getting them to apply it in some way. Learning to sing the song had certainly been more useful than munching on grammar crackers and staring at cold vocabulary soup all afternoon. The girlfriends even began to play around with lyrics, making them their own.

"Bitte mach mir ein Tomatenbrot!" sang One.

"Nein, nein, nein!" laughed Two, "Bitte mach mir ein Olivenbrot!"

"Ich hab' was: Bitte mach mir ein Karottenbrot!" joined in Three. "Karotten sind ja so gesund!"

And so the Six to Eight girlfriends confidently ordered all kinds of open-face sandwiches, meaningfully and playfully applying what they had sung so that their lunchtime diet was not an ends in itself, but a means to becoming more fulfilled.

Selma was delighted for her friends. "It's all thanks to the Archivist, you know. And the toucans, of course," she was letting the excitement of eating banana sandwiches go to her head. For sure, she felt she had grown a little taller ever since sharing the song. "Doing the copying apprenticeship with the Archivist and the toucans has definitely given me more confidence in my German. It's different, of course, if I'm thinking of me being ready to teach it as opposed to just knowing German." Selma's growth spurt continued. "I would definitely rate myself higher just in knowing German now rather than me teaching it to somebody else. The toucans have been great to work with. But it's not that I'm not confident that I'll do well as a teacher. I'm not gonna neglect the kids and it's not like they're not gonna learn German, like with the Scatterbox. You know the Archivist is really a toucan too," Selma babbled. "And has a fantastic library with unheard-of books that want to be read so much that they fling themselves off the shelves." Selma's friends smiled and giggled, half from the banana sandwiches and half at Selma's strange story. But she went on. "And we read and copy authentic texts and draw on all sorts of influences. The texts come alive and speak

to us, expecting us to ask them all sorts of questions. Or sometimes we accompany them to their houses, offices, stores, or museums. Some of them have children too and they're especially talkative. And I know a Skipping girl, who lives with the Archivist. She helps me with my reading and if I do well I will gather enough clothespins to acquire a sash that will enable me to enter another realm entirely. It's so different from, so much better than the Scatterbox."

As if teaching them the song was not bananas enough, now the Six to Eight girlfriends really did think Selma was going mad. "I think I definitely could have been better prepared by the Scatterbox. She could have done things in order to make my job easier in the future. And in terms of reading and writing, reading proficiency probably could have been a little higher. But I've had a lot of good influences as of late in that. And my writing and speaking I think are quite good now too. No thanks to the Scatterbox."

The Six to Eight girlfriends defended old Ms. Comfrey, "You're exaggerating. Even if her classes weren't enjoyable, they must have been useful!"

"And the Archivist wants you to express yourself in all languages. And the Skipping schoolgirl showed me all her books," insisted Selma. "And one day I will have my own Rechtschreibung book — though I might not need one anymore. Can you imagine?"

"But thanks to the Scatterbox you will be able to explain everything written in those books," Two countered. "And you can get good grades by memorizing her rules and limits."

They all turned silent when suddenly a short bespectacled man in a gray turtleneck sweater and generally gray suit with various colorful accessories arrived at the house, carrying a laptop computer with an email message for Selma from the Archivist, requesting that she not miss her usual start of work the next day. At that the man left and Selma and the Six to Eight girlfriends realized he had in reality been a gray-breasted mountain toucan, such a rare sighting that they all thought they had been imagining things.

At the Archivist's the next day everything about the house and library seemed normal and not magical at all. The door handle was just a door handle. The books in the library were lined up with their spines to the front edge of the shelf, imposingly out of reach. The Archivist informed Selma that she was to copy alone that afternoon and as he handed over the manuscript he asked her about lunch the previous day: "How did you like the bananas I sent?"

The manuscript that Selma had to copy that afternoon was particularly difficult and she regretted having to work alone, without the six fledglings. The manuscript was very dry and brittle and each time she turned a page it threatened to disintegrate into dust. The manuscript was written in a much too difficult style of a language. Selma thought it must have been a very, very high or tall order German. She could see from notes scratched in the margins of the text that other students — who had probably only learned German at university — had previously tried working with the manuscript. But they must have spent hours sitting there finding it incredibly difficult even to read, trying to figure out what was going on. One previous student had drawn at the top of one especially brutal page an empty hourglass with a skull and crossbones underneath it. Selma tried as hard as she could to decipher the difficult text, unable to read some sections, unable to recognize certain words. At times she stared so hard at the dusty manuscript that she thought she could hear it practically rasp back at her, but she still could not make out what that difficult text was trying to say. "But he didn't say I had to copy all the manuscript today, did he?" Selma wondered aloud. "He didn't say I had to do it all. And he hasn't very much enforced the whole of the text every time," she continued along the same line. "So I guess since this is just a little manuscript — like, it's not even like a proper text — that I could just skip a few bits and make up the bits that I do not understand in the original."

Yet as Selma rushed to complete her copy, the sections of the original that she abridged or entirely deleted flowed to the ground around her as sand that unceasingly started to fill her plush cubicle in the library. No sooner than Selma realized what was happening did she feel her legs get stuck in the heaping sand

and notice with horror that a glass chamber was closing all around her, trapping her inside. The original manuscript soon faded like the faint cry of a distant bird. The glass jar began to taper as it came closer to Selma's neck and then widened out again, leaving her shoulders below and her head over a tight, narrow funnel. Selma fainted: She was stuck in an hourglass jar in the Archivist's library.

Tenth Vigil

Selma trapped in the bilingual glass jar — The Six to Eight girlfriends are bottled up — Selma recalls the Skipping Girl — The Scatterbox's collection — Selma struggles to free herself

I doubt, dear Reader, that you have ever been trapped in an hourglass jar, unless it was in a terrible nightmare. If that were indeed the case, then I am sure you would have tremendous sympathy with poor Selma. But if such a frightful inconvenience has never happened to you, even in a dream, then please lend me your ear for just a while longer. Imagine yourself surrounded by shimmering objects. Brand new textbooks? Song sheets? Manuscripts written in strange alphabets. Some maybe illustrated. They each seemed to be held together by clothespins and were suspended motionless in glass jars, just like Selma. The student woke with her absolutely least favorite feeling. There was pressure on her limbs, on her throat. She tried to speak, but could hardly even breathe. Poor Selma, a captive of her own thoughts reverberating so deafeningly inside the glass jar that she could not make out a single word.

Selma then noticed another row of glass jars on the shelf next to her, each containing a university student. They all seemed happy in their bottles, and Selma could clearly make out their day-to-day chatter as their thoughts chimed through the glass jars: "I don't know this. I just know it's that way. I don't know how to explain it." To her horror, Selma realized the bottled students were her Six to

Eight girlfriends preserved in one of their first-year courses. She watched as they received their grades and then headed to the bar for a drink and a flirt.

“That’s a big reason why my friends aren’t involved in languages anymore,” Selma’s thoughts crashed about her jar, “because they don’t know, they just got the rules, but couldn’t do anything with it.” Selma managed to cry out to her friends: “Can’t you see that you’re bottled up inside a bunch of glass jars?”

They turned around only to laugh back at Selma, “Can’t you see that you are sitting on the bus heading to campus, staring out into the birch trees, and are tricked into thinking that you are trapped in an hourglass jar?”

Selma realized that the Six to Eight girlfriends had never experienced the same influences as she had. They had never seen the Skipping schoolgirl or the durante of toucans and so did not understand that they were trapped. Her mind called out to the Skipping girl, sorry for having lost her way. She will never again see another clothespin, never attain a sash. And again her thoughts reverberated — this time bilingually, even multilingually — within the glass jar.

Selma thought as hard as she could — in defiance of the reverberations — about the texts she had copied at the Archivist’s and all the extra spelling she had done with the Skipping girl. She had been particularly fond of the German social studies she read with the toucans. They had discussed everything in German, referring to actual newspaper clippings with opposing versions of the same topic. They had focused on cool current events, but in Germany, and compared the different cultural aspects. But then she thought of all the history of Germany she had instilled in her like nothing else in school and the reverberations exploded about her. Selma could see how beneficial such a course would have been for students who started learning about German at university, but she did not think she could take another second of the thought of more war stuff. “This is overkill!” she panted.

“But if it had to happen,” she thought to herself, “it could be different. It could be more like a culture course. There’s no sense in trying to take the history of Germany and cram it into thirteen weeks. But find the main points, things that have the most influence, and tie them in with how or why Germany is the way it is today.” Selma began to envision from inside her glass jar: “I’d incorporate Germany’s view compared to North America’s view with some history readings — factual ones. But I would also do autobiography or diaries, something personal, that students could relate to. I’d have it become more real to them, so that when they’re reading the facts, they’re like, ‘Oh, so this is kind of what she’s living through at that time’. One assignment would be based on that book, of how they relate to it, explain how the coming down of the concrete wall influenced the western-siders and the eastern-siders, and do more of a reflective essay. But they should also do a group project and a presentation in greater detail. And I’d get some guest speakers and discuss what it meant to them.”

“I have a great German speaking friend,” a crystalline voice sparkled through the glass. “She’s a historian. I’ll put you in contact with her. I’m sure she would love to come into class and talk German.” The Skipping schoolgirl had entered the room. “Your course sounds fantastic!”

“I would even add children’s perspectives,” Selma continued to the Skipping schoolgirl’s conspicuously partisan applause, “and just even incorporate how they were influenced by war and how they lost their childhood and became certain kinds of adults.”

Selma realized that the Skipping girl was standing right by her. “Other things could be different too,” Selma called beyond the immediate glass frame of her jar. “They need to have more long term goals than just ‘You’re in this class to pass it’, to know that the students come out of that class knowing German rather than, ‘You need to know this to hand in this assignment or to do well in this test’ and that’s it.” Selma could feel her limbs coming back to life. “Maybe how to apply it, and a wider range of information, ‘cause I’ve just found a lot of

overlapping, just the whole war stories, so I know that really well, but there's a heck of a lot I don't know yet."

The funnel loosened about Selma's neck, enabling her to talk a little more freely, "Why not do a course about children and youth in Germany? That would be really curious, especially for future teachers." The Skipping girl's applause encouraged Selma to speak up, "And history and culture definitely play into that: what are the differences for kids then and now. Times have changed, kids are different now. Sometimes we think that kids nowadays are very spoiled and not appreciative, that they do not have that respect."

"But you could study how in Germany after the war, particularly since the late 60s, there's this concept of 'antiautoritäre Erziehung' — antiauthoritarian education," added the Skipping girl. "Many parents thought, 'Well, we've had this experience with war and just because our society is so rigid, we want to raise our children in a way that's really not like that.'"

"Yes," responded Selma, "even the repercussions of that: How are those kids today as adults, based on that upbringing? I'd include different studies in that class."

"That's fantastic! Like sociological studies?" inquired the Skipping girl.

"The readings would include specific literature on authors who contributed to the debate somehow. People writing about children and people writing for children. And children's books because I think they're very useful. It gives you perspective." Selma pressed the palms of her hands against the glass jar, speaking through the cracks that had started to appear. "Children play a huge role in society. I just don't understand how you could just shove them aside and ignore them when studying another culture."

Selma's dialogue with the Skipping schoolgirl came to an abrupt end as the old Scatterbox tumbled into the library, snatching at the bottles on the shelves. The Scatterbox was happy to see Selma, who was surprised to see the Scatterbox

in such a good mood. “Take care of the sounds,” the Scatterbox cried, “and the sense takes care of itself!” The Skipping schoolgirl tried to shoo the Scatterbox away, but the old woman just grabbed at the glass bottles and as they fell she shoved them under her petticoats with little care or attention to the students being shaken and falling over inside. “And the moral of the story is,” she crowed, “a kilogram o’ tickle and a little chore, both enchant and madden!” Neither Selma, nor the Skipping girl had any idea what the Scatterbox was blathering. “And then I’ll set you all free with a bit of truants’ elation!” she carried on, her spindly fingers reaching toward Selma’s jar.

“No! No!” screamed Selma, “I refuse to go. I refuse to leave the Skipping girl!”

But the Scatterbox started destroying everything in the Archivist’s library, smashing the remaining glass jars. She grasped at a jar of clothespins and the silk wallet at the Skipping girl’s hip. “These should complete my collection. My confiscations!”

Selma threw herself with all her might at the wall of her jar, causing the glass to ring out an alarm. Immediately the Archivist swooped into the library in the form of a massive green-billed toucan in a brightly colored turtleneck. The Scatterbox conjured up a stack of textbooks to fling at the flying Archivist. Yet each and every one of the books rebounded off his powerful wings, transformed into huge dictionaries and heavy binders of authentic materials that fell upon the Scatterbox. The witch made a last grasp for a Hammer and a Duden, but the Archivist found a better use for them, putting the Scatterbox to rest once and for all.

The Archivist looked toward Selma, “You were not responsible for losing your way, but rather an antagonistic principle kept you from it. You have shown your trust in the learning process, in linking the classroom to your personal and cultural experiences outside. Be free!” Selma’s glass prison shattered and she fell,

landing with a gentle thud, in a pile of birchwood clothespins (enough for several blue sashes!). The Skipping schoolgirl waved her arms for joy.

Eleventh Vigil

Whether to invite Selma for lunch again — The Six to Eight girlfriends' examination, confession, and denial of the Scatterbox

"How could Selma's banana sandwiches have had such an affect?" asked One of the Six to Eight girlfriends.

"I blame the Archivist," stated Two.

"His madness is infectious," added Three,

"I don't know if we should invite Selma to lunch again too soon," wondered Four.

"She ruined everything," complained Five. "We ended up throwing out most of the soup and crackers."

"Ich verdrück ein ganzes Pfund," sang One.

"Bananen sind ja so gesund!" rhymed Two.

"Oh, how irritating," moaned Three.

"I can't get that stupid grade six song out of my head," grumbled Four. As all the Six to Eight girlfriends found themselves humming the song: "Theo, The-e-e-o!—"

"You know, I refuse to believe there was anything special about those banana sandwiches," insisted Five.

"Me too," agreed Four. "I refuse to believe in the dark arts. It's not that I don't wish Selma all the best with the Skipping girl and clothespins. But we know the Scatterbox. And we know the Archivist too, and all her stories just crack me

up. They’re nothing but an allegory, just some kind of peculiar narrative, to explain her other influences that we don’t have. She’s been doing a lot of compensating.”

“Yeah. She’s learned to have to do that if she wants to succeed. She must have had that instilled in her through her parents,” commented Three.

“She’s just gotten to the point where she knows that if she wants to do well in the classes that she’s in, then she needs to be doing extra stuff,” remarked Two. “But creativity is one thing. What about the rules?”

“Exactly! And we have an exam looming!” reminded One.

“And that lunchtime song is just too distracting,” complained Two. With that, the Six to Eight girlfriends decided to put Selma’s song out of their minds by revising for their examination.

Several days passed since the Six to Eight girlfriends had seen Selma and finally it was examination day. They put on their best clothes and headed to university. “This is it for me and German,” declared One. “No more classes for me after this exam!”

“Me too!” Two exclaimed.

“It’ll be good to be done with German,” sighed Three. “I thought I knew this stuff, but all they want me to do is explain it.”

“It was just an elective for you, anyway?” inquired Four. “I mean, none of us signed up for a major or a minor, right?” Everyone was quiet.

Five broke the silence: “Not long and we’ll receive our graduation papers! ... But it’s kind of a pity, really, that none of us except Selma did honors in German, considering how we all went to a bilingual school together,” she lamented.

The girlfriends found their way to Ms. Comfrey’s classroom, where the examination was to take place. Everyone assumed their positions behind individual desks, a copy of the exam sheets already on each desk. Looking rather haggard, Ms. Comfrey began her preamble to the examination: “Anyone who does not execute their sentences perfectly, will be!” The girlfriends glanced at

each other under their brows, amazed that they had survived this far and wondering how anyone was still alive.

"It's not very fair, is it, this exam?" whispered Five as Ms. Comfrey continued.

"Whoever said we've learned fairly?" retorted Four under her breath.

"We've learned the rules," stated Three quietly to her friends, cautiously leafing through the exam already. "But there are no questions about just the rules. They're all applied."

"And we've never had chance to apply the rules with our own sentences," said Two in a hushed panic.

"And what's the point of repeating all that stuff if you don't explain its relevance as you go along?" cooed an unexpected voice from behind the girlfriends. They slowly craned their necks only to meet the bright gaze of a sharp-nosed young student in a gray turtleneck sweater. He pointed at the exam sheets, "Confusing, isn't it?"

The girlfriends began to argue all at once. "It's not him." "You mean, you don't recognize him?" "I would know him anywhere!" "He's driving us crazy." "No, she's the one who's just plain crazy." "Just ignore him." "It's been a waste of a term." "Focus!" "I don't understand this exam." "Of course you do! You know the rules, don't you?" "I just feel like I don't know German anymore." "Who cares?" "I give up!" "It's not that important."

Still in mid preamble, Ms. Comfrey did not seem too aware of the general commotion in the classroom as practically the whole of the class was sharing their opinions about how difficult the exam looked. She reached the point where she was to go over the written instructions, when suddenly she broke into verse[3]:

Also ist die übliche Deutschprüfung

Eine kleine Unrealitätseinstufung.

Kreatives? Ach! Sowas ist nie erwartet worden;

Nur: Ergänzen Sie! Umwandeln! Und einordnen!

Weder bedeutsam … aber ganz wichtig:

[3] See Appendix for English translation.

Mach's gut, dann hast du es richtig

Mit edler stiller Grammatik geschanzt,

Egal ob du morgen noch die Sprache kannst.

Ms. Comfrey was a little surprised by herself, but since the entire class was silent she quickly announced the start of the examination. All heads went down at once.

One studied her exam sheet. It was full of holes: Pronouns, adjective endings, objects of prepositions, passives, etc. were all missing. She could not make head nor tail of it. She scanned the classroom as if the sight of her friends and fellow students would inspire her to write the right answer. Finally her exam sheet had clearly had enough with her confusion: "You can save us both a lot of trouble if you would kindly stop looking for any meaning. It's just an exercise. Don't you know?" One was taken aback. She looked about her to see if anyone had heard her exam sheet talking with her. She glanced back at her sheet, which in the meantime had stood up rather properly. With his ruled lines like an officer's stripes, his seriation like a row of medals, the exam sheet cut a formidable figure and started to goad the anxious student. "And what *do* you say to someone when you're in a pickle?"

"How should I know?" whimpered One, her eyes darting between the exam sheet's question before her and the class around her, which was becoming increasingly unsettled. One only now noticed a volary of colorful birds perched at the desks at the front of the classroom. They each had a little chalk board to write on. She was certain that she could hear the gray turtleneck behind her very faintly whistling the first bars of a song. The song's words and phrases flooded back into One's consciousness. She tried to regain focus by staring hard at the first exercise. "They're all imperatives!" she realized. Again she peered about her: The Six to Eight girlfriends were busily scribbling down answers. She turned again to her exam sheet, who was smirking back at her. But she was no longer intimidated.

"This one's ***komm***!" she thought as she wrote.

"And this must be ***hilf***!" thought Two beside her.

"This can only be *mach*!" answered Three.

"Yes!" they all thought. "*She* was right! We remembered." The Six to Eight girlfriends began to grow for the first time in a long time.

At the end of the exam One of the girlfriends turned around to thank the turtleneck, but he was gone. Likewise, the birds had flown. "Was I dreaming this?" she said aloud.

"Were you?" beamed Two.

"When I looked at that exam, I didn't know anything. But then I remembered Selma's song from the Archivist," One admitted.

"You weren't the only one!" confessed Three.

"And I drew on all her fantastic children's stories," One continued. "And just other experiences."

"Me too," said Two. "Selma was right to teach us that song."

One agreed: "What's the point in repeating all that stuff, if ..." Her voice trailed off.

Twelfth Vigil

The Narrator's confession — The Archivist's memo — Selma joins the Skipping girl in the Temple of Education — The Reader's doubt and doubtlessness

Dear Reader, I am so very delighted for Selma, now that she has found her way to the more interactive, more purposeful, more relevant, more authentic realm of fantasy. But I, my dear Reader, feel just as Selma once did before — at the beginning of the Fourth Vigil, to be precise — experiencing discomfort in the habitual world for having glimpsed such wonders. Although I have sat many

nights to finish the Twelfth Vigil, it was as if I have been held back by those very same agents of convention who previously prevented Selma from finding her way. And so I would go to bed instead to dream of Selma and the Skipping schoolgirl or the toucans, of her rewarding spelling games or their colorful culture of communication. I would jump into bed, with sleep's sole task to dream and dream some more. I would walk in my sleep! Talk in my sleep! Perform a song and dance in my sleep! As much as I could, until the grim force of those archetypal agents would cut through my dreams, returning me to the harsh, ordered reality of the mundane. But I persevered, if only ever seeing the difference I could make in my dreams, until one day I received the following memo from the Archivist.

> *I am to understand that you have completed eleven of the twelve vigils that I had asked you to write up and now torment yourself with the Twelfth in which you are to report some details of Selma's life after university as my prodigious progeny. Despite all this and that, I am bound to help. By the Twelfth Vigil, it should of course be no surprise to the Reader anymore how it is the world has more than one reality and that different realities may coexist at exactly the same moment, thus undermining the world we thought we knew. Come to my library where you will find the materials — the transcripts, timetables, calendars, examples of completed assignments, evaluations, confessions, diagrams, and fairy tales (I suggest something by ETA Hoffmann, why not* Der goldne Topf*, 1814 / 1953, since I am rather fond of his works, and perhaps just a hint of Lewis Carroll's* Alice*, 1865 / 1970) — with which properly to inform the Reader rather than relying on hearsay or some other teleological scheme or prepackaged code.*

Thus I arrived on the dot of twelve noon at the Archivist's, whereupon he offered me an open-face banana sandwich to eat, though not before he had indulged himself of the same, flapped his arms a few times as if to mock the conventional grounded world, and promptly disappeared into my imagination. I have only the fantastic arts of this green-billed toucan to thank for this vision in which I could

see Selma obtain her prize and for my ability to copy it down on the paper given to me by him. By the way, the sandwich tasted wonderful! Where was I? Ah, yes.

Soon my mind was filled with fantastic imagery: I was in a wild, chaotic garden. I had to use all my capacities to make sense of the complex shapes and figures before me. There was a fantastic family of flowers and trees of all possible colors. I could see them beckoning Selma. They told her to look into her heritage and culture; to listen to her heart's desire. She knew she was not far from expressing this love. She knew she could come to terms with the real world and her own identity. She did not need to be afraid. She wanted to make use of all that she had learned and continue her education to the fullest level. The Skipping schoolgirl then stepped from the garden temple, carrying the silken wallet, from which she pulled clothespins, a sash, and three scrolled parchments: a diploma, a degree, and a certificate. Selma swore to follow in the Skipping schoolgirl's footsteps, to be her mirror image. She could see the benefit of incorporating all kinds of reading texts into all of her lessons and how it would change what her students learned. She would send them out of class to pick up different texts, whatever they could find, and incorporate reading into every situation in class, even the tiniest thing. She would start with very basic books when teaching beginners, for even if they were little kids' books that would be something that they would be able to understand and then use to write their own little books.

And thus you wake up to find yourself at home in a cozy armchair, or at your desk in your office, or even in the library. You recall Selma's dream: the Skipping Schoolgirl, the Scatterbox, the Turtleneck, etc. They all seemed so familiar to you that you half believed in the silken wallet of clothespins. But you knew you only had to open your eyes to see dull reality, hear worthless, irrelevant facts, to know your fears for what they are.

Woe are you for your heart yearns all the more: lucky Selma has thrown off the burden of convention. You know she must now be a grown woman, telling others about the wallet of clothespins. Why, she is and has. And with this realization you feel the Archivist tap you on your shoulder, "Courage, were you

not just in Mexico yourself? Did you not see those two kids who went to Mexico for Christmas? So there were specifics that they really wanted to know, things that they could use, and so Selma incorporated that into the Spanish lesson, and culture played a part too, as well as the grammar, like, how would you say this or that properly? And what kind of effect do you think it had on those two students? Didn't you actually talk to them a couple of months ago? After they went? They thought it was great. They loved it and when they came back, they said, 'You know, I really got to use this when I met this lady — she was selling apples from a cart — and I got to talk to her and I used, I remember in class that we used this, and Ms. Selma taught us a little song to remember something like, it just came to mind and ...' So is Selma's fantastic story really so different from life?"

The End

Part Nine: The Little German Program That Could: A Fictional Case Study

In the previous chapters I have explored critical historical, theoretical, and interpretive (i.e., narrative) approaches to the curriculum for postsecondary German in Canada. These chapters have raised a number of issues, themes, perspectives, and possibilities related to the nature of learning for students and that now beg the question of what curriculum could look like — at the macro- and micro-levels — if it were to *change* in order to attend more to student needs and interests. Thus, the concluding chapter of my dissertation draws together and applies what I have learned from the scholarship and research findings that I have presented in the preceding chapters. Specifically, I provide a fictional case study of the need for and actions taken toward curriculum innovation in a typical, small German as a foreign language and foreign culture program at a mid-size North American university. While the program I present is typical, and thus invites generalization, I have chosen a case study approach in order to express the particularity and context-driven or localized nature of the situation in which a given program may find itself at a given time. The case is also fictional since I do not wish to single out or promote any one actual program. Rather, my endeavor is to give attention to a few fundamental curricular and pedagogical issues. I use the fictional case study to exemplify a certain situation — as it has developed historically and reflects social relations and professional discourses — and suggest certain student-oriented curriculum changes and practical ideas for program organization. As such, I mean to encourage new curriculum thinking in others that is similarly relevant to the needs and interests of their students in their specific local contexts. While the changes described in the fictional case are largely related to the critical and interpretive findings of this dissertation, and so reflect especially the subject positions of students as stakeholders, I have also drawn on the disciplinary knowledge second language acquisition research as well as my experiences working as an instructor and professor of German in four

different Canadian programs. Regarding the latter, I have thus used institutional history, calendars, archived notes, program reviews, presentations, various national and local statistics, commentaries by two retired professors, and student surveys and evaluations as source materials.

Huckville University: A Brief History of a Typical Small German Program in North America

The German program at Huckville University grew gradually over the twentieth century. The program was conceived in the context of providing a modern language parallel to the study of classical languages and thus teaching the so-called grand narratives of European culture and civilization, as the foundation of Euro-North American culture and part of an initially faith-based liberal arts degree (later the university became a public institution). At first the program consisted only of introductory German language and was taught by Reverend Ignatius, a part-time native-German instructor. After being discontinued during the Second World War, the program was reinstated in the fifties as the university again acknowledged the seminal role of German language and culture in European civilization as well as the urgent trend in North America that the widely perceived, largely English-speaking and monocultural population required greater foreign language proficiency and broader awareness of other cultures in order to promote cross-cultural understanding. Particularly the latter curricular objective was to be met by developing students' ability to read foreign literature in the original language. The new part-time instructor, Ms. Kloster, added intermediate German language. Further expansion occurred in the sixties as student populations grew. Ms. Kloster became an assistant professor and was joined by a lecturer, Mr. Beicht. They taught five language courses, including a third-year language course for the first time, German literature in prose, and German literature since Goethe. Later, a new course on Goethe was introduced.

In the late sixties, the university hired a new assistant professor for German, Dr. Tomasz, a Pole who had lived in Germany and the program's first instructor with a PhD. Dr. Tomasz remained the sole full-time faculty member for German until he retired in the eighties. In the seventies, he added a course on his research specialization, German Romanticism, as well as others on modern and contemporary German literature and an independent study in order to establish a Major in German. Over his career, he alternated the first-year German language class every other year with German literature and Romanticism and regularly taught an unpaid overload to make sure that majors had enough courses at the senior level, or extra sections of first-year German just so he could make sure there were enough students coming into the program. Essentially, the German language was taught with the aim of preparing senior students for reading German canonical literature in the original language.

Dr. Güstrow, a German-born PhD, was hired in the eighties to coordinate the German program. During her tenure there were regularly over forty students in introductory German, but only a brave six or seven ever continued to advanced German. In keeping with programs elsewhere in North America in the late eighties, Dr. Güstrow introduced a course on German culture and civilization taught in English and designed for the general student body. It also provided students of German with a new credit option at the senior-level in order to help them complete their degrees. However, no additional allocation was provided by the Huckville administration for this course and so it was taught only when offered as an unpaid overload. As the student population grew in the nineties and again in the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the program twice received an increased allocation for sections of introductory German. This had a notably positive, sustaining effect on registrations in intermediate and advanced language courses, which doubled in subsequent years. In addition to the German cultural survey course in English, Dr. Güstrow experimented with the other curriculum innovation common across the country at the time: An intermediate-level German for business course. However, this course attained

only moderate success for the program since it drew students away from the standard intermediate language class.

To secure senior-level students, Dr. Güstrow followed another nationwide trend by revising the German Major as a Major in German Studies, consisting of six one-semester courses in German language and/or literature and six courses taught in English with content related to German history, of which six had to be at the senior level. Thus, to obtain this Major in the standard four-year period for completing a degree, a student needed to take three relevant one-semester courses on average per year. Further degree options of a Minor in German and a Certificate in German Language and Culture followed, each requiring eight one-semester courses.

However, with limited course allocations, Dr. Güstrow opted to deliver a program each year that invariably consisted of six one-semester German language classes arranged in the hierarchical progression of introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels and based on the sequenced learning of discrete grammar items. Indeed, language courses were singularly grammar focused, used the Grammar-Translation Method and drills or grammar practice exercises, and lacked final-year upper-advanced courses (thus limiting students' level of proficiency and sense of linguistic achievement). Instead of an upper-advanced language class, Dr. Güstrow occasionally taught a literature course in German. The students who had managed to do well enough on merciless grammar exams to get this far in the program were often both excited and nervous about reading literature in German for the first time. Previously having read only the stilted dialogues and brief excerpted paragraphs in textbooks, they lacked the necessary second language literacy skills for interpretation. Nor would they necessarily acquire them: Dr. Güstrow executed the German literature course on the basis of in-class sentence-level translation into English of short German literary texts chosen exclusively by her, supplemented by her lecturing and screenings of film adaptations, while students were evaluated on the grammatical accuracy of plot summaries they wrote in German. Thus the capping course in the German program at Huckville

University — when offered — remained teacher-centered and used cultural content ultimately to focus on knowledge of the linguistic system rather than on the students' interpretative or critical responses.

Stammtisch: Student Voices Raised in the Fog and Fiddlehead Lounge

Over the years, students in a program as intimate as German at Huckville University would find much in common with each other and develop close friendships. Ms. Blum, a German-born part-time instructor hired by Dr. Güstrow, noticed especially how the majors and minors formed a group that hung around after classes and self-identified with the program. So Ms. Blum took the initiative to organize a weekly Stammtisch at the Fog and Fiddlehead Lounge, the on-campus student bar. Stammtisch was an immediate success, providing students with an extracurricular opportunity to practice their spoken German in an informal and authentic setting over a pint or two. Numbers varied from week to week — sometimes there were ten or more, sometimes just two or three — but as they talked about things that had happened in class or their everyday lives, the students dared to use German — words and phrases from nervously smiling almost beginners, sometimes even complex sentences from intermediate or advanced students, growing slightly in confidence. None had been in the habit of speaking German much in class.

The students often stayed after Ms. Blum had left, but then the conversation would quickly slip back into English as they inevitably discussed their studies. One third-year student voiced her frustration with the small number and lack of choice in course offerings: "If there was a broader selection of classes in the following years surrounding German language, it would make it easier to fit them into my schedule, allowing me to graduate on time with my German Minor." A second student added, "Yeah, because there are not enough German courses, it's not possible to do German as a Major and as a result you have to go to another university to complete the degree." This was echoed by another:

“There needs to be more courses offered so that students do not have to go elsewhere to satisfy their degree requirements. It’s difficult to complete a Major or Minor in German at Huckville. I’ve had to take courses in history with German content.” The third-year student replied, “Whenever I’ve tried to take those courses they were not offered or they clashed with my German language course in the timetable. Besides, I’m not interested in history.”

Still another student complained that “The range of German courses is very sparse. There aren’t enough courses to fulfill the Major I want to take in German! WE NEED MORE COURSES!” Even a potential German minor lamented “I hope to do a Minor in German, and there are currently very few options of classes. The selection of courses is thin … It would be nice to see a larger variety of courses to choose from in German. It’s difficult to achieve a Minor in German without going over to Crosstown University. For those people who want to Major in German, there is virtually no choice.”

The third-year student chipped in again, “Matt did a study abroad program in Cologne last year and I’m thinking of doing that next summer just so I can get the credits to complete my German Major.” “I wish I could do the same,” said the potential German minor, “but I just don’t have the finances to pay for the extra tuition and the flight.”

One German major / Psychology minor summed up the problem as a matter of customer service: “Due to the lack of courses, it’s almost impossible to complete a Major in German here at Huckville without going to Crosstown U or traveling abroad. It’s very discouraging to want to major in a language you love and to not be able to complete your courses at the university at which you study and pay tuition!”

“It’s more expensive going to Crosstown. Not having to take classes at Crosstown to finish a degree at Huckville would be a big improvement,” identified a Political Science major / German minor.

One final-year Arts major / minor put the responsibility squarely on the Huckville administration: "I'm highly disappointed that such an excellent university could fail so miserably. I have taken French, German, and Chinese, and in every case have had the most fabulous and knowledgeable instructors who have had, unfairly, their hands tied behind their backs by administration. It seems to me like it's beyond repair because this school is much more interested in commerce and sciences."

The students frequently talked about how a greater number and variety of courses should be offered. One student expressed a desire for courses to be made available in the spring and summer sessions as well as Web-based courses. Others discussed the types of courses they would like: German arts, a conversation class, a field study in Germany ("specifically Berlin where we could go to visit museums"), German film, German and gender studies, German grammar, specifically German history, German literature, modern and historical culture, short novels, stories, and essays, more German language courses, the two world wars and the Cold War, and more "that are taught specifically in German." One English major / German minor complained that "German lit courses … are the biggest thing I see lacking. You can take as many English lit courses as you can stand. But we need different perspectives on literature!"

As the students experienced it, their most immediate curricular concern was certainly the crisis in curriculum delivery: The program had delivered more or less the same courses every year. At best, there had been one one-semester senior-level literature or culture course offered every two years from among those advertised in the calendar to provide some variety. This meant that a student pursuing a Major over four years could lack as many as six one-semester courses for graduation and a student seeking a Minor could lack up to two courses. The lack of flexibility or variation in curriculum delivery restricted students' ability to complete a Major or Minor unless they knew early on in their undergraduate career to strategize by taking history courses, transferring credits from a neighboring university, accessing study abroad, or doing independent study. Some

persevered, while many otherwise interested students dropped the program. In essence, the students' own planning strategies to complete their German degrees at Huckville University reveal the program to be an example of a *withheld curriculum*. The shortfall in allocations, organization, and planning at the macro level, coupled at the micro level with teaching approaches long questioned or dismissed by second language acquisition theory and research, had brought about a curriculum that has hindered or neglected rather than facilitated students' progress toward their academic — and linguistic and cultural — goals.

They – Think – They – Can't, They – Think – They – Can't, They – Think – They – Can't

Dr. Gobaith, a Canadian-trained nonnative-speaker of German, was employed by Huckville University to take over the co-ordination of the German program as Dr. Güstrow prepared for retirement. He was expected to teach all levels of German language and the English-language survey of German culture. But on his first day he realized that the program required overhauling. He saw the need for a greater number and variety of more relevant and interesting courses (in German or about German culture in English translation) to help students graduate in a timely fashion (and not drop the program). He felt the pressure to offer unpaid overloads to deliver a program with insufficient course allocations. Also, judging by the textbooks — written by native-speaker German professors for the American market — which entirely determined the form-focused analytic syllabuses of the language classes, he was concerned by the absence of genuine communication in classroom learning. Adopting a learner-centered, constructivist stance toward language learning and teaching (Kaufman, 2004), and regarding second language education as a "humanizing activity" (Graman, 1988), Dr. Gobaith believed that the GFL curriculum had to tend better to the students' individualized linguistic and intercultural interests and needs, to develop their skills, competence, and confidence, and to focus on more meaningful, that is, relevant, authentic, purposeful, and creative learning opportunities by means of

the accomplishment of interactive tasks and discovery-oriented, self-motivated inquiry rather than attending to decontextualized knowledge of the linguistic system. Certainly, a language learning curriculum that emphasized the study of grammar, paid little attention to meaning and content, held the native speaker as the ideal to which to compare the "deficient" nonnative speaker (Firth & Wagner, 1997), and culminated in the reading or translation of a limited a number of canonical texts would disadvantage its nonnative-speaking students when they would come to use the target language for real world purposes outside the classroom (Byrnes, 1998b). Dr. Gobaith was interested in enhancing second language learning and usage for his students and less concerned with imparting a given and entrenched curriculum content. Certainly he thought that teaching and curriculum should better reflect the goal of developing personally relevant linguistic, cultural, and intercultural competencies in German in students. That is, GFL curriculum and classroom teaching should reflect the student L2 users' goals (Cook, 2002; van Lier, 1996). Dr. Gobaith was concerned that students who had completed a German Major lacked the confidence to write and converse in German with reasonable accuracy and fluency and were still unfamiliar with those aspects of German culture that were the most salient to them.

Dr. Gobaith discussed his concerns about student experiences and his plans for the curriculum with senior colleagues, but they were short on words of encouragement. One experienced professor at another university whom Dr. Gobaith admired surprised him: "I wouldn't expect too much from students. They're not very eloquent when it comes to their studies. They'll just tell you they like everything or they'll repeat back to you whatever you tell them." Another professor was similarly disparaging: "Why should you be bothered?" he laughed, "They're so naïve, what do they know?" An American-trained native-speaker Germanist criticized Dr. Gobaith's student-oriented perspective: "You must be some kind of optimist!" Another German Germanist added dismissively, "All teaching is student-oriented. Besides, we're professors of German literature. We waste enough time teaching, so why are we talking about it?" A colleague in classical languages at Huckville scoffed, "Most of them don't even know English

grammar, so how d'you expect them ever to learn German?" Dr. Güstrow put in her own two cents' worth: "And most students just don't have the facility for languages. They'll never learn another language no matter how hard you try. Caring about your students just shows how much a greenhorn you are!" Even Dr. Shipman, the Dean, seemed less than helpful: "My advice is you just keep repeating everything. You can't be too redundant because students don't listen anyway. You know, we really shouldn't be teaching languages at university anymore." Dr. Gobaith heard one putdown or excuse after another. However, at one conference a small group of graduate students overheard his discussions and later approached him to say that he had put into words their experiences as undergraduates — and as graduates too.

Dr. Gobraith wondered to whom students could turn in order to change their programs, if not to their professors — his colleagues. Exasperated, he decided to pull his program up to grade. He knew he had a steep hill to climb: "They say they can't. But I think they can," he said to himself. "I think they can! I just have to try!"

I – – Think – – They – – Can, I – – Think – – They – – Can, I – – Think – – They – – Can

Dr. Gobaith began to consider how to make change by first simplifying the goal of the curriculum to the development of students' ability to *understand and express themselves* in German and in relation to German culture. Then he identified the three main curriculum issues that hindered this goal: Restricted program delivery, minimal choice of courses, and inappropriate teaching approaches. He regarded these issues as inherently related and would tackle them in an integrated manner: By improving the instructional approach, activities, and content of language courses, it would be possible to change the nature and kinds of courses on offer, and this in turn would enable a greater number and variation of courses offered over time. Specifically, he introduced the more motivating and

more effective student- and learning-centered teaching approach of task-based language teaching (TBLT) in the first- and second-year language classes. TBLT developed within communicative language teaching (CLT) by recognizing the usefulness of meaningful, real-world task-specific performances necessary for language acquisition (Prabhu, 1987; Valdmann, 1992; Willis, 1996) and corresponds with principles derived from theories of and research in second language learning and teaching (R. Ellis, 2003; Samuda & Bygate, 2008; cf. Swan, 2005). The real-time language use required by tasks (R. Ellis) and the goal-oriented nature of TBLT effectively meant that students had to take responsibility for their learning, were required to use authentic linguistic input to discover the necessary language for their own purposeful and proficient expression, were obliged to communicate, interact, and interpret in order to accomplish set tasks, compile short reports based on those tasks or do other kinds of creative writing, and become aware of the language system and negotiate meaning in the context of real needs and interests (see Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001; Candlin, 2001; R. Ellis; Long, 1991; Nunan, 1991, 1993, 2004; Richards & Rogers, 2001; Samuda & Bygate; Skehan, 1998, 2003; Willis).

These changes were reflected by reorganizing the courses according to communicative and intercultural situations and the development of the spoken and written language necessary to function successfully in those situations. While there was little research on tasks in the organization of curriculum and classroom practice (Candlin, 2001), Dr. Gobaith did find some discussions of TBLT in postsecondary German that concerned particular course components (Byrnes, 2002a, 2002b; Lys, 2004; Wright 2000) or provided overviews of syllabuses (Department of German, Georgetown University, n.d.; Eigler, 2001; Levine, 2004; Libbon, 2004; Weber, 2000). Most of these works omitted useful details of the micro-level, pedagogical or classroom arrangement of the tasks; One (Eigler, 2001) outlined tasks that were not always purposeful. Thus Dr. Gobaith redesigned his curriculum, syllabus, and classroom practice mainly by drawing ideas from Willis's *A framework for task-based* learning (1996) and other general scholarship on TBLT (R. Ellis, 2003; Leaver & Willis, 2004; Nunan, 2004;

Samuda & Bygate, 2008). To save time, he continued with a standard textbook, but used only those sections that he could adapt according to TBLT or would provide students with scaffolding or review. Students were required to take part in in-class interactive pair and group activities and tasks, write up short paragraphs or reports about the tasks, do textbook readings on contextualized grammar and complete worksheets, do further textbook exercises assigned as self study, complete the in-class language reviews, and maintain a learning portfolio in conjunction with regular consultation appointments with peer tutors and the course instructor for corrective feedback. Examples of interactive tasks included creating lists, brainstorming, fact-finding, memory challenges, investigative group reading, acquiring, ordering, and evaluating information, following instructions, comparing versions of texts in order to identify similarities, differences, gaps, etc., developing charts, maps, diagrams, and posters, making presentations, playing games, reporting on events and experiences, exchanging correspondence, adapting or personalizing stories, songs, or culturally specific information, comparing notes, analyzing and solving real or hypothetical problems by developing directions or advice and making decisions, planning and hosting events, analyzing statistics, opinions, and preferences, developing quizzes, and developing all kinds of creative tasks (i.e., poems, dialogues, skits, brochures, media articles, etc.) (see also Willis). The range of tasks enabled the varied and especially symmetrical and contingent social interaction among students necessary for the language learning process (van Lier, 1998). The short reports were assigned as homework and marked according to an equally weighted combination of an error/wordcount ratio and the general quality of expression. The grammar worksheets were designed to provide consciousness-raising (R. Ellis, 2003) practice of the language system as focused study *to accompany* and *follow* real-time class activities. The in-class reviews were conducted at the beginning of every lesson and comprised three questions that recalled vocabulary, communications, and discrete language items that had been used in preceding lessons for the sake of formative assessment. The learning portfolio was a personal record of a student's academic activity and language development.

Students were required to purchase a binder in which to organize all class handouts, all completed grammar worksheets and accompanying exercises, all versions of creative writing (e.g., dialogues, reports, paragraphs), including drafts and corrected final versions, all in-class reviews, all self-study exercises checked with peer tutors, any personal class notes, any self-study notes (including vocabulary lists, etc.), any notes from working with peer tutors, a record of appointments with peer tutors and the instructor, and any other items (such as a record of borrowing readers) collected in aid of the study and enjoyment of German. The portfolio had to show evidence of active study, personal initiative, and — especially — self-correction.

By starting the curriculum already at the junior level with an instructional approach that required students to function in German and focus on meaning, Dr. Gobaith provided the means for those who continued into the senior-level language classes to develop the communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1983, 2005) and literacy and cultural skills (Berman, 1994; Department of German, Georgetown University, n.d.; Kramsch, 1996; Kramsch et al, 2007; Wright, 2000) as well as appropriate language (Kord, 2002) and confidence necessary to study in German at a deeper level of inquiry (Byrnes, 1998a). From the first class on, all language and culture tasks and assignments in German were designed to help students develop their individual "interlanguage" systems (Selinker, 1972) and language egos (Ehrman, 1993; Guiora, Brannon, & Dull, 1972) — or new second language identities (Coffey & Street, 2008; Hoffman, 1989; Kramsch, 1993, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000) — by actively processing linguistic and cultural input, producing meaningful utterances in interaction (including written communication), and reflecting on input and output in relation to individual language and culture learning (Lightbown, 1992; Swain, 1985, 1995, 2005; van Lier, 1996; VanPatten, 1998; Wright, 2000). Thus, due to the meaningful, communicative task-based approach to language acquisition of the first- and second-year language courses, students were able to transition seamlessly to content-, discovery-, and project-based approaches at the senior level, that is, learner-centered and student-led

approaches that essentially involved larger, more complex, and "strong" (Skehan, 2003) versions of tasks. The idea underlying the newly fashioned senior courses was that students were no longer to proceed from intermediate to advanced language study based on decontextualized grammar and arbitrarily sequenced textbook topics, only to do more of the same or otherwise listen to lectures on others' ideas about literature (see also Berman, 1997; Byrnes, 1998, 2002a; Peck, 1985; Swaffar, 1993). Rather they would use and further develop their language abilities in relation to upper-intermediate and advanced proficiency in the form of the active, self-motivated investigation and critical interpretation of linguistic and cultural contents, which to an increasing degree would be self-selected (see Mason & Sinha, 1993). The clear objective was the concomitant development of varied and socioculturally appropriate second language literacy and autonomous learning habits (see also Byrnes). Attention to grammar forms remained a key element of acquisition, but it was contextualized by and contingent on (Doughty, 1998; Doughty & Williams, 1998) student engagement with content, difficulties with language learning derived from that content, and, most significantly, as a means to their expressive needs.

Dr. Gobaith further modified the curriculum by adding upper-advanced language courses to be rotated alternately every two (to four) years with the existing two advanced options. By rotating the new with existing courses, and by opening them to any student having completed second-year German, these extra courses not only enabled students to gain greater exposure to and proficiency in the language but also offered them further credit options without requiring further teaching allocations. Certainly, the greater exposure to language and instruction, increased access to participation and interaction, and repetition of task and project styles as well as the combining of cohorts into a more intimate local community of language users made sense for the students' second language acquisition from sociocognitive and sociocultural perspectives (Atkinson, 2002; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Zuengler & Miller, 2006) since there were opportunities both for Dr. Gobaith to further structure class according to local students' interests and also for the students to "invest" (Norton & Toohey, 2001) in their learning. While the

advanced and upper-advanced courses differed by course number and content materials, they were structured more or less in the same way by being geared toward the engagement and communication of a topic by the class as a whole in order to advance and assess each individual's linguistic, communicative, and cultural competences.

One example of the new mixed ability upper-advanced courses focused on intercultural contemporary Berlin and was designed to develop advanced comprehension, writing, reading, and speaking skills in German through classroom instruction, the interpretation of a contemporary novel, autonomous research initiatives, and project work. The improvement of overall fluency, accuracy, and complexity, individual enhanced knowledge of German culture, and students' self-directed review of pertinent grammatical concepts were integral to this course. The course was directed entirely in German and all readings were in German. Students were required to obtain *Ich bin kein Berliner* by Wladimir Kaminer (2007), a highly autobiographical work of contemporary popular fiction, and the grammar review *em Übungsgrammatik* (Hering, Matussek, & Perlmann-Balme, 2002). Students were expected to take part in in-class interactive pair and group comprehension and speaking tasks, write spontaneously in-class, do self-selected readings and exercises on grammar, complete vocabulary quizzes based entirely on words and phrases used in the Kaminer text, make two oral presentations, write up short accounts of independent internet research concerning individually selected cultural references in each book chapter, and maintain a research project portfolio. The in-class tasks varied from lesson to lesson and were based on the weekly chapter readings. For example, they included creating chronologies, comparing fact and fiction, summarizing, retelling episodes, expanding or reinventing chapters, genre switching, composing skits, debating, developing quizzes, and analyzing the macrostructure of certain chapters, all for the purpose of compiling a class companion to the text. The self-selected grammar readings and exercises were based on the coded corrective feedback on written assignments (designed to elicit learner repair, Panova & Lyster, 2002) in order to help individual students focus on those particular discrete grammar items

most ready for each of them to acquire or consolidate in their interlanguage systems. Students also had to give brief explanations of grammar in class. The oral presentations were much like the traditional German memorized essay ("Referat") and comprised the major individual projects in the course. They concerned the various intercultural aspects of contemporary German life discussed in the novel that were particularly interesting to individual students. They evolved from the weekly paragraphs on cultural references in the novel, involved further library and internet research, and included the development of a slide presentation, a handout comprising of a brief glossary, a simple questionnaire for the audience to record salient information, and an audience feedback sheet. The presentations were graded first for the public oral performance and then based on a final written version. The written version was marked according to the quality of expression, descriptive content, and critical engagement with a lesser percentage derived from an error/wordcount ratio. Finally, the individual research portfolios were personal records of students' academic activity and language development based on guided and autonomous reading and research. Students were required to purchase a binder in which to organize the marked-up printouts of independent internet research based on the chapters of the novel, completed vocabulary, phrase, and/or grammar study based on the independent research, completed short paragraphs explaining research findings (on a variety of references), evidence of self-correction of paragraphs, corrected versions of all vocabulary quizzes, exercises, and written versions of the oral presentations, any personal class notes, any further self-study notes, and any other items collected in aid of the study of German, including supplementary readings. Once again, the portfolio had to show evidence of active study and personal initiative, including personalization, notation, and self-correction.

By adopting a pedagogical attitude of self-forgetfulness and thus suspending pre-existing notions of level-specific grammar points or pre-ordained essential texts or cultural-political phenomena to be taught in senior courses, Dr. Gobaith was better able to attend to individual students' linguistic and cultural interests and needs as they emerged. Indeed, beyond the basic choice of focal

novel, grammar reference work, general course activities, and assessment criteria selected by Dr. Gobaith, the specific language and intercultural goals, choice and exploration of supplementary readings, and nature, content, and aims of all writing and speaking projects were constructed and/or negotiated by the students. Other examples of upper-advanced German courses developed by Dr. Gobaith and Ms. Blum focused on cultural artifacts of, respectively, German folk tales, lived experiences of eastern Germany before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and women, gender, and sexuality in the art and literature of the 1920s, all topics identified by students as particularly interesting to them. These courses included a wider variety of text, including stories, novels, and poetry as well as autobiography, manifestos, speeches, factual reports, technical writing, feature and documentary film, photography, architecture, advertising, song, and video. By interpreting such texts and targeting, defining, and using the terms and expressions found in them as meaningful content in their own communications, Dr. Gobaith and Ms. Blum's students were able to connect with a wider than usual range of specialized categories of disciplinary language (Byrnes, 2002b; Kramsch, 1993; Kramsch et al, 2007; Steinmüller & Scharnhorst, 1987; Swaffar, 1999; Swaffar, Arens, & Byrnes, 1991).

The effect of the new and rotated content-based senior language courses on the German curriculum meant that students would not have to sacrifice continued language learning for the sake of cultural knowledge accumulation, but rather could engage simultaneously in personally meaningful linguistic acquisition and cultural investigation. By making sure that there was a range of calendar course numbers for the upper-advanced German language courses, Dr. Gobaith could vary the cultural content focus (as well as genre or medium of the focal text) from year to year to accommodate changing student interests. In this manner, he could guarantee the students more credit options in German language acquisition past the second year — double the previous amount — and open space in the teaching allocations for an advanced all-comers course on German culture taught in English. Thus students would find it easier to complete a Major, Minor, or Certificate in German. Furthermore, the program and university benefitted

from double — or greater — registrations in German at the senior level as well as greater program enrolment.

Student Evaluations (I – Knew – They – Could)

Dr. Gobaith and Ms. Blum wanted to find out what the students thought about the changes they had made to curriculum and instruction to help them accumulate sufficient credits and to respond directly to students' specific language learning needs and intercultural interests. So they circulated surveys in four classes two years into the process of curriculum change. These classes included one section each of the introductory, intermediate, advanced, and upper-advanced German language courses and the German culture and civilization course.

Students rated the language classes as "excellent," "great," "enjoyable," "fun," "interesting," "very useful," "helpful," "excellent learning experiences," and "the best class I had." Students both enjoyed German language classes and found them intellectually rewarding. One student commented that the German program "is completely diverse and nourishes the broad learning techniques that are unique to everyone." One Management major / German minor wrote in the language class: "Fantastic. My best experience at Huckville by far has been with German." Another Global Business Management major / German minor remarked that "the courses are definitely worth the money, and I have recommended German to other people." A third Global Business Management major / German minor stated that in German classes s/he was "given the ability to excel and learn." Students who identified themselves as "not in a languages program" also praised the German language classes. One took the opportunity to state that s/he "would greatly appreciate and enjoy more courses relating to German culture, life, history, etc." Another student remarked that "Even if a language is not a Major / Minor, I would recommend it just to have a general knowledge of the subject." Similarly, one English major / Irish Studies minor opined that "a person with any

Major should be required to take a course in the language program. I believe it opens people's minds to different cultures and languages in the world, and that is beneficial to everyone." A double Criminology and Psychology major wrote that "this German culture course is one of the best if not THE best I've taken at Huckville."

When explaining their satisfaction with the German language courses, students drew attention to the ways in which the courses were taught. One considered them "well structured"; another wrote: "I learned more than I ever thought I could because of the class format and the way the prof works." Others liked the "really interactive classes" since it was possible to "ask questions easier and receive more one on one help from the professors"; "it's much easier to learn and participate"; "the professor is able to attend to the concerns and needs of students in class."

Student satisfaction with instruction and micro-level curriculum redesign was also evident from evaluations of the upper-advanced project-based language class. Students particularly emphasized structural aspects of the course. One appreciated the genuinely interactive nature of the class in that "lots of discussion every class was always helpful" and how the instructor was "always enthusiastic about students improving and giving extra help!" Another enjoyed how "the class was very involved with new and different activities." Another addressed his/her engagement with culture and multiple literacy by commenting that "The weekly Absatz is a good idea as it got me writing about all manner of subjects." Another focused particularly on the way the course was designed to instill autonomous learning: "I loved the set up of this course, self-directed study with guidance as well as some structure w/ the novel. It is nice to feel like you have some control over certain aspects of the course content you are taught!" Another's positive appraisal of the course rang like a verdict on the overall effort to innovate curriculum and instruction in the German program: "Just keep doing what you're doing. ☺"

Clearly, the students' responses on the survey indicated that they were very satisfied with the new instructional approach in the German program and learned a lot in the language and culture courses. The introduction of innovative pedagogy in language classes, with an emphasis on students' self-expression in a second language and more personalized engagement with various cultural aspects, and the rotation of senior language courses have perhaps distinguished the German program at Huckville University from other programs in the region. Certainly, the micro-level changes have had the potential to boost students' personal interest in programming. But students were still not satisfied with the number and variety of courses offered. Several commented that the German program was attractive and yet risked losing student enrolments because of the lack of courses. Thus Dr. Gobaith realized he had to make further macro-level changes. Given the limited course allocations and the administration's inclination toward high enrolment over specialist courses, his only option would be to develop, integrate, and rotate new kinds of all-comers German culture courses in English. The fuller range of German language acquisition classes (with integrated cultural content in the target language in the rotated senior-level courses) and a rotated series of culture courses taught in English would enable a student to take two one-semester German language courses and a German culture course per year over four years. This would enable a major in German Studies to acquire sufficient credits to graduate and also likely mean maintaining or increasing enrolments.

Looking to the Future

The most pressing problems faced by the German program at Huckville University were the low course allocation, the historical reliance on unpaid overloads for program delivery, the insufficient variety of course offerings for students, the goal of literary interpretation (although the program's mainstay was language classes, which at once did not develop literacy skills), and teaching approaches that did not lead to effective language acquisition. Curriculum

development served as the solution to these problems. That is, in the unlikelihood of an increase in course allocations, Dr. Gobaith had abandoned the historical yearly practice of identical offerings and pursued more long-term planning so that interested students were able to see a sufficient number of courses for them to complete a degree in German, not just in the calendar but in actuality. He shifted the curriculum by de-emphasizing the macro-level structuring pall of the canon and raising the degree of relevance to students in the design of learning activities at the micro-level of classroom teaching. Improved instruction and offerings led to increased registrations and Major and Minor enrolments in German, which was sustained even when the university experienced a decrease in overall registration.

Dr. Gobaith is now planning continued curriculum development. He intends to introduce new cross-listed courses into the rotation of German culture courses taught in English. Certainly, students in German have expressed an interest in various topics in German cultural studies. Scanning the academic strengths of neighboring disciplines at Huckville and adopting the strategies of "rightsizing" and "consciously planned extensions" (Swaffar, 1999), Dr. Gobaith has several options to consider. For example, he could develop courses with the English Department or other programs in Modern Languages, such as German World Literature in Translation, European Romanticism, German World Myths, Tales, and Fairy Tales, International Children's Literature, Canada in the German Cultural Imagination, and Colonial / Postcolonial Germany (discussing colonial fantasy, outposts, occupation, *Ostalgie*, and so-called immigrant literature). Courses that he could develop with the Film Program include German Language Film and German Visual Culture (discussing art, photography, film, advertising, fashion, performance art, and new media). Courses with Sociology could include Ethnic Minority Cultures in Germany (discussing Jews, Sinti, Roma, Sorbs, Danes, Frisians, Turks, etc.), The German-Turkish Experience, Gender and Sexuality in Germany, and German Immigration to Canada. Courses that could be developed with the History Department could include Nazi Culture, Cultures of Dictatorship and Occupation, German Cultural History of Sport, and the Metropolises of Paris, Vienna, and Berlin. A course developed with Political

Science could be the German Greens or European Environmentalism, while a course developed with Psychology could be Freud and Jung in Western cultures. Finally, courses such as German-Canadian Intercultural Contact or Understanding Germany for Business could be developed with the Faculty of Commerce. The seminal role of German culture both in history and in the current world means that there is no shortage of possible interdisciplinary courses. However, the incorporation of even a few of these courses into the German or university-wide curriculum would be difficult, given the limited available space in the program's allocation. If Dr. Gobaith taught in a larger German department, he would offer some of these courses straight away, but his focus at Huckville is to cooperate with other departments to encourage them even to offer one or two of these courses as part of their course allocation.

Dr. Gobaith is considering the further idea of *staggering* the curriculum. In conjunction with rotating advanced German language classes and German culture courses taught in English, he could consolidate and expand program offerings by introducing an overall rotated curriculum that would stagger program delivery across two years. Essential to this idea is freeing up course allocations from the language acquisition stream for senior-level all-comers courses by offering introductory German language only every two years, that is, splitting the delivery of the program in two over time. This staggered curriculum would see the delivery of four first-year German language classes, two senior German language classes, and two culture classes in English rotated on a two-year basis with two second-year German language classes, two further senior German language classes, and four further culture classes in English, of which at least one would have to be a new entry-level foundational area studies course such as "Introduction to Germany." Such a staggered curriculum would provide a wider range of courses and increased credit options, better enable students enrolled in German programs to meet their program requirements within the standard four-year undergraduate degree, and completely eliminate the demand for unpaid overloads. Instead of offering the same six or seven courses every year, the German program would be able to offer between 14 and 19 courses over four

years, including between seven and twelve new one-semester courses. Delivering a staggered curriculum could even open up the possibility of a degree with honors.

The staggered curriculum poses a number of issues, risks, and challenges for Dr. Gobaith and Ms. Blum. The considerable new course development during the initial years would be exhausting. By offering first-year language only every two years, this curriculum structure could reduce the intake numbers at the lower level, even with an alternating new first-year German culture in English course. But it is also possible that students would navigate to German language as a result of being motivated by the content of the all-comers culture courses. Thus an increase in the number of students entering and continuing with language acquisition may also be just as likely. Finally, a staggered rotation curriculum model would require flexibility and cooperation with other departments, administration, and the registrar.

But Dr. Gobaith's experience of introducing macro- and micro-level curriculum changes has taught him that there are four basic principles to follow in order to lay the foundation for success when choosing and implementing the right scenario in a small foreign language program. The first principle is that everything depends on student need and interest. Empathy for the student must come before any constructed notion of disciplinary parameters. Undergraduate foreign language and culture curricula that are based primarily on traditional approaches, historically determined content, or professor identity ignore the potential academic dynamism of direct engagement with students as new speakers and writers with their own interests. Only by developing a relationship with students, providing them with a supportive and freeing environment in which to gain confidence and take initiative, and working with them to adopt suitable learning strategies and set personalized goals can instructors create the conditions for motivating language learning (Dörnyei & Czizér, 1998; Marinova-Todd, Marshall, & Snow, 2000; Noels, Stephan, & Saumure, 2007; van Lier, 1996) and begin to understand the contingency of the curriculum they are to facilitate.

The second principle is that students' learning interests and skills are best developed in relevant and student-oriented pedagogical and critical academic approaches founded in second language acquisition (and second culture teaching) research. TBLT has proven to be particularly appropriate in this regard. Certainly, this approach provides the framework for the sense of adventure, authentic contextualization, interactive creativity, personal relevance, and descriptive, analytical, and critical skills development required for building confident language proficiency.

The third principle is that — as difficult as it sometimes can be — administrations must be encouraged to have a program-appropriate understanding of student numbers (i.e., compare a small foreign language program with other such programs). Considering the small size of the Huckville German program, every administrative decision made has the potential to have a much greater positive or adverse effect on the program than on programs even only slightly larger in size. Certainly, sustained concrete support from university administration is essential. Program coordinators need to keep administration abreast of student satisfaction, for an informed, smart, and equitable administration would pay attention to happy student customers.

The fourth principle is a kind of optimism, the joy in knowing that one can make a difference. Even when a second language curriculum thinker has limited or reduced program allocations, it is still possible to make a difference to students' experiences of learning a foreign language in the classroom, regarding their linguistic performance (Doughty, 1991, 2003; Lightbown, 2000; Marinova-Todd et al, 2000) and self-esteem (Brown, 2007, pp. 155-156).

* * *

I hope that the discussions, ideas, and proposals concerning the student- and learning-oriented enhancement of postsecondary foreign language curriculum and instruction that I have presented in the fictional case study and across this dissertation are useful to professors of German as a foreign language (GFL) or of

other modern languages who are working in similar, typical, small or medium-size programs with limited allocations and interested students. I began this dissertation curious about the broad academic profiles of the undergraduate students enrolled in my classes. I was interested in finding out to what extent the courses and program or degree they were taking in German were relevant to them as learners and users of the German language and as young Canadians at the beginning of the twenty-first century with diverse academic, professional, social, cultural, and personal lives. I wanted to know where the curriculum for GFL at Canadian universities originated, how it had developed, and, most of all, whether this curriculum corresponded with the interests of those students receiving it. I thus entered this research project with the research questions of what is the postsecondary GFL curriculum in Canada, how did it come about, why is it the way it is, what is it like for Canadian students, and how are their needs and interests met. I pursued these questions within a hermeneutic framework and by means of critical and especially interpretative or narrative approaches.

As I investigated the history of postsecondary German in Canada, listened to my research participants, reflected on their words, and composed the stories of my new understandings, I observed most of all that students were not the principal unit about which the curriculum was organized. I discovered that the GFL curriculum in Canada comprised an essentialized and substantively more or less unchanging set of texts, largely promoting native-speaker literary professors' scholarly and symbolic interests, and prefaced either by a usually incomplete sequence of language instruction using ineffective and possibly stultifying teaching methods or by a native-speaker (German or German-Canadian heritage) upbringing. The GFL curriculum in Canada was thus independent of local (Canadian) nonnative-speaker students' lived experiences. As such, the Canadian postsecondary GFL curriculum has been articulated by a cross-cultural divide and withheld knowledge.

The student participants — at least — in my study all felt connected to and persevered with German for various intrinsic, personal and extrinsic, professional

reasons. They all generally enjoyed if not loved German, found ways to do well academically in German (they all happened to be excellent students), recognized the significant legacy of German culture, valued the experience of German study abroad for their personal development, planned to incorporate German language and/or culture in their future careers, appreciated the commitment of certain instructors of German, and managed by their own self-assessment to acquire at minimum capable to useful levels of competence in spoken and written German. But these positive experiences and achievements often came about despite the curriculum.

The interviews and narratives based on the participants' words, experiences, and understandings of the Canadian postsecondary GFL curriculum gave voice to a number of shortcomings and concerns. In particular, language instruction emphasized prescriptive learning of discrete grammatical forms by means of decontextualized accuracy-focused manipulation, with little attention to interaction, meaning, and individual creativity or the conscious development of communicative abilities and second language literacies. As such, the initial stages of the curriculum were dictated by the choice of a German language textbook, which incidentally continue to be structural and analytical even when espousing functional-notional or communicative approaches (Beale, 2002; Byrnes, 1998a; Campbell, 1978; Levine, 2004; Plews, under review; Widdowson, 1978). Likewise, literature and culture instruction focused on lectures on traditional canonical works, through which students "banked" (Freire, 1970) literary content knowledge, and on assignments that held students' exploration, interpretation, and production of text in bondage to the assessment of their linguistic accuracy (see also Kord, 2002) — that is, of supposedly previously banked grammar forms. The students even feared writing in German. They found it unrewarding because they were assessed for the mastery of grammar rather than their critical treatment of content. It was also time-consuming because they tended to translate into German drafts of essays written in English. Furthermore, students wanted to read more contemporary literature, explore a wider range of cultural media, and learn about older literature in ways that would enable them to discover their relevance and

new understandings by making connections between the historical realities of those texts and their own contemporary lives.

Overall, the curriculum for German lacked opportunities for students to engage with and produce language and text in an authentic or relevant and purposeful manner. It restricted student self-expression and neglected their identities and realities. Students did not necessarily get to study what they most desired; they were frustrated, lacked confidence, resigned, and ashamed (see also Cook, 2002); they hoped, endured, avoided, or planned to compensate in the future; they looked beyond the curriculum for the support and resources they needed, be that through the learning strategies of other classes and disciplines, study abroad experiences, continuing education, or heritage connections. Or they were left to imagining how else it could be. Students in German generally checked off discrete courses in order to obtain a given degree rather than choosing a sequence of courses through which they could consciously acquire multiple, various, and contingent linguistic, cultural, interpretive, and performance skills and knowledge so that — to rephrase Calvin Thomas — they may take up the study and communication of any German cultural phenomenon as intelligently as possible.

Given these findings, I explored how the unequal and encumbering divide between fluent — and often native — speakers / professors and new learners, speakers, and users of German could be reconsidered theoretically in order to envisage new codependent subject positions from which to enact more equal, empowering, constructive, and intercultural negotiations of teaching and learning GFL. This would require professors and instructors of German to become at once more self-aware and also self-forgetting of who they are symbolically as speakers and knowers in order to listen to and attend to students' linguistic and cultural needs and interests. Particularly useful were the theoretical positions of "diaspora" and the "less-native" speaker that would encourage the use of experiential principles such as ambivalence, being in-between, slipping back and forth — or shifting, differentiation, division, and connection — to construct and

reconstruct curricula. A curriculum that slips back and forth would necessarily acknowledge and begin to take up positions between tradition and transition, there/no longer there and here/never quite there, being/having been and always becoming, history and contemporaneousness, actuality and imagination, prescription and desire, expertise and apprenticeship, mine and yours. Such new conditions would recognize connections between people and disrupt the one-sidedness of the curriculum of formerly interested/withheld knowledge. It would invite students to speak for and so represent themselves, and maybe even co-construct courses and curriculum.

I thus also came to wonder specifically what the GFL curriculum would be like if it reflected more a student-oriented stance — and the goals of the student L2 user (Cook, 2002). Certainly, the critical-historical, theoretical, and interpretive approaches I had taken on the topic had indicated the need to better enable Canadian students to become German language users, able to express themselves and communicate effectively with others through all sorts of texts, media, interactions, and performance in that second language that would correspond to and satisfy multiple aspects of — particularly — their public and private lives. I began to envisage a program curriculum whose objective is student self-expression in German, whose linguistic and cultural content is negotiated with and increasingly constructed by students, and whose arrangement is founded in current knowledge of second language acquisition research and the development of multiple literacies. My research approach had pointed out much that was not going well in GFL for students and opened space for them to give voice to their needs and interests — from which I have been able to elaborate further. In practical terms, the macro-level curriculum could include more meaning-focused, situational, and content-based language instruction, greater forethought for articulation between the domestic class and either study abroad or eventually professional or personal activity in immersion environments, develop dialogue with other German users at all levels of acquisition and with increasing awareness of discursive and professional norms, integrate language and culture learning, and engage with a variety of texts or media (including contemporary

literature and media) in order to raise awareness of specialized or disciplinary language use. The micro-level of curriculum could actively and purposefully immerse students in the target language, follow the framework of task-based language teaching, include consciousness-raising exercises and activities in order to attend to forms in context, incorporate self-selected projects and public presentations that are relevant to the students' interests, provide students with opportunities to attend to their grammatical and lexical errors in a contingent manner, and require students to track and assess their own linguistic and intercultural goals and progress through target language learning diaries and/or portfolios.

Certainly, this entire dissertation comprises only one contribution to a necessary ongoing discussion of postsecondary curriculum for German (and other modern languages) in Canada. On the one hand, it has demonstrated that critical-historical, (postcolonial) theoretical, and — above all — interpretive or narrative approaches in this area of research and scholarship enable the emergence of informative uncoverings, new perspectives, and more elaborate understandings of teaching and learning that will hopefully afford students and instructors more meaningful experiences. These approaches, by focus on student experience and voice, have especially shown that German professors in Canada need to become more aware of how their curriculum and instruction occurs in changing contexts with diverse students and therefore should not be uniform; They need to question what they have imported — their subject content and its arrangement, their methodology, their own education, even their own identities; They need to understand and teach more to the local context of their students.

On the other hand, the scope of this dissertation also remains necessarily limited in that it has focused on the experience of one foreign language curriculum at one level of education in a few parts of one country by a few voluntary participants from one group of people — and retold by one researcher. Further studies are necessary in order to extend the horizons of this research. Student-oriented studies in neighboring modern language disciplines — Arabic,

Chinese, English (in Quebec), French (outside of Quebec), Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian, etc. — both at university and at school in Canada would be useful for second and foreign language curriculum thinking and development in the country as a whole. Likewise, similar studies on student experiences would augment the distinct, yet related, and already more abundant scholarship and research on the history and development of current collegiate curricula for German in our geopolitical neighbor, the United States of America (e.g., Berman, 1994, 1997; Bernhardt & Berman, 1999; Byrnes, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 2002a, 2002b; Department of German, Georgetown University, n.d.; Hohendahl, 2003; Kramsch et al, 2007; Peck, 1985; Swaffar, 1993, 1999; Swaffar & Arens, 2006; Weber, 2000). Also, given that this dissertation has attempted to make up for the historical and multifaceted silences of Canadian students in postsecondary GFL curriculum — as recipients, negotiators, and stakeholders of curriculum and as learners, speakers, and users of a second language — further endeavors in this direction with undergraduate and graduate students from a variety of Canadian universities as well as scholarship on Canadian professors and instructors' (and university administrators') macro- and micro-level curricula understandings of and responses to current student interests and needs would help to further realize the dynamic cooperation of the plurality of people involved in German as a foreign or second language and culture. This could include narrative investigations of how professors retrain themselves by questioning their educational and speaker identities in light of critical applied linguistics, how they reconsider the training of future instructors and professors, and how students fare with innovative curricula. Of particular interest and benefit would be research that involves modern language educators and teacher educators not only as practitioner-subjects but rather as co-researchers in curriculum research so that they can initiate, monitor, and further adjust changes in their own practices and institutions and also effect improved experiences for students (Barkhuizen, 2008; Bensimon, Polkinghorne, Bauman, & Vallejo, 2004; Johnson & Golombek, 2002). Certainly I hope to continue this project, drawing on further critical theories and interpretive approaches (such as arts-based research), working with

further student participants, and collaborating with professorial colleagues, in order to enhance second language education.

References

Acadia University. (2007, February 21). German. *Acadia University undergraduate calendar 2007-2008*. Retrieved June 18, 2007, from the Acadia University Web site: http://bartleby.acadiau.ca:7778/portal/page?_pageid=94,43931&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&disc=GERM&procyr=2007

Anyon, J. (1981). Schools as agencies of social legitimation. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing, 3*(2), 86-103.

Apple, M. (1979). Commonsense categories and the politics of labeling. *Ideology and curriculum* (pp. 123-153). Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul. Reproduced in course pack (pp. 223-244).

Aronowitz, S., & Giroux, H. A. (1991). Textual authority, culture, and the politics of literacy. In M. W. Apple & L. K. Christian-Smith, *The politics of the textbook* (pp. 213-241). New York & London: Routledge.

Atkinson, D. (2002). Toward a sociocognitive approach to second language acquisition. *Modern Language Journal, 86*(4), 525-545.

Batts, M. S. (1998). *A brief survey of Germanic studies at Canadian universities from the beginnings to 1995*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Barkhuizen, G. (2008). A narrative approach to exploring context in language teaching. *ELT Journal, 62*(3), 231-239.

Beale, J. (2002). Is communicative language teaching a thing of the past? *Babel, 37*(1), 12-16.

Bell, J. S. (2002). Narrative inquiry: More than just telling stories. *TESOL Quarterly, 36*(2), 207-213.

Bensimon, E. M., Polkinghorne, D. E., Bauman, G. L., & Vallejo, E. (2004). Doing research that makes a difference. *Journal of Higher Education, 75*(1), 104-126.

Berman, R. A. (1994). Global thinking, local teaching: Departments, curricula, and culture. *ADFL Bulletin, 26(1)*, 7-11.

Berman, R. A. (1997). Reform and continuity: Graduate education toward a foreign cultural literacy. *Profession, 97*, 61-74.

Bernhardt, E. B., & Berman, R. A. (1999). From German 1 to German studies 001: A chronicle of curricular reform. *Die Unterrichtspraxis, 32*, 22-31.

Bhabha, K. H. (1994). *The location of culture*. London & New York: Routledge.

Boostrom, R. (1994). Learning to pay attention. *Qualitative studies in education 7(1)*, 51-64.

Brown, H. D. (2002). English language teaching in the "post-method" era: Toward a better diagnosis, treatment, and assessment. In J. C. Richards & W. A. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice* (pp. 9-18). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (5th ed.). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education, Inc.

Bygate, M., Skehan, P., & Swain, M. (2001). Introduction. In M. Bygate, P. Skehan, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching, and testing* (pp. 1-20). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Byrnes, H. (1996). The future of German in American education. A summary report. *Die Unterrichtspraxis, 29*, 253-261.

Byrnes, H. (1998a). Constructing curricula in collegiate foreign language departments. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Learning foreign and second languages.*

Perspectives in research and scholarship (pp. 262-295). New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

Byrnes, H. (1998b). Introduction: Steps to an ecology of foreign language departments. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Learning foreign and second languages. Perspectives in research and scholarship* (pp. 1-22). New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

Byrnes, H. (2002a). The role of task and task-assessment in a content-oriented collegiate foreign language curriculum. *Language Testing, 19*(4), 419-437.

Byrnes, H. (2002b, November). Task-based writing in a curricular context: Specifying goals, pedagogies, and assessment criteria. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Teachers of German, Salt Lake City, UT. Available from Georgetown University Web site: http://www1.georgetown.edu/departments/german/programs/undergraduate/curriculum/manuscripts/37177.html

Campbell, R. (1978). Notional-functional syllabuses 1978: Part I. In C. Blatchford & J. Schachter (Eds.), *On TESOL '78: EFL policies, programs, practices* (pp. 15-19). Washington, DC: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Canagarajah, A. S. (1996). From critical research practice to critical research reporting. *TESOL Quarterly, 30*, 321-331.

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics, 1*, 1-47.

Candlin, C. N. (2001). Afterword: Taking the curriculum to task. In M. Bygate, P. Skehan, & M. Swain (Eds.), *Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching, and testing* (pp. 229-243). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Carroll, J. B. (1967). Foreign language proficiency levels attained by language

majors near graduation from college. *Foreign Language Annals, 1*, 131-151.

Carroll, L. (1865 / 1970). *The annotated Alice.* Alice's adventures in wonderland *and* Through the looking-glass *by Lewis Carroll* (Revised ed.) (M. Gardner, Ed.). Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books.

Carson, T. R. (1986). Closing the gap between research and practice: Conversation as a mode of doing research. *Phenomenology + pedagogy 4(2)*, 73-85.

Castenell, Jr., L. A., & Pinar, W. F. (1993). Introduction. In L. A. Castenell, Jr., & W. F. Pinar (Eds.), *Understanding curriculum as racial text: Representations of identity and difference in education* (pp. 1-30). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Coffee, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA; London: Sage Publication, Inc.

Coffey, S., & Street, B. (2008). Narrative and identity in the "language learning project." *Modern Language Journal, 92*(3), 452-464.

Cook, V. (2002). Language teaching methodology and the L2 user perspective. In V. Cook (Ed.), *Portraits of the L2 user* (pp. 327-343). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Cresswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Introduction. Entering the field of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-17). Thousand Oaks, CA; London; New Delhi:

Sage Publications, Inc.

Department of German, Georgetown University. (n.d.). Curriculum project. Retrieved August 5, 2010, from Georgetown University Web site: http://www1.georgetown.edu/departments/german/programs/undergraduate/curriculum/

Department of German Language and Literature, Queen's University. (2007, June 18). Course info and schedule. Retrieved June 18, 2007, from Queen's University Web site: http://www.queensu.ca/german/undergraduate/course_info.php

Dimitriadis, G., & McCarthy, C. (2001). *Reading and teaching the postcolonial: From Baldwin to Basquiat and beyond*. New York & London: Teachers College Press.

Dörnyei, Z., & Csizér, K. (1998). Ten commandments for motivating language learners: Results of an empirical study. *Language Teaching Research, 2*, 203-229.

Doughty, C. (1991). Second language instruction does make a difference: Evidence from an empirical study of SL revitalization. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 13*, 431-469.

Doughty, C. (1998). Acquiring competence in a second language: Form and function. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Learning foreign and second languages. Perspectives in research and scholarship* (pp. 128-156). New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

Doughty, C. (2003). Instructed SLA: Constraints, compensation, and enhancement. In C. Doughty & M. Long (Eds.), *The handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 256-310). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Doughty, C., & Williams, J. (1998). *Focus on form in classroom second language acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ehrman, M. (1993). Ego boundaries revisited: Toward a model of personality and learning. In J. Alatis (Ed.), *Strategic interaction and language acquisition: Theory, practice, and research* (pp. 331-362). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Eigler, F. (2001). Designing a third-year German course for a content-oriented, task-based curriculum. *Die Unterrichtspraxis, 34*(2), 107-118.

Ellis, J. L. (1998). *Teaching from understanding. Teacher as interpretive inquirer*. New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language teaching and learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eschenbach, W. von. (c. 1200-1210 / 2006). *Wolfram von Eschenbach. Parzival and Titurel* (C. Edwards, Trans.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Firth, A., & Wagner, J. (1997). On discourse, communication, and (some) fundamental concepts in SLA research. *Modern Language Journal, 81*(3), 285-300.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, Seabury Press.

German Studies, Department of Languages and Literature, Acadia University. (2004). Description of courses offered by the German Department. Retrieved June 18, 2007, from Acadia University Web site: http://ace.acadiau.ca/arts/german/courses.htm

Giroux, H. A. & Searls Giroux, S. (2000). Teaching the political with Homi Bhabha. In H. A. Giroux (Ed.), *Impure acts: The practical politics of cultural studies* (pp. 87-106). New York & London: Routledge.

Graman, T. (1987). The gap between lower- and upper-division Spanish courses: A barrier to coming up through the ranks. *Hispania, 70*, 929-935.

Graman, T. (1988). Education for humanization: Applying Paulo Freire's

pedagogy to learning a second language. *Harvard Educational Review 58*(4), 433-448.

Grittner, F. M. (1990). Bandwagons revisited: A perspective on movements in foreign language education. In D. W. Birckbichler (Ed.), *New perspectives and new directions in foreign language education* (pp. 9-43). Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Grosz, G. (1998). *George Grosz: An autobiography* (N. Hodges, Trans.). Berkeley: University of California Press. (Original work published, as *Ein kleines Ja und ein grosses Nein*, 1946)

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA; London; New Delhi: Sage Publications, Inc.

Guiora, A., Brannon, R., & Dull, C. (1972). Empathy and second language learning. *Language Learning, 22*, 111-130.

Helt, R. C., & Woloshin, D. J. (1982). Where are we today? A survey of current German teaching methods in American colleges and universities. *Die Unterrichtspraxis, 15*, 110-115.

Hering, A., Matussek, M., & Perlmann-Balme, M. (2002). *em Übungsgrammatik. Deutsch als Fremdsprache*. Ismaning: Hueber Verlag.

Hoffman, E. (1989). *Lost in translation: A life in a new language*. New York: Penguin Books.

Hoffmann, E. T. A. (1814 / 1956). *Der goldne Topf. Ein Märchen aus der neuen Zeit*. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam Jun.

Hohendahl, P. U., Ed. (2003). *German studies in the United States: A historical handbook*. New York: Modern Language Association of America.

Johnson, K. E. (2006). The sociocultural turn and its challenges for second language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly, 40*(1), 235-257.

Johnson, K. E., & Golombek, P. R., Eds. (2002). *Teachers' narrative inquiry as professional development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Johnston, I. (2003). *Re-mapping literary worlds: Postcolonial pedagogy in practice*. New York: Peter Lang.

Joldersma, H. (1992). German and Canadian educational influences on *Germanistik* in Canada. In B. Krause, U. Scheck, and P. O'Neill (Eds.), *Präludien. Kanadisch-deutsche Dialoge. Vorträge des 1. Kingstoner Symposiums. Thema: Interkulturelle Germanistik: The Canadian context* (pp. 53-70). München: iudicium verlag.

Jordan, J. (1987). *On call: Political essays*. Boston: South End Press.

Kafka, F. (1986). *Metamorphosis and other stories* (W. Muir & E. Muir, Trans.). Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books Ltd.

Kaminer, W. (2007). *Ich bin kein Berliner. Eine Reiseführer für faule Touristen*. Munich: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag.

Kaufman, D. (2004). Constructivist issues in language learnign and teaching. *Annual Review of Applied Linuistics, 24*, 303-319.

Kelly, L. G. (1969). *25 centuries of language teaching*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Kord, S. (2002, December). When the student is ready, the teacher disappears: On the absence of teaching in the literature classroom. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Modern Language Association, New York City, NY. Available from Georgetown University Web site: http://www1.georgetown.edu/departments/german/programs/undergraduate/curriculum/manuscripts/37176.html

Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kramsch, C. (1996). The cultural component of language teaching. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht, 12*(1), 13pp. Retrieved January 2, 2007, from http://www.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/projekt_ejournal/jg_01_2/beitrag/kramsch2.htm

Kramsch, C. (2006). The multilingual subject [Preview article]. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 16*(1), 97-110.

Kramsch, C., Howell, T., Warner, C., & Wellmon, C. (2007). Framing foreign language education in the United Stated: The case of German. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, 4*(2-3), 151-178.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (1993). The name of the task and the task of naming: Methodological aspects of task-based pedagogy. In G. Crookes & S. M. Gass (Eds.), *Tasks in a pedagogical context. Integrating theory and practice* (pp. 69-96). Cleveland, Philadelphia, Adelaide: Multicultural Matters Ltd.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (1994). The postmethod condition: (E)merging strategies for second/foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 28*(1), 27-48.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Toward a postmethod pedagogy. *TESOL Quarterly, 35*(4), 537-560.

Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). TESOL methods: Changing tracks, challenging trends. *TESOL Quarterly, 40*(1), 59-81.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leaver, B. L., & Willis, J. R., Eds. (2004). *Task-based instruction in foreign language education. Practices and programs*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Levine, G. S. (2004). Global simulation: A student-centered, task-based format for intermediate foreign language courses. *Foreign Language Annals, 37*(1), 26-36.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The savage mind* (J. Weightman & D. Weightman, Trans.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (Original work published, as *La pensée sauvage*, 1962)

Lewis, M. (1996). Power and education: Who decides the forms schools have taken, and who should decide? In J. L. Kinchloe & S. R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Thirteen questions: Reframing education's conversation* (2nd ed., pp. 33-42). New York: Peter Lang.

Libbon, S. E. (2004). Using virtual reality for task-based exercises in teaching non-traditional students of German. *Die Unterrichtspraxis, 37*(2), 132-142.

Lightbown, P. M. (1992). Getting quality input in the second/foreign language classroom. In C. Kramsch & S. McConnell-Ginet (Eds.), *Text and context: Cross-disciplinary perspectives on language study* (pp. 187-197). Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath.

Lightbown, P. M. (2000). Classroom SLA research and second language teaching. *Applied Linguistics, 21*, 431-462.

Long, M. (1991). Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology. In K. de Bot, R. Ginsberg, & C. Kramsch (Eds.), *Foreign language research in cross-cultural perspective* (pp. 39-52). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Lys, F. (2004). *Using web technology to promote writing, analytical thinking, and creative expression in German*. In B. L. Leaver & J. R. Willis (Eds.), *Task-based instruction in foreign language education. Practices and programs* (pp. 228-250). Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Marinova-Todd, S. H., Marshall, D. B., & Snow, C. E. (2000). Three

misconceptions about age and L2 learning. *TESOL Quarterly, 34*(1), 9-34.

Mason, J. M., & Sinha, S. (1993). Emerging literacy in the early childhood years: Applying a Vygotskian model of learning and development. In B. Spodek (Ed.), *Handbook of research on the education of young children* (pp. 137-150). New York: Macmillan.

McLeod, J. (2000). *Beginning postcolonialism*. Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education. Revised and expanded from* Case study research in education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publications.

Messinger, L. (2001). Using a story-building approach to research comprehensive community initiatives. *Qualitative Report, 6*(1), 74 paragraphs. Retrieved November 28, 2004, from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR6-1/messinger.html

Mipham, S. (2005). *Ruling Your World*. New York: Broadway Books.

Nelson, C., Treichler, P. A., & Grossberg, L. (1992). Cultural studies. In L. Grossberg, C. Nelson, & P. A. Treichler (Eds.), *Cultural studies* (pp. 1-16). New York: Routledge.

Noels, K. A., Stephan, S., & Saumure, K. D. (2007). Supporting the motivation of heritage and nonheritage learners of German. In C. Lorey, J. L. Plews, & C. L. Rieger (Eds.), *Interkulturelle Kompetenzen im Fremdsprachenunterricht. Intercultural literacies and German in the classroom. Festschrift für Manfred Prokop* (pp. 29-48). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Norton, B., Ed. (1997a). Language and identity [Special issue]. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*(3).

Norton, B. (1997b). Language, identity, and the ownership of English. *TESOL*

Quarterly, 31(3), 409-429.

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity, and educational change*. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2001). Changing perspectives on good language learners. *TESOL Quarterly, 35*, 307-322.

Norton Peirce, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly, 29*, 9-31.

Nunan, D. N. (1991). Communicative tasks and the language curriculum. *TESOL Quarterly, 25*(2), 279-295.

Nunan, D. N. (1993). Task-based syllabus design: Selecting, grading, and sequencing tasks. In G. Crookes & S. M. Gass (Eds.), *Tasks in language learning: Integrating theory and practice* (pp. 55-68). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Nunan, D. N. (2004). *Task-based language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Packer, M. J., & Addison, R. B. (1989). Evaluating an interpretive account. In M. J. Packer & R. B. Addison, *Entering the circle: Hermeneutic investigation in psychology* (pp. 275-292, 319-321). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Panova, I., & Lyster, R. (2002). Patterns of corrective feedback and uptake in an adult ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 36*(4), 573-595.

Pavlenko, A., & Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Second language learning as participation and the (re)construction of selves. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 155-177). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Peck, J. M. (1985). Advanced literary study as cultural study: A redefinition of

the discipline. *Profession, 85*, 49-54.

Pennycook, A. (1989). The concept of method, interested knowledge, and the politics of language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 23*, 589-618.

Phillion, J., & He, M. F. (2007). Narrative inquiry and ELT research. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *The international handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 1003-1016). New York: Springer.

Plews, J. L. (2003). German photography: A cultural content course for all comers. *Forum Deutsch 11*, 13-21.

Plews, J. L. (2007). The core, the outside, and the borders: A critical curriculum history of postsecondary German in Canada. In C. Lorey, J. L. Plews, & C. L. Rieger (Eds.), *Interkulturelle Kompetenzen im Fremdsprachenunterricht. Intercultural literacies and German in the classroom. Festschrift für Manfred Prokop* (pp. 1-27). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Plews, J. L. (Under review). "Can anyone suggest a good German grammar?": Analysis and evaluation of German language textbooks.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. In J. A. Hatch & R. Wisniewski (Eds.), *Life history and narrative* (pp. 5-23). Washington, DC: Falmer Press.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1996). Explorations of narrative identity. *Psychological Inquiry, 7*(4), 363-367.

Prabhu, N. S. (1987). *Second language pedagogy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Prokop, M. (2000). [Review of the book *A brief survey of Germanic studies at Canadian universities from the beginnings to 1995*]. *Seminar, 36*, 358-360.

Prokop, M. (1996). "Deutschland-Studien" in Kanada: Geschichte und Perspektiven. *Die Unterrichtspraxis, 29*, 29-36.

Queen's University. (2001-2007). Courses of instruction. German language and literature. *Faculty of Arts and Sciences calendar. 2007-2008 academic year*. Retrieved June 18, 2007, from the Queen's University Web site: http://www.queensu.ca/calendars/artsci/pg714.html

Richards, J. C., & Rogers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rollmann, M. (2007a, May 22). *CAUTG enrolment report 2006-2007*. Retrieved June 18, 2007, from the Canadian Association of University Teachers of German Web site: http://www.mun.ca/german/German/CAUTG/2007/2007CAUTG.pdf

Rollmann, M. (2007b). Three German Web courses with a study abroad component. In C. Lorey, J. L. Plews, & C. L. Rieger (Eds.), *Interkulturelle Kompetenzen im Fremdsprachenunterricht. Intercultural literacies and German in the classroom. Festschrift für Manfred Prokop* (pp. 161-181). Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Random House. [Anthologized excerpt reprinted in course readings.]

Samuda, V., & Bygate, M. (2008). *Tasks in second language learning*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Savignon, S. (1983). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Savignon, S. (2005). Communicative language teaching: Strategies and goals. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 635-651). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics,*

10, 201-231.

Sfard, A. (1998). On two metaphors for learning and the dangers of choosing just one. *Educational Researcher, 27*(2), 4-13.

Skehan, P. (1998). *A cognitive approach to language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Skehan, P. (2003). Task-based instruction. *Language Teaching, 36*, 1-14.

Slemon, S. (2001). Post-colonial critical theories. In G. Castle (Ed.), *Postcolonial discourses: An anthology* (pp. 100-116). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Smith, D. G. (1991). Hermeneutic inquiry: The hermeneutic imagination and the pedagogic text. In E. C. Short (Ed.), *Forms of curriculum inquiry* (pp. 187-209). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Smith, J. K. (1993). Hermeneutics and qualitative inquiry. In D. J. Flinders & G. E. Mills (Eds.), *Theory and concepts in qualitative research. Perspectives from the field* (pp. 183-200). New York & London: Teachers College Press.

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. London & New York: Zed Books Ltd.

Snook, J., Ed. (2005). *Directory of departments of German at Canadian universities and colleges 2005/2006*. Retrieved June 18, 2007, from the Canadian Association of University Teachers of German Web site: http://www.cautg.org/index.php?location=depdirectory

Spivak, G. C. (1995). Can the subaltern speak? In B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, & H. Tiffin (Eds.), *The post-colonial studies reader* (pp. 24-28). London: Routledge.

Steinmüller, U., & Scharnhorst, U. (1987). Sprache im Fachunterricht — Ein Beitrag zur Diskussion über Fachsprachen im Unterricht mit

ausländischen Schülern. *Zielsprache Deutsch 4*, 3-12.

Swaffar, J. (1993). Using foreign languages to learn: Rethinking the college foreign language curriculum. In J. K. Phillips (Ed.), *Reflecting on proficiency from the classroom perspective* (pp. 55-83). Lincolnwood: National Textbook Co.

Swaffar, J. (1999). The case for foreign languages as a discipline. *Profession, 99*, 155-167.

Swaffar, J., & Arens, K. (2006). *Remapping the foreign language curriculum: An approach through multiple literacies*. New York: Modern Language Association.

Swaffar, J., Arens, K., & Byrnes, H. (1991). *Reading for meaning: An integrated approach to language learning*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice.

Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. M. Gass & C. G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 235-253). Rowley: Newbury.

Swain, M. (1995). Three functions of output in second language learning. In G. Cook & B. Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Principle and practice in applied linguistics: Studies in honour of H. G. Widdowson* (pp. 125-144). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swain, M. (2005). The output hypothesis: Theory and research. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 471-483). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Swan, M. (2005). Legislation by hypothesis: The case of task-based instruction. *Applied Linguistics, 26*(3), 376-401.

University of Victoria. (2007a, May 16). German courses. *Calendar 2007-2008*. Retrieved June 18, 2007, from the University of Victoria Web site:

http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2007/CDs/GER/CTs.html

University of Victoria. (2007b, May 16). Germanic studies courses. *Calendar 2007-2008*. Retrieved June 18, 2007, from the University of Victoria Web site: http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2007/CDs/GER/CTs.html

Valdmann, A. (1992). Authenticity, variation, and communication in the foreign language classroom. In C. Kramsch & S. McConnell-Ginet (Eds.), *Text and context: Cross-disciplinary perspectives on language study* (pp. 79-97). Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath.

van Lier, L. (1996). *Interaction in the language curriculum: Awareness, autonomy, and authenticity*. New York: Longman.

van Lier, L. (1998). Constraints and resources in classroom talk: Issues of equality and symmetry. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Learning foreign and second languages. Perspectives in research and scholarship* (pp. 157-182). New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

VanPatten, B. (1998). Cognitive characteristics of adult second language learners. In H. Byrnes (Ed.), *Learning foreign and second languages. Perspectives in research and scholarship* (pp. 105-127). New York: The Modern Language Association of America.

Vickers, M. H. (2010). The creation of fiction to share with other truths and different viewpoints: A creative journey and an interpretive process. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(7), 556-565.

Weber, R. A. (2000). Re(de)fining the college German curriculum: A program proposal. *Die Unterrichtspraxis, 33*(1), 50-61.

Widdowson, H. (1978). Notional-functional syllabuses 1978: Part IV. In C. Blatchford & J. Schachter (Eds.), *On TESOL '78: EFL policies, programs, practices* (pp. 33-35). Washington, DC: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Willis, J. (1996). *A framework for task-based learning*. Harlow, UK: Longman.

Wright, D. A. (2000). Culture as information and culture as affective process: A comparative study. *Foreign Language Annals, 33*, 330-341.

Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.

Zuckowski, R. (1983). Theo (der Bananenbrot-Song). Text retrieved March 19, 2010, from the Musik für Dich Web site: http://www.musik-fuer-dich.de/liedtexte/335-1-667.pdf; Music retrieved March 19, 2010, from the YouTube Web site: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THn3RoIK36k

Zuengler, J., & Miller, E. R. (2006). Cognitive and sociocultural perspectives: Two parallel SLA worlds? *TESOL Quarterly, 40*(1), 35-58.

Appendix

English translations

"Theo (der Bananenbrot-Song)"

Theo, The-e-e-o!

Come and help me in my time of need!

The-, dear The-, dear The-, dear The-,

dear The-, dear The-e-e-o,

please make me a banana sandwich!

I'm half dying or starvation.

Theo, make me a banana sandwich.

It doesn't matter if it's straight or crooked.

Theo, make me a banana sandwich.

Come on! Chop! Chop! Man,

My stomach's really rumbling.

Theo, make me a banana sandwich.

I can't bear this feeling in my stomach

For very much longer.

Theo, make me a banana sandwich.

The-, dear The-e-e-o,

come and help me in my time of need.

The-, dear The-e-e-o,

please make me a banana sandwich.

I'm as hungry as a wolf,

Theo, make me a banana sandwich.

D'you really want me to starve to death here?

Theo, make me a banana sandwich.

Come on! Chop! Chop! Man,
My stomach's really rumbling.
Theo, make me a banana sandwich.
I can't bear this feeling in my stomach
For very much longer.
Theo, make me a banana sandwich.
The-, dear The-e-e-o,
come and help me in my time of need.
The-, dear The-e-e-o,
please make me a banana sandwich.
I could scarf an entire pound,
Theo, make me a banana sandwich.
Bananas are everso healthy!
Theo, make me a banana sandwich.
The-, dear The-e-e-o,
come and help me in my time of need.
The-, dear The-e-e-o,
please make me a banana sandwich.

Ms. Comfrey's sudden verse

The standard German examination is at best
A little unreality placement test.
Creativity? Oh! No such thing is ever expected;
Only: Complete! Transform! And arrange in order!
Neither meaningful ... but very important:
Do alright, then you have correctly
Worked like mad with noble and quiet grammar,
If you can speak the language tomorrow, that don't matter.