

HANS ULRICH GUMBRECHT

Since 1989, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht has held the Albert Guérard Chair in Literature at Stanford University, in the Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages (Departments of Comparative Literature, French & Italian; and, by courtesy, in German Studies, Iberian and Latin American Cultures, and Modern Thought & Literature). He is also associated with the Département de Littérature comparée at the Université de Montréal, a “*Professeur attaché*” at Collège de France, a former *Directeur d'études associées* at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, “*Ständiger Gastprofessor*” at Zeppelin-Universität (Friedrichshafen / Germany), and “*Professor Catedratico Visitante*” at the Universidade de Lisboa.

Gumbrecht was born in Würzburg, Germany in 1948. After spending several months at Lycée Henri IV in Paris, he graduated from the Siebold Gymnasium of his hometown in 1967. He was a *Stipendiat* of the Stiftung Maximilianeum. Gumbrecht studied Romance Philology and German Literature, Philosophy and Sociology in Munich, Regensburg, Salamanca, Pavia, and Konstanz, receiving his Ph.D. at the University of Konstanz / Germany in 1971. At Konstanz, he became an Assistant Professor (*Wissenschaftlicher Assistent*), and acquired the “*Venia legendi*” (*Habilitation*) in Romance Literatures and Literary Theory, in 1974. He was a Full Professor at the University of Bochum from 1975 to 1982, and from 1983 to 1989, at the University of Siegen, where he founded the first Humanities Graduate Program (*Modellversuch Graduiertenkolleg*) in Germany (dedicated to the topic “*Kommunikationsformen als Lebensformen*”). From 1983 to 1985, Gumbrecht was Vice-President of the German Association of Romance Philology. He has received offers of professorships from the University of Frankfurt, the University of St. Gallen, the University of California/Berkeley, Yale University, Universität Tübingen, The Johns Hopkins University, for the Directorship of the “Zentrum für Literaturforschung” in Berlin, and from Zeppelin-University.

Visiting Professorships have brought him, among other places, to Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Ouro Preto, and Rio de Janeiro; to Berkeley, Princeton, and Montreal; to Aarhus, Barcelona, Berlin, Budapest, Lisbon, Manchester (2009-2011), München, Paris, and Riga; to Capetown, Jerusalem, and Kyoto. In May/June 2007, he was the *Leibniz Professor* at the Simon Dubnow Institute of the University of Leipzig. He has been a Fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center, a Distinguished Visitor at the Commonwealth Center of the University of Virginia, and the Walker Ames Professor at the University of Washington. He has also been a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS) in Palo Alto; at the Carl Friedrich von Siemens Foundation, Munich; and at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (spring 2012). He has been an instructor at the School of Criticism and Theory at Cornell University (summers of 2005 and 2012), where he is a Member of the Board.

In 1995, Gumbrecht received the Stanford University Dean's Award for Distinguished Teaching in the School of Humanities and Sciences, and, in 2000, the Cuthbertson Award for Extraordinary Contributions, (the Cuthbertson Award was bestowed to him in acknowledgement of his work as the inaugural Director of the "Stanford Presidential Lectures and Symposia in the Humanities and Arts"). He has received Honorary Doctorates (eight in all) from universities in Canada, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, and Russia. Gumbrecht has been a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences since 1998.

Early in his career, Gumbrecht was a founding member of two "*Sonderforschungsbereiche*" (on "Society and Knowledge in the Nineteenth Century," and on "Screen Media") at Universität Bochum and Universität Siegen. Between 1981 and 1989, he organized a series of interdisciplinary and international colloquia towards the epistemological reorientation of the Humanities at the Inter-University Center in Dubrovnik, Croatia (then Yugoslavia). At Stanford, he has been Chair of the Department of Comparative Literature (1990-1993, 1996/1997), Chair of French & Italian (Fall 2001/2002), a member of the Academic Senate, on the Advisory Board of the Humanities Center (1991-1993, 1994-1997), member and chair of the Editorial Board of Stanford University Press (1991-94, 1996-99), Director of the "Stanford Presidential Lectures and Symposia in the Humanities and Arts" (1997-2000), a member of the Athletic Board (2004-2008), and a Fellow of the "European Forum" (since 2005).

Since 1989, Gumbrecht has convened the "Philosophical Reading Group; and in 1991, he initiated the work of an American / European research group that has since organized a series of conferences around the topics of "Medieval Theatricality," "The Medieval Senses," and "Medieval and Modern Religion." Twice, the Presidents of Stanford University have entrusted Robert Harrison and him with organizing one-week-long colloquia with a group of participants from the academic and non-academic worlds, whose objective was to develop new and effective forms of intellectual productivity: on "Emergence" (2002) and on "Convergence" (2006). In 2008, Gumbrecht (along with Christopher Young, Cambridge) formulated a colloquium series on "The Future of Sports," co-sponsored by their two universities, whose ultimate ambition has been to bring together athletic and intellectual events. He organized a conference on Heinrich von Kleist in spring 2012, and the annual conference of Cornell's "School of Criticism and Theory" in spring 2013 -- both at Stanford.

Gumbrecht has been an Advisor for the *Fundación Cultural* of the Banco de Bilbao, Vizcaya y Argentaría (BBVA) in Madrid, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Universität Greifswald, of the "Scientific Board" of *AutoUni* (the university founded by the Volkswagen Corporation), and a "Juror" of the "Akademie Stiftung Solitude" (in 2009). He has been a Senior Fellow and Board Member of the School of Criticism and Theory (since 2006), a member of the *Direktorium* of the *Schlegel-Kolleg* at the Free

University of Berlin (since 2008), an Advisor to the “*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*” (since 2009), and on the Executive Board of the Internationales Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung und Medienphilosophie (IKKM), Weimar.

He has worked as co-editor of the “*Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*,” of the “*New Harvard History of German Literature*,” of the publication series “*Figurae – Readings in Medieval Culture*,” “*Writing Science*,” and “*Espaces Métisses*.” At present, he serves on the Editorial Boards of a number of journals, among them “*New Literary History*.” Since the late 1980s, Gumbrecht has been a regular contributor to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Folha de São Paulo*, *Estado de São Paulo*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, “*Cicero*,” *Literaturen*, and *Merkur – Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken*.

Gumbrecht’s areas of teaching and research are the histories of French and Spanish, Italian and German literatures (with emphasis on the Middle Ages, the long 18th century, and the first half of the 20th century), the analysis of early 21st-century culture, the history of Literary Criticism and of the Humanities, and the history of Western Philosophy since its classical origins. His over 1,800 publications (translated into more than twenty languages) include a History of Spanish Literature, a chronicle of the year 1926, and monographs on medieval narrative, on rhetoric in the French Revolution, on Zola, on “Presence,” on Philology, on the Aesthetics of Sport, on “Our Broad Present,” and on “Stimmung.” Among his more recent books (in addition to a number of co-authored titles) are *In Praise of Athletic Beauty* (Harvard Press, 2006; translations into German, French, Spanish, Cantonese, Russian, Dutch, Portuguese, Korean, Danish, and Ukrainian); *California Graffiti – Bilder von westlichen Ende der Welt* (Hanser Verlag, 2010); *Stimmungen lesen – Über eine Ontologie der Literatur* (Hanser Verlag, 2011 – English, Portuguese, and Spanish translations); and *Unsere breite Gegenwart* (Suhrkamp Verlag, 2010 – translation into Spanish; English). *After 1945 – Latency as Origin of the Present*, appeared in 2013 at Stanford University Press (German translation, 2012; Portuguese, Russian, Spanish translations forthcoming). A book project tentatively entitled “Prose of the World: Diderot, Goya, Lichtenberg, and Mozart and an End of Enlightenment” is in preparation, for publication in 2015.