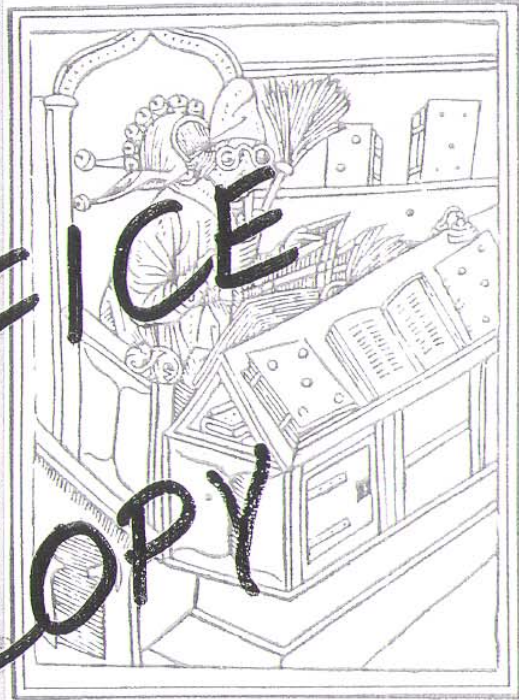


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Unsolicited book reviews of 2-5 pages will be considered for publication, yet *Focus onLiteratur* prefers to work with an established pool of reviewers. Interested persons are encouraged to inform the Book Review Editor.

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From the Editor

With this issue, *Focus on Literatur* enters its fifth year of publication, and we the staff are very excited to be able to continue to provide a forum for graduate students to publish and exchange their scholarship and ideas. We encourage any graduate student who would like to share their academic endeavors in the field of German literary studies to send us their manuscripts for possible publication.

Plans for our Third Annual Graduate Student Conference are well underway. We have invited Dr. Wolf Wucherpennig, author of *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur: Von Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* as this year's keynote speaker. The response to the call for papers indeed has been outstanding. We have received abstracts dealing with many of the topics listed in the call. Although no decisions about the papers have yet been made, the conference promises to be an enlightening and entertaining event. It will take place on October 9-10, 1998 here at the University of Cincinnati. If anyone is interested in attending, we can supply information concerning lodging, directions, etc. See the advertisement in the Announcement section at the end of the journal for further information.

As in the last issue of *Focus on Literatur*, we are proud to publish two articles as proceedings papers from our Second Annual Graduate Student Conference. In the first article, originally presented at the conference, Helen Ferstenberg discusses the German-Jewish Creative Identity in the Age of Lessing by concentrating on Bertold Auerbach's *Dichter und Kaufmann*. In her analysis Ferstenberg shows that Auerbach rejected the label "Jewish writer," while retaining a separate Jewish religious identity. In the second article, also a proceedings paper from the conference, Susan Hunnicutt analyzes Ulrich Plenzdorf's novel *Die neuen Leiden des jungen W.* Hunnicutt puts forth that Plenzdorf's novel can be viewed as a cult book. Hunnicutt looks to John Collins' book *The Cult Experience* for the theoretical basis of her argument. In the third and final article Julian Nelson investigates the role of technologies of death in Mann's *The Magic Mountain*. Nelson discusses the various representations of death in *The Magic Mountain* and how technology is "instrumental in Hans Castorp's 'aesthetic

education.'"

Although our book review section is comparatively smaller from past editions, we are pleased to present to the reader two books that are objects of discussion in Germany. We include here a novel by Hans Graf von der Goltz and Peter R. Wieninger.

The final section includes an interview with author Thomas Brussig who came to the University of Cincinnati this April to read from his novel, *Helden wie wir*. We were very pleased to have the opportunity to interview Herr Brussig after having published a review of *Helden wie wir* in the last issue of *Focus on Literatur*. The second interview with Hans Georg Bulla was conducted by Volker Langeheine from Michigan State University at the beginning of 1998 in Hannover.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks to the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures for giving me the opportunity to experience the world of publishing firsthand. I have enjoyed my year being the editor of *Focus on Literatur*, meeting graduate students from different universities, authors and editors, and other interesting people. I hope Bärbel Such, who will be taking over the position of editor-in-chief, will find her year as rewarding as I have.

Michael Rice