

# Introduction

## Transnationalizing German Studies

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### Where is German?

This deceptively easy question stands at the heart of this book on Transnational German Studies. Although it begs a simple answer, posing it uncovers a host of practical and existential issues that run right through our approach to studying German language, culture and society in universities today. On the one hand, discovering that studying the German language can extend your geographical and political horizons across much of Central Europe and, through patterns of trade and migration, all around the world, is an early kick for curious students of German, encouraging them to see and explore the ‘wider worlds’ beyond Germany, Austria and Switzerland that their studies can unlock. The challenge that then follows, though, is how to make sense of what suddenly becomes a potentially vast area of study – an area that cuts across not only nations (from Austria to Australia, if you will) but also time periods, languages and artistic genres (from medieval books of devotion printed in Low German to modernist painting and film, and beyond) – and all of this in the course of just three or four years of a standard degree programme. German Studies, seen in this light, can both excitingly eschew any sense of regionalism or parochialism and expand to such an extent that we might be forgiven for asking ‘where in the world’ we should begin when studying it.

At the same time, the question of ‘where’ German is to be found has been accompanied by the question of ‘why’ one should study it at all, with concerns about the decline of German as a subject in schools becoming an entrenched source of angst in UK higher education. Indeed, UK universities have now almost entirely followed American colleagues, who have been well

used to offering German from scratch on their programmes, in order to make up for its near extinction from high school curricula. Even professors of German in Germany are coming under increased pressure to explain the broader worth of *Germanistik* [German Studies] to cohorts of students needing to make their way in a specialized labour market. This is, in fact, not a new phenomenon at all: as Nicola McLelland has shown, German Studies (especially in the UK) has always been a moving target, with the answers to the questions ‘why to learn German’ and ‘who should learn German’ evolving over the past 500 years, from scholarly to touristic to commercial reasons.<sup>1</sup> Intriguingly, though, McLelland’s historical survey reveals that, ultimately, it is ‘cultural rather than purely instrumental reasons [that] have remained crucial’ motivating factors for studying German. McLelland concludes:

If there is a moral to the tale for Germanists and teachers of German, it is perhaps this: we must continue to make the case ‘upwards’ to policy-makers, that German is indeed a useful language, and, in this era, one of the most useful ones [...]. However, [...] it is not hard-headed commercial reasoning that wins *individual learners* to languages in general and to German in particular, but the promise of enriching cultural encounters, both in travel [...] *and* in travels of the mind.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, there has been a shift in the institutional representation and approach to German (and the Modern Languages more widely) away from German as an inherently valuable subject of study in its own right. At the same time, this has led to new and creative ways of finding the fruits of German writers’, politicians’ and scientists’ work, albeit at times a little to the side of the subject’s traditional heartlands. For German culture, broadly defined, translated and adapted, continues to flourish in theatre, music, philosophy, politics, religious studies, science and medicine, whether in university curricula or in the broader worlds of practice to which each of these disciplines attend. Finding new ways of linking language-based expertise in all things German with these cognate areas has led to some startling combinations, whether in bringing computational analysis of data to bear on our understanding of culture, encouraging communities to explore fixed notions of identity through material objects or helping scientists parse their research questions differently,

<sup>1</sup> Nicola McLelland, ‘German as a Foreign Language in Britain. The history of German as a ‘useful’ language since 1600’, *Angermion* 8.1 (2015), pp. 1–34 (p. 2).

<sup>2</sup> McLelland, ‘German as a Foreign Language in Britain’, p. 33 (emphasis in the original).

through the lens of language and metaphor, to name just a few examples. These transformative uses of German Studies require that we ask the question again, seriously now, and not on the back foot, but for a new set of students and researchers within and beyond German Studies: *Where is German?*

### The Transnational as Transformational

In providing an answer, this volume captures a transformation, not just as the German-speaking countries in Europe reassess their relationship to the wider world in political and economic terms that map on to twenty-first-century realities – an aspect of transnationalism that has been captured in other recent volumes on the topic – but as the whole discipline itself asks why being a repository for the study of a particular, linguistically defined culture matters.<sup>3</sup> Of course, on one level, any structures that we use to stake out parameters for our discipline – such as the categories of ‘Language’, ‘Spatiality’, ‘Temporality’ and ‘Subjectivity’, which are used to structure this book, and all the other volumes in the *Transnational Modern Languages* series too – are inherently subject to flex. This is partly the paradox of making any living language and its attendant cultures into an object of study, as if these could ever truly be caught and analysed through a microscope to yield broader results that might be scalable and universally true in some reliable sort of way. The very thing that makes the study of languages and cultures worthwhile is the fact that they are constantly changing, often in ways that appear to contradict themselves and frustrate neat categorizations along the lines of familial resemblance or basic laws.

But there is also a certain productive instability to the disciplinary boundaries offered by the categories of ‘language’, ‘spatiality’, ‘temporality’ and ‘subjectivity’ that we may like to consider as particularly Germanic – not in essential terms (in other words, not promoting the idea that the German language is inherently more slippery or German history more circular than any other languages or histories), but in contextual ones. In *The Shortest History of Germany* (2017), James Hawes, for instance, has entertainingly

<sup>3</sup> Recent approaches to a transnational or global German Studies include Elisabeth Hermann, Carrie Smith-Prei and Stuart Taberner, *Transnationalism in Contemporary German-Language Literature* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2015); Stuart Taberner, *Transnationalism and German Language Literature in the Twenty-First Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Thomas Oliver Beebee, *German Literature as World Literature* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Anke S. Biendarra, *Germans Going Global. Contemporary Literature and Cultural Globalisation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012); and Randall Halle, *German Film after Germany. Towards a Transnational Aesthetic* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

linked the waxing and waning of German space in Europe over the last two millennia to specific religious and political drivers, especially the power of Prussia, arguing that to really understand Germany today we must 'throw away a great deal of what we think we know about German history, and start afresh'.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, Heinz Schlaffer provocatively gave German culture a very short time in the sun during the last 200 years of world literary achievement, arguing in *Die kurze Geschichte der deutschen Literatur* [*The Short History of German Literature*, 2002] that, since German literature's heyday, far too much has been made of far too little: 'Critics, literary historians, and even authors themselves will hardly refute the judgement that the past fifty years of German literature is unable to stand comparison with either international literature of the same period, or the earlier national literature [of Germany].'<sup>5</sup> Both accounts of 'Germanness' either implicitly (Hawes) or explicitly (Schlaffer) invoke foundational insecurities about Germany and the value of the German language and its ability to sustain a distinct identity over time and in contradistinction to its neighbours. What unites these popular accounts is the underlying paradoxical notion that, historically, German culture, ideology and politics are *everywhere* and *nowhere* on the world stage, as likely at any point in time to be found leading the way into new areas as they are collapsing back in on themselves. In looking again at where and what German is or might be, the contributors to our volume are consciously exploring what happens when you embrace such ambivalence and instability.

#### Deterritorializing the Nation

The transnational is certainly a term that invites reflection on a stable concept of nation-based identity (in logical grammatical terms, it presumes a nation to go beyond) and at the same time unpicks it (it goes beyond the nation). This paradoxical movement is very helpful for our troublesome 'German Studies' slide on the microscope. In political terms, national unity appears only very late in the day for what we now think of as Germany, when the loose collection of German states were joined under the Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in 1871, a result of Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian war. Austria must point to an even younger official birthday as a nation state: the First Austrian Republic came into existence in 1918, after the collapse of the

<sup>4</sup> James Hawes, *The Shortest History of Germany* (London: Old Street Publishing, 2017), p. viii.

<sup>5</sup> See Hans Schlaffer, *Die kurze Geschichte der deutschen Literatur* (Munich: Hanser, 2002), p. 151. All translations are by the authors.

Austro-Hungarian Empire (itself frequently seen as a transnational construct), while contemporary Austria marks its creation with the proclamation of the Second Republic in 1945. Meanwhile, Switzerland – or to use its official title, the Swiss Confederation – was formed in 1848, that year of revolutionary tumult across Europe, with the adoption of the Swiss Federal Constitution creating a federal republic out of its many cantons. Our current nation states of Germany, Austria and Switzerland, then, are merely the latest iteration of alliances, confederations and indeed transnational empires that came and went prior to our contemporary forms of statehood or nationhood. Indeed, taken together, the vast swathe of the European continent – from Lisbon to Lillehammer, from Barcelona to Bucharest – is a model example of how ‘culture’, as the expression of important values and intellectual ambitions that shape communities of people across the ages, emerges from across ever-shifting combinations of geopolitical boundaries, religious divisions and global economic forces.

Indeed, for much of their history, the various peoples operating across these European regions who might call themselves ‘Germanic’ have, in this paradoxical sense, always been transnational (all the way back into the first millennium BC). Lacking a nation as a medium-sized container for identity across a surveyable number of people, they have been intensely regional, if not to say parochial, in their everyday lived experience, while their activities have also formed part of something far larger than a nation: not least the Holy Roman Empire (962–1806), which, in fruitful tension with France and a global Iberia, could be considered the very cradle of European letters. The transnational too only makes sense when seen as emerging from the interplay between the macro and the micro, the grand historical tableau of quasi-universals and their local, contingent manifestations. Taking a transnational approach to German Studies thus allows us to indulge in this historical oddity: the transnational not only manifests in German-speaking Europe as going *beyond* the nation in our contemporary moment of globalization, but also comes *before* the nation with its standardized dialects (and well before globalization was ever considered a particular phenomenon).

The transnational thus provides an oblique angle on our traditional subject of study (German language and letters) that forces us to question some of the bases of a discipline that, like all Modern Languages, has emerged from the study of a literature inflected, in line with the nation state itself, by foundational late nineteenth-century values. The periods, genres and, above all, the canon that this nation-bound approach has constructed have, to borrow a phrase from Ulrich Beck, tended to end in a form of ‘methodological nationalism’ that must look increasingly suspect in an era both of globalization and

of rising nationalist populism.<sup>6</sup> The transnational, by contrast, asks us what value still lies in the traditional model of German Studies, and at the same time it asks us to start to unpick some of that canonicity and allow new voices to arise: a form of deterritorialization of German-language culture that shows how we can approach the problematic, ultimately reductive, concept of the nation without denying its existence and continued power.

### Local and Global German Studies

With this in mind, far from dismantling the discipline, the transnational has the potential to strengthen what engaging with the discipline might have to offer. It invites us to think big and at the same time to care about the local detail, to argue for real global relevance while not losing sight of relative strengths and weaknesses, and, in so doing, to tread the fine line that divides world-leading from world-domineering, religious devotion from ideological obsession and innovation from emulation when trying to make sense of German political, cultural and literary history. As students of Modern Languages, we do all of this in order to see better what is in front of us, both in the German-speaking countries we care about and also, by innate comparison, in our own. Grasping German language and culture transnationally entails reflecting on structures of inclusion and exclusion, whether these cut along geographic, ethnic, gender or class lines, and better understanding why some things are elevated to areas of apparently universal cultural significance while others are not. But we also want to know why German matters beyond the walls of a Languages Department, and how it can help us transform the nations in which we are currently resident by making us reflect harder and differently on the stories we tell about ourselves and the local and global communities of which we feel ourselves to be part.

The multiple award-winning writer Ulrike Draesner provides us with a first major point of orientation in this respect when, in her contribution to this volume, she emphasizes the inherently transnational and indeed translingual nature of stories that are passed down from generation to generation, crossing thousands of kilometres and different political regimes, and in so doing containing the germ to transform any individual subject's sense of 'the nation' and his or her place within it. Origins are always complex and almost never readily contained, as her own story in becoming a German writer through deep engagement with Anglo-American literature and British culture, grafted on to a familial journey through Silesian and

<sup>6</sup> See Ulrich Beck, 'The Cosmopolitan Condition: Why Methodological Nationalism Fails', *Theory, Culture & Society* 24.7–8 (2007), pp. 286–90.

Bavarian dialects and Protestant and Catholic religions, underscores. The later chapters by Birgit Lang and Claire Baldwin provide further examples of individual artistic careers: those of twentieth-century Austrian émigré artist Louis Kahan and the contemporary Muslim German writer and political commentator Navid Kermani, respectively. Both chapters tell fascinating stories of how individuals weave multiple origins and artistic credos into their work that will be seen differently by different people. They also illustrate, on a practical level, how to work with a mixture of biographical and philological (close textual analysis) approaches to analysing how complex processes of cultural cross-fertilization lead not just to new takes on being German but also to finding new subjects of study that open out the discipline towards wider arts practice and politics.

Finding and exploring the limits of different voices within the discipline of German Studies is also the focus of Dirk Weissmann's contribution on the presence, both historic and contemporary, of translanguaging writers in German literature. While on the one hand dealing in depth with the increased profile in the present moment of 'writers from abroad', as Weissmann terms it (in other words, those writing in German as a second language), such as Zé Do Rock, Tomer Gardi and Feridun Zaimoglu, Weissmann also historicizes this phenomenon, underlining the multilingual origins and/or parallel manifestations of work by writers often thought of in simple canonical terms as wholly German – not least Heinrich Heine and Rainer Maria Rilke. Through these historical and contemporary examples, Weissmann pursues writers' own conscious questioning of when experimental linguistic play shifts from creating a distinctive literary canon in German to breaking down not just the canon but the very legitimacy of literature itself as a bastion of 'pure' language. Benedict Schofield and James Hodgkinson similarly explore such issues, but this time by taking contemporary monuments (Walhalla on the Danube and the Hafez-Goethe Monument in Weimar, respectively) as their way into asking who gains access to the German cultural canon and how new readings of the transnational and intertextual imbrications of those who have been placed there might change the way we deal with both the achievements and the shortcomings of this canon today – in these cases, Heinrich Heine, Gustav Freytag, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing.

All of the chapters mentioned so far also share a profound concern with how concepts and legacies travel across time. A second major point of orientation for our unfolding of transnational German Studies is provided by Anne Fuchs's chapter, which argues against the idea, very popular in understandings of the transnational that focus solely on the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, that transnational connectivity necessarily brings about universally transformative opportunities. Rooting her contribution

firmly in a German intellectual and cultural tradition, but ranging across the world, Fuchs is at pains to bring to the fore the persistence of unequal experiences around areas of the globe that are often glibly claimed to be connected in 'real time' by reinserting a differentiated understanding of time and diverse temporal experiences back into concepts of the transnational. Paulo Soethe and Nicholas Baer provide examples of how keeping such concerns in full view also gives us a new angle on historical corpora. Soethe sets out the challenge of digitally securing an archive – the German-language newspapers and periodicals published in the Americas of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that, for both political and economic reasons, have been long neglected. In so doing, he shows how tracing a *histoire croisée* [crossed history] approach – tracing how inter-related discourses and narratives unfold quite differently in different places but at the same time – can change not just what we know about the historical presence of German-speaking communities in the Americas but also how North and South America each told their own stories of one another through the German-language press. Baer, meanwhile, shows how the specific medium of early cinema is used to facilitate imaginary journeys to impossible places that are also explored in the writings of Gershom Scholem and Franz Kafka. In this instance, we are travelling East as part of a foundational doctrine of hope, or, in Scholem's words, the attempt to give real contours to the Jewish 'life lived in deferment' in the Holy Land. Both Kafka's work and the early Zionist cinema he is known to have watched give expression to the incommensurable temporalities of the land that is experienced as a deferred hope and the actual perspective of the Jew in German-speaking Europe.

The way in which concepts, whether of religious devotion or artistic practice, travel through time and take on different expressions in different places, which then in turn transform those very concepts, is also a core concern of Elizabeth Andersen's chapter. Andersen sets out how the Hanseatic League, a maritime trading network that underpinned the global economic significance of medieval and early modern Germany, led to a particular form of cross-cultural and trans-lingual exchange through multiple media and genres (church paintings, devotional literature and political satire) produced in the city of Lübeck on the Baltic coast. In tracing the circuitous journeys travelled through the multiple dialects in play across far-flung trading points, Andersen also helps us understand the significance of fully grasping how economic networks shape cultural practices that unfold in particular social settings, and vice versa.

This third major point of orientation for the transnational is taken up in the chapters by Rebecca Braun and Sara Jones, both of whom work with forms of network analysis developed in Science & Technology Studies, a sub-discipline

of Sociology, as well as in Sebastian Heiduschke's practical overview of how shifting transnational alliances have significantly affected the history and contemporary orientation of the German film industry. Braun's focus is on showing how the abstract concept of 'World-literature', the phrase famously coined by Goethe in 1827, was always underpinned by the practice of world authorship: the multiple people, processes and even material objects that are involved in both producing and circulating literary texts. Braun traces the networks of people, media streams and material objects that have coalesced around the contemporary Austro-German writer Daniel Kehlmann and the Northern German Felicitas Hoppe to probe further whether contemporary German-language literature is capable of aesthetic and conceptual renewal in a way that can both promote and look beyond canonical author figures on a world stage. Jones, meanwhile, shows in a very practical way how to apply computational methods to analysing the intent and success of institutional networks, as set out for the international collaborations sustained by the Federal Office for the Files of the State Security Service of the former GDR (BStU) between 2009 and 2012. These networks evolved as part of the BStU's commitment to sharing best practice in the curation of memory documents and to developing broader and more dynamic forms of collaborative memory that acknowledge the fact that memory practices do not necessarily remain confined by geopolitical or linguistic borders.

The inherent translatability of experiences that are also marked as significantly German forms the fourth and final major point of orientation for our volume. Stuart Taberner, Angus Nicholls and Charlotte Ryland each provide their own perspective on how legacies from the German twentieth century are picked up and circulated in transnational politics, science and the cultural sector. Each bring startling findings to well-known topics. Nicholls shows how the transnational legacy of Freudianism together with its somewhat uncomfortable positioning as a pseudo-science has much to do with the way Sigmund Freud's work was first translated into English, obscuring many of his more metaphorical, if not to say literary, allusions when putting forward ideas about the unconscious. Taberner and Ryland, meanwhile, return us to questions of inclusivity within the curation of the German cultural mainstream. Taberner reveals how the gesture of being contrite becomes part of a powerful German political toolkit, but one that is increasingly subject to the radical relativism of much larger looming planetary problems. Ryland, meanwhile, explores, from a position within the publishing industry, how transnational networks support German-language literature in translation. This global flow of German-language culture in translation has, she argues, had the effect of encouraging a greater diversity within German-language literature itself, enabling a broader than ever range of German-language

voices to find success both in the German-speaking countries and around the world. Here, Ryland neatly captures the core premise of this volume: that the transnational is both present throughout what we might traditionally define as 'German-language' culture as well as to be found in global contexts that such national frameworks often obscure. Crucially, as all the contributions to this volume make clear, these two positions are not mutually exclusive, but are constantly informing each other.

Structuring the Transnational:  
Language, Spatiality, Temporality, Subjectivity

The chapters outlined above are grouped together in this book in four parts: (i) 'Language', (ii) 'Spatiality', (iii) 'Temporality' and (iv) 'Subjectivity'. Deliberately conceived as broad and inclusive in scope, each of these parts nevertheless constitutes an area, and a methodological practice, that students of Modern Languages engage with during their studies, including (but not limited to):

- (i) Their experience of language, multilingualism and translation;
- (ii) Their interrogation of the construction and deconstruction of borders and boundaries (geographic, social, political, cultural, historical and others);
- (iii) Their engagement with competing memory cultures and histories and their exploration of different visions of the future expressed through culture and politics; and
- (iv) Their dissection of the relation of self to other, and their critical investigation of identity politics.

Such parts are, of course, open to manifold interpretations, and the chapters in this volume could conceivably be placed into more than one of them. In this sense, these parts are not designed to be prescriptive, and the contributions should be read flexibly across them (indeed, precisely as we have done when outlining their content in the preceding section). At the same time, though, they provide readers with an initial and ultimately necessary pathway through the diverse themes and questions addressed in this volume. In addition, these parts are replicated in the other volumes in the *Transnational Modern Languages* series, thus actively encouraging readers to explore related themes across the books and across different languages and cultures, which

in turn helps dissolve any latent 'methodological nationalism' that might still partially be inscribed by the existence of a 'nationally specific' volume on German Studies in a series that explores the 'transnational'. In being able to trace issues of 'Language', 'Spatiality', 'Temporality' and 'Subjectivity' across the series, these parts thus demonstrate to our readers how diverse languages and cultures continually interact across linguistic and geographic differences, and can be fruitfully studied in tandem, rather than in isolation. In turn, all the books in the series can be read alongside the volume *Transnational Modern Languages: A Handbook*, which contains over 30 short essays, each of which takes a key term in cultural criticism (such as 'Diaspora', 'Queer', 'Autobiography', et cetera) and explores how these work methodologically across the many different areas of study, and language zones, that comprise the Modern Languages.

In this German volume, the four parts of 'Language', 'Spatiality', 'Temporality' and 'Subjectivity' are also designed to help readers articulate new ways of thinking about 'where' and 'what' German Studies is. Each part thus contains a spread of chronological examples and showcases a range of different methodologies for approaching the transnational. Part One on 'Language', subtitled 'Local and Global Voices', thus addresses the perhaps surprisingly thorny question of 'who speaks German', tracing debates around language and self-identity, language and national belonging, and language and power (especially questions of exclusion and inclusion) that have raged from the Middle Ages to the very present. These chapters deploy approaches derived from historical linguistics, from the close reading of literary works and visual artefacts, as well as from the practical experiences of multilingual authors, translators and figures in the publishing industry. In doing so, Part One reveals the central role of language in developing transnational communities that cut across the local, national and global, and demonstrates how language can be the source of exclusive cultural identities, yet, through processes of translanguaging and translation, can also become the vehicle for more inclusive modes of transnational communication.

The idea that language can be used both as a marker of the boundaries of a specific culture but also as the means to overcome those boundaries is not only linguistic but spatial. This demonstrates the innate permeability of our parts, the second of which approaches explicitly the issue of boundaries and borders, focusing on 'Spatiality'. Subtitled 'Mapping Nations, Mapping Networks', Part Two takes the notion of mapping literally as well as figuratively: tracing authors and filmmakers, as well as institutions and individuals, as they criss-cross borders, but also innovatively showcasing how methodologies from other disciplines, such as Sociology, Comparative Literature and Film Studies, can be applied to key questions in German Studies. This part

ultimately reveals how transnational entanglements arise even when mapping what appear to be the most 'national' of spaces, and how that mapping of space always goes hand in hand with the exercise of power: power over the culture we get to consume, and power over the things we are allowed to remember.

In turning to 'Temporality' in our third part, our book considers not only the inherent connection between the transnational and the trans-period – that crucial awareness that the transnational is both the precursor as well as the result of the nation – but also, as our subtitle makes clear, different 'Experiences of Time'. This exploration of time is not solely about the past, and the ways in which we remember the past, but also about the mechanisms with which time is captured, preserved and instrumentalized. This can take the concrete form of archives and monuments – those symbols both of preservation (in what they choose to store or memorialize) and precarity (in what they choose not or are unable to preserve or remember). Yet time is technologically mediated in other ways too, such as cinema's ability to bridge space–time and bring new worlds to us with speed, or through the digital world's insistence on instantaneous communication. The ways in which time, considered transnationally, can become a form of space–time, is a core concern of these chapters: something that suggests the existence of a global community, yet one that can exclude as many people as it includes. Part Three thus explores how our experience of time and the means with which we measure and preserve time impact on the way we imagine ourselves as part of wider national and transnational communities that span space–time.

The final part of this volume is called 'Subjectivity'. As our subtitle 'Ideology and the Individual' makes clear, in Part Four we focus on discourses of power, and how we as individuals are positioned, labelled and prescribed within wider group identities. A core concern for all the chapters in Part Four is the issue of alterity, and how that state of being 'other' or 'different' is culturally and historically constructed – and how, in turn, this can be culturally dismantled. As people, cultures and ideologies move around the globe, different discourses of gender, race, identity, class and religion come into contact: a transnational mobility of peoples, concepts and policies that is at the heart of all the contributions to Part Four. This mobility – which is also across time and space, and which also involves multiple languages – often leads to misunderstanding, exclusion and prejudice. But, as this part shows, it can also result, through acts of linguistic and cultural translation, in increased understanding and the creation of transnationally imagined communities – communities that stretch in surprising and dynamic ways far beyond the geo-political borders of the German-speaking countries.

## Decentring and Recentring German Studies

We began this introduction by posing the question ‘where is German’? The concept of the ‘nation’ is, of course, never something we can entirely escape or eliminate, and this is not our intention in this book: fundamentally, the transnational does not negate the national, it coexists with it. But the chapters in this book do demand that we question, as students and researchers of German, the cultural and linguistic construction of the nation, nation states and national identities. The chapters enable this questioning by at once displacing the centrality of ‘Germanness’ through transnational perspectives – what we earlier called its deterritorialization – but, crucially, in ways that also allow us to return to an expanded German Studies with new critical questions.

Our concern is thus not only ‘where is Germany’, but ‘who’ makes Germany, and ‘how’ – concerns that demand a creative transnational approach that traces the mobility of different peoples, languages, ideas, institutions and ideologies as truly ‘trans’ – in other words, *across, through, between, before and beyond* what we define today as the geo-political entities of Germany, Austria and Switzerland. With this, transnational German Studies also encourages us to think *trans-period*, to operate *trans-lingually* and consider the *trans-lational* potential of our work for other fields of enquiry that might stand to gain from a relational knowledge of German history and culture: a *trans-disciplinary* approach that also allows German Studies to benefit methodologically from these other fields. In recognizing that German-language culture never corresponds neatly to clearly defined national identities or linguistic and geographic entities, but can be both decontextualized and recontextualized through transnational approaches, the contributions to this volume together demonstrate the transformative potential of the transnational for our understanding of ‘where’ German might be, and ‘why’ we choose to continue to study it.

## Suggestions for Further Reading

- Beebee, Thomas Oliver, *German Literature as World Literature* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 256 pp.
- Biendarra, Anke S., *Germans Going Global. Contemporary Literature and Cultural Globalisation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 256 pp.
- Halle, Randall, *German Film after Germany. Towards a Transnational Aesthetic* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 258 pp.
- Hermann, Elisabeth, Carrie Smith-Prei and Stuart Taberner, *Transnationalism in Contemporary German-Language Literature* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2015), 293 pp.
- Taberner, Stuart, *Transnationalism and German Language Literature in the Twenty-First Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 365 pp.