In Memoriam Jost Hermand (1930-2021)
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On 9 October 2021 the world of German Studies lost one of its most prolific and preeminent voices. On that day Vilas Research Professor of German emeritus, Jost Hermand, almost halfway through his 92nd year on earth, passed away at his home in Madison, Wisconsin, where he had lived since he began his professorial career at the state university in 1958. For his colleagues and students he was a beloved friend and teacher, a stimulating conversationalist, and a kindhearted supporter of progressive causes. For the larger world of *Germanistik* he was probably the most productive scholar writing about German literature, art, and music in the seven decades after the Second World War. He displayed his vast knowledge of German and European culture in scores of books he authored or co-authored, and he continued publishing at a steady pace even into his tenth decade, two of his books appearing posthumously. His lengthy bibliography includes hundreds of essays on the most varied topics. He lectured as keynote speaker or contributor to conferences and scholarly meetings throughout the world on a regular basis, and he enjoyed exchanges with his audiences, often provoking them with views that differed from the humdrum offerings of more staid German professors. Together with doctoral students and colleagues in Madison, above all Reinhold Grimm, he initiated several journals and edited many volumes that helped change the way in which scholars viewed the history of the discipline. *Basis* and the *Brecht-Jahrbuch*, as well as the annual proceedings of the Wisconsin Workshop, contributed to and fostered literary scholarship in ways that were fresh and exciting. His unbounded intellectual curiosity made him a pioneer in numerous areas of research. The volume *Synthetisches Interpretieren*, which went through six editions from 1968 to 1978, was inspirational for a generation of German literary scholars seeking to break away from immanent methods and outmoded notions of *Geistesgeschichte*. His work on progressive and democratic moments in the history of German letters, from Jacobin literature to Young Germany, *Vormärz*, Naturalism, and Expressionism, provided students of German culture influenced by the student movement with a concrete alternative to a conservative tradition, sometimes not far removed from views propagated during the Third Reich, that was the standard fare in German academic circles in the first postwar decades. Jost was a pioneer in ecocriticism, recognizing the dangers for the planet inherent in capitalist growth and embracing many aspects of the incipient green movement as an alternative to traditional political thought. In addition to writings dealing with the literary tradition, Jost displayed a masterful knowledge of art, the history of art, and music. He even dabbled in the history of film, composing a short piece on Charlie Chaplain's final speech in *The Great Dictator*. The stimulation from Jost's scholarship will bear fruit for future generations in multiple areas of German Studies, but probably his most memorable writings will be the cultural histories of Germany from the *Gründerzeit* on into the late twentieth century. He began work on a five-volume project with Richard Hamann in the 1950s, and this series of monographs was to conclude with a book on Expressionism. While both Hamann and Hermand are listed as authors, Hamann wrote large portions of only the first installment; Jost completed the cultural history of the *Gründerzeit*, composed the remaining four volumes with only outline notes from his older colleague, who passed away in 1961, well before the project was finished, and went on to complete a cultural history of the Weimar Republic, coauthored by his friend and colleague, Frank Trommler, and a two-volume study of the culture of the Federal Republic of Germany from its inception until 1989. He also wrote larger studies of culture during the 1930s and 1940s and a retrospective look at literature in the GDR. Anyone seriously interested in trends and

tendencies in German culture from 1870 until 1989 will profit immensely from consulting Jost's comprehensive and fascinating studies for many decades to come.

Jost's youth and upbringing gave little indication that he would become the foremost progressive scholar of German culture in the postwar world. Born on 11 April 1930 in Kassel, he spent his early years in Berlin in a relatively modest household. His father, Jost wrote, came from an impoverished background and worked during the Third Reich as a poorly paid textile salesman, earning a bit of extra money playing piano in the evening in various taverns. His mother, "eine deklassierte 'höhere Tochter,'" contributed perhaps a bit more traditional culture to the household, but the fact that Jost's older brother was brought up by grandparents because of the relative penury in the Hermand household, tells us a great deal about the disadvantages Jost encountered compared with the progeny of bourgeois families, who possessed not only the comforts of middle-class life, but also an exposure to literature, art, and music that Jost did not enjoy. Jost, however, showed himself to be an exemplary student, and after graduating from elementary school (*Volksschule*), he was recommended in 1940 for more advanced education in an *Oberschule*. This graduation into higher culture was one of the major turning points in his young life.

Two experiences were tremendously important for Jost's formative years. The first occurred during the period 1940-1945. Because of Allied bombings in major German cities, Jost and his classmates were sent for their protection to camps in the country, where they could escape the dangers of the war. Jost's fate was shared by millions of German teenagers and preteens in the early 1940s, but the consequences of camp life were highly variable, depending on the administration and location of the particular camp. It is fair to say, however, that the impact on the youths forced to live away from their parents in strange surroundings was often quite negative and, in many cases, traumatic. In 1993 Jost wrote about his experiences in the "Erweiterte Kinderlandverschickung" or KLV in an autobiographical text that is both revealing and highly disturbing. He makes it clear that one of the main purposes of these camps was to indoctrinate the younger generation of Germans in the harsh realities of National Socialism and its ideology, and that he was one among many others who left the camps with emotional and psychological scars. In a later autobiographical work Jost insists that soon after the war he forgot about the camps; he downplays their negative influence on him, but the fact that he devotes one of only two autobiographical works to the KLV and that it was his first venture into autobiography belies his claim of minimal impact. Writing about the camps was obviously extremely difficult for Jost, and *Als Pimpf in Polen* is probably the single volume that cost him the greatest emotional anguish. But it does explain something about the resolutely anti-fascist attitude that permeates his entire scholarly oeuvre, as well as the uncompromising attitude he displays toward the remnants of National Socialism he detects in the German culture and the scholarship of the postwar period. His recounting of the trials and tribulations of the camps and the psychic toll they inflicted, as described in the original German publication and its English translation, *A Hitler Youth in Poland*, had relatively little resonance in the public sphere of Germany or the Anglophone world. But their impact on Jost's development as a public intellectual was a significant factor in his thought and writings for his entire mature life.

The second impactful experience was his exposure in his schooling to a different class of pupils and to a culture that was unfamiliar to him. The recommendation that he be placed in an *Oberschule* clearly came initially as a surprise to him and his family. In the first instance his parents dismissed it as too expensive, and without financial assistance from the National Socialist school administration, Jost would probably have continued on a path that would not

have included study at the university or an exposure to the foremost achievements of literature, art, and music. For five years the camps were something of a detour to that exposure, but when the war ended, and Jost was removed from the agricultural work on a farm, to which he had grown accustomed and enjoyed, he was placed by his mother in the *Realgymnasium I* in Kassel. Jost criticizes the pedagogical techniques employed in that school, but more significant for his future development was that he was now in the company of peers, many of whom had not been sent to camps, who were therefore more advanced in their studies, having attended *Oberschulen* outside of the areas threatened by Allied bombings, and who came from backgrounds that were much different from Jost's. He found himself, as he describes it in *Zuhause und anderswo* in a group consisting largely of sons of physicians, lawyers, and upper-level civil servants; Jost considered himself the only "barbarian" in his class. "Im Gegensatz zu diesen Jungen waren mir klassische Musik, anspruchsvolle literarische Werke sowie Bilder der sogenannten Museumskunst weitgehend unbekannt geblieben." In order to integrate himself into this new situation, Jost turned to an intensive acquisition of knowledge appropriate to the bourgeois elite. He describes how he availed himself of every opportunity that presented itself, attending concerts and operas, as well as theatrical productions; visiting museums where he could become acquainted with painting and sculpture; and reading in particular dramas and poetry associated with the accepted canon in German letters. Jost emphasizes in his account of his extracurricular activities that he completely ignored contemporary culture and evidenced no interest in current events or political trends in postwar life. But surely his fervent desire to catch up with his peers instilled in him the work ethic and productivity that embodies his later life as a scholar. Jost informs his readers that in his initial semester of university studies in Marburg in 1950 he enrolled in 18 proseminars, lectures, and recitations. We recognize in this ambitious schedule his dedication to an understanding of culture and his commitment to applying all his energies to his chosen profession, which became hallmarks of his later academic career.

Jost's focus on elitist, apolitical bourgeois culture gradually ceded to an intense preoccupation with leftist political directions as he broadened his circle of acquaintances and found himself in different circumstances during the 1950s. Jost himself emphasizes repeatedly that in his years at the Gymnasium and initial years of university study, he was completely uninterested in what was occurring in Germany: he ignored current happenings in politics and avoided newspapers and any other source of information on German, European, or world affairs. His focus was strictly elitist: he was preoccupied with "high culture." In his personal life a conversation in Bielefeld with his future father-in-law, Paul Jagenburg, whose daughter Elisabeth was Jost's faithful companion and intellectual partner for six decades, introduced the budding scholar to a world that to that point in his development had remained foreign. The elder Jagenburg had been a prominent National Bolshevist during the Weimar Republic, which led to his incarceration in the Buchenwald concentration camp during the Third Reich. He introduced the young man who would marry his daughter to political issues, not only pertaining to fascism, but also to developments in the early years of a newly divided Germany. About his initial conversation with Jagenburg, Jost later wrote that although Jagenburg's views were completely alien to him, he began to understand how Elisabeth and her family had suffered under the National Socialist regime: "Demzufolge war dieser Tag in Bielefeld für mich nicht nur ein schöner, sondern auch ein politisch verwirrender, weil er mir schlaglichtartig Einblicke in die Verfolgtenprobleme der NS-Zeit sowie die ideologische Verdrängung der Adenauer-Ära gewährte, die ich wie Gespenster aus einer mir unbekannten Welt empfand." Elisabeth was also responsible for a professional connection that awakened a political consciousness in her future

husband. She arranged with Richard Hamann-MacLean, the son of the celebrated art historian, for his father to read Jost's dissertation. So impressed was the elder Hamann, who was then teaching at the Humboldt University in Berlin, that he invited the young scholar to visit him and offered him co-authorship of the five-volume history of German culture since the Second Reich. Jost learned from the eminent scholar how his preoccupation with German culture could be more constructively pursued by understanding its relationship to the socio-political context in which it was produced. His political education was furthered not only by his work with Hamann, but also by his residence in East Berlin for a year and a half. Jost's political views developed rapidly when he began to take an interest in the connections between culture and society, and by the close of the decade he had matured into the progressive political observer we recognize in all his subsequent writings.

With his postwar transformation into a prolific, antifascist, politically aware and progressive scholar complete by the late 1950s, it was natural for Jost to be attracted to the most talented and controversial, leftist writer of the nineteenth century, Heinrich Heine. Jost's initial encounter with Heine scholarship, however, was not entirely fortuitous. After Hamann was replaced in East Berlin by a more dogmatic communist and Jost was also forced to leave the GDR, the young scholar had to seek employment in the West. At issue for Jost was his speech defect, a stutter that interfered with his oral communication to such a degree that even his most ardent supporters, including Hamann, thought him unsuitable for a teaching position at a university. While exploring his severely reduced options, Eberhard Galley invited him to participate in the historical-critical edition of Heine's works that was being sponsored by the Nationalen Kultur- und Gedenkstätten in Weimar. Jost's recent experiences with the GDR and his suspicion that the political contention that surrounded Heine for the past century would hamper any cooperative East-West project led him to reject this offer. But a decade later, another opportunity to deal with Heine presented itself, when he was recruited to work on the West German Heine edition, produced in Düsseldorf under the general editorship of Manfred Windfuhr. Indeed, Hermand was assigned the first volume for this project, which included the *Briefe aus Berlin, Über Polen*, and the first two volumes of *Reisebilder*. For Jost this project was also the final step in his legitimization as a bona fide academic. His writings before and after the completion of his editorial work in 1973 have often been criticized by detractors as unscholarly, as tendentious, as polemical, or as propagandistic, and therefore dismissed as unimportant for genuine students and scholars of German literature. With volume 6 of the critical Heine edition Jost's abilities as an academic and his dedication to German Studies could no longer be doubted. This volume is exemplary in every regard, but especially in its detailed commentary on sometimes obscure references and allusions in the texts. It set a high standard for the fifteen volumes that appeared in subsequent years, and it confirmed Jost's credentials as an outstanding scholar whose voice must be taken seriously.

Over the next half century Jost published repeatedly on Heine, starting with *Streitobjekt Heine* in 1975, a detailed review of Heine research in the postwar era, *Der frühe Heine* a year later, which contained studies of the four volumes of *Reisebilder*, and finishing with two essay collections, *Mehr als ein Liberaler* from 1991 and *Heinrich Heine: Kritisch, Solidarisch, Umstritten* in 2007. In these books Jost explored multiple aspects of Heine's life and works, from the poetry of his early and later years to his correspondence articles written in Paris, from his relationship to various political movements of his time to his reception in several countries by different factions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Why Jost took such an avid interest in Heine may seem like a naïve question with an obvious answer: both were progressive

intellectuals in their respective eras, and Jost had developed since the late 1950s an affinity for the left-leaning tradition in German letters. But Heine and Hermand were different in essential ways: Heine, despite his intellectual and literary histories and observations on contemporary happenings in the nineteenth century, was essentially a creative writer, known for his poetry and lively prose more than any scholarly and academic efforts. Although Jost, like many young men, had dabbled in belletristic in his early years, he abandoned poetry and drama for scholarly pursuits and never returned to creative endeavors. Furthermore, Heine's Germany and Europe were quite different from Jost's: through traditions and historical happenstance Heine lived in a time when Germany unity was a dream shared by nationalists, liberals, and radicals, while Germany for Jost was divided initially into two halves, one a capitalist and democratic entity, the other belonging to the Soviet bloc. And Heine was an individual from a Jewish background, often subjected to anti-Semitic slurs both during his lifetime and in subsequent years. Jost was Germanic to the core, although his leftist leanings did expose him to denigration from conservative circles. Despite these differences Jost saw something in Heine that was not only attractive to him, but that he sought to emulate in his own actions and writings. For Jost Heine was a kindred spirit, someone Jost consistently admired and frequently fashioned into the exemplary progressive intellectual of his times.

Jost's identification with Heine starts with their absence from Germany. In a sense both existed in exile, away from the nation that they knew best and to which they devoted almost all their thoughts and energy. The ambivalence they felt about their exile status is evident in many reflections on the Germany of their times and their adopted homeland. Heine's aperçu about a fish in water feeling the way he does in Paris indicates his comfort in the French capital, his feeling that he was almost at home in the city of light. We know that he was acquainted with many of the leading cultural figures in Paris, from influential members of Saint Simonism to musicians, writers, and intellectuals who gathered for discussions in cafes and salons. His books were translated into French and were well received in French critical circles. But there are, nonetheless, indications that he was never completely content with the country in which he spent the last 25 years of his life. The memoirs and letters of the most prominent members of French society he knew contain scant mention of their German counterpart. He was evidently a presence, but perhaps not an active and central participant in conversations with his French peers. Heine became fairly fluent in French, but he was always more comfortable with German, and it appears that even in his writings composed originally for a French public, he was often more concerned with his German audience. His satires are directed largely at German foibles, individuals, and traditions. He admired various aspects of the political scene in France, but his focus was primarily Germany, even when he was openly persecuted in the Fatherland for his political views and risqué references.

Jost exhibited a similar ambivalence for his land of exile. The chapter describing his arrival in the United States is titled "Unfreiwillige Auswanderung," which conveys to the reader his disappointment in leaving Germany and his reluctant acceptance of his new home. Jost emphasizes that the United States was the foremost capitalist nation in the world, as well as the leading cold-war adversary of the Soviet bloc, which, from his recently acquired political perspective, made it an uncomfortable place to settle down. Jost learned English well, but even when I was a student in Madison during the 1970s, it was evident that he was much more comfortable in German. In all his courses he lectured in German, and almost everything he wrote over a period of nearly 70 years was in the German language. He was always well informed about happenings and cultural activities in Germany, but his knowledge of current events or

electoral politics or the cultural scene in the United States was spotty and evidently of lesser importance for him. Jost was extremely grateful for the opportunity that the University of Wisconsin provided, and he expressed that gratitude in various ways over the years. But even in Madison he gravitated toward the Germans at the university: Reinhold Grimm and Klaus Berghahn, whose appointments in the German Department he facilitated, George Mosse, the celebrated European historian who was perhaps his closest friend, and Felix Pollak, the Austrian translator and poet, who dined with Jost on a regular basis. Jost frequently taught as an exchange professor in Germany, and after his retirement he received an honorary professorial position at the Humboldt University. Jost, like Heine, remained focused on German affairs even as he resided for the majority of his mature life in another country.

It was important for Heine, as it was for his postwar admirer, to maximize the exposure of his writings in the public sphere. To help him realize this goal, Heine relied to a large extent on the innovations of his publisher Julius Campe, who put Heine's works into series (*Reisebilder*, *Salon*) meant to maximize their sales. But Heine's aims were not simply mercantile; for political reasons he also wanted his ideas to enjoy widespread dissemination in the reading publics of his times. His efforts in writing correspondence articles and then collecting them in various editions were a strategy to secure a large readership. In the forward to his last great collection of reflections on France, *Lutetia*, he justifies his choice of the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* for his observations on French affairs, implicitly comparing his preference to the contributions of supposedly more "radical" contemporaries that appeared in less frequently read journals. "Es gibt obskure Winkelblätter genug, worin wir unser ganzes Herz mit allen seinen Zornbränden ausschütten könnten," Heine writes, "aber sie haben nur ein sehr dürftiges und einflußloses Publikum, und es wäre ebensogut, als wenn wir in der Bierstube oder im Kaffeehaus vor den respektiven Stammgästen schwadronierten, gleich andern großen Patrioten. Wir handeln weit klüger," he continues, "wenn wir unsre Glut mäßigen, und mit nüchternen Worten, wo nicht gar unter einer Maske, in einer Zeitung uns aussprechen, die mit Recht eine Allgemeine Weltzeitung genannt wird, und vielen hunderttausend Lesern in allen Landen belehrsam zu Händen kommt." Not only was the medium significant for Heine; equally important was the style in which he communicated his thoughts. His *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* is exemplary in this regard. It deals with some of the most sophisticated theological and philosophical ideas since the Reformation, but it does so in a language that is accessible to a non-academic public. Indeed, it was this accessibility that caused Metternich to single it out as a dangerous text. Twenty years after its publication, Heine himself reflects on the reasons that German authorities reacted so severely against Young Germany and, by extension, his own contributions to that movement: "Nicht der gefährlichen Ideen wegen welche 'das junge Deutschland' zu Markte brachte, sondern der populären Form wegen worin jene Ideen gekleidet waren hat man das berühmte Anathema dekretirt über die böse Brut und namentlich über ihren Rädelsführer, den Meister der Sprache, in welchem man nicht eigentlich den Denker sondern nur den Stylisten verfolgte. Nein, ich gestehe bescheidentlich, mein Verbrechen war nicht der Gedanke, sondern die Schreibart, der Styl." Heine's desire to communicate to a wider public, to have his ideas disseminated beyond academic and elite belletristic circles was a constant concern from his earliest poetry to his last literary endeavors.

Jost appreciated Heine's accessible style, his strategy for maximizing influence, and his aspiration to sway and provoke a wide swath of the public with his works. Moreover, he adopted a similar posture with his own publications. Jost, of course, did not have to contend with the censorship of the Metternich era: he did not have to modify his thoughts to get them into print or

compromise content because of governmental restrictions. During the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s his essays can be found in major disciplinary journals and his books appeared in some of the most prominent publishing houses. The journals he edited with Reinhold Grimm, *Basis* and *Brecht-Jahrbuch*, came out regularly in Suhrkamp Verlag, a leading publisher in these years. But he, like Heine, made a conscious effort to express himself in ways that were both creative, inspiring, and easily accessible to a broad reading public. Indeed, even in his earliest publications on German cultural history, he acknowledges his endeavor to avoid esoteric utterances of recondite academic prose. He took pride in the broad reception of the Hamann-Hermand collaboration: "Und das empfand ich als Verpflichtung, bei der Niederschrift dieser Reihe einen Stil zu entwickeln, der auf allen akademischen Ballast – wie Fußnoten oder ausführliche bibliographische Hinweise – verzichtete, das heißt trotz der enormen Materialfülle der einzelnen Bände zugleich 'lesbar' blieb, um nicht nur die Zunftangehörigen, sondern wesentlich größere Schichten der Bevölkerung anzusprechen und sie mit der kulturellen Entwicklung Deutschlands vertraut zu machen." When in the 1970s and 1980s literary studies in the USA and Germany began to succumb to increasingly esoteric jargon, and scholarship was often expressed in a language that only specialists could comprehend, Jost rebelled against this trend and remained true to his concern for communicating with a broad public. Like Heine, he wanted his writings to be widely disseminated and accessible to students of German culture at all levels of education and society.

The most important affinities between Heine and his postwar admirer are related to politics. In Heine scholarship, even among critics favorably inclined toward him, he has often been depicted as an unreliable political figure who alienated potential allies and ridiculed movements he ought to have embraced. Evidence for a politically unreliable Heine is not difficult to find: his severe criticism of Ludwig Börne in a book many felt should have celebrated a stalwart democrat; his harsh treatment of numerous patriotic poets in the 1840s, many of whom appeared to share Heine's desires for a united Germany free from princes and autocratic potentates; and, in his personal life, his public feud with family members over inheritance from Uncle Salomon Heine, his acceptance of a secret pension from the French government, and his fleeting engagement with capitalist speculation can easily give the impression of a writer insufficiently devoted to social justice, European democracy, and emancipation. Jost's image of Heine, however, always countered this portrayal of a fickle and undependable political thinker, depicting him instead as a complex, but consistent intellectual who never wavered from principles and who, from his earliest writings until the *Matrazengruft*, exhibited remarkable insights into the political situation in Germany and France and the potential, as well as the shortcomings, of oppositional movements to the status quo. He attributes to the young Heine a penetrating analysis of the nationalist *Burschenschaften*, as well as a recognition of their insufficiencies for the type of radical democracy Heine came to champion. His later political maneuvers are similarly described in Jost's essays as the products of a superior political intelligence that never wavered from the most progressive oppositional positions. It was important for Jost, moreover, to see in Heine a writer who was "more than a liberal," a phrase that became the title of one of his collection of essays on him: the Heine Jost highlighted and admired most was an author who recognized the pernicious nature of social injustice, and who repeatedly advocated for the rights of the oppressed and for a society, "in which the freedom of the privileged individuals no longer resulted from the oppression and exploitation of the underprivileged." Marx, Jost argues, also recognized that Heine, unlike the typical liberal of his times, was a partisan for "all oppressed classes and peoples." "Nicht viele Liberale des 19.

Jahrhunderts können sich damit brüsten, sich so nachdrücklich für die Enterbten and Entrechteten eingesetzt zu haben wie Heine," Jost asserts. Like other liberals Heine believed in the power of the idea, but unlike many like-minded compatriots he understood that the "Magenfrage" plays a decisive role in world history. Jost's image of Heine encompasses more than the abstract liberties of the liberal intelligentsia: it includes a recognition that political struggle must overturn the inequities inherent in a social order involving class, race, and gender.

Jost never writes about himself that he, like Heine, was "more than a liberal," but his writings and actions indicate that he aspired to distinguish himself from the typical left-leaning university professor. From the volume on Naturalism, where Jost became acquainted with the importance of the proletariat for the course of German culture, to his later writings that championed formerly excluded voices in the German tradition Jost demonstrated his desire to be more than a mere progressive exegete in German Studies. Indeed, he states explicitly that in Madison he and Grimm sought to establish a new paradigm, not to exclude canonical figures, but to view them in a differentiated socio-political context, and to introduce new writers and artists whose importance had been hitherto ignored. These dimensions of Jost's politics are well known. Less obvious to outsiders was his importance for German Studies at the University of Wisconsin and in the United States. Jost never assumed an administrative role in the German Department, but in subtle ways he used his influence, as the most prolific and controversial scholar on the faculty, to enable Madison to become not only the most highly ranked German department in the United States, but also the most diverse and progressive. It is no coincidence, for example, that Women in German originated in Madison and was supported by men and women graduate students alike. Although Jost was not one to march in strikes or protests, the German department contributed disproportionately to the activities of the Teaching Assistants Association, the union of graduate-student instructors who fought for educational reforms and fair treatment as employees. Jost harbored misgivings about the views of the Frankfurt School, but he was instrumental in the hiring of David Bathrick, a leftist scholar who, together with like-minded young professors, founded *New German Critique*, a journal Jost valued despite some principled disagreements with its theoretical predilections. And Jost was also influential in the appointment of James Steakley, an openly gay scholar who had already published on the "homosexual emancipation movement in Germany" when he was hired into a tenure-track position in the department. During the 1970s, when I was a graduate student, Madison became known in the States and in Germany as a leftist enclave of German Studies, and although Jost is rarely given the credit he deserves for shaping departmental culture, he, perhaps more than any other individual, was responsible for its sterling reputation in the world of *Germanistik*.

Jost's appreciation for Heine's politics extends beyond his partisanship for the underprivileged and his superior insight into complex social movements. Important for Jost's image of Heine was his deft ability to embrace a utopian vision without ignoring concrete material circumstances. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Heine recognized that future developments promoting emancipation and equality would not always lead to results favorable to personal penchants. Heine's most celebrated utopian moments occur in the essay *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland* from the early 1830s and in the satirical epic poem *Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen* from 1844. In the essay Heine opposes an emancipation of Republican austerity, instead championing the "divine rights of human beings." Inspired by Saint Simonist doctrine, he advocates a sensualist alternative to the sans-culottes of the French revolution in his demand for "nectar and ambrosia, crimson robes, costly perfumes, luxury and splendor, the dancing of laughing nymphs, music and comedies." In the *Wintermärchen* he is not

satisfied with providing bread, the basic means of subsistence, for everyone: his utopian vision includes "roses and myrtle, beauty and joy" as well as green peas, which become the symbol for luxurious satiety. At other moments, however, Heine tempers his utopian projections with a realism that encompasses sacrifices of his most cherished achievements. In the Preface to *Lutetia* he speculates that the future belongs to the communists, who will "utterly shatter all the marble statues of my beloved world of art; they will smash all those fantastic knick-knacks that were so dear to the poet's heart." Roses and nightingales will not fare well under communist dominion, and the pages of Heine's own poetry books will come to serve "as little paper bags in which to pour coffee or snuff for the little old ladies of the future." Ultimately Heine affirms emancipation over utopianism, but it is the tension between the two that Jost admired most in Heine's reflections on political change.

Like the nineteenth-century poet, Jost viewed utopian convictions as a necessary precondition for political progress. It is no coincidence that four of his books contain some variant of the word "utopian" in their title, and in countless essays the reader detects his optimistic vision for change and for the realization of a more humane and equitable social order. His publications from the late 1960s and 1970s, in which he extolled the progressive moments of German culture – the German Jacobins, the Young Germans, the poets and intellectuals of the German *Vormärz* – demonstrated his desire to find models and predecessors for his progressive stance in his own cultural heritage. In his autobiographical account *Zuhause und anderswo*, he writes passionately about his advocacy of a "third way," a non-Stalinist, non-capitalist, humanistic alternative to the global conflict that dominated the first forty-five years of the postwar era, and he states toward the end of his reflections that the absence of an open East-West Cold War after 1989 does not eliminate this "third way": the antagonism between these two mentalities continues unabated and demands from us, as it did before the "Wende," that we take a stand. Jost refused to relinquish the utopian impetus behind his scholarship even after the fall of the wall and the establishment of a unified Germany. Like Heine, he was enough of a realist to recognize that the historical parameters of utopianism had changed with the collapse of the Soviet Union. But he could see that the utopian "third way," which many others had perhaps superficially espoused in postwar times, now attracted fewer and fewer defenders. Jost's response was to immerse himself even more resolutely in progressive scholarship: instead of descending to his basement typewriter at six in the morning, he resolved to start work at four or five, to become more productive and more concrete in his political views. But the loss of utopian visions among his contemporaries took its toll. During the 1990s he became more isolated in his views, increasingly subjected to rejection or even ridicule by more frequent cynical or conservative voices. But, like Heine, he never veered from his principled positions. "If writing today still makes sense," he wrote at the turn of the millennium, then it is only as an appeal to rethink conventional views and to consider "the possibility of a 'third way,'" one which synthesizes the individualism of current society with a recognition of reciprocal social responsibility. He shared with Heine, in short, a utopian vision accompanied by a sober realism concerning its realization.

One final dimension of Jost's identification with Heine should not be neglected: their mutual appreciation for talent and artistic excellence. Jost's admiration of Heine extended beyond their circumstantial and political affinities; Jost recognized, moreover, Heine's immense talent and creative genius, qualities he consistently affirmed as essential for cultural excellence and for political influence. Heine, for his part, consistently emphasized artistry even when it appeared to conflict with political preferences. In his polemic against Platen, for example, it would be short-

sighted to reduce Heine's objections to demeaning references to homosexuality. Platen was a target for Heine's criticism because he dabbled in banal imitations of creative works that he could not understand; his artistry was artificial. While Heine's own poetry, especially the verses in *Buch der Lieder*, appears simple und uncomplicated, we should not underestimate his attention to the nuances of poetic accomplishment. We need only examine his lengthy letter to Karl Immermann in June 1830, in which he undertakes a detailed metric and stylistic critique of Immermann's *Tulifäntchen*, to understand that Heine's writings are the product of a superior and exacting creative intelligence. The distinction between talent and character, most prominent in the Börne *Denkschrift*, is further evidence that Heine regards inventiveness and artistry as essential features of a progressive culture. His rejoinder to the uproar he raised for defaming a writer admired for his integrity and staunch commitment to progressive causes – "but wasn't it beautifully written" – is more than a throwaway wisecrack; rather, it is an affirmation of the necessity for imagination and creativity even in political controversy. Similarly his remarks about the tendentious poets of the *Vormärz* in *Atta Troll*, and their satirical embodiment in the captive dancing bear are further evidence that Heine's objections were grounded in considerations beyond politics and that he never wavered from his espousal of originality and artistic quality in cultural endeavors.

Jost valued Heine's consistently high standards as well as his insistence on the most lofty level of artistic creativity. Above all, however, he recognized that Heine himself was one of the most innovative and gifted writers in the German tradition. Jost wrote about many progressive authors from previous centuries, and he affirmed their political insights even when they did not match their creative ambitions. He recognized artistic deficiencies in movements he deemed important to rediscover for their political impulses. Thus Jost confesses that his work on Naturalism, which followed closely on his intense preoccupation with the highest forms of German literature, art, and music, disappointed him: "Obendrein vermißte ich, wie ich zugeben muß, an vielen Werken des Naturalismus, vor allem denen, die nicht von Gerhart Hauptmann oder Max Liebermann stammten, jene ästhetische Qualität, die ich noch kurz zuvor an den Werken der 'Klassiker der Moderne' so bewundert hatte und jetzt auch bei Brecht widerfand." Indeed, Jost's preference for Heine and Brecht is largely attributable to their ability to combine progressive political views with an inspiring creativity that raised them above other like-minded contemporaries. Jost's consistent appreciation for artistry can be seen best perhaps in his reflections on Heine as a leading figure in the Young German movement. Although Jost affirms the general liberalism of the group and its opposition to the petty statism of Germany in the 1830s, he observes that the Young Germans were primarily concerned with agitation, with provoking the repressive authorities, with being gadflies in the face of a Restoration and Biedermeier quiescence. Their ultimate failure, he suggests, is the result of their limited horizon for change, one that was mere provocation without aesthetic excellence: "Daß es bei dieser Auferweckung allerdings mit einer bloßen Journalisierung, Operationalisierung, Entauratisierung, Modernisierung, Liberalisierung oder auch Avantgardisierung nicht getan war, gehört auf ein anderes Blatt." Essential for Jost, as it was for Heine, is something more sustaining and admirable: genuine artistry: "Auf Kunst sollte man nicht pfeifen," Jost concludes in the spirit of Heine, "nicht einmal in Zeiten der äußersten Bedrängnis, des Aufruhrs oder gar der Revolution." The highest cultural concerns, for Heine and Hermand, are not incidental to social progress, but an essential feature of authentic revolutionary change.

With the passing of Jost Hermand we have lost not only a giant of postwar cultural criticism, but also one of the most perceptive and informed interpreters of Heinrich Heine's writings. Jost

was more than an admirer of Heine, however: he was above all a scholar and critic who integrated key characteristics of Heine's life and oeuvre into his own worldview. He identified with Heine in an unusual fashion from his earliest books to his final reflections on German culture. As exiles from a Germany that they loved and sought to move in more progressive directions, Heine and Hermand were always concerned with communicating in a manner meant to appeal to more than the cultural elite: they wanted to engage broad audiences and to inspire them to action. They were progressive intellectuals who were "more than mere liberals," embracing the underprivileged and the minorities of their respective eras. They shared utopian views for a better world but recognized that an empty and fanciful utopianism contradicted the realities of their times. They appreciated the highest artistic creativity and promoted it as an essential element of any progressive politics.

Elisabeth Hermand, Jost's wife of almost sixty years, predeceased him in 2013. The Hermands had no biological children. But Jost produced five dozen *Doktorkinder* over his lengthy career at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, as well as, through his writings, thousands of appreciative readers and, through his numerous lectures and public pronouncements, hundreds of devoted adherents. These individuals will carry his legacy of a progressive German Studies forward in the twenty-first century. Fortunately Jost's death does not signal the demise of his most cherished beliefs. His writings and influence will continue to serve as an inspiration for Germanistik in general, and for Heine studies in particular, for many decades to come.

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