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GOETHE NEWS AND NOTES

XXX.2, Fall 2010

Burkhard Henke, Editor
Davidson College

FROM THE EDITOR

In this edition of the *Goethe News and Notes* you will find a number of important announcements, including information on upcoming panels and new books by members. Our *Yearbook* Editor, Dan Purdy, shares the good news that, within a few weeks, all numbers of the *Goethe Yearbook* will be available online through Project Muse. In her President's column, Astrida Tantillo comments on the state of our Society as well as on German programs nationwide. She invites suggestions regarding Goethe's relevance in academia today.

Most importantly, perhaps, we are inviting you to suggest candidates for the position of Executive Secretary. As we thank Patty Simpson for her three years of leadership and service, we hope that, by October 3, you will take the opportunity to nominate a suitable successor.

Last but not least, please be sure to pay your 2010 dues, if you have not done so already.

Burkhard Henke
Davidson College

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have much to be excited about in Goethe studies. Our Society is strong: graduate student memberships has been growing, our members are among the most active conference participants in the field, our book series is bearing significant fruit. The *Yearbook* truly is a yearbook now and publishes some of the best work in Goethe studies. That it is now available electronically also means that it has become a more widely used tool for research. Planning is well underway for our next conference: "Metamorphoses: Goethe and Change." The conference will take place on the campus of the University of Illinois at Chicago on 3, 4, and 5 November 2011. We are very pleased and excited to announce that Dieter Borchmeyer and David Wellbery will be our keynote speakers. We will be announcing the call for papers later this fall and hope to see many of you in Chicago next year!

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Patty Simpson, who for the last three years has served as our executive secretary. The Society owes a great deal of its recent momentum to Patty, and we will miss her a great deal. One of the roles of this position is to organize the panels at our three main conferences.

Over the last several years, we have had multiple sessions at many of the conferences – I do not believe the Society has ever been so well represented! Thank you, Patty! We now have the task of finding a new executive secretary. Please see the notice in the bulletin about nominations and self-nominations for this position.

However much the Society has been making strides, there have been more ominous forces swirling around us. The humanities in general have been under attack for some time: although faculty positions have been shrinking in general because of the poor economy, the humanities have been proportionately more hard hit. Humanities departments – even English departments—are losing students and majors to the social sciences and given the way in which many universities now calculate the worth of fields, this has led university leadership to cut back or eliminate humanities programs. Sadly, we are now seeing many colleges and universities targeting – and eliminating – German programs.

In recent months, the Goethe Society has been called upon to write letters to save positions and programs in Germanic Studies. In writing these letters, board members have focused upon the worth of the work of individuals or of the importance of the German language and culture to liberal education generally. I would be happy to share a sample letter with anyone who is interested: it has some useful links to the importance of learning languages and cultures, has some statistics about increased salaries for speakers of foreign languages and about Germany's economic importance, and challenges administrators who stress

the importance of global citizens at the same time they are closing language programs.

I wonder, however, whether as members of the Goethe Society, we should not be thinking more specifically about Goethe as we seek to defend German studies and the humanities. What, exactly, would be lost to the American student if courses on Goethe and his age were no longer taught? How should we be articulating these things to university administrators and legislators? In my own recent work, I have been attempting to show the relevance of Goethe's works to contemporary issues from our current economic collapse to educational reform. This is perhaps one way to argue for Goethe's relevance today, i.e., that his works allow us to question current social and political paradigms as a means to improve them. Perhaps, however, one needs also to make the negative case: aspects of Goethe's works have been linked to extraordinarily negative political policies and tendencies. Lessons for our students thus may be negative ones. The next time, however, that the Society is called upon to write a letter in defense of a German program or of an eighteenth-century scholar, what do you think should be in the letter? I ask members to send me their thoughts. It is unfortunately quite likely that we will be called upon to write more such letters in the future and perhaps it may help us to think collectively. I promise to share any ideas that I receive.

Astrida Tantillo
University of Illinois, Chicago

FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

I would like to take this occasion to thank the members of the Goethe Society who have contributed so significantly to our high profile and estimable presence in the profession over the past three years. When I accepted the position of Executive Secretary, I welcomed the opportunity to work with colleagues who had long since established the GSNA as a vibrant forum for scholarly exchange about Goethe and beyond. I offer belated thanks to my immediate predecessor in this position, Astrida Tantillo, who smoothed the transition and continues to serve the Society with such dedication and shine.

The most important duty of the Executive Secretary involves representing the GSNA as an affiliate society or allied association of the GSA, MLA, and ASECS. Our public voice is heard most clearly at the panels we sponsor, and it is gratifying that the individual organizers have identified such appealing, innovative topics; they often had to make hard choices from deep pools of submissions, and persuaded reluctant conference organizers worried about panel gridlock to accept more than one session on our behalf.

The excitement from the 2008 conference in Pittsburgh generated considerable momentum among the members, and that enthusiasm has made my job an easy one – thanks to all who submitted panel topics, each one of which prompted a lively debate among the members of the Board, who have in turn consistently and reliably reached

consensus about the best interests of the membership – and reminded me of upcoming anniversaries, which have been marked with such flare. If I may add one word of advice to my successor: I recommend the legendary Irvine party at the MLA. It has, on more than one occasion, provided a perfect forum for acts of recruitment, should a deadline approach more rapidly than expected! Few drastic measures are required, though. From the panels on “Built: Structure and Meaning in the Age of Goethe” (in the not so well constructed and filled-beyond-capacity Cabana rooms!) to the imminent GSA sessions on Classicism and Religion, the Society continues “to kick it up a notch.”

The GSNA was ahead of the curve in collaborating with colleagues from other societies – *Tugend aus Not*, perhaps, but also extremely productive! The co-sponsored panel, “Die Memoiren Gottes: Goethe, Heine, and the Bible,” in some ways anticipated the MLA regulations on collaborative endeavors, and I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the Heine Society to that effort. After getting some details about the new MLA guidelines, I again headed for the Irvine party, where several of us sat down with a laptop, along with other party-goers, Jocelyne Kolb and Richard Schade among them, to craft a topic, “The Portable Stage,” that would facilitate the cooperation among three societies. Elliott Schreiber agreed to help with the organization of the upcoming MLA panel, co-sponsored by the Lessing and Heine Societies. Check out the Web site for other GSNA activities in the new MLA time slot of January 2011.

It has been an honor to serve the GSNA for the past three years in the position of

Executive Secretary, and I will miss the sense of purpose and spirit in the work. I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Board for their support and collegiality during that time. Burkhard Henke gets a special note of appreciation for his patience with my excessively formatted files. And I thank the exceptional organizers of panels (among other things): Simon Richter, Stefani Engelstein, Jocelyne Kolb, Bernd Hamacher, Mary Helen Dupree, Markus Wilczek, Richard Block, Elisabeth Krimmer, Christian Weber, Elliott Schreiber, Barbara Fischer, and Ellis Dye, and all the presenters, for their contributions to the Society and the profession.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Anne Simpson
Montana State University

NOMINATIONS INVITED

Executive Secretary, Goethe Society of North America

The Board of the Goethe Society of North America invites nominations for the position of Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary provides administrative and programmatic leadership for the GSNA and serves as an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors. An appointment will be made by the Board for a renewable three-year term, beginning January 2011.

The position of Executive Secretary is

responsible for sustaining GSNA programs and programmatic links with our affiliate organizations: the Modern Language Association, the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, and the German Studies Association. The Executive Secretary, in consultation with the board, arranges panels at the annual meetings of these organizations and monitors the development of convention programs. Other administrative matters, such as the periodic MLA recertification, require exceptional attention and a timely response. Attendance at the annual MLA meeting in December is mandatory. Attendance at the annual meetings of the ASECS meeting in March/April and the GSA meeting in October is also highly desirable. The MLA hosts the annual executive board meeting of the society, but board meetings may be called at the other annual conventions, e.g., to confirm the selection of winners of the annual essay prize and of Gloria Flaherty awards to graduate students, as well as to conduct other urgent business. The Executive Secretary drafts the agenda for the annual meeting, in consultation with the President and other members of the board.

The Executive Secretary facilitates communication among and between the society's officers, the Board of Directors, and the members, and responds to queries and requests from outside organizations. Communications with the Webmaster and Editor of the Newsletter and with the Secretary-Treasurer, who oversee the dissemination of society news and its financial/legal matters respectively, are especially important, as are the ability and willingness to facilitate conversations from a distance about

matters pertinent to the mission of the organization.

Please send your nominations or self-nominations by 3 October 2010 to Astrida Tantillo at tantillo@uic.edu.

FROM THE YEARBOOK EDITOR

The next and 18th volume of the *Goethe Yearbook* will include an extensive special section on Goethe's connection to German Idealism. These papers constitute a major reassessment of Goethe's engagement with Idealist philosophy, in Jena and beyond. The arguments treat Goethe's readings in Kant's critical philosophy, his relations to early Romanticism, the revival of interest in Spinoza and the history of science. Additional articles in the *Yearbook* discuss Schiller's connection to computer games, the politics of brotherhood, Faust and Martin Walser. The book review section under the direction of Professor Catriona MacLeod, cmacleod@sas.upenn.edu, continues to grow. This *Yearbook* volume will be mailed in February 2011. Another important development – Project Muse will release the back issues of the *Goethe Yearbook* on October 13th. Submissions for volume 19 are under review. Please send manuscripts to Daniel Purdy, dlp14@psu.edu.

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

NEW BOOKS BY MEMBERS

Karl J. Fink, *Goethe's History of Science* (Cambridge University Press, 1991 [2009]) now available in paperback.

This book is about the interdisciplinary activities of Goethe's mid-life (1790-1810) when he researched optics, color theory, and plant morphology, and at the same time contributed to the growing literature in the history and philosophy of science.

In Goethe's writings, Fink finds a scientist examining the junctures of nature, the boundary conditions where growth and change occur. These topics of transition also define his approach to the history of science, where the gaps between visible states challenge the historian to search for metaphors that bridge discontinuities.

Fink describes how Goethe distinguished science from the history of science; how, in dialogue with Friedrich Schiller, Goethe applied Kantian categories of the mind to his project on color theory; how Goethe confronted Newtonian science with the strategies of polemics; how he organized science from antiquity to the Enlightenment into epochs of authority and canonicity; and how, as poet and critic, he linked the scientist's language, style, and personality to the development of schools of thought.

Written in the idiom of Thomas Kuhn, Fink discovers how this pioneer in the historiography of science investigated the shared exemplars, common metaphors, and *topoi* of thought that shape scientific traditions.

Astrida Orle Tantillo, *Goethe's Modernisms* (New York: Continuum, 2010).

"In *Goethe's Modernisms* Astrida Tantillo offers a model of what literary scholarship should be: a challenging reinterpretation that fully situates Goethe in his historical circumstances while showing how he speaks eloquently to our present age of secular individualism." – Gerald Graff

Goethe's Modernisms is not only an original and insightful contribution to Goethe scholarship, but also a book of compelling advocacy on behalf of Goethe's relevance to the intractably complex challenges of the present. I believe it is the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Goethe's impact on American thought." – David E. Wellbery

Goethe's Modernisms demonstrates Goethe's pivotal influence on the development of Western society. It also reveals him to be one of modernity's profoundest critics. His influence has not only shaped aesthetic issues, but a myriad of cultural and intellectual ones as well. By studying his works, we can thus gain insights into the foundational principles of modern society and its shortcomings. Tantillo explores Goethe's role within the culture wars that have been with us for some time, his role as both a progenitor and a critic of modernity, and suggests how we might rethink aspects of our current policies, whether educational or fiscal.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Special GSNA Sessions at the GSA in Oakland, CA, 7-10 October 2010

German Classicism and Religion (1)
Sat 10:30 AM-12:15 PM
Oakland Convention Center 212

Moderator: Elisabeth M. Krimmer,
University of California, Davis

Commentator: Catriona Macleod,
University of Pennsylvania

1. "Transubstantiation of the Stage:
Ritual and Theatricality in Friedrich
Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans* and
Maria Stuart" (Joshua Bonilla,
University of Chicago)

2. "Crime and Punishment: Secular and Transcendental Justice in Schiller's Works" (Jennifer Driscoll Colosimo, University of Puget Sound)

3. "Schiller, Moses, Monotheism, and the Aesthetic Liberation of the Secular Individual" (Jeffrey L. High, California State University Long Beach)

German Classicism and Religion (2)
Sat 2:00 PM-4:00 PM
Oakland Convention Center 212

Moderator: Clifford Bernd

Commentator: Horst J. Lange,
University of Nevada, Reno

1. "Sacred Maternity and Secular Sons: Hölderlin's Madonna As Muse" (Patricia A. Simpson, Montana State University—Bozeman)

2. "Divine Determinism: Herder's Scientific Case for the Immortal Soul" (Tom Spencer, Brigham Young University)

3. "*Die heilige Cäcilie* as Allegory of the French Revolution" (Colin Benert, University of Iowa)

Annual Business Meeting and Presidential Address at the MLA 2011 in Los Angeles, 6-9 January

*Thursday, 6 January, 3:30-4:45 p.m.,
407, LA Convention Center*

Presiding: Astrida Orle Tantillo, Univ. of Illinois, Chicago

"Saving the *Urphenomena*: Goethe's Work with Nature's Forms," Dennis Sepper, Univ. of Dallas

**Special GSNA Session
at the MLA 2011**

*Friday, 7 January, 12:00-1:15 p.m.,
303B, LA Convention Center*

**Self and Self-Consciousness
(*Selbstbewußtsein*) in Goethe and Romanticism**

Presiding: Barbara Becker-Cantarino,
Ohio State Univ., Columbus

1. "Self-Presentation in Werther,"
Stanley Alan Corngold, Princeton Univ.

2. "A Rebirth of Consciousness:
Goethe's *Italienische Reise* and the Rise
of Objective Idealism," Georginna
Hinnebusch, Univ. of Chicago

3. "The Syntax of Desire in Hegel and
Goethe," Patricia Anne Simpson,
Montana State Univ., Bozeman

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

Deadlines for submission of panel proposals

2012 MLA, 15 November 2010
2011 GSA, 1 December 2010
2012 ASECS, 15 March 2011

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 and click on the link to “Membership.” Thanks for your support in this endeavor.

Claire Baldwin
Colgate University

DUES

If you have not already done so, please send your 2010 dues to the Secretary-Treasurer, Claire Baldwin, or go to 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.

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

GSNA OFFICERS

President

Professor Astrida Tantillo
Visiting Associate Dean for Literatures, Cultural Studies, and Linguistics
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (MC 189)
University of Illinois at Chicago
601 S. Morgan Street (Room 1733UH)
Chicago, IL 60607
Telephone: (312) 413-2137
Fax: (312) 413-1044
tantillo@uic.edu

Vice President

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

Secretary-Treasurer

Professor Claire Baldwin
Department of German
Colgate University
13 Oak Drive
Hamilton, NY 13346
Telephone: (315) 228-7281
Fax: (315) 228-7176
cmbaldwin@colgate.edu

Directors-at-Large

Professor Elisabeth Krimmer
Department of German and Russian
411 Sproul Hall
University of California, Davis
Davis, CA 95616
Telephone: (530) 752-4999
emkrimmer@ucdavis.edu

Professor Andrew Piper
Department of German Studies
McGill University
688 Sherbrooke St. West, Suite 425
Montreal, QC H3A 3R1
Canada
Telephone: (514) 398-2044
andrew.piper@mcgill.ca

Executive Secretary

Professor Patricia Anne Simpson
Department of Modern Languages and
Literatures
Montana State University
P.O. Box 172980
Bozeman, MT 59717-2980
Telephone: (406) 994-6443
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
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
cmacleod@sas.upenn.edu

Editor of the Book Series

Professor Jane Brown
Department of Germanics
Box 353130
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195-3130
Telephone: (206) 543-4580
Fax: (206) 685-9063
jkbrown@u.washington.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
[buhenke@davidson.edu](mailto:buhenke@ davidson.edu)
webmaster@goethesociety.org