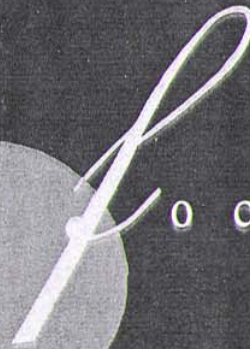


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F O C U S   o n

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LITERATUR

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**LITERATUR**

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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.

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Special thanks to all members of our board of reviewers. Articles for this issue were refereed by the following professors: Beth Bjorklund (U of Virginia), Sara Friedrichsmeyer (U of Cincinnati), Erhard Friedrichsmeyer (U of Cincinnati), Katharina Gerstenberger (U of Cincinnati), Jerry Glenn (U of Cincinnati), Clayton Koelb (U of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Heidi Rauscher-Tilghman (Knox College) and Richard Schade (U of Cincinnati).



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## From the Editor

The *Rechtschreibreform* is an important issue for graduate students in German departments throughout the country. It is a reform which is radical and will affect all of us using the language. Not only the spelling of some words will change but also capitalization, hyphenation of words and punctuation will be different. Even though the *Kultusminister* of Germany, Austria and Switzerland have agreed to accept the latest version, it is still debatable what changes will make their way into books and textbooks published after 1998. Famous examples are changes from *Philosophie* to *Filosofie* or *Portmonnaie* to *Portmonee*. Some of the new rules are convincing while others are outright ridiculous. The *Institut für deutsche Sprache* put a complete list of changes and updated information on the reform at the following Web site: <http://www.ids-mannheim.de>.

Those of us in the academic arena or in the professional world involved with the German language will have to watch the reform closely. Every publisher has to decide whether to adopt the new rules immediately or wait for public acceptance. Some people are convinced there is no way to stop it; others believe that it will fade away (even though the new rules are already being taught in elementary schools and the new *Duden* and other dictionaries have been printed with the new rules). For those of us who are graduate students, who might be teachers or professors in the future, the decision is of importance. We will be affected by its outcome because we use language in reading, writing and teaching.

Incidentally, the language use of this issue is not yet in line with the new rules! Maybe the difference will be easy to ignore and as insignificant as the old spelling of "Thür" with a "th" or "bey" with a "y." Language is always changing through everyday usage and gradual assimilation. This reform is more complex and more imposed on the people than previous ones. Maybe speakers of German will adapt as easily to the new rules as they did to the introduction of the 5-digit *Postleitzahlen*, which was intensely debated by the media. For now we adopt a wait and see attitude.

Let me turn to other business: This year's *Focus on Literatur* Conference, held on October 11-12, 1996, was a big success. 20th cen-

tury German, Austrian and Swiss literature was the topic of our first annual graduate student conference. After our keynote speaker, Hardy Friedrichsmeyer, spoke on Grass's *Ein weites Feld*, we heard more papers on Grass's work. There were papers dealing with Christoph Hein's novels; others dealt with literature by Schnitzler, Tankred Dorst, Jurek Becker and Monika Maron. One paper discussed Thomas Bernhard's work and another one focused on Elfriede Jelinek's prose. A bonus was an evening with the author Klaus Modick who read from his latest manuscript. The papers of all speakers will be considered for publication in the Spring and Fall '97 issues. Thanks again to the organizers, the session chairs, the department and all grad students who made this conference possible. For next year's topics, please see the conference announcement at the back of this issue.

This issue starts with an interesting article by Ralf Werner on language use in Bachmann's *Der Fall Franza*. It gives an insight into Bachmann's way of establishing a dialog between the narrator and the reader of the story. Thereafter, Peter Yang focuses on the function of various narrators in Brecht's *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*. He discusses the acting narrator, the first person narrator, simulated perspectives of the *dramatis personae* and perspectives of characters in detail. Jeff Todd's article deals with Adorno's 'Ban' on poetry after the Holocaust. Todd describes what a difference it is to understand Adorno's statement in the original context rather than out of context.

In the book review section, we review books which were published between 1994 and 1996 by well-known authors such as Hans Christoph Buch, Hermann Lenz, Monika Maron and Christa Wolf. Other authors included are Karlheinz Barwasser, Elazar Benyoët, Marcel Beyer, Martin Grzimek, Thomas Hettche, Uwe Kolbe, Gerhard Schade and Bernhard Schlink.

In the last part of this issue you will find an interview with Albert Völkman, who is the head of the small, yet interesting *AI Verlag* in Munich. He was interviewed on issues dealing with the publication of contemporary fiction.

We encourage you to send us your papers for the journal and your abstracts for next year's *Focus on Literatur* graduate student conference.

*Britta Kallin*