

Integrating Culture in Beginning German

Kulturexkurse: A Model for Teaching Deeper German Culture in a Proficiency-Based Curriculum

George F. Peters

Michigan State University

The Problem of Deeper Culture Acquisition

Chapter nine of the second-year German textbook, *Kaleidoskop*, includes an excerpt from an article first published in *Die Zeit* about an American, Randy Kaufman, who has been living and working in Germany for over twenty years. Kaufman comments on the ability of Germans to organize themselves, on their systematic mentality, and on the fact that Germans have a different relationship to their government than Americans. “In den USA,” he states, “kommen gesellschaftliche Bewegungen eher von unten in Gang, in Deutschland dagegen wartet man oft auf die Initiative von oben” (Moeller et al. 201).

The theme of this particular chapter is “Stereotypen,” and Kaufman’s observation about the different ways societal organizations develop in the United States and Germany reflects one of the most persistent clichés about Germans, namely that they take their cue from above or, in less polite terms, that they are submissive to authority. When Kaufman adds that he as an American regards as an intrusion into his personal sphere what Germans take for granted—registration with the local police—he raises a complex intercultural issue with far-reaching implications.

In the student questions following this text the authors of *Kaleidoskop* avoid listing a term such as “Gehorsam” or “Obrigkeitsdenken” under the qualities that Kaufman associates with Germans; the

neutral point, “anderes Verhältnis zum Staat als in den USA,” seems to be the correct attribute students should apply to this portion of the article. The other choices are “systematische Mentalität,” “starre Klassengesellschaft,” “Stabilität,” and “deutscher Tiefsinn” (202). The alert teacher, however, might parlay the phrases “von unten” and “von oben” into a mini-unit on German history. “Was heißt eine ‘Initiative von oben’?” “Könnt ihr an eine Zeit denken, wo die Deutschen besonders stark *von oben* regiert wurden?” In all likelihood the immediate response will be “die Nazis,” and answers such as “die Kaiserzeit” and “das Reich” might follow. Since the purpose of this chapter in the textbook is to challenge stereotypical thinking, the teacher could remind students that modern Germany is a democratic state, perhaps by asking, “Gibt es noch heute einen Kaiser in Deutschland?” or by showing a picture of the remodeled Reichstag with its glass dome and pointing out its symbolic significance: “Hier können deutsche Bürger und Bürgerinnen *von oben* auf die Politiker runter schauen, ja sogar runter spucken!” Such concepts as “Volksabstimmung,” “Volksbefragung,” and “Volksentscheid” might be introduced, perhaps in conjunction with the American concept of “grass roots,” to counteract the view that Germans automatically wait for initiatives from above.

The relationship between the individual and institutions of authority is key to an understanding of German culture. It underlies the “German question” and contributes forcibly to the frequent per-

plexity aroused in Western observers trying to understand German behavior. The fact “that the Germans aren’t like anyone but the Germans,” in Gordon Craig’s words, can be traced to their long and at times tortured struggle to define the relationship between the self and the state (15). In its most chilling manifestation, the question of the individual’s response to authority arises in the studies of Daniel Goldhagen and Christopher Browning about “ordinary” Germans committing acts of atrocity on order from above.

Can and should a cultural issue as complex as this one be introduced in the early stages of the German curriculum at American schools and universities? Over thirty years ago Gerhard Weiss argued forcefully that the language teacher must also be an “interpreter of culture” and that cultural material should be “integrated into the language study program” (120). In its summary report of 1996 on “The Future of German in American Education” the AATG reaffirmed Weiss’s prescient call in recommending that the “additive model of language learning” be replaced “with a holistic model that integrates linguistic and cultural knowledge right from the beginning” (Byrnes 25–26). But what sort of cultural knowledge should be integrated with language learning at what stages of the curriculum? This question has dogged research on the teaching of culture. Without hierarchical guidelines, how are teachers to decide what aspects of culture are most appropriate, and when? Various comprehensive models have been proposed to categorize the many elements that comprise a culture (Brooks, “Teaching”; Nostrand; Seelye; Galloway); the problem has been to integrate such models into a sequenced language curriculum (Omaggio Hadley 346–49). Intuitively, a progression from “everyday life” to more sophisticated forms of cultural expression suggests itself, as is reflected in the research by descriptions of culture that differentiate between “little-c” and “big-C” culture (Herron et al.), *Landeskunde* and *Kulturkunde* (Kerl), “surface” and “deep” culture (Trojanovich; Tinsley and Woloshin), “popular” and “high” culture (Lalande), and “Hearthstone” and “Olympian” culture (Brooks, “Guest”). This is the sequence proposed by Weiss, who suggests concentrating on such topics as home and family at the high school level and reserving more complex issues such as “concepts of social behavior” and “cultural myths” for more advanced students (124). In his 1968 five-part definition of culture, Nelson Brooks suggested a progression from concentration on “Patterns of Living” at the early stages of culture acquisition to “Literature

and the fine arts” and “The sum total of a way of life” later, “as the learners’ competence increases” (cited in Omaggio Hadley 350). In 1985 Emily Spinelli proposed that at the Novice and Intermediate levels of proficiency students engage in the practice of such everyday topics as numbers, dates, times, addresses, weather expressions, and greetings.

The *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* reject the division of culture into the “two bins” of “Big C’ (formal)” and “little c’ (daily life),” arguing that “both aspects of culture are inextricably woven into the language of those who live in the culture, and ... understanding and involvement with both is vitally important for students at all levels of language learning” (44). At the same time, the Standards firmly place communication “at the heart of second language study” (27). All but one of the 34 Sample Learning Scenarios that include culture as one of the targeted Standards are clearly to be conducted *in the target language*. The one exception is from a middle school exploratory program (67–94).

The American German teacher committed to proficiency-based instruction faces a substantial dilemma when it comes to the teaching of culture. On the one hand, best practices stipulate that cultural topics are best treated in the target language (Lafayette). On the other hand, despite the concerted efforts of *Kinder lernen Deutsch* and other programs, the majority of German students in this country begin their study of the language as young adults of high school and college age. During the first several years the cognitive skills of these learners far outstrip their linguistic ability. While they may be dealing with intellectually challenging ideas in their other courses, in German class they are reduced to communication about personal matters. “Indeed,” as Holly Tucker asks, “what would students at this level have to say if they could not talk about themselves, their activities, their families, their likes and dislikes?” (53).

Gerhard Weiss recognized this conundrum in 1971 by advocating “a formal course in ‘Kulturkunde’ at the end of a student’s [German] career” (121). Despite calls for a “balanced perspective” in the teaching of high and low culture in the language classroom (Lalande), it remains the case that the in-depth study of German history and philosophy necessary to understand the development of the attitudes and values of the culture are generally reserved for advanced course work in German Studies and/or for cognate courses in other departments, thus perpetuating the split between the

“tool” of language and the “knowledge” of culture.

The German Studies Department at Stanford University faced this problem head-on when it restructured its undergraduate German curriculum in the mid-1990s. Based on research demonstrating the correlation between success in second language acquisition and “the ability to do the same task in the first language” and bolstered by the finding “that students must acquire conceptual tools for dealing with second language texts,” the goal of the reform was to provide “students the rudiments of a cultural-historical knowledge and the key conceptual tools with which they could begin to think about Germany in more sophisticated ways” (Bernhardt and Berman 149–50). German 1 was renamed German Studies 001 and 10% of instructional time was “stolen” from the language curriculum and devoted to reading and discussion of *The Germans* by Gordon Craig. The inclusion of sophisticated topics such as “[b]elated nationhood and *Kulturnation*, aesthetic culture and *Innerlichkeit*, modernization patterns and *Sonderweg*” represents an ambitious attempt to lead students of German to an historically rooted cultural awareness that might well allow them to better understand the underlying causes of the German penchant for awaiting instructions *von oben* (Bernhardt and Berman 150). Yet despite initial findings that the cultural work in English had no detrimental effect on the students’ achieved level of language proficiency after two quarters, indeed that the added knowledge-base encouraged students to ask more sophisticated questions *auf Deutsch*, the faculty at Stanford continued to wrestle with the dilemma “of the split between language and culture” (154). How to convey sophisticated cultural knowledge to students who are intellectually mature but linguistically immature *in the target language* remains a fundamental problem for language teachers committed to a Standards-based curriculum.

Literature and Deeper Culture Acquisition

To propose that one solution to this problem may lie in literature will raise eyebrows, if not hackles. Scholarly debate about the role of literature in the curriculum has been ongoing for some time and is amply documented in the professional literature (Van Cleve and Willson, Bernhardt, McCarthy, McCarthy and Schneider, Weber, Kaes, Kramsch; see also the “Millennial Issue” of GQ [73.1]). The cantankerous feud between ACTFL and MLA about literature’s role in the Standards has run its

course and reached a resolution of sorts with the inclusion of literature in the 1999 Standards document as “one content area among many others” (Tucker 54).

The upshot for beginning German, to judge by textbooks that have appeared in revised editions over the past several years, is that while literary texts have not disappeared, they have become scarce. At least one first year book, *Vorsprung*, contains none at all (Lovik, Guy, and Chavez), *Deutsch heute* perhaps three or four, depending on how broadly literature is defined (Moeller et al.), *Kontakte* five (Terrell, Tschirner, and Nikolai). *Neue Horizonte* is an interesting exception, to which we shall return below (Dollenmayer and Hansen). Where they are included, these texts are integrated into the thematic content of the unit; little attention is given to the author or to the cultural and historical background of the text. At the intermediate level, literary texts are more prevalent, but here, too, they are chosen to support the communicative theme of the unit. In *Assoziationen* literature is included under the general rubric of “Lesetexte” along with magazine and newspaper articles, popular reading, and advertisements (Walker et al.). Interestingly enough, one of the first texts in this book is the poem “Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam,” by Heinrich Heine, one of the last a speech by Hitler, though the irony of this juxtaposition is not made evident to the students. *Kaleidoskop* takes a different approach, separating “Literarische Werke” from “Kulturlesestücke” and accompanying each literary example with a fairly extensive introduction in English to the author and the social and historical background of the text (Moeller et al.). Two intermediate-level textbooks based specifically and solely on literature, *Mitlesen-Mitteilen* and *Blickwechsel*, are now out of print (Wells; Swaffar et al.).

Few would disagree with the assertion that literature expresses the fundamental “Perspectives” of a culture (“meanings, attitudes, values, ideas”; *Standards* 43). In stating the case for “Using Literature to Teach Cross-Cultural Management,” Brian Bloch argues that “Literature . . . offers insights into mentality, psychology and attitudes which cannot be gleaned (or at least not in the same way) from more conventional sociological or historical sources” and specifically points to literature’s rich store of content relating to “values and attitudes, manners and customs, aesthetics, education, social institutions, religion, language, and non-verbal language” (146–47). And though the Standards treat them as *products* of a culture, it is the case that literary texts are first and foremost *language*. They are

authentic texts that communicate ideas and feelings intended to arouse a response in the reader/listener. As Holly Tucker puts it, with reference to research by Daniel Shanahan, “literature is one form of language that unabashedly plays on affect” (58). In his exemplary resource guide for teaching literature in *DaF*, Hans Weber describes how literary texts invite students “in eine Art Dialog mit ihnen ein[zut]reten,” “als Wechselspiel von Leser und Text” (5). Depending on the selection, the exchange between text and recipient may be culturally significant and involve sophisticated, intellectually challenging communication. Why, then, can we not introduce literature as communicative language “right from the beginning,” as called for by the AATG, and thus engage both the linguistic and cognitive skills of our learners? If providing students with opportunities “to practice carrying out a range of functions (tasks) likely to be necessary in dealing with others in the target culture” is one of our primary goals (Omaggio Hadley 98), then leading them toward the ability to discuss substantive issues, such as politics, history, values, and beliefs, is surely important. A common frustration of American exchange students in Germany is their inability to engage in the type of “deeper” discussion favored by their German counterparts.

It will be argued by SLA theorists steeped in the communicative approaches of Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrel that in natural language acquisition, patterned as it is on the way children acquire their first language, “[a]ffective rather than cognitive factors are primary” (Omaggio Hadley 121). A “literary” text may be assumed to raise the affective filter immediately, even alarmingly, particularly among a generation of fast-paced, visually oriented students who view the subject of literature with suspicion, *Harry Potter* notwithstanding. When asked in a recent study to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale how much each of 33 cultural topics were “part of their personal definition of foreign language culture,” a group of over two hundred college students placed literature toward the very bottom of the ranking. Interestingly, this same group of students ranked “history” at the very top, followed immediately by “trends in values, beliefs, and attitudes” (Chavez). Apparently the value of literature in gaining an understanding of a culture’s history and attitudes is not readily apparent. Or perhaps “big-L” literature continues to be viewed as an esoteric, advanced subject of study not immediately relevant to language learners. The tactic used in *Kaleidoskop* of detaching literary selections from cultural ones, thereby suggesting that literature

deals with a different, conceptually more difficult sort of culture, and also prefacing them with information in English, suggesting that students are not yet fully able to deal with literature in German, would seem to perpetuate this view. Implicit in the treatment of literature in our textbooks seems to be a two-fold assumption: a) our students lack the linguistic skills (adequate comprehensible input, grammatical structures, and vocabulary) to talk about the cultural themes in literature; and b) the students lack adequate historical background information to understand more complex cultural issues.

The Model of *Kulturexkurse*

I would propose a model for integrating literary texts into the communicative, proficiency-oriented German curriculum that addresses this problem by systematically building a base of linguistic and cultural competence that will allow students to develop the skills to communicate in German about such complex issues as attitudes toward authority. The model is based on several hypotheses:

1. Literary texts need not be more difficult or esoteric than other types of authentic texts if they are carefully sequenced in the curriculum.
2. Literary texts, if properly sequenced, respond to both the affective and cognitive needs of students (Omaggio Hadley 102).
3. Literary texts invite creative language practice (Omaggio Hadley 97).
4. Literary texts can convey essential “Perspectives” (Standards) on German culture. Properly sequenced throughout the curriculum and accompanied by carefully crafted communicative exercises, a series of such texts can yield substantial insight into fundamental attitudes and beliefs particular to German culture.
5. The inclusion of literary texts combats an “anti-aesthetic retreat from literature [that] impoverishes our curriculum” (Berman 3).

The proposed model calls for including in each unit of a beginning German language program a short literary text chosen explicitly for its cultural content and its level of linguistic complexity, which, according to the input hypothesis, should be “a little beyond” the current level of competence (Omaggio Hadley 61). In a variation of the “culture capsule” technique (Omaggio Hadley 371), each text is accompanied by level-appropriate communicative activities. To avoid unnecessary elevation

of the affective filter the texts need not be labeled “literary.” Such recurring sections might appear under the title *Kulturexkurs*. Students should be alerted to the fact that in short segments of their lesson plan they will be asked to turn their attention to communication about fundamental ideas, values, and beliefs that characterize the German speaking peoples (see Appendix A for a sample introduction to the students).

It is important to note that this model deviates from current curricular practice in which the linguistic and cultural materials in each instructional unit are integrated and grouped around a primary theme. These themes are familiar: “Familie und Freunde,” “Arbeit,” “Freizeit,” “Ausländer,” and so forth. While the *Kulturexkurs* is linguistically integrated into the unit, it deliberately asks students to turn their attention away from the communicative context in which they are working and talk about deeper cultural matters. Again, the assumption is that our students possess the cognitive skills and the intellectual curiosity to willingly engage in such discussions.

There can be no question that texts can be found that are linguistically suitable for Novice and Intermediate learners and that contain pertinent and challenging cultural information. That these texts will consist primarily of short poems, particularly in the early stages, is logical. Interestingly, the textbook *Neue Horizonte* demonstrates the feasibility of including poetry in a beginning language program from the outset: each of the 16 chapters in this book contains a poem chosen to match the students’ level of language competence and, in some cases, to support the cultural theme of the chapter (Dollenmayer and Hansen). The authors simply label these texts “Lyrik zum Vorlesen,” however, and include no exercises for them whatsoever, suggesting only that each poem “may be used both for pronunciation and intonation practice and for simple interpretive discussion” (viii). As is illustrated in Appendix D, a number of these texts actually lend themselves well to the introduction of just the kind of deeper cultural information under discussion here.

In order for students to work with the sequence of texts, a corpus of vocabulary needs to be developed. Key words for talking about German cultural attitudes and values should be introduced, practiced, and, most importantly, recycled in subsequent units. The list need not be extensive. If, for example, ten new items were introduced as the specific *Kulturwortschatz* in each of 16 chapters of a beginning textbook, students would gain a re-

spectable active vocabulary for talking about cultural attitudes within a year. A base vocabulary of this nature might include such words as those listed in Appendix E. Vocabulary introduced elsewhere in the curriculum will be used alongside the specialized items in the *Kulturexkurs* section of the unit, of course; and conversely, the effort should be made to incorporate cultural vocabulary into the regular instructional flow of the class. This will be easier with some items than with others. Looking at the *Kulturwortschatz* for the sample lesson (Appendix C), for example, the alert teacher should be able to recycle words like “Frieden,” “kämpfen,” and “Krieg” easily enough—especially if he or she has an unruly class—but words like “regieren,” “Fürst,” or “Wende” may take some ingenuity. One solution would be to take a few minutes during subsequent periods to recall such vocabulary: “Wann war eigentlich die ‘Wende’ in Deutschland?” “Wer regiert in Washington, D.C.? Ein Fürst?”

How the corpus of cultural vocabulary develops depends on the crucial question of which texts are introduced, and when. That a wealth of German poetry deals with issues relating to cultural history, to values and attitudes, and to social and historical realities is a given. Findings texts to match or slightly exceed students’ linguistic competence is challenging but by no means impossible. One advantage of poetry is that many non-trivial texts exist that are exceedingly simple in their morphology and syntax. *Neue Horizonte* chooses children’s rhymes, tongue twisters, riddles, and “Du bist mein, ich bin dein” in its “Lyrik zum Vorlesen” sections through chapter 4, before making a substantial leap to Richard Dehmel’s “Arbeitsmann” in chapter 5, a poem that lends itself well to the model of *Kulturexkurse* (see Appendix D). But there is no reason that culturally informative texts cannot be used from the very beginning. The sample *Kulturexkurs* in Appendix C illustrates how Ernst Jandl’s “Markierung einer Wende,” a poem consisting of just two words, might function in chapter 1 of a beginning German text such as *Neue Horizonte*.

Building a Deeper Culture Mosaic

What are the cultural issues to be addressed, and what sort of knowledge should German students acquire to better understand the German-speaking world? In their “deeper” culture model Tinsley and Woloshin propose “five universal problems of cultural orientation which are common to all human groups: (1) Human Nature, (2)

Social Relations, (3) Man and Nature, (4) Time, and (5) Space” (126), a typology that lends itself to further subdivision (Moreau and Pfister). German attitudes toward authority would presumably fall under “Social Relations,” and Tinsley and Woloshin draw attention to the relevant fact that German society is “vertically structured,” as opposed to American society which, in the ideal at least, is “horizontally structured” (129). While clustering deeper cultural issues around abstract universal problems is helpful for making cross-cultural comparisons, it leaves unanswered the more pragmatic question of just what sort of cultural knowledge our students should acquire in the course of their language study. What particular historical facts, philosophical ideas, social movements, political developments, religious precepts, and so on would, for example, begin to explain why German society developed vertically? Under the model of *Kulturrexkurse*, students begin to develop a rudimentary, working knowledge of deeper German culture through the acquisition of basic cultural information (*Kulturinformationen*) that is introduced in step-by-step fashion. The attempt is not to teach the history of German culture systematically or chronologically. Rather, a cultural mosaic will begin to emerge as students acquire certain key concepts and vocabulary as they are actively introduced and practiced in the context of the proficiency-based curriculum.

The issue of German attitudes toward authority, for example, is a particularly complex and thorny one that undoubtedly has its roots in history and politics (feudalism, absolutism, nationalism, totalitarianism, democracy), philosophy and religion (the Reformation, Enlightenment, humanism, romanticism), the educational system (*Bildung*), the dynamics of class structure (nobility, *Bürgertum*, proletariat), and economics (capitalism, socialism, communism). Younger Germans today have different attitudes toward authority than older ones; Germans in the east differ in their views on authority from those in the west; women differ from men. The Austrians have markedly different attitudes toward authority than the Germans, the Swiss, of course, even more so. The systematic presentation of this knotty problem is clearly out of place (and unnecessary) in a first year German class and is probably not feasible even in an advanced undergraduate culture course. If, however, culture is viewed as a complex mosaic that even native speakers do not always fully comprehend, it becomes important to begin to supply small pieces of the mosaic to students from the beginning of their

language study. Using the *Kulturrexkurse* suggested in the Appendix, for example, students would acquire the following bits of knowledge—and ability to express it—that might begin to explain why Germans have traditionally looked to leadership from above:

- “Fürsten, Könige, und Kaiser regierten lange in Deutschland.” (Chapter 1, Jandl)
- “Die Wende 1945: von Diktatur zur Demokratie.” (Chapter 1, Jandl)
- “Die Arbeiter mussten schwer arbeiten und waren oft arm.” (Chapter 5, Dehmel)
- “Das Volk strebte gegen die Gewalt von oben.” (Chapter 5, Dehmel)
- “Der Müller ist noch Geselle. Er muss seinen Meister um Erlaubnis bitten, wandern zu gehen.” (Chapter 7, Müller)
- “In der Romantik strebte der Mensch, die Herrschaft in der Gesellschaft zu entfliehen.” (Chapter 7, Müller)
- “Der romantische Mensch ist irrational. Er benutzt seine Vernunft nicht. Man kann ihn leicht verführen.” (Chapter 8, Heine)
- “Das deutsche Volk wollte Freiheit und Einigkeit. Das war ein Problem. Nach der Revolution von 1848 siegte das Nationalgefühl. Deutschland wurde eine Nation aber demokratische Hoffnungen waren enttäuscht.” (Chapter 11, Fallersleben)

Working with the Texts

Each *Kulturrexkurs* involves a two-fold process of working with a literary text. (A sample introduction for the instructor about the cultural units and the methodology to be applied is included in Appendix B.) The first step involves lowering the affective filter by having students become comfortable with the text through pre-reading and personalizing activities. “Einstieg in das Thema” focuses attention on particular words and themes and may draw attention to the title. Following the text itself, personalized activities draw students into a dialogue with it (“Spiel mit dem Text”). The importance to students of reader-response processes in the study of literature is well established (Tucker; Shanahan; Davis, Kline, and Stoekl); and both Hans Weber and William B. Fischer have illustrated how even traditionally intimidating “canonical” texts can arouse spirited personal response among students in the classroom.

Once students have become comfortable with the text, they can be guided toward communicative

exchanges about the cultural issues raised (“Warum sind die Deutschen anders als wir?”). The transition from personal engagement to consideration of cultural themes need not be abrupt if the questions and activities are carefully designed. Again, it is important to note that the instructor should avoid the temptation to revert to English in order to fill in the “big picture.” The *Kulturekkurse* should be treated the same way as other portions of the proficiency-based curriculum, as building blocks leading toward fuller cultural understanding. The big picture will emerge slowly as students become acquainted with the issues and relevant historical facts that begin to fill out the deeper culture mosaic.

To illustrate how a series of *Kulturekkurse* might function through a first-year German curriculum the Appendix includes a complete sample lesson for chapter 1 (App. C) and suggestions for four additional texts that could be used in later chapters (App. D).

Objections

Why just literary texts?

An immediate objection to this model may be its restriction to the use of literary texts alone. Obviously a rich assortment of additional *realia* could accompany the cultural content of each *Kulturekkurs*. Since this model is designed to be integrated into an existing curriculum, however, rather than to replace it, the cultural unit is deliberately kept short. One of the major problems identified in the teaching of culture is the “time that many teachers do not feel they can spare in an already overcrowded curriculum” (Omaggio Hadley 346). More importantly, the attempt is to retain a focus on the text as *language* rather than *product*. The *Standards* argue that knowledge and understanding of other cultures is developed by teaching students the link between the *perspectives* of the culture studied and the *practices* and *products* of the culture (43). To remain with the issue of authority, the attitude of Germans toward officialdom, laws, governmental agencies, teachers, professors, judges, and so on is presumably the *perspective* that comes into play. One *practice* would be what Randy Kaufman observed, the fact that Germans register with the local police. Another might be that German students still dutifully knock on the table at the conclusion of their professor’s lecture. The oft-noted tendency of Germans to actually wait at street crossings on red might be yet another example.

The *Personalausweis* issued to and carried by all Germans could be considered a *product* relating to the issue of authority; the ballot used in German elections, puzzling for Americans with its two vote structure, could be another. According to the *Standards*, a literary text such as Georg Büchner’s *Woyzeck* might also be considered a *product* reflecting German perspectives on authority. Beginning language textbooks understandably focus on *practices* and *products*, since these are visible in everyday life and lend themselves to colorful illustrations—a picture of a German *Personalausweis*, for example, or of a pedestrian stop light with its little red and green *Männchen*. Getting at the *perspectives* underlying such cultural manifestations is the difficulty. Under the model of *Kulturekkurse*, cultural beliefs, attitudes, and values are introduced and discussed in and through *language* from the outset, hence the text-based approach.

Language teachers aren’t trained to teach deeper culture.

A second objection may lie in the fact that “many teachers are afraid to teach culture because they fear that they don’t know enough about it” (Omaggio Hadley 347). If this is true about teaching everyday culture, it could be doubly so if “big C” culture or “big I” literature are perceived to be involved. If, however, the short texts of the *Kulturekkurse* are approached communicatively, if teachers understand that they are not expected to lecture, and if the cultural issues are in each case limited and clearly defined, this need not be a fear. The goal is to pique students’ interest in understanding why Germans think and behave the way they do, to slowly build a base of significant cultural information and vocabulary, and to encourage students to begin to communicate about substantive issues.

The danger of trivialization

Relatedly, it could be argued that such an approach risks trivializing complex cultural issues. Is this not a shotgun approach to deeper culture that ignores both the larger historical context and the thread of critical thinking woven into the fabric of German culture? Without adequate background knowledge will students not form premature conclusions or draw on established stereotypes? First of all, the primary purpose of the *Kulturekkurse* is

to link communicative competence to cognitive focus on culture. Students begin thinking and talking about deeper German culture as it relates to their own. Secondly, no one issue is simply raised, discussed, and then dropped. Perspectives on culture grow out of myriad factors, as the concept of a cultural mosaic suggests. If students have been exposed to a number of such factors over the course of a year and, more importantly, have become comfortable dealing with them in German—experiencing how culture and language are inextricably linked—the foundation is laid for reinforcing and deepening cultural understanding. Thirdly, of course, the introduction of *Kulturexkurse* in the first year does not preclude studying deeper culture at the advanced level. And if the model works, those advanced courses might succeed in ways they have not in the past. Students will have acquired rudimentary knowledge about important cultural perspectives and will be accustomed to discourse about culture in the language they are learning.

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Appendix A. Introduction to Kulturexkurse for the Student

In each chapter of this book you will work with a short text designed to introduce you to important aspects of German culture that will help you better understand why Germans (and Austrians and Swiss) are the way they are and at times think and act differently from Americans. You will slowly learn vocabulary that will allow you to talk about attitudes, values, and beliefs commonly held in the German-speaking world and compare them to your own. You will also learn about some important events in German history that will help you understand the origins of German cultural perspectives.

Kulturwortschatz: Each of the *Kulturexkurse* includes some new vocabulary items which you are to learn; these words will reappear in later chapters. They are printed in **boldface** at first occurrence and are listed with the English equivalent at the end of the *Kulturexkurs*. You are not responsible for learning glossed words, marked °; sometimes these words will become part of your active vocabulary later in the book. Words marked ° are closely related to English. If you think for a minute, you should be able to recognize their meaning. All other words are part of the regular vocabulary you will acquire in the other sections of the textbook.

Kulturinformationen: This section summarizes some important cultural and historical information about the German-speaking world. Here you will find a few facts, dates, terms, and names that you should learn. They are given in conjunction with the discussion of the text and are meant to draw attention to significant people, places, and events in the development of the modern German world that will help you answer the tricky question: "Warum sind die Deutschen anders als wir?" (Why are the Germans different from us?)

Appendix B. Introduction to the Kulturexkurse for the Teacher

As is explained in the introduction for students, the *Kulturexkurse* included in each chapter are designed to lead toward an understanding of certain basic cultural issues that help to explain how and why German speakers in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland think and behave the way they do. In each case a short literary text and accompanying exercises provide a context for engaging in discussion in *German* about substantive matters. Both the texts and the exercises are sequenced so that you may work with them communicatively; the shift in focus for the *Kulturexkurse* is not on language use, rather on cognitive process. You and your students will be using German to introduce some ideas, some facts, and some knowledge about the German-speaking world that is important for understanding deeper German culture. Progress is moderate and step-by-step. In each case, the amount of new material is limited to what can reasonably be absorbed in a fifty-minute period. The purpose of these units is not to introduce "Literature" or to ask you

2. 1945 ist auch ein Jahr. Das Wort "krieg" kommt viermal vor. Dann kommt "mai". Schreiben Sie den Kalender Jandls für das Jahr 1945 richtig!

 mai

3. Was bedeutet "Mai" für Sie?

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frühling° | <i>spring</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ende° des Schuljahrs | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Der Anfang° des Sommers | <i>beginning</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sonne° | <i>sun</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blumen° | <i>flowers</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hochzeiten° | <i>weddings</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball | |

4. Was bedeutet "Krieg" für Sie?

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soldaten° | <input type="checkbox"/> Bomben° | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Zerstörung° | <input type="checkbox"/> Videospiele° | <i>destruction</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tod° | <input type="checkbox"/> Kriegsfilme° | <i>death</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patriotismus° | <input type="checkbox"/> Pazifismus° | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Der 1. Golfkrieg | <input type="checkbox"/> Der 2. Golfkrieg | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Der Vietnamkrieg | _____ | |

5. "Mai" 1945 ist die "Markierung einer **Wende**". Was ist eine "Wende" für Sie?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Der 21. Geburtstag | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Das Ende von <i>high school</i> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Die Scheidung° der Eltern | <i>divorce</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Der Abschluss des Studiums° | <i>graduation from college</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Der Tod einer geliebten Person° | <i>death of a loved one</i> |

Warum sind die Deutschen anders° als wir?

different

1. Wie heißt der Krieg 1939–1945?

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Der 1. (Erste) Weltkrieg |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Der 2. (Zweite) Weltkrieg |

2. Wer **kämpfte** in diesem Krieg?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deutschland | <input type="checkbox"/> USA | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> England° | <input type="checkbox"/> Russland° | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frankreich° | <input type="checkbox"/> Japan° | <i>France</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italien° | <input type="checkbox"/> Polen° | |

3. Wo kämpften die Soldaten° in diesem Krieg?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In Deutschland | <input type="checkbox"/> In Österreich |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In Russland | <input type="checkbox"/> In Polen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In Japan | <input type="checkbox"/> In den USA |

4. Wo fielen° die Bomben in diesem Krieg? *fell*

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In Deutschland | <input type="checkbox"/> In den USA |
|---|-------------------------------------|

5. In dem Text von Ernst Jandl steht "mai" unter 1945. Warum?

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Das Ende des Krieges für die Deutschen | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Der Frieden für die Deutschen | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Der Kalender beginnt wieder neu. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eine neue Zeit° beginnt. | <i>time</i> |

6. Jandl schreibt° "krieg" zwölfmal unter *writes* 1944 und viermal unter 1945. Warum?

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Der Krieg war° lang für die Deutschen und Österreicher. | <i>was</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Der Krieg war schwer für Deutsche und Österreicher. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Viele Menschen starben° in dem Krieg. | <i>died</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Viele Bomben fielen auf deutsche Städte° in dem Krieg. | <i>cities</i> |

Kulturinformationen

1. Bis 1949 **regierten** in Deutschland sehr oft **Fürsten**, **Kaiser**, oder Diktator°.

- Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland: 1949–heute Deutschland ist eine demokratische Republik°.
- Das 3. (Dritte) **Reich**: 1933–1945 Deutschland ist unter der Diktatur° von Adolf Hitler.
- Die Weimarer Republik: 1918–1933 Deutschland ist eine demokratische Republik.
- Das 2. (Zweite) Reich: 1871–1918 Deutschland ist unter dem Kaiser.
- Rheinbund und Deutscher **Bund**: 1806–1871 Die deutschen Länder° *countries* sind unter Fürsten.
- Das 1. Deutsche Reich (Das Heilige Römische Reich Deutscher Nation°): *Holy Roman Empire* 800–1806 Die vielen deutschen Länder sind unter Fürsten.

2. Der 2. (Zweite) Weltkrieg: 1939–1945
Tote° einiger° Länder *dead / several*
im 2. Weltkrieg:

	<i>Militär</i> ^c	<i>Zivilisten</i> ^c	
Deutsch-land	3.250.000	3.810.000	(7.060.000)
Österreich	380.000	145.000	(525.000)
Sowjet-union	13.600.000	7.700.000	(21.300.000)
USA	295.000	—	(295.000)

3. Die Wende:
Das Ende des 2. Weltkrieges in Europa im Mai 1945 war eine Wende für die Menschen. Das Leben° beginnt neu, wie die Natur° im Mai. *life*

Für Deutschland war es die Niederlage°. *defeat*
Aber es war auch der Neubeginn°.

Die Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands 1989 war auch eine Wende für die Deutschen.

Heute bedeutet Wende oft einfach° die Wiedervereinigung. *simply*

Kulturwortschatz

der Bund, Bünde	<i>federation</i>
der Frieden	<i>peace</i>
der Fürst, -en	<i>prince</i>
der Kaiser, -	<i>emperor</i>
Kämpfen	<i>to fight</i>
der Krieg, -e	<i>war</i>
Regieren	<i>to govern, rule</i>
das Reich, -e	<i>empire</i>
der Weltkrieg, -e	<i>world war</i>
die Wende, -n	<i>turning point</i>
die Wiedervereinigung, -en	<i>reunification</i>

Appendix D. Additional Text Examples

The following four poems are included in *Neue Horizonte* under “Lyrik zum Vorlesen.” In suggesting their use as *Kulturexkurse* it is assumed that students have achieved a level of language competence commensurate with the location of the texts in this particular textbook.

1. Chapter 5: Richard Dehmel, “Der Arbeitsmann”

The Text: The theme of this chapter in the textbook is “Arbeit und Freizeit.” The voice in Dehmel’s poem, written at the beginning of the 20th Century, is that of a

day laborer who has a wife, addressed in the first stanza, and a child, addressed in the second. He is also part of “Wir Volk,” addressed in stanza three. The poem is revolutionary in import. It is only a matter of time (“Nur Zeit”) until the working class will secure the freedom symbolized in the poem by flocks of swallows darting across the fields.

Spiel mit dem Text: Students can relate to the images of nature that suggest openness and freedom and oppose these to the oppressive daily grind of work and study. In the poem, both husband and wife work. Only on Sunday is there time for a walk in the country. Students might also empathize with the idea in the poem that progress and wealth for a few is achieved on the backs of the workers.

Kulturinformationen: Industrialization; Berlin around 1900; workers’ movement; Communism and socialism; revolution; the concept of Volk.

2. Chapter 7: Wilhelm Müller, “Wanderschaft”

The Text: This well known Romantic poem (and song) has a simple theme that Germans intuitively understand: *wandern*. For Americans this concept is not so ingrained. In fact the English words “hike,” “wander,” or “roam” don’t convey the essence of *wandern*. The text allows for straightforward introduction of the Romantic world view, crucial for understanding of German values and beliefs. There is a hint of rigid social structures and revolutionary yearning at the poem’s end: “Herr Meister und Frau Meisterin, / Laßt mich in Frieden weiterziehn / Und wandern!”

Spiel mit dem Text: The text takes for granted that every miller wants to go on *Wanderschaft*. Everything moves, water, wheels, even stones; so, too, should the good miller and, by extension, everybody else stuck in the everyday world. Students can play with the idea of *wandern*; maybe their idea of “getting out” will be the road trip. To get at the idea of the type of freedom embodied in this concept, students might be reminded of the American pioneers and the concept of “wide open spaces.”

Kulturinformationen: Romanticism; romantic longing; the real vs. the ideal; the relationship between the apprentice and his master.

3. Chapter 8: Heinrich Heine, “Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten”

The Text: Oddly enough, this famous poem appears in conjunction with the theme “Das Leben in der Stadt” in *Neue Horizonte*. After “Wanderschaft” the Heine poem allows for further and deeper discussion of the Romantic world view. Here the concepts of legend, myth, and fairy tales (“ein Märchen aus alten Zeiten”), the bedrock of Romanticism, are thrown into ironic relief, though this will have to be worked out in the discussion.

Spiel mit dem Text: Students can have fun with Heine’s rendering of the Lorelei. They can be asked to describe her; maybe they will notice that she’s almost too

“golden.” Asked about what she does all day, they will note that she combs her hair and sings. That’s about it. Attention can be turned to the “Ich” of the poem, who seems to have a not uncommon problem: he can’t figure out why he’s so sad. Maybe it’s because he’s unable to remember how the story ends (“Ich glaube, die Wellen verschlingen”). The motif of the beautiful maiden seducing unwitting men will certainly be familiar to students. Some might note that the “Schiffer” in Heine’s poem are actually pretty stupid, which may be what Heine is getting at.

Kulturinformationen: myth (but note that the myth is fake here); fairy tales; the Rhine; the Romantic view of nature; the rational *vs.* the irrational view of the world.

4. Chapter 11: Hoffmann von Fallersleben, “Das Lied der Deutschen”

The Text: This famous and controversial text coincides, appropriately enough, with the theme “Deutschland nach der Mauer” in *Neue Horizonte*. By this time in the course the students will have acquired sufficient language competence to engage in more extended activities in German when dealing with it. Assuming ten *Kulturexkurse* have preceded this one, students will have also acquired the cultural competence to better understand and discuss this text. Already in chapter 1, for example (“Markierung einer Wende”), students’ attention was drawn to the fact that Germans were ruled by princes throughout much of their history. They also became aware that two periods of a “Reich” were interrupted by confederations in the 19th Century (“Bund”). The poems by Müller and Heine acquainted students with the Romantic yearning for freedom. Dehmel’s text raised the issue of “das Volk.” “Das Lied der Deutschen” needs to be approached carefully, since it is easily misunderstood, thanks in part, of course, to the Nazi misappropriation of the first stanza (“Deutschland, Deutschland über alles”) in support of expansionism and ultimately both political and racial domination.

Spiel mit dem Text: Students may have trouble relating to this poem. It contains some puzzling geographic names (“Mass,” “Memel,” Etsch,” “Belt”) and a slew of abstract concepts (“Brüderlich[keit],” Treue,” Einigkeit,” Recht,” “Freiheit,” “Vaterland”). One way to start might be to ask students to identify the geographic boundaries of the United States on the north, south, east, and west. Some may forget that Alaska and Hawaii extend those boundaries considerably. Was the U.S. always this large? Students could be reminded of the territory originally encompassed by the 13 Colonies, the Louisiana Purchase, the westward expansion into the Northwest and California. How did this happen? A map of Europe should then certainly be shown to illustrate that Fallersleben is calling for the unification of all the territory occupied by German speakers in the middle of the 19th Century, an area considerably larger than the Federal Republic today.

Students could be asked how they would under-

stand the infamous opening line if it read “USA, USA über alles” (even though it doesn’t scan). At this point a discussion might ensue that gets at the heart of the issue in the poem. Some may think first of America’s military might, others of the values of democracy, freedom, and religious and ethnic tolerance. Students could be asked to debate the meaning of the word “Patriotism.” At this point the line “Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit” could be considered, perhaps with the reminder that the struggle to achieve and maintain national unity under the principles of justice and freedom lay at the heart of both the American Revolution and the Civil War.

The second stanza may strike students as odd in this context. Why does Fallersleben mention German “Frauen,” “Wein,” and “Sang” in the same breath as “deutsche Treue”? These apparently represent values that are worth fighting for (“Uns zu edler Tat begeistern”). Would it be too farfetched to ask students to talk about what they associate with the phrase, “Mom, Baseball, and Apple Pie”?

Kulturinformationen: The text is rich in possibilities, and it will be important not to overload students with information. The competing forces of nationalism and liberalism in Germany during the first half of the 19th Century lie at the heart of the issues raised in the poem, and this might be the place to introduce the pivotal events of 1848-49. The link between romanticism and nationalism expressed in the second stanza might be explored. And certainly this would be the place to consider the term “Vaterland” in some detail, perhaps in conjunction with a term with which Americans have recently become familiar, “Homeland.” The history of “Das Lied der Deutschen”—its adoption as the national anthem in 1922, banishment in 1945, and reinstatement (without the first stanza) in 1952—might allow for a brief review of German history in the 20th Century.

Appendix E. Sample Cultural Vocabulary List

By introducing selected vocabulary items in each *Kulturexkurs* a basic corpus of cultural vocabulary can be acquired by the end of the course. After their first appearance, words are reintroduced and practiced with sufficient frequency to allow for active acquisition. The following list is not meant to be complete or prescriptive but only to illustrate the type of vocabulary necessary for dealing with deeper cultural issues. Easily recognizable cognates (e.g., *Nation*, *Revolution*, *Emanzipation*) are not included. When listed in a textbook, plural forms and other essential grammatical information would be included.

Nouns

Adel
Armut
Aufklärung
Bildung
Bund
Erziehung

Bürgertum
Burschenschaft
Ehre
Einigkeit
Erlaubnis

Ewigkeit
Frieden
Fürst
Gehorsam
Geist
Gesell(e)
Gewalt
Heimat
Herrschaft
Hoffnung
Kaiser
Kanzler
König/in
Krieg
Kritik
Lust

Meister
Not
Obrigkeit
Pflicht
Recht
Reichtum
Sehnsucht
Spießbürger
Seele
Unterdrückung
Vaterland
Verfassung
Vernunft
Verstand
Wanderlust
Wende

Verbs
begeistern
bilden
entfliehen
erlauben
erziehen
gehörchen
kämpfen
leiten
regieren
schwärmen
streben
wehren

Adjectives
aufgeklärt
bürgerlich
gebildet
geistig
selig
vernünftig
völkisch

THE BEST ARTICLE AWARD



has been presented to

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for her article

Hilft es die Regel zu wissen um sie anzuwenden?
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which appeared in

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