

Clive W. Earls

## Foreword

On the occasion of Arnd Witte's well-earned retirement from German Studies and the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures at Maynooth University, I present this *Festschrift*. The *Festschrift* is a meaningful tradition in our field and a very fitting way to chart such an accomplished career on all fronts as Arnd's. And so, as a colleague and friend, it is my distinct honour to have done this for you, Arnd.

Arnd's achievements in scholarly, teaching and leadership spheres spanning over four decades are innumerable and have left a lasting positive impression on Maynooth University and the disciplines of German Studies and Applied Linguistics/Intercultural Studies, both nationally and internationally. As the first Head of the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures at Maynooth University, Arnd has left an indelible mark and incomparable legacy, not only illustrated by the way in which the School continues to thrive under his successor, but also by his collaboration with colleagues in the creation and success of MA and PhD Programmes in Applied Linguistics and Intercultural Studies. In scholarly fields, Arnd's impressive publication record is marked by three monographs, seven edited volumes, eighteen peer-reviewed journal articles and thirty-eight book chapters – published solely or in collaboration with numerous colleagues across continents.

Over the course of his career, Arnd has contributed to our evolving understanding of 'culture', and with his 'Model of Progressive Principles', he has tied in his valuable work with innovative concepts in Intercultural Studies and Foreign Language Teaching and Learning, such as 'Third Space' (Homi Bhabha) and 'Third Place' (Claire Kramsch). Most recently, Arnd's work has evolved further by engaging with the notion of *leibliches Spüren* – the preconscious sentient body and its role in intercultural foreign language learning – innovatively progressing the discussion beyond the cognitive domain.

The contributions comprising the *Festschrift* are very much reflective not only of interdisciplinarity characterizing Arnd's studies and subsequent scholarly activity but also of the core notion of 'blending' at the heart of Arnd's work and this *Festschrift*. The first six contributions sit predominantly in the Literary/Cultural Studies field and address 'blending' of identities in cultural and intercultural contexts (with many focused on African experiences familiar to Arnd, who lived in Africa before coming to Ireland). The second six contributions are clearly located in the field of Applied Linguistics/Intercultural Studies, addressing 'blending' in

terms of interculturality, multilingualism and teaching and learning. The final contribution of the volume is a personal reflective piece bridging the often perceived and structurally reinforced divide in academia between Literary/Cultural Studies and Applied Linguistics/Intercultural Studies, mapped onto the author's shared experiences with Arnd in the Irish higher education system. By bringing together and 'blending' contributions across this traditional divide in language studies, the *Festschrift* is reflective of Arnd's endeavours to support 'blending' across time and space in modern foreign language studies.

As guest editor, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the editors of *Germanistik in Ireland*, Jürgen Barkhoff and Siobhán Donovan, without whose support this volume would not have been possible and whose efforts went above and beyond what would normally be expected of them in this role. An additional sincere note of thanks to my colleague Florian Krobb for his support in communicating with potential contributors internationally and his keen editorial eye. Given the secretive nature of the *Festschrift*, I would like to thank all colleagues and friends in German Studies and beyond for managing to keep the existence of the volume hidden in order to surprise Arnd. I know it would have been possible to draw on the enthusiasm of many more colleagues for this celebration of their long-standing friend, but given logistical reasons the outreach had to be limited.

This *Festschrift* is, then, a heart-felt and sincere token of appreciation from all of us who have had the pleasure of Arnd's company as a colleague and friend throughout the years and across disciplinary and institutional contexts. We bid you, with one joyous and one weeping eye, not Goodbye but *Auf Wiedersehen* as you enter the next phase of your life.