focus on Literatur

Edited by
Jeffrey Dean Todd
Tonya Hampton

Published by the German Graduate Student Association of the University of Cincinnati
Focus on Literatur is published semiannually (Spring & Fall) by the German Graduate Student Governance Association of the University of Cincinnati.

Editor
Jeffrey Dean Todd
Book Review Editor
Tonya Hampton
Technical Assistant
Michael Shaughnessy
Copy Editors
Christina Bonner Britta Kallin

SUBMISSIONS
Focus on Literatur welcomes article submissions from 10-25 pages on topics related to German literary studies. Submissions are accepted continuously, but contributors must be students at the time of submission. Manuscripts must be submitted in triplicate to the editor and should be prepared according to the guidelines of the latest MLA Handbook. A self-addressed postcard should accompany the manuscript for acknowledgment of its receipt.

BOOK REVIEWS
Unsolicited book reviews of 2-5 pages will be considered for publication, yet Focus on Literatur prefers to work with an established pool of reviewers. Interested persons are encouraged to inform the Book Review Editor.

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Annual subscriptions are $12.00 for individuals and $22.00 for institutions; individuals and institutions overseas add $5.00 for additional postage.

CONTACT ADDRESS
Send subscription fees and all other correspondence to Focus on Literatur, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221-0372. Tel: (513) 556-2755 Fax: (513) 556-1991.

COVER: “The Book Fool” from Sebastian Brant’s Ship of Fools, London, 1570, courtesy of the Archives and Rare Books Department, University of Cincinnati Libraries. Cover design by Giana Morrell.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This first installment in the third volume of Focus on Literatur was possible only with the continuous commitment of Dr. Judith Trent, Associate Vice President for Research and Advanced Studies, and the officers of the University of Cincinnati Graduate Student Governance Association: Lori Sohns (President), Mike Hughes (Vice President), and Brent Van Zwaluwenberg (Treasurer). We appreciate their enthusiastic support.

Department Head Sara Friedrichsmeyer and the entire faculty of Germanic Languages and Literatures deserve our deepest gratitude for helping out in so many ways. We owe special thanks to the following people: to the Faculty Advisor to Focus, Prof. Richard Schade, for his advice and support, which help us maintain a necessary sense of continuity; to Prof. Manfred Zimmermann, who provided timely advice in editorial questions; to Greg Redding, one of the founders and a former editor of Focus, who was extremely eager to provide counsel on issue layout. Thanks also to Jeff Hull for reading articles.

Special thanks also to the following people for evaluating articles for this issue of Focus: Roswitha Burwick (Scripps College), Erhard Friedrichsmeyer (University of Cincinnati), Jerry Glenn (University of Cincinnati), Clayton Koelb (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).
Focus on Literatur
Volume 3, Number 1
Spring 1996

Contents

from the editor vi

articles

Bekenntnis zum Einzelgängertum: 1
Hans Sahls Exilroman Die Wenigen und die Vielen
NICOLE ZÖLLNER

Greed and Economic Self-Interest 21
in Kleist's "Verlobung in St. Domingo"
JOHN S. ANGERMEIER

Franz Kafkas Der Prozeß: 31
Die Problematik des Schriftstellerseins als sozialer Konflikt
CHRIS PRANG

book reviews

Günter Kunert. Baum • Stein • Beton 47
Schatten entziffern 49
Zsuzsanna Gahse. Übersetzt: Eine Entzweiung 51
Erica Fischer. Aimée und Jaguar: Eine Liebesgeschichte 53
Jeannette Lander. Überbleibsel. Eine kleine Erotik der Küche 56
Thomas Kling. nacht. sicht. gerät 61

Reinhard Jirgl. Abschied von den Feinden 63
Hans Magnus Enzensberger. Diderots Schatten 67
Josef Haslinger. Opernball 70
Michael Kleeberg. Barfuß 72

interview

"Creating the Statue out of the Mass of Clay"
AN INTERVIEW WITH URSULA HEGI 75

contributors 85

announcements 87
FROM THE EDITOR

This year has seen a good deal of scholarly activity among the graduate student ranks, and Focus on Literatur has done its best to be in the thick of it. We have made contact with graduate student conferences at the universities of Pennsylvania and North Carolina, Chapel Hill through our contact persons Norman Roessler and Chris Prang, and our Book Review Editor Tonya Hampton attended the Yale Graduate Student Conference, which took place on March 29-31, 1996. Tonya acquainted the audience with Focus and informed them of our own upcoming Focus conference. Since then, a number of our colleagues have notified us and expressed their intentions to participate in Focus in some way, whether by submitting essays and book reviews for publication, or by submitting abstracts for the Focus conference. By the way, Tonya was very impressed with the Yale conference: not merely by its interesting topics, but by how well-organized it was, and how smoothly it came off. We owe a special thanks to Yale's Mary Ballard Paddock for giving Tonya the program spot in which to introduce Focus.

We hope that our own conference comes off as smoothly. This conference, co-sponsored by Focus and the University of Cincinnati's German Department, will be devoted to 20th-century German, Austrian, and Swiss Literature, and will take place on October 11-12, 1996. It is our first annual conference. We have received a good response, will have a full menu for those in attendance, and hope to see you there.

I recommend the web surfers among you take the opportunity to visit our Web site at the following internet address: (http://www.uc.edu/~fourmag/focus.htm). Our Technical Assistant and all-round computer guy, Mike Shaughnessy, has put together a very nice and useful Web site full of links to other German Studies sites.

And now to the contents of the present issue. As in previous issues of Focus, you'll see that we continue to affirm our commitment to inquiry into the German-American literary relationship, to present original scholarship on classic German authors, and to offer reviews of well-known and less well-known contemporary German-language authors. But for all this continuity, we have a number of new things on our slate this issue. Nicole Zoellner's article recommends to us a novel by Hans Sahl, *Die Wenigen und die Vielen*, which a number of respected literary authorities have praised as the quintessential exile novel, but to which the goddess of literary fortune has not been kind. Steve Angermeier argues for an economic reading of Kleist's "Verlobung in St. Domingo," suggesting economic self-interest is the principal factor motivating character action in the novella. Chris Prang's Kafka essay is indicative of a new turn in Kafka studies, which explores the social dimension of a suffering traditionally interpreted as individual and existential. Finally, Laura Jackson interviews the German-American authorress Ursula Hegi about her latest book project, a collection of interviews with other people in her position, people born in Germany but now living in the United States.

The book review section brings you well-established authors, such as Kunert and Enzensberger, as well as interesting lesser-known writers: a nice mix of the familiar and the less familiar. Here's a sampling of some of the themes: terrorism in Vienna (Haslinger); the attraction of life in the margins of society for people who have lived in the center of the page for most of their lives (Fischer, Kleeberg); linguistic experimentation (Jirgl, Kling); East-West German relations (Jirgl); food, its semiotics and social significance (Lander); and finally, translation (Gahse). Did you know that the eighteenth-century French Encyclopedist Denis Diderot was a Hörspiel author? Read Norman Roessler's review of Enzensberger to find out why.

Jeffrey Dean Todd