

## **20 Years Fall of the Wall – Germany, a Sustainable Democracy? A Symposium at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

### **Organized by**

Corey Johnson, Geography,  
Arndt Niebisch, German and European Studies,  
Susanne Rinner, German Studies  
In conjunction with the Center for Critical Inquiry

### **Description:**

The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 was a transformative cultural, political, and economic event, and its impacts extended well beyond the borders of Germany. Although heralded at the time and even still today as an unqualified triumph of Western democratic ideals, few would argue that the transition was seamless or unproblematic.

The events of 1989 in Germany transformed not only the political world order, but they also spawned a re-ordering of cultural identities and economic systems throughout much of Central and Eastern Europe. The fall of the Berlin Wall as an event therefore transcends the realm of the mere political discourse within Germany. It also poses difficult questions for the former Soviet States concerning national identity and economic sustainability.

Goal of this symposium is to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and to reflect from interdisciplinary perspectives on the historical changes and to analyze the contemporary consequences of the fall of the Iron Curtain.

### **Thursday, November 5, 2009**

**4 PM** Roundtable (Participants TBA)

**6 PM** Dinner

**7:30 PM** Reading by Peter Schneider

About the author: Peter Schneider who celebrates his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday next year is one of the most prolific authors currently writing in German. He is particularly known for his participation in the sixties student movement and his subsequent engagement with political issues and their cultural representation in literature and film. He is also one of the most engaged participants in the transatlantic dialogue between the U.S. and Germany (Writer-in-Residence and Visiting Professor at various American universities, including: Stanford, Princeton, Dartmouth, Harvard, Washington University (St. Louis), and Georgetown University, and Fellow of the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, D.C.) He authored over 20 books, including novels, short stories and essays, some of them translated into 20 different languages, including the following in English: *The Wall Jumper*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), *The German Comedy* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1991), *Couplings* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1996), *Eduard's Homecoming* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2000), *Lenz*, in *Three Contemporary German Novellas* (New York: The German Library, 2001). He also wrote screenplays and publishes in newspapers and journals, including *The New York Times*.

**Friday, November 6, 2009 (additional speakers are invited)**

**11 – 11:45 AM: Opening presentation**

Christian Moraru (English), “After the Fall: Late Globalization and Paradigm Shift in Post-Lapsarian U.S. Culture.”

**11:45 – 1 PM: Panel I: Cultural Representations of Germany**

Jill Twark (German), “Humor and Satire in East Germany.”

Susanne Rinner (German), “Race in East-, West-, and Unified Germany.”

Arndt Niebisch (German and European Studies), “I am the Databank bleeding in the Crowd:” Specters of Communication in Heiner Müller and Jacques Derrida.

**1 – 2 PM: Lunch and Student Project: Tear Down the Wall**

**2 – 3 PM: Panel II: History Revisited**

Chancellor Linda P. Brady (Political Science), “TBA”

Karl Schleunes (History), “TBA”

**Coffee Break**

**3:30 – 4:30 PM: Panel III: Global Perspectives, Germany’s Future?**

Jerry Pubantz (Political Science), “The End of the Cold War: A Global Perspective.”

Corey Johnson (Geography), “Strengthening Strengths: A New Paradigm for Growth in Eastern Germany.”

**4:30 – 5:30 PM Reception/Book launching party**

*Postcommunism, Postmodernism, and the Global Imaginary*, edited by Christian Moraru forthcoming from Columbia University Press in the fall of 2009. – Presented by Aaron Chandler (English).

The symposium will be accompanied by a student photo exhibit “On Walls” and a film series (TBA).

**Budget:**

**Prospective Funding Sources:**

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (including Center for Critical Inquiry, Atlantic World Research Network, International and Global Studies Program, International Programs Center, Center for Creative Writing in the Arts, Department of German, Russian, Japanese, and Chinese Studies, Department of Romance Languages, Department of Geography, Lloyds International Honors College, requests will be made in July 2009):

	\$ 1000
North Carolina Humanities Council (application to be submitted):	\$ 2000
DAAD (application pending):	\$ 2000
	<b>Total: \$ 5000</b>

**Proposed Budget:**

Travel, lodging, honorarium for invited speakers	\$ 3000
Catering	\$ 1500
Facility and equipment	(provided by UNCG)
Advertising/Printing	\$ 500
	<b>Total: \$ 5000</b>