

**Richard Block**

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**Education**

Northwestern University, Ph.D., German Literature and Critical Theory/Comparative Literary Studies, (1998).

Northwestern University, MSJ, Journalism (1982).

University of Washington, MA, German Languages and Literature (1979).

Duke University, BA, German Literature/Psychology, Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude (1975).

**Dissertation**

The Spell of Italy: Goethe and the German Literary Imagination.  
Director: Gezà von Molnàr.

**Current Position**

Professor, Germanics, University of Washington, September 2019 . Associate Professor, 2007-2019. Assistant Professor, 2004-2007.

Adjunct Faculty: Stroum Center for Jewish Studies. Program in the Comparative History of Ideas. Program in European Studies, Cluster for the Environmental Humanities.

**Previous Teaching Positions**

Guest Professor, Germanistik, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, spring 2009.

Assistant Professor, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, University of Colorado, Boulder, August 2000 to August 2004. Department of Comparative Literature and the Humanities, appt. spring 2004.

Visiting Assistant Professor, Departments of German and Comparative Literature, University of Oregon. 1999-2000.

Visiting Assistant Professor, Departments of German and Comparative Literary Studies, Northwestern University, 1998-1999.

**Monographs**

*Echoes of a Queer Messianic: From Frankenstein to Brokeback Mountain.* Albany, NY: State University Press of New York, 2018. 213 pp.

*The Spell of Italy: Vacation, Magic and the Attraction of Goethe.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006. 310 pages.

Reviews: *German Studies Review* (32.1: 2009); *Goethe Yearbook* (15.1 2009); *Monatshefte* (100.2: 2008). *German Quarterly* (Winter 2008).

### **Edited Books and Special Issues**

With Mia Du Plessis and Kathleen Chapman. Guest Editors, *AIDS. Remains. New Centennial Review*, forthcoming.

With Simon Richter. *Goethe's Ghosts: Reading and the Persistence of Literature*, New Jersey: Camden, 2013. 315 pages.

With Michael Du Plessis:, guest editors, *Betrayal. New Centennial Review*, 12:3 (Winter) 2012.

With Peter Fenves. *The Spirit of Poesy: Essays on Jewish and German Literature and Thought.* Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP: 2000. 221 pages.

### **Translations of Books**

Peter Bürger, *The Thinking of the Master.* Evanston, IL.: Northwestern UP: November 2002. 128 pages.

### **Introductions to Books**

With Kathleen Chapman and Mia Du Plessis, "No Nostalgia" as part of a special issue for *New Centennial Review*, forthcoming.

With Simon Richter, *Goethe's Ghosts.* New Jersey: Camden, 2013, 1-18.

With Michael Du Plessis, "Betrayal is a Treacherous Subject" as part of a special issue for *New Centennial Review*, 12:3 Winter 2012, 1-17.

"Peter Bürger's Turn," *The Thinking of the Master.* Evanston, IL.: Northwestern UP, November 2002, v-xii

### **Articles in Refereed Journals**

"Mourning Becomes Electric: AIDS' Disappearing Act." *New Centennial Review*, forthcoming.

"The Ends of Judaism: Heinrich Heine's "The Rabbi of Bacherach' *New Centennial*

*Review* 14.2,(Winter 2019) 147-67.

"The Bloody Price of Adoption: Betrayal and Absolution in Kleist's "Der Findling," *New Centennial Review*, 12:3 (Winter 2012) 27-52.

Responses to Professor Donahue's Forum Essay "Taking Jewish Cover: A Reply to Bernhard Schlink," Robert Holub, Karina von Tippelskirch, John Wheatley White and Richard Block. *The German Quarterly*. Vol. 85, No. 4 (Fall 2012), pp. 375-379

"I'll Love You Forever, Wilhelm." Queer Echoes in Roland Barthes' Reading of "Werther," and the Eternal Return of the Same in *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*. *Literatur für Leser*, 10:3 (Spring 2011) 147-65.

"I'm nothing. I'm Nowhere." Echoes of Queer Messianism in *Brokeback Mountain*." *New Centennial Review*, 9:1 (Spring 2009) 253-278.

"Falling to the Stars: Georg Trakl's Utopian Poetics," *German Quarterly*, 78:2 (Spring 2005), 24-44.

"Queering the Jew Who Would be German," *Seminar*, 40:2 (May 2004) 93-110

"From Classical Weimar to Hess' Zion: Remapping a Literary History through Textual Configurations of Sexuality," *MLN*, 119:3 (April/May 2004) 409-30.

"Selective Affinities: Walter Benjamin and Ludwig Klages," *Arcadia* 35 (Fall 2000) 117-36.

"Stone Deaf: The Gentleness of Law in Stifter's 'Brigitta'," *Monatshefte*, 33:1 (Spring 1998) 33-47.

"Strings Attached: Interpretive Ruse in Kleist's 'Über das Marionettentheater'," *New German Review*, 3 (Fall 1995) 42-60.

"Second Reads: Althusser Reading Marx Reading Hegel," *boundary 2*, 22:1 (Spring 1995) 211-34.

"Baal Dancing: The Unsettling Position of Baal in Brecht's Theater of the New," *German Quarterly*, 68:2 (Spring 1995) 117-30.

"The End of Reading: Adorno on Brecht," *Faultline*, 3 (Fall 1994) 63-78.

### **Articles in Peer-Reviewed Collections**

"Prosopopoeia." *Handbuch der Autobiographie und Selbstfiktion*. Ed. Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf. Berlin: DeGruyter, 2019; Vol. 1 378-75.

"Fake Autobiography." *Handbuch der Autobiographie*; Vol. 1 595-605.

"Glükl von Hameln." *Handbuch der Autobiographie*; Vol. 3 1511-1525.

"From Art to History: Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* and The Coming Community," in *Inventions of the Imagination*. Ed. Richard Gray et al. (Seattle and London: UP Washington, 2011) 141-59.

"Textual Narcissism: Undoing Queer Readings in Kleist's 'Über das Marionettentheater,'" *The Self as Muse: Narcissism and Creativity in the German Imagination, 1750-1830*. Ed. Alex Mathäs (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2011) 171-194.

"Scribbles from Italy: Cy Twombly's Experiment in Seeing Goethe See Language," in *Enlightened Eye: Goethe and Seeing*. Ed. Evelyn Moore and Patricia Simpson (Amsterdam: Rodopoi, 2007) 284-309.

### Invited Review Articles

Peter McIssac. *Museums of the Mind. German Modernity and the Dynamics Of Collecting*. (College Park, Pa.: Penn State UP: 2007). *MLQ* 70:3 (Spring 2009) 394-8).

Bernd Witte and Mauro Ponzi, eds. *Theologie und Politik: Walter Benjamin Und ein Pardigma der Moderne*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1005. *Arcadia* 42: 1 (Winter 2007) 189-92.

Susannah Gottlieb Yah: *Regions of Sorrow. Anxiety and Messianism in Hannah Arendt and W. H. Auden*. Stanford: Stanford UP 2002. *Arcadia* 39:2 (fall 2004) 434-7.

"Goethe at War: An Invisible School of Thinkers vs. the Industry." Benjamin Bennett: *Goethe as Woman: The Undoing of Literature*. Detroit: Wayne State University, 2001. Astride Orle Tantillo: *Goethe's Elective Affinities and the Critics* Rochester and Suffolk: Camden House, 2001. Martin and Erika Swales: *Reading Goethe: A Critical Introduction to the Literary Work*. Rochester and Suffolk: Camden House, 2002. *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 36:2 winter 2003. 299-304.

Michael Eskin: *The Ethics of Dialogue in the Works of Bakhtin, Levinas, Celan, and Mandel'shtam*. New York: Oxford University, 2000. *Arcadia*, 36:2 (winter 2001) 376-79.

### Reviews of Books

Samuel Weber. *Benjamin's –abilities*. Cambridge, London: Harvard UP, 2007. *German Studies Review* 32:1 (Feb. 2009) 699.

Simon Richter. *Missing the Breast: Gender, Fantasy, and the Body in*

*The German Enlightenment*. Seattle: UP Washington, 2006 Lessing Yearbook XXXVIII (2008-2009) 338-9.

*Georg Trakl: Poems and Prose*. A Bilingual Edition. Alexander Stillmark, Trans. Evanston: Northwestern UP. *German Quarterly* 79:2 (Spring 2006) 282-4.

Gary Schmidt. *The Nazi Abduction of Ganymede: Representations Of Male Homosexuality in Postwar German Literature*. New York: Peter Lang, 2003. *German Quarterly*, fall 2004, 509-10.

Kenneth M. Ralston, *The Captured Horizon: Heidegger and the "Nacht-wachen von Bonaventura"* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1994) *Colloquia Germanica*, 29, 1 (winter 1996): 70-72.

### Works in Progress

*Essays:*

"Metaphor of a Jewish Suicide: Stefan Zweig's 'The Royal Game and The Death Wish of the Inner Emigrant.'" Anticipated completion, 2021

*Monographs and Books:*

AIDS Memorials: A Catalogue and Critique of Memorials and Other Commemorative Materials. Anticipated completion, 2023.

'Societies of Caring.'" Explores the possibilities or articulations of care (Sorge) in marginalized societies that refuse hierarchical structures, anticipated completion 2023.

### Research Grants

Research Fellow, Society of Scholars, Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington, Seattle. 2005-06.

Junior Faculty Development Award, University of Colorado, Boulder, Summer 2002

Holocaust Educational Foundation, Fellowship to attend workshop in Evanston, Il. June 2001.

Humanities Consortium of the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville, Postdoctoral Fellowship, 1998-1999 (declined).

College of Arts and Sciences, Northwestern University, Award for Outstanding Teaching, 1996-1997.

Alice Berline Kaplan Center for the Humanities, Northwestern University, teaching fellowship, 1995-96.

### **Talks and Presentations**

#### Conferences and Symposia

"Sibling Rivalries: From Cain and Abel to *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane*. GLITS conference to introduce new major, University of Washington, Seattle, April 2021.

"Holocaust Film after Shoah." Stroum Center for Jewish Studies, University of Washington, Seattle, May 2020.

Teaching the Holocaust in the Age of Trump: Association of Jewish Studies, (Boston, December 2018.)

"Echoes of a Queer Messianic." Book Presentation, University of Washington, January 2018.

"Teaching Son of Saul and the Holocaust. Association of Jewish Studies Conference, Washington, D.C., December 2018.

"Gloom and Rupture in Heine's 'The Rabbi of Bacharach'", MLA, Philadelphia, January 2017.

Teaching the Holocaust: Hillel Center, Seattle, March 2015.

"Philosophy and the Novel," moderator and respondent, University of Washington, May 2015.

"The Blood-and-Soil Sensorium of Stifter's 'Bunte Steine,'" GSA, Denver, October 2013.

"Sephardim and the Holocaust," moderator and respondent, University of Washington, April 2013.

"The Metaphor of a Jewish Suicide: Stefan Zweig's 'The Royal Game,'" Association of Jewish Studies, December 2012.

"The Fifth Commandment: Divine Justice and Betrayal in Kleist's 'The Foundling,'" MLA, January 2012.

"Questions of Jewish Sovereignty in Rosenzweig and Benjamin," moderator respondent, University of Washington Symposium, April 2011.

"Goethe in Italy," Roma, Terza Università, September 2010.

"Echoes of Queer Messianism: Barthes' Reading of *Werther* and Nietzsche's

Eternal Return of the Same. University of Washington, 2010.

"Textual Narcissism in Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater*." GSA, Minneapolis, 2008.

"Censoring the Censors: Heine's 'Florentine Nights.'" North American Heine Society, MLA, Chicago, December 2007.

"From Art to History: Schelling's Modern Mythology." Inventions of the Imagination Conference, University of Washington, May 2007.

"Goethe's Italian Scribbles in the Hands of Cy Twombly." MLA (Lessing Society), Philadelphia, December 2006.

"I'll Love You Forever, Wilhelm": Queer Messianism in Goethe's *Werther*. GSA, Pittsburgh, September 2006.

"Birthing Italy: Goethe's Custody Battle with Bachmann," PAMLA, Portland, November 2004.

"Taking the Words out of the Father's Mouth: Goethe and his Father in Italy," University of Washington, June 2003.

"Schelling and the Aesthetics of History," MLA (standing committee on Comparative Literature), New York, December 2002.

"Castration and the Feminine Gaze in Winckelmann's Art History," GSA, San Diego, CA, October 2002.

"You can never be too rich or too queer: Peter Schlemihl's Wonderful History," MLA (standing committee on Literature and the Other Arts), New Orleans, LA. 2001

"From Weimar to Zion: Remapping a Literary History," Humanities Workshop, University of Colorado, Boulder, April 2001.

"Mehr Licht, Mehr Licht: Nietzsche's Homecoming in Weimar," MLA, (standing committee on German Literature of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), Washington, D.C., December 2000.

"Speaking of the Father: Goethe's Translation of his Father's Diaries," American Association of Italian Scholars, University of Oregon, Eugene, Or., April 1999.

"Nietzsche in Italy: The Eternal Return of the Fascist Same," International Narrative Conference, Evanston, Ill., May 1998.

"Italy and the German Nightmare: The Coming Home of the Unacknowledged Roots of German Classical Culture," German Studies Association, Seattle, October 1996.

"Benjamin and the George Circle," Colloquium of the German Departments of the University of Chicago, Loyola University, and Northwestern University, Chicago, December 1995.

"Selective Affinities: Ludwig Klages and Walter Benjamin," Midwest German Studies, Chicago, May 1995.

"Photo-athesis: Walter Benjamin on Translation and Photography," Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, January 1995.

"Dueling Dialectics: Adorno and Benjamin on Kafka," Literary Studies Colloquium, Northwestern University, Evanston, February 1994.

"Disregarded Political Subtexts in Stifter's Novellas," MMLA, Minneapolis, November 1993.

*Invited Talks and Presentations*

"The Rise and Fall of the Modern Homosexual." Keynote Address, "Conceiving the (Un)Quiet Mind." University of Washington, Seattle, April 2021.

"Irene Butter and Richard Block: From Holocaust to Hope"; Town Hall Meetings; 4/16/19.

"E nessun valore": Il ruolo della letteratura nell' universita' statunitense (9/12/3<sup>rd</sup> Univ. Roma).

"Che servono i poeti nei tempi poveri: Hölderlin, Leopardi, e la poesia della immanenza." Positano Cultural Center, Italy, September 2105.

"*The Holocaust in Film.*" Hillel Society, Seattle, October 2013.

"Losing Sight of the Holocaust: A Short and Indelicate History of Holocaust Film." Hillel Society, Seattle, February 2013.

"Queer Reiterations in Roland Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse.*" Northwestern University, May 2009.

"I'm Nothin. I'm Nowhere.' Queer Potentialities in *Brokeback Mountain.*' U. Bonn, June 2008.

"Echoes of Queer Messianism in *Brokeback Mountain.*" U. Frankfurt am Main, May, 2008.

"Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism and the Poetry of Friendship.*" U. Münster, May 2008.



"Globalization and the New Cologne Artists." (podcast). Henry Art Museum, March 2007.

"The Loss of Berlin Salon Culture." Frye Museum, January 2007.

"Scribbles from Italy: Cy Twombly's Goethe Experiment," University of Southern California, November 2005.

"Queering the Jew Who Would Be German: Peter Schlemihl's Strange and Wonderful History," Northwestern University, March 2004.

"Mechanically Reproduced Visions of Italy: Goethe, Stendhal, and James," Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, March 1997.

### **Conference Planning and Organization**

"Heine, Goethe and the Bible" Panel organizer for first joint session of the North American Heine Society and Goethe Society of North America, MLA, Philadelphia, December 2009.

"Heine In Italy." Panel organizer for the North American Heine Society. MLA, San Diego CA., December 2003.

"Realizing Aids: Action, Intervention, Discourse, Sites," February 21-23, 1997, Northwestern University, Evanston. Member of the planning and steering committees.

### **Languages:**

German, near native fluency.

Italian, fluent

French, Reading Knowledge.

Spanish, Conversational competency.

### **Other Professional Service:**

Editorial Board: *Kontouren*. NCR (*pending*).

Peer Reviews  
of book manuscripts:

Stanford UP; Northwestern UP, Fordham UP, Routledge, Palgrave.

...of articles:

*Diacritics, The German Quarterly, Seminar, Kontouren,  
New Centennial Review, Gender and History, Goethe Yearbook.*