



f o c u s *on*

LITERATUR

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a journal for German-language literature

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LITERATUR

Edited by

Herman J. De Vries, Jr.
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Focus on Literatur welcomes article submissions from 10–20 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. Contributors whose submissions are accepted for publication will need to submit a final version on computer diskette.

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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 of their areas of expertise and interest.

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Focus on Literatur

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From the Editor

Early in 1993, the graduate students of the University of Cincinnati's German Department convened to begin the process of founding a graduate-student journal. Now, a little over a year later, we are pleased and excited to introduce *Focus on Literatur: a journal for German-language literature*. Since this is our premiere issue, it seems appropriate to begin this preface with an explanation of our editorial policy. This scholarly journal is unique in that it is run, edited, and published exclusively by graduate students. It also publishes exclusively student writing—there are less than a handful of such journals in the field of German Studies in the United States. As such, we look forward to the attention and participation of fellow students of German both in our country and abroad.

We feel the appearance of *Focus on Literatur* is most timely. There is now an unprecedented urgency for graduate students to establish publishing records before seeking post-degree employment. The job market in foreign languages has grown increasingly tight over the last several years, and according to the predictions of the Modern Language Association, 1994 will show a further drop in number of advertised positions.⁸ Anyone who is on this job market knows the plight of the ABD or recent PhD with a small or with no publishing record. The days are gone when one obtained a position with only a PhD degree and received tenure with a half-dozen article publications. In some cases, yesterday's publication expectations of a tenure-track faculty member are today's expectations of the PhD graduate. *Focus on Literatur* serves to meet this critical need of students by providing another avenue for them to publish in scholarly journals.

An essential part of our "mission," as it were, is to involve students in the *process* of publishing. We mean this in a very practical sort of way. While a student's course work, reading, and writing prepares him or her for the post-degree responsibilities, when it comes to getting published, each student is really on her or his own. The best way to start publishing is to "just do it"—to quote a popular advertising slogan. We at *Focus on Literatur* are committed to the value of all

phases of this process for the student submitting writing. We believe that the experience for a student whose submission is not accepted is equally as valuable as the student's whose work is accepted—perhaps even more so. We also emphasize the nature of *Focus on Literatur* as a student publication to our article referees. In most cases they respond with evaluations that are *constructively* critical, even if the submission is not at a sufficient level for publication.

As our title indicates, this is a *bilingual* journal dealing with *literary* topics within German Studies. However, we understand "literature" in a broad sense—as this premiere issue well demonstrates. In addition to studies on a wide range of literary genres, we look to involve various approaches to the concept of "text" in our literary discussions. For example, we see film as fair game for "textual" and literary inquiry.

Focus on Literatur is intended to be a journal with a wide format. We consider book reviews an important component of each issue. Unlike most journals in German Studies, we review no secondary literature. The purpose of our book reviews is to introduce current literature (published within the last three years), including novels, essays, poetry, dramas, avant-garde works, etc. For those outside Europe interested in German-language literature, it is often difficult to keep up on latest releases. *Focus on Literatur* aims to provide introductory and informative reviews of many of these works. As part of this process, we hope to involve many of our fellow students in North America and around the world as book reviewers. Our list of reviewers both home and abroad is growing and we welcome anyone interested to contact us and inquire about being added to the list. Interviews with authors will also be a regular feature of this journal. Particularly for the PhD students who interview during their research, *Focus on Literatur* provides an excellent forum for publication of these dialogues. In the coming issues, we also look to introduce a new section to our journal dedicated to discussion of issues concerning (graduate) students and German Studies. See Call for Essays on page 109 for more details.

Now a few words about this, our premiere issue. The literature discussed throughout this issue is generically diverse. Jenifer Cushman, in her article on Botho Strauß's *Der Park* discusses how the play works to reveal failed paradigms in the artistic constructs of European

thought. Cary Henderson deals with the essay as a genre, specifically examining how Nietzsche, working with deductive thought processes, found in the essay an appropriate writing environment; for Robert Musil, however, who proceeded inductively, the essay proved to be a less fruitful genre. Ana Djukic-Cocks illuminates the literary strategies of Egon Erwin Kisch and how he uses them in *Paradies Amerika* to destroy illusions of the "America image" in Germany. María Losada examines the motif of letter exchange in Fontane's *Effi Briest* through the lens of Jakobsonian-literary theory and demonstrates its relationship to the breakdown of communication in the novel. Thomas Ringmayer introduces books by Max Goldt and Eckhard Henscheid on the cutting edge of German cabaret humor and satire. Finally, Barbara Mennel interviews Ruth Klüger on her much discussed book, *weiter leben*, and Kaushalya Krishnamoorthy interviews Hans Christoph Buch on the latest in his series of "Haiti novels."

As demonstrated by this premiere issue—in fact by the very presence of this new journal—students in the field of *Germanistik* are active in scholarship beyond their course and degree requirements. This publication will hopefully increase awareness of this reality amongst students and professors alike. We look forward to the reactions and opinions of you, the reader, to this journal and its contents. We especially hope that you, the student, will get involved with this journal in one or several of the avenues available for participation.

Herman J. De Vries, Jr.
March 1994

Note

* "Latest *Job Information List* Figures Available," *MLA Newsletter* 26.1 (1994): 1.