



# Monatshefte

*für deutschsprachige Literatur und Kultur*

Volume 105

Number 1

Spring 2013

Published by  
the University of Wisconsin Press

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Monatshefte, Journals Department, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1930 Monroe Street, 3rd Floor, Madison, WI 53711-2059, USA. <[www.wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/journals](http://www.wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/journals)> Subscriptions, payments, and applications for advertising should be sent to this address.

## PUBLICATION DATA

Published four times a year under the auspices of the Department of German at the University of Wisconsin. Periodicals postage paid at Madison, Wisconsin, and additional mailing offices.

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## US ISSN 0026-9271

Postmaster: Send address changes to Monatshefte, 1930 Monroe Street, Madison, WI 53711-2059.

# M onatshefte

für deutschsprachige Literatur und Kultur

VOLUME 105 • NUMBER 1 • 2013

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### ARTICLES

**Patrick Fortmann**

**Miniaturizing the Revolution: Political Fantasy, Theatricality, and Sovereignty in Goethe's Comedies *Der Groß-Cophta*, *Die Aufgeregten*, and *Der Bürgergeneral***

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Between 1791 and 1793, Goethe became increasingly concerned with the upheaval unfolding to the West of Weimar, responding to it with a series of plays, *Der Groß-Cophta*, *Die Aufgeregten*, and *Der Bürgergeneral*, which transpose the revolution to rural Germany and transform it into comedy. Contemporary audiences as well as modern critics have by-and-large shunned the plays. This article makes a case for a reassessment, arguing that the comedies may be provincial in setting, schematic in script, and minimalistic in cast but pointedly identify the imagination as the primary force pressing for political change. Goethe's comedies of the revolution respond to this constellation threefold—by denouncing revolutionary fantasies as a scam created by demagogues to fool the gullible; by exposing the theatricality inherent in the revolutionary undertaking; and by branding the apostles of liberty as tyrants in waiting. As Goethe, in each play, pits the lord of the land against a contender, he not only catalogues the sources of sovereign authority but also establishes a disturbing parallel between the sovereign and the con-artist, thus pointing to the foundation of sovereignty in fiction. (PF)

**Hartmut M. Kaiser**

**Ist Gretchen eine Kindsmörderin?**

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Goethe's vote to retain the death penalty for infanticide (1783) influenced his subsequent work on *Faust* (1788–1808), in particular his evolving concept of Gretchen. Proceeding from some of Goethe's comments and his significant

changes in the *Prison*-scene, I analyze the chronology of Part I and claim that its inconsistencies disappear when read as lasting from Easter to early May, insufficient time for Gretchen to give birth. The ambiguous *Prison*-scene does not contradict this finding and the scene *Bergschluchten* where Gretchen reappears as penitent contains no references to infanticide. Goethe realized around 1800 that his expanding concept of *Faust* required a second part; simultaneously he decided to turn Gretchen into an agent for Faust's salvation. Lifting the crime of infanticide from her (but not her sinful relationship with Faust) implies that Goethe, the poet, accepted the decision of Goethe, the statesman, that infanticide is a serious crime, far more so than falling in love with a man who made a pact with the Devil. That the poet needed some twenty years to concur with the statesman indicates how difficult a decision it was. (HMK)

### Angel Valentinov Angelov

#### **Metropolis und Exotik: Heinrich Heine über Leopold Robert und Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps**

The author argues that Heine outlined an imagined geography of Europe via reference to a number of paintings, divided into historical (France, England) and national exotic (Italy, Tirol, the Pyrenees). Heine's social and historical actuality did not exclude the creation of ideological and non-historical images. Heine over-interpreted Alexandre Gabriel Decamps's genre painting "Cadjibey, chef de la police de Smyrne, faisant sa ronde" as an image of injustice; the image represents a world that is not only devoid of civilization but degenerate and bestial. Animal resemblance denies history to that world. Finally, the author explores the significance of the gaze from outside in addressing exoticism in the works of Decamps and Léopold Robert and the way in which looking from the outside may create exotic images derived not from foreign cultures, but from the peripheries of European countries. (AVA; in German)

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### Daniela Hempen

#### **Grünender Wald, gebannter Ort und Palast der Fee: Zum Verhältnis zwischen Mensch und Natur in Franz Grillparzers *Melusina***

This article examines the relationship between humans and nature in Franz Grillparzer's *Melusina* (1823). In contrast to the hunting forest, the aristocracy's playground, untamed nature appears as a largely inaccessible and frequently hostile 'otherworld,' populated by mythological animals, such as the White Stag and the nymph, and comprised of topical places, such as the *locus amoenus*. Grillparzer uses nature elements integral to medieval tales of the *Mahrtenhe* and to early modern and romantic tales of *Melusina*—such as the hunting forest, the medieval *wilder walt*, as well as the *locus amoenus* and *locus terribilis*—to present his audience with a new view of nature. Most importantly, the nymph Melusina herself becomes the symbol and voice of untamed nature. Although impossible to control, nature can still become a victim of civilization. In the successful relationship between Raimund and Melusina Grillparzer demon-

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strates that the dichotomy between civilization and untamed nature can be overcome if humans accept nature on its own terms, much as the lover Raimund comes to accept Melusina. Raimund's changed view of Melusina is a reflection of the growing movement to value and protect the natural world and thus of the emerging *Naturschutzbewegung* in 19th century Germany and Austria. (DH; in German)

### Samuel Clowes Huneke

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#### The Reception of Homosexuality in Klaus Mann's Weimar Era Works

Although Klaus Mann has long been recognized for his antifascist works written in exile, his earlier Weimar texts have only recently received serious scholarly attention. Noted for the prominent role that homosexuality plays in them, these works have been frequently cited as an example of and influence on Weimar culture, particularly its gay elements. However, no rigorous study has yet attempted to trace the reception of homosexuality in Mann's literature in the 1920s and early 1930s. This article seeks to determine the reception of these texts in selected contemporary general and gay periodicals in order to demonstrate that the homosexual content of Mann's literature was widely received in the Weimar Republic. Interwar critics noted his works not only for their depictions of the *Nachkriegsgeneration*, but also for their vivid and realistic homosexual content. Mann's works placed same sex desire, depicted in an affirmative light, squarely in front of Weimar readers, asking them to consider the place of gay men and women in their society. (SCH)

### Tom Kuhn

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#### Brecht reads Bruegel: *Verfremdung*, Gestic Realism and the Second Phase of Brechtian Theory

Brecht's interest in Bruegel is widely testified, but no one has asked quite what the playwright and theorist saw in the pictures of the Flemish master. This article tracks Brecht's reception, from a putative first encounter in 1936 and through his own notes on the pictures, and demonstrates how closely Brecht's reading of Bruegel may have entwined with his contemporary reflections on *Verfremdung*, *Gestic* and "cognitive realism," as also with the theatre projects of the later exile period. There are particularly close relationships, for example, between Bruegel's *Dulle Griet* and *Mutter Courage* and *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*. Through the gaze of the modernist dramatist, Bruegel comes across as an artist of political cunning whose works demand a complex (even dialectic) cognitive process in order to read and decipher them. He is, like Brecht, both a satirist and a realist. His paintings are full of inversions designed to unsettle the onlooker's conventional views, full of political hints and separate little narrative episodes to tease. What Brecht discovered in Bruegel and in the detail of Bruegel's pictures was to have far-reaching consequences, both for the formulation of his theory and for the look and practice of his theatre. (TK)

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