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GOETHE NEWS AND NOTES

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Burkhard Henke, Editor
Davidson College

FROM THE EDITOR

By now, most of you are aware of the 2006 election results. They were announced at the MLA meeting (see the minutes of the business meeting) and have been posted on our Web site. They are again mentioned in this newsletter. Congratulations to the winners—and thank you to the outgoing members of the board, the nominating committee, the members who stood for election, and to all those who cast their votes.

In this number of the *News and Notes* you will hear from the President, the *Yearbook* editors, and our new book review editor. You will also find here the extensive minutes of the last business meeting, an announcement of the 2006 winner of the GSNA Essay Prize, an abstract of Jane Brown's new book, a call for papers for the 2008 ASECS panel sponsored by the Goethe Society as well as the submission deadlines for future panel proposals. For a complete listing of past GSNA-sponsored panels (thanks, Meredith!) visit our Web site at www.goethesociety.org and click on "Panels."

If this issue also includes a dues notice, it means that we have not yet received payment from you, at least not at the

time of this printing. If that is the case, please send your 2007 dues to the Secretary-Treasurer, John Lyon, or go to our Web site and use the convenient PayPal feature (a modest fee will apply). As you know, dues are payable in each calendar year. The *Goethe Yearbook*, now appearing annually, is sent only once this obligation is met. We appreciate your continued support.

Burkhard Henke
Davidson College

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear GSNA Members,

A friend and colleague once expressed some doubts about the legitimacy of learned societies focused on one artist or author. I no longer remember the precise nature of his skepticism, but perhaps he suspected such organizations as the Goethe Society of fostering some sort of personality cult or, in our case, of promoting Goethe idolatry. That I don't share my friend's reservations is amply clear from my long-standing membership in three different Goethe societies plus the Herder Society, the

Hölderlin-Gesellschaft, the Lessing Society, the Heine Society (not as long-standing in this case—I just joined), and several others, not to mention a cluster of more broadly based organizations such as the MLA (I'm a "Life Member" and no longer have to pay dues).

Even the broadest associations still do have a focus, and providing focus is one of their purposes. They are a bit like a core curriculum and highlight an intersection or "Knotenpunkt" of many strands of inquiry, without drawing arbitrary limits on how far such strands may extend. The Goethe Society is valuable not only because it fosters understanding of Goethe and his achievement, inestimably worthwhile though that is, but because Goethe was and is such a "Brennglas" and "Brennpunkt" of intellectual discourse, both during his own time and since. Not only is he infinitely rich by himself, his outreach is endless. As Henry Adams said about teachers, Goethe affects eternity, we can never tell where his influence stops. "Nineteenth-century German philosophy consisted to a considerable extent in a series of efforts to assimilate the phenomenon of Goethe" observed Walter Kaufmann. Goethe's "impact" in the West overall as well as in Germany, has been pervasive—on the French (e.g. Berlioz, Gounod, Massenet, Hugo), on the Americans (Emerson, Longfellow, Fuller, Hawthorne), and on the British (Byron, Carlyle, Sir Walter Scott, and George Eliot). A BBC movie of Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* has a scene in which the heroine is dismayed because the new pastor's wife has had the roses (not the nut trees) cut down and another which shows the male protagonist crazy with uncertainty as to whether the

heroine looked back at him as she rode away in her coach. Even the once skeptical T. S. Eliot came to recognize Goethe's greatness and kept a drawing of him on his mantelpiece. The panel sponsored by the Goethe Society at the upcoming GSA, under the direction of Angus Nicholls, will examine Goethe's legacy in Twentieth-Century Literary and Critical Theory. It is impossible that his influence will not be found to have been great. Goethe is a huge intersection, all by himself.

As the coiner of the term "Weltliteratur" well understood, no nation, indeed no person, is ever alone, never all by him- or herself in the world. Some persons do stand out, however, and some "Ansatzpunkt" we must have if we are to begin to understand anything. Significant "Ansatzpunkte" are what a learned society, in ever new and evolving ways, enables us, in dialogue with each other, to promote. Goethe gives focus to a huge chunk of intellectual history, although any focus, like any form or concept, must also distort an unsurveyably complex universe: "Jede Form, auch die gefühlteste, hat etwas Unwahres, allein sie ist ein für allemal das Glas, wodurch wir die heiligen Strahlen der verbreiteten Natur an das Herz des Menschen zum Feuerblick sammeln" ("Aus Goethes Brieftasche," 1776). Without focus there can be no refraction.

On a practical and organizational note, Clark Muenzer and Simon Richter have both recommended that we sponsor an annual or biennial conference of a yet to be determined format—one that might provide an additional forum for the study of Goethe and his times as well as promote cooperation on matters of

common concern with colleagues in other disciplines than our own. The members of the board are interested in your thoughts and suggestions.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank Simon and Martha Helfer for their excellent work on the *Yearbook* over these last, “fat” seven years and to salute and congratulate Daniel Purdy as the new editor of the *Yearbook* and Catriona MacCleod as the new Book Review Editor as well as new Vice President Simon Richter, new Directors-at-Large Clark Muenzer and Karin Schutjer, and both Astrida Tantillo and Burkhard Henke as the continuing Executive Director and the Webmaster and Editor of the Newsletter, respectively. Hearty thanks to all colleagues who were willing to run for office and who will surely be called upon again in the years ahead. Thanks and congratulations also to John Lyon on his re-election as Secretary-Treasurer. John is exploring ways of maximizing the financial resources of the Goethe Society of North America and bringing our non-affiliated colleagues into the fold. We need them and they need us. You may look forward to modest proposals for regularizing the deadlines for submission of panel topics at the three organizations with which we are affiliated and to consideration by the board and the membership of any and all ideas you may have for heightening the effectiveness of our society in promoting thoughtful inquiry into many things.

Ellis Dye
Macalester College

AWARDS AND PRIZES

The **GSNA Essay Prize** is awarded annually to an outstanding piece of scholarship on Goethe and his times which has been published during the previous year. This year’s award goes to Elisabeth Krimmer for her *PMLA* essay on the castrato singer in 18th-century German literature and culture. Two honorable mentions were awarded to Matt Erlin for his work on Goethe’s “Ilmenau” and Eric H. Denton for his article on “Goethe’s Mixed Media,” both published in the *Goethe Yearbook*. (See complete citations in the minutes of the business meeting). Congratulations to all three!

The Society’s **Gloria Flaherty Scholarship** is awarded annually to a graduate student in support of travel required either by a research project or a presentation. Unfortunately, we received no formal applications last year. Please encourage your best students to apply. The deadline is November 30, details can be found on our Web site.

FROM THE YEARBOOK EDITORS

Members received volume 14 in late January and early February. Volume 15 is currently being prepared for press. Because of Camden House's heavy production schedule, volume 15 will be published in early 2008. Given these circumstances, subsequent volumes of the *Goethe Yearbook* edited by Daniel Purdy will also be published in January or February.

Submissions are now being accepted for volume 16. The *Yearbook* continues to be open to papers on any aspect or author of the *Goethezeit*, not just on Goethe. Submissions that reflect diverse theoretical interests and a variety of modes of scholarly inquiry are particularly welcome. In contrast to many other publications, there is no stringent limit on the length of papers that can be considered. Please refer to the style sheet posted on the Web site.

Daniel Purdy
Simon Richter

FROM THE BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

As you may know, I have recently taken over as book review editor from Martha Helfer. I would like to thank Martha for the help she has given me in the transition. Also, 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

NEW BOOKS BY MEMBERS

Jane Brown. *The Persistence of Allegory. Drama and Neoclassicism from Shakespeare to Wagner*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.

“An ambitious survey of a great deal of culture, attempting links and connections on a grand scale.”—David Bevington, University of Chicago.

In an impressively comparative work, Jane K. Brown explores the tension in European drama between allegory and neoclassicism from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century. Imitation of nature is generally thought to triumph over religious allegory in the Elizabethan and French classical theater, a shift attributable to the recovery of Aristotle's *Poetics* in the Renaissance. But if Aristotle's terminology was rapidly assimilated, Brown demonstrates that change in dramatic practice took place only gradually and partially and that allegory was never fully cast off the stage.

The book traces a complex history of neoclassicism in which new allegorical forms flourish and older ones are constantly revitalized. Brown reveals the allegorical survivals in the works of such major figures as Shakespeare, Calderón, Racine, Vondel, Metastasio, Goethe, and Wagner and reads tragedy, comedy, masque, opera, and school drama together rather than as separate developments. Throughout, she draws illuminating parallels to modes of representation in the visual arts.

A work of broad interest to scholars, teachers, and students of theatrical form,

The Persistence of Allegory presents a fundamental rethinking of the history of European drama.

FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Minutes of the Business Meeting, 30
December 2006** (MLA Convention,
Loews Philadelphia)

President Meredith Lee called the annual business meeting to order on Saturday, December 30, at the MLA Convention in Philadelphia, PA. President Lee welcomed the members and delivered the following President's Report:

I. Report from the President

News from this Year

It has been a good year for the Society, although it began with some sad news. Simon Richter will have to leave the editorship of the journal, but the society is pleased that Daniel Purdy will take over that responsibility and looks forward to his leadership as editor.

President Lee made a presentation this past year (on the occasion of the GSNA's 25th anniversary) at the Vorstand of Goethe Gesellschaft in Weimar. In this context she presented a list of presentations and conference panels sponsored by the GSNA, as well as of member publications (specifically monographs on Age of Goethe) during the past 25-years. This list is still a work in progress, but it shows our German colleagues the vitality of North

American Goethe and Goethezeit scholarship. President Lee would like to keep this list updated and perhaps even post it online.

The other big event from this year was the launching of the book series, discussed later in these minutes.

Election Announcements

Elections for board member positions are held every three years. The results of this year's elections are:

- Simon Richter will be the new Vice-President, and will become President after three years;
- Clark Muenzer and Karin Schutjer were elected as board members (at large);
- John Lyon was re-elected as Secretary-Treasurer; and
- Ellis Dye, who was elected Vice-President last year, accedes to the presidency this year to replace Meredith Lee.

The Executive Secretary position (currently held by Astrida Tantillo) is appointed by the board and so Astrida did not stand for election. President Lee thanked all members who stood for election and gave special thanks to Martha Helfer for chairing the nominating committee. She also thanked outgoing board members Catriona MacLeod, Jonathan Hess, and Martha Helfer for their dedicated service to the Society.

Prizes

There were no formal applications for the Gloria Flaherty Prize this year, so it

was not awarded. Please remember to inform your students that these funds are available and that we are happy to award this prize.

The annual essay prize was awarded to Elisabeth Krimmer, for her essay, “‘Eviva il Coltello’? The Castrato Singer in Eighteenth-Century German Literature and Culture.” *PMLA* 120, 5 (October 2005): pp. 1543-1559.

The selection committee found it to be a particularly good year for essays and so also awarded two honorable mentions for the essay prize: Matt Erlin, “Goethe’s ‘Ilmenau’ and the Origins of the Aesthetic State.” *Goethe Yearbook* 13 (2005): 53-74; and Eric Hadley Denton, “Goethe’s Mixed Media: The Entertainers in Jahrmarktsfest zu Plundersweilern.” *Goethe Yearbook* 13 (2005): 19-52.

Congratulations to all prize recipients!

II. Report from the Incoming President

President Ellis Dye shared some of his plans for the next three years. These include:

- revising the Society’s bylaws (a number of issues have come up recently that necessitate this revision);
- considering whether to reprint vol. 1 of the *Goethe Yearbook* in the context of sending sets of *Yearbooks* to libraries in Eastern Europe;
- scheduling a board meeting at the GSA convention to deliberate prizes earlier. This will allow prize winners to attend the

annual business meeting at the MLA convention. It will also necessitate moving the deadline for nominating essays to an earlier date;

- continuing a membership drive;
- considering proposals by Clark Muenzer and Simon Richter to sponsor an annual or biennial conference in a format yet to be determined; and
- to continue as active participants in the MLA’s deliberations on the scheduling and format of its annual convention.

President Dye would like to confer with the membership frequently, and he circulated a sign-up list for email addresses to the attendees at the meeting.

III. Report from the Secretary-Treasurer

President Lee entertained a motion to have the minutes from last year’s meeting approved, and they were approved unanimously.

The Society’s finances are sound. We increased capital by nearly \$4500 this year, in part due to a late appearance of the *Yearbook* (only half the cost was billed in 2006). We have moved most of the Society’s accounts from Wells Fargo Bank in California to PNC Bank in Pennsylvania, and will move the last ones during 2007.

Dues-paying membership is at its highest level in at least a decade, and nearly 20% of members are now paying dues online. At the board meeting a dues-increase was deliberated, but the board felt it was not necessary at this point. Instead of a dues increase, we will

suggest that tenured faculty pay at the “Senior Member” level (\$10 more than the “Active Member”) level.

IV. Report from the Executive Secretary

Astrida Tantillo thanked President Lee for her service, noting that in the 26 year history of the Society, there were only four years that Meredith wasn't a board member. Astrida then presented Meredith with a gift on behalf of the Society.

Forthcoming panels sponsored by the Goethe Society:

- The ASECS panel for this March will be organized by Peter Höyng. The topic will be “Goethe’s Stage and Staging Goethe.”
- The GSA for the Fall of 2007 will be organized by Angus Nicholls. The topic will be Goethe and 20th-Century Literary and Critical Theory.
- The MLA panel for December of 2007 will be organized by Daniel Purdy. The topic will be the “Poetics of Architecture.” The deadline for proposals is March 15.

Book Series

Astrida announced that we have an editorial and advisory board in place. We have distributed flyers announcing the series, but the series has not yet accepted a manuscript. The Society wants to establish a strong reputation for the series and so is seeking very strong manuscripts.

V. Report from the Yearbook Editors

Simon Richter reported that *Yearbook 14* is late, but will appear in February. It will have a copyright date of 2007, but will be considered the 2006 Yearbook. The 2007 volume (*Yearbook 15*) will appear at the end of 2007 and already has its articles selected. The annual yearbooks are shorter than the previous biannual yearbooks (current yearbooks are about 200 pages in length), which is economically advantageous to the Society and also allows Society members to see the publication more often.

Simon introduced Jim Walker (present at the meeting), from Camden House (the publisher of the *Yearbook*) and thanked him for his collaboration.

Simon indicated that he receives regular article submissions, which allows the *Yearbook* to be selective (approximately one of every two articles received is accepted). He has worked with a good advisory board, whose members have given good, constructive feedback. Dan and Simon will work together on *Yearbook 15*, during which time Simon will pass on editorial information to Dan, after which Dan will edit volume 16, for which he has already received a number of submissions.

Daniel Purdy stated that he hopes to carry on the strong tradition passed on to him by Simon and by Thomas Saine, and that he is still in the process of learning from Simon. He is currently composing an editorial board.

Dan encourages submissions that reflect diverse theoretical interests and a variety of modes of scholarly inquiry, that focus

not only on Goethe, but also on the Goethezeit in its broader configurations. Please encourage fine young scholars to submit to the journal. He welcomes suggestions.

He would also like to get the journal online, and is currently in conversation with Camden House about doing so.

VI. New Business

There was no new business.

VII. Program

Karin Schutjer, an Associate Professor at the University of Oklahoma, presented a paper: "Goethe, Judaism, and the Problem of Evil". A lively discussion followed.

Call For Papers: ASECS 2008

Authors and Their Admirers in the Age of Goethe

"Klopstock!" exclaims Lotte during a storm in *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and the title character is moved to tears, overcome by the associations the poet's name conjures up. Lotte and Werther are, of course, not the only admirers of Klopstock in the late eighteenth century; one need only to read the letters of the Göttinger Hain for examples. Indeed, the reading public in the Age of Goethe was often passionate about authors and their works to a degree that would likely strike the contemporary reader as surprising and, perhaps, contrived. How does this admiration function, not only with Klopstock, but with Gleim, Goethe

and others? What examples of this phenomenon can be found in literary and non-literary texts, or in art and music from the period? How do authors react to this adulation? Do they encourage it, act decisively against it, parody it in their own works? Papers on these and related topics are sought for a panel sponsored by the Goethe Society of North America at ASECS 2008 (March 27-30 in Portland, Oregon). Please send 200-word abstracts by September 15, 2007 to

Professor Kamaal Haque

Department of Modern Foreign
Languages & Literatures
701 McClung Tower
The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996
or by email at khaque@utk.edu

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 Astrida Tantillo

Dept. of Germanic Studies (MC 189)
University of Illinois at Chicago
601 S. Morgan Street
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: 312-413-2374
Email: tantillo@uic.edu

Deadlines for submissions of panel proposals

2008 MLA, 15 November 2007.
2008 GSA, 1 December 2007.
2009 ASECS, 15 March 2008.

GSNA OFFICERS

President

Professor Robert Ellis Dye
1305 Fairmount Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105
Email: rdye695716@aol.com

Vice 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

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

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

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

Executive Secretary and 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) 413-2374
Fax: (312) 413-2377
Email: tantillo@uic.edu

Editors of the Yearbook

Professor Simon Richter

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

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

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
Email: webmaster@goethesociety.org