



[www.goethesociety.org](http://www.goethesociety.org)

## GOETHE NEWS AND NOTES

XXVIII.2, Fall 2008

Burkhard Henke, Editor  
Davidson College

### ***FROM THE EDITOR***

Back in May, I was pleased to announce on the listserv that Astrida Tantillo (University of Illinois at Chicago) had been elected Vice President of the Goethe Society. Congratulations again! Astrida's term began immediately and will last until December 31, 2009, at which time she will accede to the presidency for a three-year term. Thanks to all who cast their vote, and a special thank you to Liliane Weissberg as well as the nominating committee, comprised of Elisabeth Krimmer, Horst Lange, and Andrew Piper.

There is good reason why this edition of the *Goethe News and Notes* appears a little earlier in the fall than usual. Aside from the customary compilation of columns and announcements, you will find in it the registration form for our GSNA Conference, *Goethe and the Postclassical*, to be held in Pittsburgh, November 14-16, 2008. Please fill it out, if you have not done so already (you may submit it by postal mail or electronically), and make your travel arrangements soon. The conference promises to be an amazing event and one of the highlights of Simon Richter's presidency. If you are coming, and would like to chair one of the panels (see

[www.goethesociety.org/conference](http://www.goethesociety.org/conference) for a list of open panels), just send me an email.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Pittsburgh.

Burkhard Henke  
Davidson College

\*\*\*

### ***FROM THE PRESIDENT***

The other day I introduced my two sons, Toby (8) and Sam (6), to *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. It all started because of Toby's obsession with birds. On a whim, I showed the boys the dead parrot routine on YouTube. One thing led to another and before long they had seen any number of my favorite scenes and extracted a promise that they could see *Holy Grail* (in which speculation on the weight and relative strength of various swallow species plays a recurring role). You may remember that near the end of the movie, Sir Arthur and his knights must answer three questions before crossing the bridge of death. Sir Lancelot is first and readily answers questions about his name, quest and

favorite color. The cowardly Sir Robin is relieved and volunteers to go next, expecting similarly easy questions. After two lobs, the keeper of the bridge suddenly asks him, “What was the capital city of Assyria?” We barely hear Sir Robin’s plaintive “That’s not fair” as he tumbles into the abyss.

At this point you must be wondering why I am telling you this, and what in the world does this have to do with Goethe? Well, as the keeper of the bridge asked the question of Sir Robin, my eight-year-old Toby said, “That’s easy. It’s Nineveh.” I was completely taken aback. *My young son would have made it across the bridge of death.* But where does his knowledge come from? Not from me, I can assure you, at least not with respect to Assyrian history. Probably the best answer I can offer is that he’s home-schooled. And that’s where Goethe comes in. Because Goethe, after all, was home-schooled too.

Home-schooling has long seemed the preserve of families of the Christian right, but when you think about it, it’s an academic’s fantasy, especially if you happen to be an eighteenth-centuryist or, better yet, a Goethe scholar. The curricular paths of Toby and Sam are determined in large measure by their burning interests and those interests arise from exposure to a rich cultural and natural environment. The preferred mode of appropriation (*Aneignung*) is fabulation. Adepts in numerous mythologies (Greek, Roman, Norse, Egyptian, Mayan, and, as they like to say, Christian), they make all of it their own through the enactment of sweeping imaginative epics of encounter, adventure, and conquest, sometimes in

tragic modes, but as often in the spirit of Monty Python. Props are supplied by Playmobil and Schleich—(German) manufacturers of historically accurate toys—and simple building blocks. Postmodern irony and media awareness are built in: they are self-conscious about their use of narrative conventions (flashbacks, colliding narrative arcs, and *deus ex machina*), readily “press the pause button” for a restroom break or other necessary interruption, and delight in historical and stylistic incongruities. Archaeological and anthropological museums, documentaries, the internet, art, literature and travel supply their restless minds with ever more *Stoff*. This is *Spieltrieb* pure and it’s a beautiful thing.

My sons’ eager receptivity to all things in natural and cultural history has set me thinking. This fall semester I’m going to be teaching a course on Jesus and cinema. One of the films we’ll discuss is *Jesus Camp*, a harrowing documentary about a type of Christian indoctrination. The kids in this film also achieve levels of specialized knowledge out of all proportion to their age. Any one of them could tell you that Nineveh was the evil city to which the Lord sent Jonah. The explicit goal of the organizers of “Jesus Camp” is to create “soldiers for Christ.” Insofar as the traumas these children undergo easily match those of US soldiers in Iraq (not to mention those of Iraqis), the designation is not far off the mark. They are being prepared for battle: the culture wars, certainly, but also the apocalyptic battles of their communal fantasies (just think of the popular Left Behind series of novels and films). Given the present situation, is there perhaps a place for Goethe Camp?

I don't mean to come off as a latter-day Rudolf Steiner. I also don't want to substitute Goethe for Jesus. The two names are about as congruent as creation and evolution, false alternatives joined by the pressure of peculiar times. But it does occur to me that something like Goethe Camp (by some other name, if necessary) is what we need more than anything else. At Camp Goethe, children collaboratively construct large contexts of historical, cultural and scientific information. At Camp Goethe, children play out and enact the stories of numerous civilizations. At Camp Goethe, children become accomplished and aware storytellers in multiple media. These are modes of living, experiencing, and knowing that mean everything to us. I think they're worth sharing.

Of course, not everyone can or wants to home-school. But there are opportunities for all of us. You may be able to start up your version of Goethe Camp at a local public library—talk to the children's librarian. Or you can tap into a local home-schooling network—they're exceptionally well organized. Just google the name of your state and the word home-schooling and you'll have what you need. Or perhaps it can be done through a local public or private school. Count on the cachet of your university or college affiliation to make you an immediately attractive organizer and proponent of the principles of Camp Goethe. And if you have already initiated something along these lines (I don't doubt this for a minute), please let me know. The DAAD annually funds something that I started a few years ago, officially known as the Graduate School Experience, affectionately called German Nerd Camp, designed to lure rising college seniors into our ranks. If

you hear rumors of my having applied for funding to get a Goethe Camp off the ground, don't be surprised. Maybe you'll want to be a camp counselor!

---

I would most particularly like to urge all of you planning to attend this year's MLA in San Francisco to book your flight in such a way that you can come to the Goethe Society business meeting on Saturday, December 27 at 5:15. The MLA forces affiliate associations to hold business meetings either at the beginning or conclusion of the conference and attendance is notoriously low. But it's San Francisco, a Saturday, the time change works with you, you're coming anyway ... We'll be presenting the Gloria Flaherty Prize and the ever provocative Arnd Bohm will deliver the presidential address. Please come!

Simon Richter  
University of Pennsylvania

\*\*\*

### ***FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT***

The response to the upcoming Goethe Society conference has been phenomenal, and I would like to thank the planning committee (comprising Simon Richter, Clark Muenzer, and Karin Schutjer) for its efforts on behalf of the Society. The committee has been planning this conference for a long time, and its success (over 20 panels and a dissertation workshop) is due to the committee's careful planning and hard work. Society members were solicited about suggestions for a conference, and

many of these suggestions were then incorporated into the event. Special thanks also go to Burkhard Henke for his work in putting together such a fantastic conference website! We hope that even if you are not giving a paper we will see you at the conference. It promises to be very lively and engaging.

Society membership has increased over the last couple of years in large part because of a growth in graduate student members. This is a trend we would like to continue. Please encourage your students to join the Society. Let me know if you would like to receive extra newsletters or application materials to hand out to your students, and please inform them of the Society's website and activities. For their \$10 annual membership fee, they will receive the newsletters and Yearbook and be eligible for the Gloria Flaherty Prize. This year we awarded 6 prizes (\$250 each) to enable graduate students to travel to the conference and take part in the dissertation workshop.

Astrida Tantillo  
University of Illinois, Chicago

\*\*\*

**FROM THE  
YEARBOOK EDITOR**

Members in good standing should have received Volume 15 of the *Goethe Yearbook* earlier this year. Volume 16 is scheduled for an early 2009 publication. It presents innovative interpretations by young scholars of Goethe's most prominent works. A special section on twentieth-century theory, co-edited by Angus Nicholls, demonstrates the poet's

importance within contemporary debates, such as post-colonial criticism and Heideggerian phenomenology. The volume includes Judith Ryan's masterful address to the Goethe Society at the MLA Convention, as well as essays written by several international scholars that take stock of Goethe criticism over the last decades. The *Yearbook* welcomes manuscripts on German culture history and literature in the decades around 1800, hence we present a surprising interpretation about Schiller's representation of subjectivity and military strategy, as well as feminist archival history of the Hamburg actress, Charlotte Ackermann.

The *Yearbook* continues to accept manuscript submissions for the next issue, Volume 17. We welcome articles on a wide range of topics relevant to a scholarly understanding of the Goethezeit. Please send article submissions to the editor, Daniel Purdy, and all book review requests to Catriona MacLeod. The current issue of the *Goethe Yearbook* (Volume 15) is now available online through Project Muse, provided your library subscribes to it.

For all article submissions, please refer to the style sheet on our web site.

Daniel Purdy  
Pennsylvania State University

\*\*\*

**FROM THE  
BOOK REVIEW EDITOR**

As always, I encourage you to let me know if there are particular areas of

research that you are interested in reviewing for the *Goethe Yearbook*. Please send books for review and suggestions for books for review to:

**Professor Catriona MacLeod**  
Department of Germanic Languages  
and Literatures  
745 Williams Hall  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305  
Telephone: (215) 898-7334  
Fax: (215) 573-7794  
Email: [cmacleod@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:cmacleod@sas.upenn.edu)

\*\*\*

### ***FROM THE BOOK SERIES EDITOR***

I am very excited to announce that the first book in our series, Peter J. Schwartz's *After Jena: Goethe's Elective Affinities and the End of the Old Regime*, is in the copy-editing stage. We will let you know as soon as we have a publication date. Over the last several months, the editorial board has received several excellent book proposals, and it is awaiting the completed manuscripts to send out for review. Given the strength of these proposals, we anticipate that we will be publishing more books in the series over the next year. The editorial board hopes that if you are working on a book, you will consider our series. Please contact any member of the board (listed at [www.goethesociety.org](http://www.goethesociety.org)) if you have any questions.

Astrida Tantillo  
University of Illinois, Chicago

\*\*\*

## ***UPCOMING MEETINGS***

### **Special GSNA Session at GSA 2008**

Organized and chaired by Stefani Engelstein, University of Missouri

#### **Structure and Meaning in the Age of Goethe (I)**

Moderator: Daniel Purdy Penn State University

Commentator: Stefani Engelstein University of Missouri

1. "From Structure to Process," Frederick Amrine, University of Michigan
2. "Goethe's Object Thinking, or the Overgrowth of Nomenclature," Chad Wellmon, University of Virginia
3. "A Foundation for Thought in a Fragment: Reconsidering Goethe on Nature," Angela Borchert, University of Western Ontario
4. "The Structure of the Self: Goethe's Literary Challenge to Schiller's Philosophical Model of Identity Formation," Jason Wilby, University of California, Irvine

#### **Structure and Meaning in the Age of Goethe (II)**

Moderator: Angela Borchert University of Western Ontario

Commentator: Chad Wellmon University of Virginia

1. "The Family Curse: Structure and Fate," Stefani Engelstein, University of Missouri

2. "Hegel's Architectural Transcendence," Daniel Purdy, Pennsylvania State University

3. "The Dome of the Mind," Susan Bernstein, Brown University

### **Annual Business Meeting and Presidential Address at the MLA 2008 in San Francisco**

*Saturday, 27 December, 5:15–6:30 p.m., San Francisco Marriott*

#### **49. Goethe and Stoicism**

*Presiding:* Astrida Orle Tantillo, University of Illinois, Chicago

1. "President's Report and Business Meeting," Patricia Anne Simpson, Montana State University, Bozeman

2. "Goethe's Reception of Stoicism: Elective Affinity," Arnd Bohm, Carleton University

#### **Special GSNA Session at the MLA 2008**

*Sunday, 28 December, 7:15–8:30 p.m., San Francisco Marriott*

#### **393. The Impropriety of Faust: Marking the Two Hundredth Anniversary of Goethe's Play**

*Presiding:* Simon Richter, University of Pennsylvania

1. "A Nonspecialist's Report on the Matter of Faust," Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Columbia University

2. "The Secular Sacred: Goethe and Enlightenment," Michael Holquist, Yale University

3. "Faust the Liberator," Jane K. Brown, University of Washington, Seattle

---

NB: If you are interested in organizing a panel sponsored by the Goethe Society at any of the annual (incl. regional) meetings of ASECS, GSA, or MLA, please contact our Executive Secretary.

**Professor Patricia Anne Simpson**  
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures  
Montana State University  
P.O. Box 172980  
Bozeman, Montana 59717-2980  
Telephone: (406) 994-6443  
Email: [psimpson@montana.edu](mailto:psimpson@montana.edu)

#### **Deadlines for submission of panel proposals**

2009 GSA, 1 December 2008  
2010 ASECS, 15 March 2009  
2010 MLA, 15 November 2009

\*\*\*

#### ***FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER***

In an ongoing effort to increase the strength of the society, the GSNA is looking for new members. We ask for your assistance in this endeavor. If you

know of any scholars or other interested parties who are interested in the Age of Goethe, but are not yet members, would you please encourage them to join the society? We are particularly interested in recruiting younger scholars—current and recent graduate students—to ensure the society’s future for decades to come. Joining is simple—go to [www.goethesociety.org](http://www.goethesociety.org) and click on the link to “Membership.” Thanks for your support in this endeavor.

John Lyon  
University of Pittsburgh

\*\*\*

## DUES

*If you have not done so already, please send your 2008 dues to the Secretary-Treasurer, John Lyon, or go to [www.goethesociety.org](http://www.goethesociety.org) and use PayPal (a modest fee will apply). Dues are payable in each calendar year, see the schedule below. The GYB is sent only once this obligation is met.*

<b>junior member</b> (non-tenured faculty)	\$25
<b>senior member</b> (tenured faculty)	\$35
<b>patron</b> (please consider becoming a patron)	\$100
<b>emeritus</b>	\$10
<b>student</b>	\$10
<b>institution</b>	\$40

\*\*\*

## GSNA OFFICERS

### President

**Professor Simon Richter**  
Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, 745 Williams Hall  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305  
Telephone: (215) 898-7332  
Email: [srichter@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:srichter@sas.upenn.edu)

### Vice President

**Professor Astrida Tantillo**  
Dept. of Germanic Studies (MC 189)  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
601 S. Morgan Street  
Chicago, IL 60607  
Telephone: (312) 413-2370  
Fax: (312) 413-2377  
Email: [tantillo@uic.edu](mailto:tantillo@uic.edu)

### Secretary-Treasurer

**Professor John B. Lyon**  
Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, 1409 Cathedral of Learning  
University of Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260  
Telephone: (412) 624-5839  
Email: [jblyon@pitt.edu](mailto:jblyon@pitt.edu)

### Directors-at-Large

**Professor Clark Muenzer**  
Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, 1409 Cathedral of Learning  
University of Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260  
Telephone: (412) 624-5909  
Email: [muenzer@pitt.edu](mailto:muenzer@pitt.edu)

**Professor Karin Schutjer**  
Department of Modern Languages,  
Literatures and Linguistics  
202 Kaufman Hall  
University of Oklahoma  
Norman, OK 73019  
Telephone: (405) 325-6181

Fax: (405) 325-0103  
Email: [kschutjer@ou.edu](mailto:kschutjer@ou.edu)

### **Executive Secretary**

**Professor Patricia Anne Simpson**  
Department of Modern Languages and  
Literatures  
Montana State University  
P.O. Box 172980  
Bozeman, Montana 59717-2980  
Telephone: (406) 994-6443  
Email: [psimpson@montana.edu](mailto:psimpson@montana.edu)

### **Editor of the *Yearbook***

**Professor Daniel Purdy**  
Department of Germanic and Slavic  
Languages and Literatures  
311 Burrowes Building  
The Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, PA 16802  
Telephone: (814) 865-1353  
Fax: (814) 863-8882  
Email: [dlp14@psu.edu](mailto:dlp14@psu.edu)

### **Book Review Editor**

**Professor Catriona MacLeod**  
Department of Germanic Languages and  
Literatures, 745 Williams Hall

University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305  
Telephone: (215) 898-7334  
Fax: (215) 573-7794  
Email: [cmacleod@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:cmacleod@sas.upenn.edu)

### **Editor of the Book Series**

**Professor Astrida Tantillo**  
Dept. of Germanic Studies (MC 189)  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
601 S. Morgan Street  
Chicago, IL 60607  
Telephone: (312) 413-2370  
Fax: (312) 413-2377  
Email: [tantillo@uic.edu](mailto:tantillo@uic.edu)

### **Webmaster and GNN Editor**

**Professor Burkhard Henke**  
Department of German and Russian  
Davidson College  
Box 6956  
Davidson, NC 28035-6956  
Telephone: (704) 894-2269  
Fax: (704) 894-2782  
Email: [buhenke@davidson.edu](mailto:buhenke@davidson.edu)  
Email: [webmaster@goethesociety.org](mailto:webmaster@goethesociety.org)