



FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AND EDITOR

This will be the last *Goethe News and Notes* that I edit as Executive Secretary. I have enjoyed serving our organization over the last three years by collecting and disseminating important information for the newsletter. Now that we have become electronically connected under the management of our new Web-Master, I look forward to the ongoing circulation of news and opinions to the members.

I am hoping to see some of you in New Orleans. As always, I have included details about our MLA sessions, as well as the ASECS panel this Spring in Colorado. Anyone who might want to organize an MLA session for next year's meeting should contact me—or better yet—see me in December.

Clark S. Muenzer
University of Pittsburgh

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

One of the pleasures of being president is to represent the GSNA abroad. Since acceding to the top job of our little society in January of this fateful year, I have had the opportunity to visit two smaller Goethe societies: that of New Zealand (for Auckland and Wellington)

and one in Switzerland. Our Swiss counterpart is a relatively recent addition to the international family of worldwide Goethe societies. Founded in 1998, the Swiss society's current president is Henriette Herwig.

The *Schweizerische Goethe-Gesellschaft* held its most recent annual meeting at the University of St. Gallen. Spread over a day and a half, the symposium's general topic was "Goethes (*schweizerische*) Landschaften—Produktives Begegnen." Three of the nine presentations were by writers of fiction (Adolf Muschg, Ulrike Längle, Alois Brandstetter); all three provided insightful new perspectives on our author.

It was gratifying to see that, thanks largely to our *Goethe Yearbook*, *Goethe Freunde* as far apart as New Zealand and Switzerland seemed to be quite aware of the existence of the GSNA. In fact, most of those with whom I spoke expressed admiration and even a touch of envy of for our society and its successes—flattering perceptions from abroad of what we are trying to accomplish, which I am pleased to share with the membership back home.

I am sure that some of you have yourselves posed the question that has been on my mind for the last weeks: Are "the events of September 11," to use the current euphemism, in any way going to affect our perception of Goethe and of our work as a scholarly society? While it is clearly too early to tell, it nonetheless seems to me that the current soul-searching mode of the American public might well provide an excellent opportunity to turn the spotlight on an aspect of Goethe's work that is seriously underexposed in the English-speaking world: his pioneering intercultural project of, as one might wish to put it, reconciling the Western world with the world of Islam

as exposed in *Der west-östliche Divan* and in his indispensable *Noten und Abhandlungen zum besseren Verständnis des west-östlichen Divan*. Does the current crisis in the relationship between the West and the East, in Goethe's sense, shed any new light on the intercultural significance of Goethe's work? Put differently: Do the "events of September 11" call out for new readings of Goethe's memorable project of intercultural dialogue? This is merely one of the questions that members of the GSNA might wish to ponder in this end-of-the-year period of reflection.

I hope that the present anxieties about air travel will not have too negative an effect on attendance at the upcoming MLA convention in New Orleans. The GSNA Business Meeting is scheduled for December 28, 7:15 pm and will feature what promises to be an important and timely lecture by Jill Kowalik (UCLA) on "Trauma and Memory in Goethe's Novels." I look forward to seeing many of you in New Orleans.

Hans Rudolf Vaget
Smith College

FROM THE YEARBOOK EDITOR

Volume XI is complete and being prepared for Camden Hill. Publication is expected in September, 2002. Volume XI includes essays on *Faust* by Stuart Atkins and Geza von Molnar, a special section on the self in *Goethezeit* co-edited with Fritz Breithaupt, and articles on film adaptations of *Faust*, the poet Wilhelm Müller, Grillparzer, and a musical

"Göte-Abend" by the GDR *Liedertheater* group Karls Enkel. This volume also includes for the first time a short story entitled "Mignon" by Irmgard Hunt.

Volume XII will be dedicated to Thomas P. Saine, founder and longtime editor of the *Goethe Yearbook*. Any members of the GSNA who would like to contribute to this volume may contact the editor. All submissions will undergo the normal review process. Deadline for submissions is May 31, 2001, although later submissions may also be considered in consultation with the editor.

Simon Richter
The University of Pennsylvania

FROM THE BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

Please send books for review and suggestions for books for review to:

Professor Martha B. Helfer
Department of Languages and Literature
255 S. Central Campus Dr., Room 1400
University of Utah
Salt Lake City, UT 84112

CALL FOR PAPERS

**First Annual Bloomington
Eighteenth-Century
Studies Workshop**

Indiana University
May 21-26, 2002

**Signs of the Self in the
Eighteenth-Century**

Building on Indiana University's emerging strength in eighteenth-century

studies, we are pleased to announce the first annual Bloomington Eighteenth-Century Studies Workshop.

The workshop will be an inter-disciplinary event, with 25-35 scholars presenting, discussing, and debating their work in a congenial setting over the course of several days. Accommodations and most meals and travel expenses for participants will be covered by the workshop.

The topic for the inaugural workshop is "Signs of the Self." The many possible topics include: aspects of self or interiority in "ego documents" such as autobiographies, diaries and letters; philosophical debates over personal identity; changing modes of devotional practices and self-formation; eighteenth-century psychology; affect and emotions; dress and self-fashioning; childhood and education in relation to notions of self; moral philosophy and notions of conscience; the relationship between self and selfishness; selfhood and portraiture; the European self in world encounters; or how some or all of the above are questions *mal posées*.

Applications for the workshop are encouraged from scholars at all stages of their careers and from all disciplines. Applications are due December 4, 2001 and should include a CV as well as a two-page proposal. Please direct your application or any questions to one of the following organizers:

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GSNA AT ASECS (April, 2002) Colorado Springs

From Alchemy to Ecology: Reevaluating the Goethean Idea of Nature

Moderator: John B. Lyon
University of Pittsburgh
E-mail: jblyon@pitt.edu

"The Ethics of Genetic Engineering and Goethe's Homunculus," Ulrike Zeuch (Herzog August Bibliothek)

"'Naturally Goethe!' A Fragment in the Journal of Tierfurt," Angela Borchert (University of Western Ontario)

"Protean Nature and Goethean Philosophy," Astride Orle Tantillo (University of Illinois at Chicago)

GSNA AT THE MLA

Thursday, 27 December
5:15-6:30 p.m. (Exhibit 4, Marriott)

Goethe and Truthfulness
Moderator: **Karin Pagel Meiners**
University of Kansas

"The Mind's Eye in Goethe's *Italienische Reise*" (Martina Kolb, Yale University)

"True Lies: Making Sense of the Witch's Riddle in Goethe's *Faust*" (Karin Barton, Waterloo, Ontario)

"Truth Transposed" (Robert Ellis Dye, Macalester College)

Friday, 28 December
7:15-8:30 p.m. (Exhibit 7, Marriott)

Business Meeting of the GSNA
Presiding: **Hans Vaget**
Smith College

"Trauma and Memory in Goethe's Novels"
(Jill Anne Kowalik, University of California, Los Angeles)

REPORT ON THE GSNA AT THE GSA

**Life into Literature,
Literature into Life**

Moderator: **John A. McCarthy**
Vanderbilt

**Rousseau's Autobiography:
Goethe's Life**

Jane K. Brown, University of Washington

The talk is part of a larger attempt to understand how the structural similarities connecting *Werther* and *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* derive from Goethe's ambivalent and extended confrontation with Rousseau's epistolary novel *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (1761); this part addresses what drove Goethe back to Rousseau in 1808, so many years after *Werther* and after Rousseau's death in 1778, by locating these novels of love in the context of Goethe's own love life and of his reading of Rousseau's autobiography. It is difficult to distinguish influence from analogy because of the numerous similarities between Goethe's and Rousseau's careers, but episodes based on Rousseau in *Dichtung und*

Wahrheit reveal Goethe's deep reservations about Rousseau's repeated attempts to exculpate himself by appealing to the purity of his intentions. Goethe's arrival at this position is rooted in his personal experiences of the 1780s and 1790s. His relationship with Charlotte von Stein is stylized in terms of Rousseau's Julie and his own Werther. The parallels between this affair and Rousseau's affair with Mme. de Warens, described in the *Confessions*, must have opened Goethe's eyes to the moral problems (incest, adultery) underlying this relationship: he revised *Werther* and abandoned Charlotte within a year of one another. The model for his common-law marriage with Christiane Vulpius was Rousseau's relationship with his long-term mistress Thérèse Levasseur, but Goethe "corrected" Rousseau's biography by embracing the responsibility of children, whereas Rousseau had notoriously avoided it. Shortly after his official marriage to Christiane, Goethe wrote *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, which makes a child the problematic focus of responsibility in marriage and thereby returns the response to Rousseau from lived biography to literature.

Self-Blame in the Confessions of Young Goethe

Ellis Dye, Macalester College

This paper notices in the young Goethe's letters unconvincing remorse about the abandonment of Friederike Brion: maybe she would find consolation in the fact that Weislingen gets poi-

soned and insouciance that Charlotte Buff got away. Yet in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* Goethe claims that *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* is confessional and that Weislingen and Clavigo reflect his guilt toward Friederike. Fernando in *Stella*, Faust and, possibly, the Knab' of "Heidenröslein" might be added to the confessional rogues gallery, evidenced in the last instance not only by the eponymous poem, but in Goethe's joke to Friederike's father about the pesky Rhine mosquitoes, whose bites Friedenthal interprets as conscience pangs.

Surveying Goethe's skepticism about the possibility of *Selbsterkenntnis*, as well as Romantic doubts about reflexive models of self-consciousness, this paper questions the possibility of unrefracted self-representation in literature and the veracity of *bekennnishaft* *Literatur* as such. It notes Heine's suspicion that the figure *confessio* or *paromologia* informs Rousseau's *Confessions* and affirms his point that confessional writing is always deceptive and often self-deceptive, except that self-deception may be impossible too.

As a Goethe effigy, Fernando is a contrite confessor in his own right, excused by Cezilie on the ground that passionate men deceive themselves in deceiving women. Self-deception is a theme in *Stella* and suggests an answer to the question whether Goethe, in creating guilty self-portraits, was kidding either himself or the reader about the depth of his remorse. Since he understood that life is always falsified in literature, the former possibility is to be ruled out. Goethe can be adjudged innocent of the latter charge as well. He is ironic and indirect, but expects us to discern *Wahrheit* through the veil of *Dichtung* and, as in the *Divan* poem "Wink," to make contact with the pair of

mischievous eyes behind the "lieblicher Flor" of a fan, or a confessional poem or play.

'To Write is to Be is to Write': Goethe, Life, and Literature

Deirdre Vincent, University of Toronto

Reading, writing, and being read were all vital elements in Goethe's life, vital above all in determining his creative output. What his contemporaries misunderstood was the insecurity at the root of much that he produced in his later years, seeing their own bafflement as evidence of a willful arrogance and Titanism on his part. The paper sought to offer a tentative corrective by exploring writing as being and vice versa throughout Goethe's life and works.

Central to how he read, why he wrote, and how he wished others to relate to his works was the existential importance of literature for him as *the* means of access to life and the world. Reading was a voyage of self-validation, writing one of self-creation. With each work that he wrote, whether scientific or literary, he sought to create a possible self, a possible world in which to live in harmony with those around him, but for his projections to achieve true validity he needed the endorsement of his readers. Denied the latter, he took to creating it for himself through his whole autobiographical enterprise. The lure of such writing progressively overwhelmed him, however, as seen by the *Campagne in Frankreich*, that most extreme of his harmonious fictionalizations of un-palatable reality. If ever there was a consummate example of the person for whom life and literature were one, then Goethe was surely that person.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Robert D. Tobin on the recent publication of his book:

*Doctor's Orders:
Goethe and Enlightenment Medicine*

by Bucknell University Press.

FROM THE WEBMASTER

Our new website will be alive by the end of the year. You will be able to find it at:

<http://www.goethesociety.org>

In addition to the US mails, we will also soon be distributing the Newsletter in electronic form. Please, therefore, send your e-mail addresses to:

[buhenke@davidson.edu](mailto:buhenke@ davidson.edu)

Burkhard Henke
Davidson

NECROLOGY

Geza von Molnar, Professor of German at Northwestern University, where he had been teaching since 1963, died Friday, July 27, from complications related to a heart attack. He was 69.

Von Molnar was the author of three books: *Novalis' Fichte Studies* (1970), *Romantic Vision, Ethical Contest: Novalis and Artistic Autonomy* (1987), and *Goethes Kantstudien* (1994). His research sought to link the ethical dimensions of Enlightenment thought with the aesthetic vision of Romantic Idealism. He was perhaps one of the few scholars

to understand the moral imperative that conditioned the spirit of poesy: "Poetic receptivity and practice are not only the communicative exercise of the self's freedom but also the highest form of recognizing the transcendental horizon of communality within which object and self derive their respective conceptolinguistic and moral validity," von Molnar wrote of Novalis in 1974. The ethical considerations of his work also led von Molnar to investigate the moral vacuum that structured Germany's tragic relationship with European Jewry.

Whatever doubts one had about Kant's notion of freedom were suspended in his presence. Everything he did seemed to issue from an ethical conviction so generous in its regard for family, friends, students, and colleagues that he came to embody the very spirit of poesy that was the subject of his writing.

Von Molnar was born in Leipzig, Germany, in 1932 to a Jewish mother and a Hungarian-Catholic father. Because of Hitler's rise to power, he was never told of his Jewish origins. He left Germany for the United States in 1947 and earned his doctorate from Stanford University in 1966.

He is survived by his wife of forty-three years, Barbara, two daughters, Karen and Anina, a brother Stephen, and a granddaughter.

Richard Block
University of Colorado

WWW SITES

GSNA

<http://www.goethesociety.org>

GOETHE YEARBOOK

<http://www.hnet.uci.edu/tpsaine/gyb.html>

DUES

Members who have not yet paid their 2001 dues are gently reminded to send them to Martha Helfer. The GYB is sent only once this obligation is met. Please see the schedule below. Dues are payable in each calendar year.

active member	\$20
payment in D-marks	\$50
senior member	\$30
patron	\$100
emeritus	\$10
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institution	\$30

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