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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.

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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.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS
Annual subscriptions are $15.00 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.

Member
CELJ
Council of Editors of Learned Journals
ISSN 1076-5697

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Volume one of Focus on Literatur moved from idea to reality only through the help of many people. Department Head Suzanne Shipley and the entire faculty of Germanic Languages have given more than their fair share of advice and support. Richard Schade deserves special thanks for answering our many questions. Dean Judith Trent along with Greg Kostraba, Melissa Hardoby, and the University of Cincinnati Graduate Student Governance Association are especially appreciated for their ongoing financial support. Dane Heuchemer, Richard Bowen, Mya Poe, Patricia Hill, and Erin Lampe have all helped in various significant ways.

Managing a journal is difficult enough; it would be impossible without the assistance of the our professorial referees. The following people graciously evaluated articles for volume one of Focus: Hamilton Beck, Beth Bjorklund, Irene Compton, Robert Conard, Garry Fourman, Erhard Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Alan Galt, Michael Geisler, Katharina Gerstenberger, Jerry Glenn, Edward Harris, Frank Hirschbach, Susanne Kord, Phil McKnight, Christiane Seiler, Richard Schade, Don Tolzmann, James van der Laan, Manfred Zimmermann.
Focus on Literatur
Volume 1, Number 2
Fall 1994

Contents

om the editor vi
ticles
inter Answers in the Poetry 111 Ilse Aichinger
AND A RICHIE
merica: A Modern Day Taurus? 129
Study of Two Adaptations of the Iphigenie Myth
ATHERINE MARSHALL
ilistic Elements in the Prosa of Brigitte
ronauer exemplarily dargestellt an Rita Münster,
terner Bogenschütze und Frau Mühlenbeck im Gehäus
AGMAR SCHULZ
er Stand des Experiments und der Avantgarde 151
der deutschsprachigen Literatur am Beispiel
s Österreichischen Literaturmagazines perspektive
NKA FINGER
ook reviews
iner Kunze, Am Sonnenhang 167
& Günter de Bruyn, Zwischenbilanz
elga Königsdorf, Im Schatten des Regenbogens 171

Gert Hofmann, Die kleine Stechardin 173
Franz Hodjak, Landverlust 176
Gert Niers, Wortgrund noch Lyrik und Prosa 180
Christoph Hein, Das Napoleon-Spiel 182
Ulrich Woelk, Rückspiel 187
Birger Sellin, ich will kein innich mehr sein 189
Günter Kunert, Im toten Winkel 192
Gisela Corleis, Brand 194
Botho Strauß, Das Gleichgewicht 197
Jürgen Becker, Foxtrott um Erfurter Stadion 199
Uwe Timm, Die Entdeckung der Carrywurst 202
Tankred Dorst, Herr Paul 205
Martin Walser, Ohne einander 208
Doris Gercke, How many miles to Babylon 211
Brigitte Kronauer, Hin- und herbrausende Züge 215

Interview

Ein Zirkel, der sich schließt 219
INTERVIEW MIT GÜNTER KUNERT

Contributors 231

Announcements 232
A debate has grown around the issue of graduate student publishing. Several editorials and essays in the past year have focused on the pressure to publish placed on graduate students by the current job market. Some have been supportive, recognizing the market forces which have created the pressure. Others, the most disturbing of which was a highly editorialized announcement in last fall's *German Studies Association Newsletter*, suggest that graduate student scholarship is by definition inferior to faculty scholarship, serving only to 'clog' the review process and delay the evaluation of more deserving faculty submissions. The author of that announcement goes on to imply that devious graduate students slyly submit articles on departmental letterhead to fool editors into thinking they are faculty members: “They do not yet give themselves a false faculty rank,” the text reads, “but just sign their names” (emphasis added). This unfortunate wording hints at the author’s true thesis—that in the future, if not already, journals may find themselves so overwhelmed by graduate student submissions that they will be forced to reject non-faculty scholarship sight unseen. To do so would make a mockery of the very notion of scholarly debate and dialogue. Therefore, editors who have not carefully defined the mission of their respective journals may soon find themselves in an ethical dilemma.

What purpose do scholarly journals serve? Most claim the role of a forum for scholarly articles which, in the words of that lofty phrase, “contribute to the general pool of knowledge.” Yet the GSA newsletter announcement predicts that “the number of journals refusing to consider students’ work will increase in proportion to the increase in [student] submissions” (4). Intentionally or not, that same editorial creates a faculty = good, student = bad paradigm, characterized by two things: first, while student submissions occasionally yield a work of publishable quality, the bulk of the manuscripts are quite poor, and second, these student submissions hinder the timely evaluation of manuscripts by professors. Such thinking perpetuates the notion that the scholarly efforts of graduate students have little value, yet faculty status is no guarantor of quality. Certainly experienced professors will produce quality manuscripts with greater consistency, but every established scholar started with a first publication. If a journal is to be truly devoted to the dissemination of new ideas, editors must grapple with the task of evaluating every submission, without regard to its point of origin. Otherwise editors must drop the pretense of blind submissions and ask scholars to submit vitae along with manuscripts, this done at the risk that journals become the exclusive forum of an elite group of scholars.

Although graduate students today feel an ever-increasing pressure to perform, most can afford to take a great deal of time and care in preparing a manuscript for submission. There is a large incidence of self-censorship among student scholars, and as a result the *PMLA* reports that it accepts a greater percentage of submissions by graduate students than by faculty members. That students in graduate programs are producing viable scholarship should come as a surprise to no one. Graduate students today are no longer allowed to be just students. In various ways they are also teachers, editors, lecturers, scholars, authors, administrators—in short, there are few aspects of the profession which advanced degree candidates have not been exposed to in at least some small way. In addition, with such a competitive job market people are remaining graduate students for a longer time. As a result there is often a very fine line between junior faculty members and senior graduate students. Indeed, a student who is just completing a dissertation can potentially have broader experience than many new faculty members. In the course of a graduate student career, it is even possible that one could become the expert on an author, particularly understudied or younger writers. Yet some people apparently do not wish to acknowledge a graduate student as an authority on a particular subject. One clear issue is clear, however: anyone writing an article which includes information previously published is ethically bound to cite the original, regardless of who the author is or where the original quotation was published. To do otherwise, to ignore that work, is either poor scholarship or outright plagiarism.

The increasing frequency of graduate student submissions to scholarly journals is attributed to the extremely competitive job market. Yet there is in fact no such entity as a “job market.” The pressure to publish comes not from some mythological beast (although it seems that way at times), but rather from the professors who populate academic departments and job search screening committees. One unaware
member of the audience attending the "Mock Interviews for Job Seekers in Foreign Languages" session at the 1993 MLA Conference asked the panel just how important publications are for applicants. "They are expected," was panel member Renée Waldinger's emphatic reply. Hiring committees have placed a premium on candidates with publication records, and hopeful applicants these days recognize that to compete with other candidates, they must demonstrate scholarly potential. The advertisements in the most recent MLA Job Information List are peppered with phrases like "evidence of active scholarship," or "outstanding research potential" and the like. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that simply to get a job these days, graduate students must have a vita which resembles one which would have satisfied requirements for tenure twenty years ago.

The answer, of course, is a decrease in the emphasis on frantic publishing. While currents of such thought have been felt, the situation is unlikely to change as long as the paucity of jobs makes scholarship a useful determinant in the hiring process. To that end we offer Focus on Literatur. The contents of this second issue cover the spectrum of German-language literature, from poetry to drama to prose, from the well-established to the cutting edge. Amanda Ritchie offers an alternative interpretation of winter imagery in the poetry of Ilse Aichinger, while Catherine Marshall compares depictions of America in dramas by Egon Vietta and Ilse Langner. A structural analysis of Brigitte Kronauer's prose forms the foundation of a contribution by Dagmar Schulz, and Anke Finger teams up with Ralf Korte in a discussion of the current state of avant-garde literature in the German-speaking world. Among the eighteen titles discussed in the book review section are works by canonized figures such as Martin Walser and Reiner Kunze, as well as lesser-known writers like Doris Gercke and Ulrich Woelk. Finally, the issue is rounded out by an interview with Günter Kunert, in which the celebrated poet talks instead about his extensive prose work. It is our hope that every reader will find something of interest among these diverse contents.

J. Gregory Redding


2 Reported by the Executive Council at the "Welcome to the MLA: An Introduction for Graduate Students" session of the 1993 MLA Conference.