

Nomination of Harald Weilnböck (HW) for the EU Marie Curie Prize 2012

In his MC-research Weilnböck developed and applied an entirely innovative *approach to literary studies (LIR) and humanities' teaching* – and, simultaneously, created and empirically tested a novel *tool of social intervention*. HW has since demonstrated LIR's effectiveness both in mainstream (inter-)cultural education and in high-risk social hotspot- thus reaching-out to target-groups farthest away from education and society.

Literary/media Interaction Research (LIR) – newly combined resources from (i) culture/media research and education/pedagogy (ii) qualitative social research, (iii) interdisciplinary narratology, (iv) violence/terrorism studies, and (v) psychology/trauma- and psycho-therapy (of clinical sort [!] not speculative-philosophical, like in some cultural theory).

LIR's methodological *design/setting* by far exceeds existing humanities' traditions in Germany – and in the US –, which is historical or practices speculative exegesis but is hardly ever engaged in empirical inter-action research. LIR's methodological added-value pertains to (1) procedural rigor and transparency, (2) depth of analytical investigation both of texts and people (author/reader, communities) and the mediated cultural and psychological processes among them, (3) interdisciplinary connectivity to other empirical sciences and (3) concrete applicability in social, educational and therapeutic work.

LIR's *applications* reach from university teaching ("Group-Analytic Literary and Media Experience Seminar") to hotspot social work, e.g. fields of hate-crime prevention/ 'deradicalisation' – i.e. interventions countering violent political extremism, religious fundamentalism, 'group-related enmity' – building inter-cultural and human-rights skills and moderation abilities (youth-cultural "Fair Skills" course, "ClassicClubCultures" workshop, the interactive "We-Group-Storytelling" deradicalisation technique).

Most *interdisciplinary*, HW acquired project grants not only from EU-Directorate General 'Research' but also reached out to 'Justice' and 'Home Affairs'. He integrated (a) *high-brow* classical and *low-brow* popular/youth cultural work, (b) philological *text interpretation* and empirical *reader-interaction* research and *education* – and conceptualized an innovative *post-graduate professional training* program ("Weiterbildung"). Hence, what used to be national literature teachers/professors explaining what Goethe's texts 'mean', may now become practitioners of text-experience-based educational processes, facilitating personality formation, soft skills, preventative human rights education and peace-building – thus not only "communicating science" but engaging people in developmental processes.

Outreach/ coverage: Aside of publishing numerous articles (www.weilnboeck.net), HW promote LIR/applications by acquiring several national and EU projects: In German Federal Model-Project Programs 'Vielfalt'/^Xenos' (e.g. "Creating Resilient Communities"; "Youth Cultures, Fictional Narratives and Self-Awareness Group-Work – in rightwing extremist milieus"); and EU projects: "Firstline Practitioners", "European Deradicalising Narratives", "Women/girls in Extremism" (ISEC, RAN, www.cultures-interactive.de).

Moreover, HW promoted European *NGO work* and *social entrepreneurship* in vulnerable at-risk communities (inner cities, deprived rural areas), most effectively in the 'Radicalisation Awareness Network' (RAN) (EC-DH Home-Affairs).

Not surprisingly, HW attracted mainstream *national newspaper* attention twice (FAZ, 11.07.05 25.04.07) (which hardly ever happens to literary scholars). An entire issue of *prestigious 'Mittelweg36'* journal was dedicated (1/2007) – subsequently being translated by Eurozine-Online (2008).

Arguably HW's biggest achievement was getting into the Marie-Curie program in the first place – being the only MC-project ever coming from literary text-interpretation/exegesis, then becoming an MC show-case project. Currently, HW prepares his second ERC-Advanced-Grant application.

In my view, HW/ LIR could have never achieved this within national, quite conservative, university structures – which is why I personally have left German academia long time ago.