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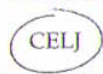
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Special thanks to all members of our board of reviewers. Articles for this issue were refereed by the following professors: David Coury (U of Wisconsin-Green Bay), Sara Friedrichsmeyer (U of Cincinnati), Erhard Friedrichsmeyer (U of Cincinnati), Katharina Gerstenberger (U of Cincinnati), Jerry Glenn (U of Cincinnati), Phillip McKnight (U of Kentucky, Lexington) and Richard Schade (U of Cincinnati).

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## *Focus on Literatur*

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### Contents

from the editor vi

#### articles

“Mauern haben sich überlebt”: Die Unmöglichkeit der Identitätsbildung durch *Andere* in Grass' *Kopfgeburten* oder *die Deutschen sterben aus*  
SILKE R. FALKNER 1

Life under the Table: An Investigation into the Themes and Insecurity in Günter Grass's *Die Blechtrommel*  
JENNIFER MARSTON WILLIAM 13

“Friederike, Martha, Hilde”: Christoph Heins 'Kleinaufnahmen' aus der deutschen Geschichte  
MARIA KROL 21

The *Beau Almand* and Armand: Simplicissimus and Felix Krull in Paris  
CHRISTINA L. BONNER 35

#### book reviews

Tankred Dorst. *Die Legende vom armen Heinrich* 53  
Barbara Frischmuth. *Hexenherz* 55

---

Peter Handke. *Eine winterliche Reise zu den Flüssen Donau, Save, Morawa und Drina oder Gerechtigkeit für Serbien* 57

Hanna Johansen. *Kurnovelle* 61

Günther Kunert. *Mein Golem* 64

Jeannette Lander. *Eine unterbrochene Reise* 66

Thomas Strittmatter. *Milchmusik* 68

Gabriele Wohmann. *Aber das war noch nicht das Schlimmste* 72

#### interviews

Die besten Ideen und die 'unverhofften Bekannten' kommen beim Schreiben  
INTERVIEW MIT DEM AUTOREN KLAUS MODICK 77

Ein knallroter Umschlag wäre mir für Ruth Klügers Buch unpassend erschienen . . .  
INTERVIEW MIT DEM VERLEGER THEDEL VON WALLMODEN 93

contributors 105

announcements 106



## From the Editor

With this issue, the *Focus on Literatur* journal enters its fourth year of publication. *Focus on Literatur* is one of only two journals published by graduate students in the U.S. We have published papers in German and English, with topics ranging from literature of the Middle Ages to contemporary German-language literature dealing with all genres. Our pool of book reviewers is constantly growing. In addition, we have seen a significant increase in subscriptions. Many of our past authors have given us feedback that their publication in our journal has provided them with an advantage in job applications.

We not only offer a platform for new scholarship by publishing a journal but are happy to extend this platform by organizing conferences at which future scholars can meet and exchange their ideas on current issues in German literary studies. The First Annual Graduate Student Conference was organized by *Focus on Literatur* and held in October 1996. This volume opens with three articles that were presented at that conference. They are not printed as proceedings of the conference, but similar to other submitted articles, were refereed by our discerning panel of reviewers.

In the first article, Silke Falkner analyzes concepts of the Other in Grass's *Kopfgebirgen*. She demonstrates how a construction of identity is impossible by simply constructing the Other. Her article is part of the current debate on post-colonial criticism of Grass's work and the neocolonial, eurocentric standpoint that can be traced in books such as *Kopfgebirgen* and *Zunge zeigen*. In the next article, Jennifer Marston William argues that the idea of insecurity in Grass's *Die Blechtrommel* is underlined by the use of language, especially expressions of location, often seen from the protagonist's lower perspective. Marston William shows how the usage of *unter* reveals motifs of fear and insecurity. In the following article by Maria Krol, the author contends that the link between literature and history, or the making of history, is of great importance when examining Christoph Hein's story "Friederike, Martha, Hilde." Krol exemplifies how Hein's definition of *Chronik* is significant for the understanding of his work. Hein's idea of the writer's task deviates from the official concept of GDR-politics. Unlike mainstream GDR-literature, this story serves

as an example of how the socialist state did not improve the personal development of individuals.

In addition to the *Focus on Literatur* conference, Professor Katharina Gerstenberger (University of Cincinnati) organized a *Mini-Konferenz* at the end of a seminar on *Bildungsromane*. A shorter version of Christina Bonner's article was presented at that conference last May. Bonner develops a detailed analysis of similarities between the characters Felix Krull and Simplicissimus. She focuses on the Paris episode in Thomas Mann's and Grimmelshausen's works. Bonner explores, for example, similarities in the use of language, clothing and treatment by other characters. She concludes that whereas Simplicissimus is judged by Grimmelshausen as having a sinful nature, Mann does not use the same religious framework but, rather, evaluates Krull in aesthetic terms.

Even though the book review section is organized according to the author's last name, it is interesting to note that works by male and female authors alternate. We are delighted that more and more women authors are being published and reviewed. This section includes reviews on a collection of stories by Barbara Frischmuth, a novel by Gabriele Wohmann and reviews on novels by the less famous authors Hanna Johansen and Jeannette Lander. Furthermore, we introduce a new play by Tankred Dorst, a new collection of poems by Günther Kunert as well as the controversial essay by Handke on the Serbian role in the Balkan war. The book by Strittmatter was put together after the author's death from fragments of his work.

The final section includes an interview with author Klaus Modick that was held last October during the *Focus on Literatur* conference. It gives a good insight into the author's ideas on developments in contemporary German-language literature. The second interview with Thedel von Wallmoden was held last November by a group of students including Michael Rice, who will be next year's editor for *Focus on Literatur*. Herr von Wallmoden published Ruth Klüger's bestseller *weiter leben - eine Jugend*. He has recently become the *Koordinator* for the *Subkamp Verlag*.

Working as the editor of this journal has given me a wonderful insight into the world of publishing, scholarship, networking with graduate students and professors from other universities, authors, editors and many other interesting people. It is very important for

graduate students—who are about to enter the “real professional” world—to have scholarly forums such as journals and conferences dedicated to their needs, where ideas can be exchanged and discussed among peers. I am certain that this year’s Second Annual Graduate Student Conference organized by *Focus on Literatur*, to be held on October 10-11, 1997, in the newly opened Max Kade German Cultural Center, will be a great success. It is open to the public and I would like to encourage graduate students from all over the country and in German-speaking countries to participate in such conferences.

*Britta Kallin*

“Mauern haben sich überlebt”:  
Die Unmöglichkeit der Identitätsbildung  
durch *Anderere* in Grass’ *Kopfgeburten* oder  
*Die Deutschen sterben aus*<sup>1</sup>

Silke R. Falkner

**I**n *Orientalism* zeigt Edward Said, daß “the development and maintenance of every culture require the existence of another, different and competing *alter ego*. The construction of identity . . . involves the construction of opposites and ‘others’ whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from ‘us’” (Afterword 331-332). Mit dem leitmotivischen Satz “Asien ist anders” (169) setzt Günter Grass’ 1980 erschienenen *Kopfgeburten* eine Konstruktion des *Eigenen* anhand des *Anderen* in Szene. Doch inwiefern gelingt diese Konstruktion? Kann hier durch diesen Mechanismus Identität geschaffen werden? Diese Frage soll im Zentrum der Diskussion des einer Vorlage zu einem Filmmanuskript ähnlich konzipierten Textes stehen.

Ähnlich wie bei dem von Jürgen Rothenberg mit: “Nichts scheint hoffnungsloser als der Versuch, den Inhalt des ‘Tagebuchs’ referieren zu wollen” (113) kommentierte *Aus dem Tagebuch einer Schnecke*, lassen sich die verschiedenen Handlungsebenen von *Kopfgeburten*, das wir auch als Reflexion über einen möglichen Roman bezeichnen können, kaum zusammenfassen. Es geht unter anderem um Dörte und Harm Peters, Lehrerehepaar aus Itzehoe, die sich im Sommer 1980 auf eine Studienreise nach Indien (Bombay und Manori), Thailand (Bangkok) und Indonesien (Java, Bali) begeben. Von der Übernachtung bei einer zwölfköpfigen Slum-Familie in Bombay bis zu Dörtes Annahme naturreligiöser Fruchtbarkeitsriten auf Bali befindet sich im Reisegepäck der beiden sowohl die Sorge um den bevorstehenden Wahlkampf um die Kanzlerschaft in der Bundesrepublik, als auch die Frage nach einer Entscheidung für oder gegen ein Kind. Politische und persönliche Diskussionen verknüpfen