The Good Germans?
New Transatlantic Perspectives

Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies
25th Anniversary Alumni Conference
June 29th–July 2nd, 2011
In his novel *The Good German*, Joseph Kanon tells the story of Jake Geismar, an American network correspondent who returns to Berlin to cover the Potsdam Conference and find his lost love. In this thriller of intrigue, corruption and betrayal, the author depicts a ruined city at a historic point in time and ultimately poses the question of complicity and guilt. The novel’s title refers to a widely held North American cliché, because it turns out that all Germans are inevitably tainted by Nazi collaboration, but pangs of conscience among several protagonists also show some chance of redemption.

In their academic research, scholars in German and European studies constantly address the ambivalent nature of the German experience. Due to the two World Wars and the Holocaust, the problematic aspects have, however, tended to prevail in recent decades in the perception of much of the Anglo-American media and among many intellectuals. Instead of reinforcing such understandable stereotypes, the conference starts from the opposite perspective and asks, somewhat self-ironically of course, whether there are not also some appealing aspects of German history, society and culture. Without intending thereby to relativize Nazi crimes, such an approach seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the entire range of German experiences in North America and the English speaking world. The conference therefore aims to trace recent scholarship addressing the German model in politics, society and culture within a European context.

The conference will take place at the Seminarzentrum (Silberlaube, Room 115) of the Freie Universität Berlin, located at Otto-von-Simson-Straße 26, 14195 Berlin.

We wish to thank the DAAD and the Ernst-Reuter-Gesellschaft der Freunde, Förderer und Ehemaligen der Freien Universität Berlin e. V. for their generous support.

**Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies**
Freie Universität Berlin
Garystr. 45, 14195 Berlin, Germany
Tel.: +49 30 8385 6671
Fax: +49 30 8385 6672
Email: bprogram@zedat.fu-berlin.de
Website: www.fu-berlin.de/bprogram
5 p.m.  
**Registration**

6–8 p.m.  
**Welcome Addresses**  
Peter-André Alt, President of the Freie Universität Berlin  
Werner Väth, Vice President of the Freie Universität Berlin

**Introductory Notes**  
Konrad Jarausch (Freie Universität Berlin and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)  
Harald Wenzel (Freie Universität Berlin, John-F.-Kennedy-Institut für Nordamerikastudien)

**Keynote Speech**  
*Transatlantic Ambivalence: Germany and the United States since the 1980s*  
Paul Nolte (Freie Universität Berlin, Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut)

**Responses by**  
Johannes von Moltke (University of Michigan, Dept. of German)  
Belinda Davis (Rutgers University, Department of History)  
Gökce Yurdakul (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Institut für Sozialwissenschaften)

8 p.m.  
**Reception**

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**THURSDAY, JUNE 30TH, 2011**

9 a.m.–12:45 p.m.  
**Panel 1: Sources of German Exceptionalism**  
Commentator: Thomas Mergel (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften)

The ‘German Forest’ as an Emblem of Germany’s Ambivalent Modernity  
Jeffrey Wilson  
(California State University at Sacramento, Dept. of History)

German Missionaries and the Study of Africa in the Nineteenth Century  
Sara Pugach (California State University at Los Angeles, Dept. of History)

11–11:15 a.m. Coffee Break

Exceptional Exceptionalism: Apprenticeship, Artisans, and their Contributions to German Development, Welfare, and Historical Self-Understanding  
Hal Hansen (Quincy, MA)
Health as a Public Good: The Positive Legacies of Volksgesundheit
Annette Timm (University of Calgary, Dept. of History)

Genealogies of the “Unpolitical German”: Democratic Renewal and the Politics of Culture in Occupied Germany
Sean Forner (Michigan State University, Dept. of History)

12:45–2 p.m. Lunch

2–4:30 p.m. Panel 2: Creative Tensions in German Culture
Commentator: Claudia Albert (Freie Universität Berlin, Institut für Deutsche und Niederländische Philologie)

Photographic Returns, 1945-53
Claire Zimmerman
(University of Michigan, Dept. of the History of Art)

Moving Memories of Post-War Germany and Its Cinema History
Sara Hall (University of Illinois at Chicago, German Studies)

Atlantic Transfers of Critical Theory: Alexander Kluge and the U.S. in Fiction
Matthew Miller (Colgate University, German Studies)

Heisse Waren (Hot Commodities): Black Music and African Americanization in Aggro Berlin
Griff Rollefson (University of California, Berkeley, Dept. of Music)

4:30–4:45 p.m. Coffee Break

4:45–6:30 p.m. Distinguished Lecture
Bridges and Barriers: Reflections on Transatlantic Academic Exchanges
David Barclay
(Kalamazoo College & German Studies Association)

Responses by
Helga Haftendorn (Freie Universität Berlin, Center for Transnational Relations, Foreign and Security Policy)
Tom Haakenson
(Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Dept. of Liberal Arts)
Rolf Hoffmann
(German-American Fulbright Commission)
Wedigo de Vivanco
(Ernst-Reuter-Gesellschaft der Freunde, Förderer und Ehemaligen der Freien Universität Berlin e. V. & de vivanco consulting international)
FRIDAY, JULY 1ST, 2011

9 a.m.–12:45 p.m.
Panel 3: Postwar German Redemption: A Manual for Success?
Commentator: Martin Sabrow
(Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung Potsdam)

Reconfiguring Antifascism in Postwar Berlin: A Study of Actors and Places of Myth Making
Clara Oberle (University of San Diego, Dept. of History)

“Lasting Reform Must Come From Within”: Education and Democratization in Adenauer’s Germany
Brian Puaca (Christopher Newport University, Dept. of History)

Human Rights without Pluralism: the East German Example and the Problem of Democratization
Ned Richardson-Little (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Dept. of History)

11–11:15 a.m. Coffee Break

Vergangenheitsbewältigung – Deliberate Policies, Unintended Consequences, and Global Proliferation
Julian Dierkes (University of British Columbia, Institute of Asian Research)

Redemptive and Reflective Cosmopolitanism in Reunited Germany
Michael Meng (Clemson University, Dept. of History)

12:45–2 p.m. Lunch

2–5:30 p.m.
Panel 4: The Resilience of the German Model in Politics, Economy and Society
Commentator: Gert Wagner (Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung and Technische Universität Berlin)

The Good Germans: Not a Foregone Conclusion
Katja Weber (Georgia Institute of Technology, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs)

The ‘German Model’ in Renewable Energy Development
Carol Hager (Bryn Mawr College, Dept. of Political Science)

Intergenerational Returns from a Move to Germany? Comparing the Educational Performance of Youth on Both Sides of the German Border
Renee Luthra Reichl (University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research)

3:30–3:45 p.m. Coffee Break
How do Bailouts fit within German and American Models of Capitalism?
Mark Cassell
(Kent State University, Dept. of Political Science)

The European Sovereign Debt Crisis: Is Germany to Blame?
Brigitte Young (Westfälische Wilhelms Universität Münster, Institut für Politikwissenschaft)

7:30 p.m.
Conference Dinner
at Hostaria del Monte Croce, Kreuzberg
by invitation only

SATURDAY, JULY 2ND, 2011

10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Excursion:
Places of Tranquility/Spaces for Reflection
In cooperation with the Center for Metropolitan Studies, Technische Universität Berlin
Meeting point: Soviet War Memorial (Tiergarten), Straße des 17. Juni

12:30–2 p.m. Lunch

2–5:30 p.m.
Panel 5: Wall Memories and Celluloid Traces
Venue: Kino Arsenal at Potsdamer Platz
Commentator: Dorothee Brantz (Technische Universität Berlin, Center for Metropolitan Studies)

The Berlin Wall as a Site of Memory since 1989
Hope Harrison (George Washington University, The Elliott School of International Affairs)

(In)visible Migrants: Public Memory and German Nationhood in the Shadow of the Berlin Wall
Jeffrey Jurgens (Bard College, Dept. of Anthropology)

Screening:
Cycling the Frame (1988) and The Invisible Frame (2009)
The conference will conclude with a screening of these acclaimed films that follow Berlin’s border landscapes at different points in time.