

Cultural Turn in der Literaturtheorie?
Beobachtungen zur Neuauflage von Iwanami Literary Studies und dem
„Sonderband Literaturtheorie“

Abstract

Traditional philology in Japan (*kokubungaku*) is often described, both at home and abroad, having a phobia of theory. The literary scholar often speaks the same language as the poet, and in many cases, as in the second edition of *Iwanami Literary Studies* (*Iwanami Kōza Bungaku*, 1975–1976), they are one and the same person. However, as a closer look at Japanese literary studies since the translation of Eagleton's *Literary Theory* in 1985 reveals that this paradigm has already started to shift. The publication of the third edition of *Iwanami Literary Studies*, and in particular the supplement *Literary Theory* (*Bungaku Riron*, 2004) distinctly reflects this shift, at least among the younger generation of literary scholars.

In my paper I will show not only the shift to theory in recent Japanese literary studies, but also that theory itself (as it is used in Japan) has experienced that worldwide movement described as the “cultural turn”. In order to prove this observation, I will take a closer look at the contemporary English, German and Japanese discourse on literary theory and, in particular concepts such as contingency, (new) contextuality, and culturalism.