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Susanne Lenné  
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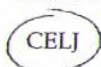
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## From the Editor

In volume 8 of *Focus on German Studies* the editor-in-chief, David Prickett, ascertained that “the traditional boundaries that once separated the disciplines continue to dissolve.” No words better reflect the multi-faceted nature of this latest volume. Contributors invite new and exciting perspectives on “things German” based on their individual expertise in a wide range of disciplines including architecture and cultural studies, history and philosophy, computer technology, film, and literature. The increasing number of articles taking interdisciplinary approaches seems to attest to a growing need of graduate students to share ideas and interact with young scholars from other fields on the common grounds of German Studies. Once again, *Focus* is pleased to offer the forum for such scholarly exchange.

As editor-in-chief, one of the most difficult decision has been upon the acceptance and rejection of a contribution that meets our requirement of solid and original scholarship. Oftentimes, the subject and method of examination reflects the school of thought the author has been trained in. It is no news that, at times, form and content of academic investigations differ greatly between the scholarship generated in Germany and the United States. Is it, then, as Sander Gilman advocates in his interview (see page 253), merely the new and “fashionable” that deserves publication? Have more traditional topics and investigative methods lost their appeal? As the selection of papers in this volume shows, *Focus on German Studies* intends to give voice to a variety of approaches, examining the well-established as well as the cutting edge.

The international scope of this journal has by now become an integral part of it. Submissions have reached us from Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. We are especially glad to note that the interest in our publication not only continues to grow among graduate students. Our board of reviewers has expanded enormously in terms of numbers and geographical outreach. Our sincere gratitude goes out to all scholars who have volunteered their time and expertise and who have offered valuable and constructive criticism.

Papers in this volume are grouped thematically, beginning with

Kay Baronowski whom the events of September 11, 2001 led to a new reading of Ernst Jünger's *Das abenteuerliche Herz* (1929). His study grounds this prose work in a long tradition of terrorism motivated by a combination of a feeling of disquiet with modernity and a reactionary claim for ultimate truth. In the article that follows, Stefanie Hofer demonstrates how the ways in which Germany's Nazi past is presented in films such as *Europa, Europa* and *Aimee and Jaguar* is decisive for their very success. On the basis of specific characteristics of the NS-past portrayal, Hofer draws haunting conclusions for the current German self-perception. Eleanor Mosemann also addresses Germany's constructed self-image and (in)ability to confront the past. Through an architectural investigation of the evolution of what became known as Jeanne Claude and Christo's *Wrapped Reichstag*, she reveals why Germans were ultimately able to accept the wrapping of their historically burdened seat of government. A different past, that of the GDR, is brought to the foreground by Anna Saunders. She suggests that, similar to architectural monuments, ceremonies such as the *Jugendweihe* can forge or reinforce identity. However, Saunders' study highlights the importance of a variety of factors not necessarily under government control as she points out quite an ironic twist in the success of identity formation endeavors in Eastern Germany before and after the fall of the wall.

According to Thomas Schneider, Thomas Mann's *Schwere Stunde* exhibits a poetic identification of the author with his predecessor Friedrich Schiller. He further examines the role of the other great poet of the time, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, for Mann's artistic development and self-perception. With his study of Schiller's absolute ethic, Daniel Balestrini takes part in the ongoing debate about aesthetic beauty as subject of scholarly investigation. A text-based interpretation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* honors the author's claim of artistic autonomy, Balestrini argues, as he advocates the "return of beauty" as a legitimate subject of analysis and interpretation. The dichotomy of "Schein" and "Sein", illusion and reality, is the target of Sabine Sieverns study of Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's novella *Wieder die Alte*, in which she foregrounds identity markers of class and gender as decisive factors for Claire's positioning between illusion and reality.

The first of three papers taking philosophical approaches, Matthew Binney's article traces the origins of one of the primary concerns in postmodernist theory, the concepts of "Self" and "Other", back to two eighteenth century philosophers: the third Earl of Shaftesbury and Gottfried

Wilhelm Leibnitz. Through an examination of numerous letters and other primary sources, Katja Brunkhorst investigates the ambiguous attitude of the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, towards the poetic and the poet Rainer Maria Rilke himself. Her article highlights on one hand the common grounds of psychoanalysis and poetry and on the other, how each elucidates, evades, and endangers the other. David Wachter continues the philosophical discourse as he concerns himself with the ambivalence of Nietzsche's definition and evolution of the *décadence* as a social and aesthetic phenomenon.

By giving evidence to Gahmuret's courtly manners, Anja Becker adds significantly to the existing scholarship on Wolfram's *Parzival*, which has hitherto limited the figure of Parzival's father to a hero solely motivated by battle and *minne*. The article by Jason Williamson partakes in the recent debate on the attitude of Pope Pius XII towards the Jewish people during the Holocaust and draws disquieting conclusions for the Pope's possible role in Hitler's Final Solution. Finally, Michael Shaughnessy's analysis of electronic research and reference tools is a long-due review of available sources. He not only identifies the most valuable electronic research tools for all areas of German Studies, but also attests to their validity if carefully chosen and properly employed.

The book reviews in this issue reflect the latest works by German-language authors and scholars in the field of German. As one might expect from the broadened scope of this journal, the number of secondary works reviewed (Karin Bauer, Elke P. Frederiksen and Martha Kaarberg Wallach, Shareen Brysac, and Roy Jerome) has increased to nearly one third. The remaining two thirds include novels (Urs Faes, Christoph Hein, Andreas Maier, Sarah Paris, and Marlene Streeruwitz), stories (Jenny Erpenbeck, Patricia Görg, Jo Lendle, and Maïke Wenzel), poetry (Wolfgang Bächler), and one essay (W.G. Sebald). This ongoing stronghold of prose seems to suggest that drama continues to have only a small place in early twenty-first century German literature.

Our interview section features conversations with two prominent scholars of German literature and culture, as well as with a poet and an author from Germany. Dr. Leslie A. Adelson calls for analytical alternatives when discussing issues of identity, belonging and migrant literature. Adelson and Dr. Sander Gilman concern themselves with current trends in the field of German Studies and with ways in which academic departments can respond to new challenges. Gilman furthermore speaks on the

fashion of scholarship and the state of current German literature. In her conversation with Dorothea Grünzweig, Emily Jeremiah poses questions about notions of body and embodiment in the poet's works. Grünzweig also discusses the issues of consciousness and control during the process of poetic writing. Finally, the author Mario Wirz talks about different subjectivities of author and readers, "Identitätsliteratur" and the last dinosaur.

In closing, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Cincinnati for the continued moral and administrative support of this journal and for entrusting me with the responsibilities of editor. I also thank my fellow students, in particular Susanne Buckesfeld and David Prickett, who have generously given advice and assistance. It is my pleasure to introduce the editor-in-chief and book review editor of volume 10, Silke Schade and Aine Zimmermann, whom I wish much success. I would like to encourage the graduate students among our readers to participate in this scholarly exchange through presenting work in writing or at our next annual conference in October 2003 (please see our web site for details).

*Susanne Lenné*