



North American Heine Society

January 30, 2023

Dear Members,

Last year marked among other things Heinrich Heine's 225th birthday. Looking back, it is remarkable just how much research has developed even in just the last 25 years. In North America, there is no doubt that our society has played an important role in this development.

I find this to be a reassuring confirmation that even with a bleak outlook on the hopes we dare to entertain regarding the field of German Studies, there nevertheless might be a bright future ahead, at least for Heine research.

The idea that research on everything concerning Heine and his works has already been done and exhausted is far from being true and even if it were - as Heine reminds us - that would never imply the end of a new and better appreciation of his work after all. What he once observed with regard to Goethe equally applies to himself as well:

Later times will [...] discover much in Goethe of which we have as yet no shadow of an idea. The works of the soul [Geist] are immutably firm, but criticism is somewhat volatile; she is born of the views of the age, is significant only for it, and if she herself is not of a sect which involves artistic value, as, for example, that of

Schlegel, she passes with her time to the grave. Every age when it gets new ideas, gets with them new eyes, and sees much that is new in the old efforts of mind that have preceded it. (*The Works of Heinrich Heine*, trans. Charles Godfrey Leland, London: Heinemann, 1906, vol. 2, 231)

In other words, while we might need to worry of our field(s) there is less reason to have to worry about the legacy of Heine and some of the other literary "content creators." And indeed, if the history of literary scholarship is a safe indicator as anything else, it has taught us how with each generation's new experiences and ideas the literary texts of old assume an often surprisingly refreshing new significance.

If this sounds hopeful and maybe a bit dreamy, it is also what has kept Heine studies on the move. Maybe this is all an affair that has been "klein aber fein" - but then again what would be wrong with that?

At least these are the kinds of concerns that keep crossing my mind as we enter a new year. But maybe the challenging and exciting part is that we cannot yet say what those new ideas will be, though what we know is that Heine's texts have so far never let us down in offering resources to deal

with the challenges of our times, and each time so in eye-opening ways.

It helps, of course, to be able to report that during the past year the Society has been involved in some promising initiatives. In November 2022, the Heinrich-Heine-Institut, the German Heinrich-Heine-Gesellschaft, and the Society co-organized an international conference on Heinrich Heine und die Menschenrechte in Düsseldorf. This cooperation was a great experience and we hope to continue working together in the future. Here is the program:

Friday November 18, 2022

Begrüßung: Sabine Brenner-Wilczek (Düsseldorf), Willi Goetschel (Toronto)

Christoph auf der Horst (Düsseldorf): Heinrich Heines Kampf für die Menschenrechte. Konstruktivität und Solidarität

Arnd Pollman (Berlin): "Der Gedanke geht der Tat voraus." Inwiefern gab es schon zu Heines Zeit Menschenrechte?

Tracie Matysik (Austin, Texas): Ursus sacer: Sovereignty and Bear Life in *Atta Troll*.

Christine Ivanovic (Wien/Berlin): Zur Aktualität von Heinrich Heines „Atta Troll“

Christian Liedtke presents selected manuscripts from the archive collection of the Heinrich-Heine Institut

Saturday, November 19, 2022

Helge Dedek (Montreal): "Eine Bibel des Egoismus" - Heine, Recht und Rechte

Christian Liedtke (Düsseldorf): „... und es war ein Mensch.“ Menschenrechtsverletzungen in Heines Werk

Sebastian Wogenstein (Storrs, Connecticut): Vom Recht auf Brot: Sozioökonomische Rechte bei Heine

Willi Goetschel (Toronto): Heine und die Menschenrechte: eine verborgene Tradition.

The conference provided a wonderful opportunity to discuss Heine's critical contribution to rethinking human rights over the period of two days. The papers are slated to be published in this year's *Heine Jahrbuch*.

At this year's MLA in San Francisco, the Society sponsored the panel "Heine and the Diasporic Experience," organized by Alicia E. Ellis. Because of the ongoing issues with COVID it was decided that the panel was going to be presented via Zoom. Here is the program of this panel presented January 6, 2023:

Linda Maeding (U of Bremen), 1492; or, The Emergence of a Diasporic Utopian Thinking in Heine

Willi Goetschel (U of Toronto), Heine's Diasporic Modernity

Alicia E. Ellis (Colby C), Slavery, History, and Seascapes: Heine's 'Das Sklavenschiff' and Walcott's 'The Sea Is History'

Arianna Amatruda (U of Florence), Diasporic Bodies in Heine's Oeuvre: The Case of Pomare

Thanks to Alicia's initiative, this panel impressively demonstrated how Heine remains indeed a poet who commands future attention. I cannot speak for the other panelists but reading "Das Sklavenschiff" in the context of Paul Gilroy's approach about the "Black Atlantic" has led me to begin thinking more about the project of exploring the interconnections between Black and Jewish discourses on diaspora.

Heine and World Literature

I am also pleased to inform you that the forthcoming issue of *The Germanic Review* features the special theme focus "Heine and World Literature" with the

following contributions, all by members of the Society:

Willi Goetschel, Heine and World Literature

Chloe Vaughn, “Die Partei der Blumen und Nachtigallen“: Heine and Herder Between National and World Literature

Michael Swellander, The Arabic-Spanish-Jewish School of Poets: Heinrich Heine’s “ehudah ben Halevy” and World Literature

Christoph auf der Horst, Heinrich Heine und die ‘rote Weltliteratur

GSA and MLA

While I am also happy to report that a CFP is already out and has been sent to you regarding a panel on Heine and Translation at the upcoming GSA conference in Montreal in the fall (you can find it [here](#)), **all options are on the table for a panel at next year’s MLA. Please immediately write to me if you wish to organize such a panel.**

Jeffrey L. Sammons Prize

A committee has now been struck for the award of the best essay published or accepted for publication on Heine from 2020 to 2022 written by a graduate student or emerging scholar (pre-tenure). Please send nominations and self-nominations with a PDF of the paper to me and the Secretary-Treasurer Sebastian Wogenstein by February 15.

Free Graduate Student Membership

This is a reminder that we continue to offer free membership to graduate students. I would like to encourage all members to direct students interested in becoming members to the Secretary-Treasurer for registration: wogenstein@uconn.edu

Dissertation Mentoring Program

Please direct any students writing their dissertation on Heine or a Heine-related subject and interested in mentoring support to me so we can match them with an experienced colleague for support and mentoring.

Research opportunities at the Heinrich-Heine-Institut

Last year, a second graduate student from Toronto has been successful in being awarded a fellowship by the Heinrich-Heine-Institut. This is a wonderful opportunity to receive not just a nice stipend but also the unwavering support by the knowledgeable scholars working at the institute. Candidates should contact me so I can put them in touch with the person in charge of this program.

NAHS Website

This is a reminder: To keep our list of recent publications by members updated we ask you to please send information about any recent publication on Heine or related to Heine research to Sebastian Wogenstein.

Finally

I would like to hear from you and encourage you to drop me a line if you are interested in taking a more active role in the Society. Please feel free to write to me with any ideas, suggestions, or concerns.

At last, another reminder those who have not paid their annual membership fees yet: Please do so at your earliest convenience!

With best regards and wishes,

Willi Goetschel