

Department of English

December 15, 2018

### **Recommendation for Michaela Hermann**

It is a pleasure to write in support of Michaela Hermann, my former research assistant during the summer of 2016, when I taught a block seminar in American crime literature and film at the University of Konstanz. Hermann has distinguished herself in the years since we worked together, earning a Fulbright award to attend the University of New Orleans, and subsequently earning admission to the prestigious American studies program at the Free University of Berlin.

These accomplishments do not surprise me in the least, as Hermann did superb work for me during my time in Germany. To begin with, she handled the logistical support of my work exceedingly well, including smooth work with my finances (salary and expenses). She impressed me immediately with her organizational skills and efficiency, and her advance work (reserving books and films, etc.) allowed me to launch the seminar smoothly, even though I arrived with my family just a couple of days in advance of its beginning.

More important, Hermann assumed a responsible collaborative role within the seminar itself. Though she was in no way obliged to do so, she attended all of the seminar meetings as an unofficial auditor—and her participation showed enormous intelligence of several kinds. First, she said smart and insightful things about the books and movies assigned to the class, showing her considerable depth of knowledge of American literature and culture. The quality of her insights showed me why she has been so successful in her studies.

As important, Hermann demonstrated a restraint at times that showed me that she was thinking along with me as well as with her classmates. By knowing when *not* to talk, she allowed her classmates, who were less skilled than she, the space to help create the seminar discussion. This sensitivity to the needs of both teacher and students, and of both German and foreign ways of teaching and learning, demonstrated a striking level of “emotional intelligence” on Hermann’s part. I was able to trust and rely on her in ways that went beyond the normal duties and responsibilities of her position.

As I reflect on it, I see that Hermann’s strong motivation lay behind her excellent performance. She is a student who seeks to get the most out of the opportunities before her, and she certainly did that in this case. I have no doubt that she has continued to do

so. I recommend Michaela Hermann with enthusiasm and without reservation. Please feel free to contact me at <[cassuto@fordham.edu](mailto:cassuto@fordham.edu)> if I may do anything further to support her application.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leonard Cassuto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and a stylized "C".

Leonard Cassuto  
Professor of English and American Studies