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Wolfgang Lückel

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## FROM THE EDITOR

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As *Focus on German Studies* completes its thirteenth volume, I am delighted to say that with every issue the journal has succeeded in accomplishing its original goal, namely to provide a forum for graduate students in German Studies to share their scholarly efforts beyond their local institutions. *Focus on German Studies* is a scholarly journal for German language literature and German Studies, which is run and published exclusively by graduate students at the University of Cincinnati. As there is only one other student-run journal in our field in the country, we regard *Focus* as an important asset not only to graduate students, but also to German scholarship as a whole.

Since 1993, when Herman De Vries, J. Gregory Redding, and David Coury founded the journal, each year has seen growth and change. Over the past months, I was pleased that both our subscriptions and our pool of reviewers have expanded and many of our past authors have given us feedback that their publication in *Focus* has provided them with an advantage in job applications. Two former *Focus* editors, today assistant professors, attended the 2005 *Focus* conference, as it celebrated its tenth anniversary. This year's conference entitled "Questioning Authority: Traditions, Transitions and Breaks in German Studies," organized by the staff of *Focus on German Studies* and the graduate students of the Department of German Studies at the University of Cincinnati, was held on October 28-29, 2005. We were honored to have Marlene Streeruwitz to deliver the keynote address, which was followed by eleven graduate student papers exploring authoritarian and anti-authoritarian voices in works from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century up to contemporary debates. Speakers joined us from Ireland, England, and the United States to present a wide variety of papers dealing with literature, language, film, sociology, and history. The audience had a wonderful chance to engage in a fruitful dialogue with students from different universities and academic backgrounds.

This year's call for submissions was met with a very enthusiastic response: we received 20 papers from graduate students from Australia, Canada, Germany, Hungary, the United Kingdom, and the United States. All submissions underwent a rigorous selection process by faculty reviewers and in the end eight papers were accepted. Thank you to our board of referees for their thoughtful and constructive criticism of this

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year's submissions. We are glad to see that publishing in *Focus on German Studies* is becoming more competitive year by year.

The contributions in this volume explore a variety of themes and approaches. The first two articles focus on home and homelessness in contemporary German literature. The journal begins with Giles Harrington's essay, which explores Arnold Stadler's contemporary novel *Ein hinreissender Schrottbändler* to show its function as a satire on post-unification Germany, setting it within the debates on the Nazi past and cultural globalization. Harrington analyzes the concept of the provincial, as the repository of supposed 'authenticity' and the 'homelessness' of the individual in the postmodern world. In the second article, Silke Schade examines physical and social spaces in the city of Berlin in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's novel *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*. Schade shows that the protagonist's active engagement with Berlin creates a unique narrative space, "a hybrid, malleable, and highly personal sense of home" within the experience of migration (22).

The next two articles draw from the vast topic of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in film and literature. Kate Krueger's contribution investigates Wim Wenders' struggle with the legacy of the Third Reich in two of his road films, *Alice in the Cities* and *Kings of the Road*. While presenting the realities of intra-generational differences in the journeys of postwar characters, Krueger considers three ideological paths: going to America, combating the lingering history through protests and terrorism, and dropping out of society. Charlotte Ryland traces Günter Grass' and Hans Magnus Enzensberger's responses to Adorno's infamous statement on the barbarity and impossibility of poetry after Auschwitz. Ryland argues convincingly that responses to the 'dictum' reveal more about the prevailing literary climate than they do about Adorno's original ideas.

Two very different articles deal with topics from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Darren Ilett's article takes the reader to a fin-de-siècle boarding school, whereas Theodore Jackson traces the history of the *Schillerverein* in St. Louis. Ilett's careful reading of Rilke's "Die Turnstunde" sheds light on the complexities of the short story and the relationship between homosexual thematics and the narrative form. Jackson's essay, an important contribution to the field of German-American Studies, utilizes Charles Taylor's notion of the "politics of recognition" to illuminate how and why the German-American community in St. Louis at large fostered organizations such as the *Schillerverein*.

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The final pair of articles enriches this volume with perspectives from the fields of linguistics and paremiology. Viktoria Bagi's article presents techniques used by non-native speakers of German to quote formerly produced speech and focuses on what may accompany a performance of such quotes. Bagi argues that language learners who actively participate in German language conversation with native speakers are pragmatically more successful than learners who flavor conversational turns only with textbook rules. Hrisztalina Hrisztova-Gotthardt's contribution demonstrates the value of teaching proverbs in the classroom. Furthermore, Hrisztova-Gotthardt defines a fascinating phenomenon, the anti-proverb, and by providing a list of exciting examples from graffiti, politics, advertisement, and pop music, she shows why foreign language learners should also become familiarized with anti-proverbs.

This year's impressive book review section was edited by Wolfgang Lückel. The multifaceted reviews have a pronounced international flavor as our reviewers contributed their texts from seven countries from three continents. The 18 books reviewed span 800 years of German literature and culture. Again, we tried to achieve a balance between primary and secondary works, well-known authors and authors off the beaten track. We selected primary works by Eva Menasse, Andreas Maier, Dietmar Dath, Peter Sloterdijk, and Julian Schutting. We present two important work editions of the works of Hartmann von Aue and Hans Keilson, as the editing of work editions is one of the classical chief virtues of *Germanistik*. Furthermore, we selected secondary works on cultural topics like subjectivity in the Middle Ages, the belligerent interplay of French and German culture, artists during the Third Reich, teaching the Holocaust in the 21st century, representations of the eldritch and the demonic in cultural history, and filmic adaptations of literary texts. The selection of secondary works is completed by monographs on Friedrich Schiller's life, the medical history of Theodor Fontane, the artistic interplay of the Mann brothers, and the artistically fruitful relationship of Clemens and Bettine Brentano. Many thanks to the reviewers and to Wolfgang Lückel for his hard work and support, which extended far beyond completion of the book review section.

*Focus on German Studies* also publishes interviews with prominent scholars and German-language writers. In April 2006, Professor Wilfried Barner delivered a lecture "Gruppe 47: The Revival of Literature in Postwar Germany" and Wolfgang Lückel spoke with him about this unique association of writers. My colleague Julia K. Baker interviewed

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Professor Michael A. Meyer and George Brady about the extraordinary story of *Vedem*, the magazine created by adolescent boys in a barrack in the Terezín ghetto, after their lecture in the Max Kade Cultural Center during Holocaust Awareness Week. Nothing could be a more thought-provoking closure of Volume 13 than the third interview with this year's Max Kade Visiting Professor, Dr. Alexander Košenina, on topics such as contemporary challenges in our field, the relationship between journalism and literature, and the merits of philology.

Next year's editorship will be in the hands of Wolfgang Lückel, who is currently planning the upcoming conference. The eleventh annual *Focus* graduate student conference, entitled "Between Future and Fatality: Utopian and Dystopian Ideas in German Literature, Film, and Culture," will be held October 27-28, 2006 in the Max Kade German Cultural Center at the University of Cincinnati. For further information please refer to the advertisement in the Announcements section at the back of the journal. Next year's book review editor will be Todd Heidt, who already dedicated a great deal of time to the book review selection and copy-editing process this year. I wish them both much success with the conference and with Volume 14.

Working as the editor of *Focus on German Studies* has given me a wonderful insight into the world of publishing, scholarship, and networking with graduate students and professors from a variety of universities, as well as authors, editors and many other interesting people. I would like to express my appreciation to the Department of German Studies at the University of Cincinnati for entrusting me with the position of editor. Department Head Sara Friedrichsmeyer, advisor Richard E. Schade, and Katharina Gerstenberger deserve sincere thanks for their continued support of the journal and the annual conference. I would also like to recognize the Graduate Student Governance Association of the University of Cincinnati for their continued financial support. I wish to extend additional thanks to Volume 12's editor, Julia K. Baker, for her helpful suggestions and support. Thank you to my fellow graduate students of the University of Cincinnati German Graduate Student Association for their enthusiastic support of last year's conference and of the journal itself. Finally, Ferenc Traser deserves a special mention for his invaluable technical support and inexhaustible design ideas for the conference documents and for the layout of the journal.

*Laura Traser-Vas*

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