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LITERATUR

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Special thanks to all members of our board of reviewers and advisors. Articles for this issue were refereed by the following professors: Sara Friedrichsmeyer (U of Cincinnati), Katharina Gerstenberger (U of Cincinnati), Jerry Glenn (U of Cincinnati), and Richard Schade (U of Cincinnati).

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From the Editor

Focus on Literatur has entered its seventh year of publication. Since its inception, *Focus*, one of two German graduate student publications in the U.S., has provided a forum for graduate students to publish their work. The year 2000 is an important year for our department. It marks the centenary of the Graduate Program of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Cincinnati, as well as a new beginning for *Focus*. *Focus* will still include book reviews and interviews in each issue – the format will not change. What will then be different? The content and the title of the journal itself.

Herman J. De Vries, J. Gregory Redding and David N. Coury established the journal in 1994 as a “bilingual journal dealing with literary topics within German Studies.” With our next volume, we will widen our focus to include papers on *all* topics within German Studies. As of volume 8, *Focus on Literatur* will be known as *Focus on German Studies*. Previously published bi-annually, the journal will now appear annually. David Prickett will oversee the publication of *Focus on German Studies* 8 (2001), as well as the new **Focus on German Studies Society**. Two points of the Focus on German Studies Society’s mission statement are “to develop a network of graduate students and graduate advisors” and “to cooperate with other institutions and organizations which share its interests and goals.” In following this new path, we believe we will achieve these goals. Consider joining the Focus on German Studies Society. For information, see our website:

<http://ucaswww.mcm.uc.edu/german/focus.htm>

Our annual graduate student conference will continue in full force each October. The sixth annual Graduate Conference will be held on October 12 and 13, 2001. Our 2000 conference was a great success, made possible by the enthusiastic participation of students from the United States, Canada, and Europe. As always, we encourage graduate students to attend our annual conference and to publish papers and book reviews.

In this issue of *Focus on Literatur*, we present four papers, which

represent a wide range of topics. In the first article, Anna-Karin Axelsson discusses Jakob Lind’s story, “Eine Seele aus Holz,” and the representation of the grotesque therein. In her analysis, Axelsson shows the similarities between Lind’s story and the portrayal of the grotesque in Kafka’s works. In the second article, Ina Pfitzner examines the popularity of Martine Monod’s works in the GDR of the 1950s and 1960s. A French novelist, Monod’s realism was appropriate to the ideological climate of the GDR at that time, meeting the requirements for “acceptable” entertainment. Pfitzner examines the relationship between socialism and adventure, politics, and entertainment. In the next article, David Prickett presents the life’s work of Magnus Hirschfeld. This paper was given as a lecture introducing the exhibit “The First Institute for Sexual Science (1919-1933),” which was on loan in 1999 to the University of Cincinnati from the Magnus-Hirschfeld-Gesellschaft e.V. in Berlin. Prickett examines Hirschfeld’s writings as an effort to remove the stigma of homosexuality present in Weimar German society and to gain acceptance of it as a natural condition. Finally, Joanna Kedzierska Stimmel examines *Die Marquise von O...* in the form of two genres: Kleist’s Novella and Rohmer’s film. Stimmel analyzes the “bizarreness” of the novella and the futility of a one-dimensional classification of the work – a futility which is emphasized in Rohmer’s film adaptation. She points out the aspects of “modernity” in each and ultimately the limits of interpretation.

In our book review section we offer the reader a varied selection of books, including the latest drama by Peter Handke, a recent collection of poetry by Volker Braun, an exotic adventure novel by Rafik Schami and Peter Bichsel’s 1999 release, a largely autobiographical tale of two men fated to share the same obscure name but end up with very different destinies. We also include reviews of Anna Maria Jokl’s latest work and two collections of stories: one with its focus on New York, the other, Switzerland.

Finally, in this issue we present two interviews, both held during the April 2000 *Jahrhundertwenden* conference, which celebrated the 100th year of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Cincinnati. The first is with Michael Speier, Guest Professor in Cincinnati from 1999-2000; the second is with Guy Stern, a beloved and integral part of our department’s

history.

With the many changes outlined above, I look forward to a future which, I trust, will offer increased opportunity for interaction and productivity among graduate students in German. I encourage our readers to submit articles, book reviews and interviews which challenge the conventional definitions of *Germanistik*. Once again, thank you for your support of *Focus*, in the past and in the future.

Tonya Hampton

Kafkaeske Elemente in
Jakov Linds Erzählung
Eine Seele aus Holz:

Ein Vergleich in Bezug auf Darstellungen
des Grotesken und der Sexualität

Anna-Karin Axelsson

Einige Jahre nach dem Holocaust wuchs bei manchen, die den Holocaust überlebt hatten, das Bedürfnis, ihre Erfahrungen und Leiden in Wörter umzusetzen. Für die meisten war es eine notwendige Therapie, um mit ihrem Leben weiterzukommen, für viele aber auch ein Bedürfnis, der Welt zu zeigen, was wirklich passiert war, damit es auch nicht vergessen werden konnte. Der Holocaust als literarisches Motiv war sehr umstritten. Man fragte sich, ob es für Kunst und Literatur angebracht oder überhaupt möglich sei, sich mit dieser barbarischen Vergewaltigung der Menschlichkeit zu befassen. Versuche zur Darstellung des Nicht-Darstellbaren wurden unter anderem von Adorno abgelehnt, der 1949 notierte, dass es barbarisch sei, nach Auschwitz Gedichte zu schreiben. Siebzehn Jahre später wurde jedoch diese Aussage von Adorno selbst revidiert: "Das perennierende Leiden hat soviel Recht auf Ausdruck wie der Gemarterte zu brüllen; darum mag falsch gewesen sein, nach Auschwitz ließe kein Gedicht mehr sich schreiben" (Adorno, 353).

Peter Stenberg weist darauf hin, dass die ersten literarischen Auseinandersetzungen mit dem Holocaust vor allem die Tendenz zeigten, die unbegreifliche Brutalität auf eine so realistische Weise wie möglich darzustellen. Die Autoren fühlten die Notwendigkeit, den Holocaust als ein beinahe heiliges Thema zu behandeln, "not to be violated lightly by such potentially blasphemous literary devices as satire, irony, travesty, or black humor, which had often been used in fictional accounts of destructive events in Jewish history" (Stenberg, 642).