

OBERBÜHNE

The upper floor of a double-floored stage, used esp. in Shakespearean plays.

OBJEKTIVISMUS

In Marxist terminology a pejorative term for the view that phenomena can be perceived objectively, i.e. independently of the political and social opinions of the person perceiving.

ODE (ode)

Form of lyric poetry, which treats elevated themes, using elaborate language. There are no strict formal requirements, but German odes are usually written in unrhymed stanzas. The *Ode* frequently makes a direct address to its subject, often in the *Du* form. The tone is less spontaneous and more restrained than that of the →HYMNE, which it closely resembles, esp. in its subject-matter; e.g. truth, friendship, joy, the fatherland etc.

OFFENE FORM (open form) = atektonisch →**GESCHLOSSENE FORM**

OFFIZIN (printing office)

ONOMATOPOESIE (onomatopoeia, echoism) = Klangmalerei, Schallnachahmung, = Tonmalerei

Rhetorical figure: words whose sounds reinforce and echo their meaning, or the formation of such words;

e.g.: Und außen horch! gings trapp, trapp, trapp. (Bürger, *Lenore*) →KLANG.

ORDENSDICHTUNG

A broad term which is applied to the literature developed by religious orders. →DEUTSCHORDENSDICHTUNG, →JESUITENDICHTUNG.

The monastic orders performed a valuable task in cultivating Latin literature and recording popular literature in the vernacular.

ORIGINALAUSGABE →**AUSGABE**

ORIGINALGENIE →**GENIEZEIT**

ORTSKOLORIT (local colour)

The detailed representation in literature of the speech, dress, customs, etc. of a particular region.

OSSIANISCHE DICHTUNG

Literature inspired by Macpherson's collection of poems, published in 1760, which he claimed was a translation of poems by the Gaelic bard (→BARDE) Ossian. In fact, it was Macpherson's own work. However, its publication had great impact on the →STURM UND DRANG movement. Characteristic features were descriptions of harsh landscapes, winter scenes, autumn storms etc., befitting the prevailing tone of lamentation and melancholy.

OSTERSPIEL

The oldest form of liturgical drama in the M.A. The *Osterspiel*, originally performed

in church, with the events surrounding Christ's resurrection as the subject-matter, represents the important transition from the Latin trope (→TROPUS) to the vernacular →PASSIONSSPIEL in that it still contains elements of the liturgy but includes freely composed scenes. By the end of the 14th century *Osterspiele* had been superseded by the passion plays and →MYSTERIENSPIELE, which were performed outside the church. →GEISTLICHES DRAMA.

OXYMORON (oxymoron)

Figure of speech in which two incongruous or contradictory elements are juxtaposed; e.g.: *Helldunkel, alter Knabe*. →CONTRADICTION IN ADJECTO, →PARADOXON.

P

PAARREIM

The rhyming of two consecutive verse lines to form a →REIMPAAR.

PANTALONE (Pantalone)

Stock character from the →COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE: the stereotyped foolish husband.

PANTOMIME (mime)

Form of dramatic entertainment in which the characters act without speech, conveying thoughts and emotions by facial expressions and gestures, which are often highly exaggerated, frequently with musical accompaniment.

N.B. Not to be confused with the English pantomime.

PANTRAGISMUS

Highly pessimistic attitude: notion that the world is governed by tragedy, that every action is predestined to failure; exemplified in the dramas of Hebbel (1813-1863).

PARABEL (parable)

Short fictitious narrative about an ordinary situation, which illustrates a moral precept or a general truth about human nature, as the narrator draws a sustained analogy between the material in the story and the lesson he is attempting to impart. →GLEICHNIS, →MODELL.

PARABELSTÜCK

Term introduced by Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) to refer to some of his plays which are meant to be understood as parables. The extension of the term to contemporary dramatists (F. Dürrenmatt 1921-1990, Max Frisch 1911-1991, M. Walser 1927-) remains controversial. →PARABEL.

PARADIGMA →EXEMPEL

PARADOXON (paradox)

Statement which although apparently contradictory or absurd, is in fact valid, e.g.: "...einer der rechtschaffensten zugleich und entsetzlichsten Menschen seiner Zeit." (Kleist, *Michael Kohlhaas*, 1810-1811). →OXYMORON.

PARALIPOMENA

Material not included in the body of a literary work, and appended as a supplement.

PARALLELDRUCK (parallel text)

Publication which provides two (or more) versions of the same text on opposite pages.

PARALLELISMUS (parallelism) = Gleichlauf

Figure of speech: the recurrence of similar syntactical patterns e.g.: Der Mensch denkt, Gott lenkt. →ANTITHESE.

PARATAXE (parataxis) = Beiordnung

The juxtaposition of main clauses. →HYPOTAXE.

PARENTHESE (parenthesis) = Schaltsatz

A word, phrase or clause inserted into a sentence which is grammatically complete without it; usually indicated by the use of brackets, dashes or commas around it.

PARERGON (parergon)

Secondary or auxiliary work, separate from the main body of a literary work.

PARNASS (Parnassus)

Mountain in Greece which was reputed to be the home of Apollo and the Muses. It is therefore associated with poetry and literary creation. →KASTALIA, →MUSEN.

PARODIE (parody)

The German term has the same connotations as parody in English and in both languages the same distinction is made between parody and travesty (→TRAVESTIE). Parody is the imitation, with more or less ridiculing or deflating intent, of the form, style and mannerisms of a literary type or genre, or of a particular author, and the substitution of a trivial or comic content for a sublime or serious one. Thus Alexander Pope adopts and exaggerates the characteristics of the heroic epic in his *The Rape of the Lock* (1712), which describes the theft of a snippet of hair.

Though some parodists - perhaps all - have an affinity with what they parody, theirs is an aggressive technique, which ridicules the verbal pretensions and mannerisms of the target.

Looked at in a historical dimension, parody has the function of demolishing anachronistic or exhausted forms. Sometimes this leads to the creation of major new forms; Cervantes's *Don Quijote* (1605 ff), for example, can be seen as not simply a parody of the chivalric romance, but as the first novel.

P.T.

PARS PRO TOTO

Figure of speech (a kind of →SYNEKDOCHE) in which a part of something is used to express the whole; e.g.: 20 Köpfe instead of 20 Personen. (→METONYMIE).

PASSION (Passion); **PASSIONSSPIEL** (passion play)

The Passion means the sufferings of Christ on the Cross, esp. as recorded in the Gospels. The passion play was a med. drama on this theme, which developed from the →OSTERSPIEL. Frequently, the production of passion plays entailed considerable expense, and they lasted several days. They enjoyed great popularity, and were performed from the late 14th to the early 16th century. The present Oberammergau *Passionsspiel* has been substantially altered and the text bears little resemblance to the original. →GEISTLICHES DRAMA.

PATHETISCH (with pathos) →**PATHOS**

PATHOS (pathos)

Pathos in English is that quality in a work which evokes pity and sadness in the reader/spectator, and is more likely to occur in sentimental and melodramatic works, rather than tragedy. In German, *Pathos* is closer to Aristotle's (384-322

B.C.) usage, meaning an intense experience of emotion and suffering, which results from the (invariably wrong) decision the tragic hero makes. *Pathos* is thus an essential element in tragedy. For Emil Staiger (*Grundbegriffe der Poetik*, 1946) *Pathos* is one of the constituents of the quality of →DRAMATISCH. *Pathos* in this context denotes the urge to convince and presupposes a resistance which has to be overcome. It is advocating what should be the case and opposing the status quo. →PROBLEM.

N.B. *Pathetisch* = with pathos; NOT pathetic.

A.O.

PAWLATSCHENTHEATER

Form of →WANDERBÜHNE unique to the Viennese popular tradition. *Pawlatschen* were simple wooden stages frequently incorporating the cart used by the players. These stages were hastily erected for partly improvised performances in courtyards and market-places.

PEGASOS (Pegasus)

In Greek mythology a winged horse which sprang from the blood of Medusa after Perseus had slain her. Bellerophon tamed Pegasus with a special bridle given to him by Athena. The two then fought and killed the Chimaera. Because of his association with →HELIKON and →HIPPOKRENE, Pegasus is taken by some authors to be a symbol of poetic inspiration.

PENTAMETER (pentameter)

Metrical line consisting of five feet, usually dactyls or spondees. →METRIK.

PERIODE (period)

1. Segment of time, epoch.
2. Full-stop: point which marks the end of a sentence.
3. Complex sentence comprising a series of different clauses.

PERIPETIE (peripeteia, peripety)

In tragedy, the hero's sudden change of fortune, usually a change from prosperity to ruin, which is one of the basic elements of the tragic plot. →ANAGNORISIS, →HAMARTIA, →WENDEPUNKT.

PERIPHRASE (periphrasis, circumlocution)

Use of many words to express something which might be conveyed in a few; often employed for purposes of euphemism.

PERSIFLAGE (persiflage)

Mode of ridiculing a person or situation by exaggerating the style, manners or way of thinking of a person, or the governing principle, genesis or effects of a situation.

PERSONALES ERZÄHLEN →AUKTORIALES ERZÄHLEN

PERSONENVERZEICHNIS →DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PERSONIFIKATION (personification, pathetic fallacy)

Figure of speech in which inanimate objects or abstract qualities are invested with human attributes and abilities.

PERSPEKTIVE

1. Perspective. In theatre and painting the creation of the visual impression of depth and dimension.
2. The point of view from which events are narrated (→ERZÄHLER) or from which the world is described. The application of the term is usually confined to narrative works and refers to the type of narrator, e.g. first-person narrator, omniscient narrator etc. = Erzählhaltung, = Erzählperspektive, = Erählsituation.
3. In the GDR the optimistic view of the socialist future which was often mandatory for the writer of socialist realism. →SOZIALISTISCHER REALISMUS.

E.W.H.

PHANTASMAGORIE (phantasmagoria)

The creation on stage of the illusion of ghosts, phantasms, or dreamlike visions, by means of technical devices for theatrical purposes.

PHILOLOGIE

The study of a people or culture mainly by means of its language and literature. Philology is concerned specifically with the editing, classification, commenting and interpretation of texts. Its two major branches, linguistics and literary criticism, are supported by the study of textual criticism, palaeography, grammar, stylistics, rhetoric, metrics and poetics. (→METRIK, →POETIK, →RHETORIK, →STILISTIK, →TEXTKRITIK).

As an academic discipline, philology has a long history. Its origins can be traced to the ancient Greeks, particularly to the famous library at Alexandria which became the centre of a renowned school in the 4th century B.C. Its activities included the codification and editing of literary texts as well as the writing of glosses to these texts. The Greeks strongly influenced the Roman philologists, while the med. European and Byzantine scholars built on the legacy of Rome. The →RENAISSANCE, with its interest in classical antiquity and its literary heritage, gave a new impetus to the discipline, which was further intensified by the invention of the printing press, and which was sustained into the 18th century. In the 19th century, the methods which had been developed and tested in the study of Greek and Latin texts were beginning to be applied to vernacular literatures. The leading figures in this process in the area of German language and literature were the brothers Grimm and Carl Lachmann. They thus laid the foundations of a new branch of philology, →GERMANISTIK, which has become an academic discipline in its own right. →ALTPHILOLOGIE, →NEUPHILOLOGIE.

P.Oe.

PHONETIK (phonetics)

Phonetics is the study of the sounds used in human language. Any utterance can be regarded as a sequence of discrete sounds, *segments*, whose properties are studied primarily in three ways. *Articulatory* phonetics aims at a description of these segmental speech sounds on the basis of their production. *Acoustic* phonetics is concerned with them as patterns of air vibrations. A third approach, *auditory phonetics*, looks at the reception of sound by the hearer.

Each distinct sound, *phone*, can be given a unique description by stating the activity

of the vocal organs in its production. For *vowels*, in which air, set in vibration by the vocal chords, passes through the mouth without any obstruction, one refers to the *position* (*front, central, back*) and *height* (on a *high to low* scale) of the highest point of the tongue, and to the lips (*rounded or spread*) and for *consonants*, to the type of obstruction, whether complete (*stops*) partial (*fricatives*) complete but with open nasal passage (*nasals*) etc., and to the place where this occurs, e.g. at the lips (*bilabials*) etc. The International Phonetic Alphabet provides a symbol for every phone, e.g. [k] as in *ski*lll.

R.H.

PHONOLOGIE (phonology)

Phonology as part of General Linguistics aims at discovering generalizations about the way all human languages make use of sound, and a statement of the sound system of a language is called its phonology. This will include a list of the phones (→PHONETIK) used by speakers of that language, and a classification of these into *phonemes*, distinctive classes of phones; for in any given language not every phonetic distinction is relevant. For instance, there are two 'l' sounds in English, the light [l] and the 'dark' [l^w], but, although phonetically different, they never function distinctively in English, because [l] is used only when a vowel follows, and [l^w] only when no vowel follows, as in *leaf* and *feel*. These two phones thus make up one phoneme, /l/, are its *allophones*, and are in *complementary distribution*, in that where one occurs the other cannot. The phonology of a language will also include *phonological rules*, which are statements of the sort just made about the distribution of [l] and [l^w] in English, as well as statements of other regularities of a language's sound system, such as *Auslautverhärtung* in German, the rule that stem-final /b/, /d/, /g/ are pronounced as the corresponding voiceless sounds [p], [t], [k] at the end of a word, cf. *Rad* v. *Rades*.

R.H.

PICKELHERING

Stock comic figure of English origin. →ENGLISCHE KOMÖDIANTEN.

PIERROT

Stock pantomime figure of the clown, usually dressed in a white costume and with a whitened face.

PIETISMUS (pietism)

Pietism was a reform movement in the Protestant church and religion, which flourished in Germany - although there were similar contemporary movements in other European countries, e.g. Puritanism in England - between about 1670, when Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705) founded the 'Collegia pietatis' in Frankfurt am Main, and about 1740, when with the accession of Frederick the Great the Pietists lost their hitherto dominant influence in the Prussian education system.

Instead of the rigid dogmatic intellectualism of orthodox Protestantism Pietism emphasized the importance of individual and subjective aspects of religious experience. It emphasized feeling as opposed to doctrinal understanding (e.g. Goethe's *Faust I*: "Gefühl ist alles;/Name ist Schall und Rauch,/Umnebelnd Himmelsglut"), and the personal relationship of the individual to God. This led to the celebration of Christ as friend, brother, lover and husband of the soul.

Pietism was on the one hand an active reform movement, insisting on the primacy of

good works and on the practical regeneration of social ethics, and on the other hand a passive and mystical flight from the world into contemplation.

The literary products of the Pietists (hymns, religious poetry, diaries, confessions and →ERBAUUNGSLITERATUR) are not as important as the influence the movement had on literature later in the 18th century. The Pietists, through their constant practice in the observation and analysis of (religious) emotions, contributed greatly to the refinement and intensification of feeling, and to the development of a language adequate to express it; e.g. Goethe's *Werther* (1774) and Klopstock's *Messias* (1748). The flowering of subjectivism in 18th century German literature (→STURM UND DRANG, →ROMANTIK) cannot be fully appreciated without an understanding of Pietism. The Pietist cult of friendship as love (→EMPFINDSAMKEIT), the greater importance given to woman as *schöne Seele*, and the new sensitivity in the experience of nature were all to play an important part in German literature.

The effect of Pietism on the German language was to replace Latin by German in religious writing and in education, to overcome the complex sentence structures of the →BAROCK writers in a search for a clear and simple syntax, to introduce a dynamic element into the language with a preference for verbs of motion, especially using prefixes (*ein, hinein, durch, entgegen, hinab hinauf, aufwärts*, etc.), and to develop the expression of abstract ideas by the use of verb-substantives ending in *-ung, -heit* and *-keit*.

The predominant use of water metaphors (*Quelle, Brunnen, Fluß, Strom, Wassersturz, Wasserfall*, etc.) was taken over and developed by later writers, especially Goethe. Pietism also influenced 18th century German literature, in that many writers were educated in Pietist institutions.

E.W.H.

PIKARISCHER ROMAN →SCHELMENROMAN

PLAGIAT (plagiarism)

The appropriation of another person's writings or ideas and representation of them as one's own.

PLANIPES →MIMUS

PLATTDEUTSCHE DICHTUNG

Literature written in Low-German dialect. →DIALEKTDICHTUNG.

PLEONASMUS (pleonasm)

Redundancy of expression: the use of more words than are necessary to express an idea or situation, so that a superfluity results; sometimes this may be a deliberate stylistic device.

POEME EN PROSE →PROSAGEDICHT

POESIE →DICHTUNG

POETA DOCTUS

Highly educated and cultured author who writes for an equally well-educated public.

POETIK (poetics) = Dichtungslehre

An academic discipline which concerns itself with questions of literary genres, literary forms and modes of presentation as well as with a general theory of literature.

Poetik is therefore an integral and central part of →LITERATURWISSENSCHAFT.

The published account of such views and theories is also referred to as *Poetik*.

The oldest surviving *Poetiken* are the fragments on tragedy and epic poetry by Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) and the *Epistula ad pisonem* (known as *De arte poetica*) by Horace (65-8 B.C.). Since then every period or cultural movement has produced its own *Poetik* according to its particular notion of literature. There are in principle two types of *Poetiken*: prescriptive ones, which establish rules and regulations for the writing of literature and judge literature according to these rules; and descriptive ones, which by means of analysis and comparison of individual literary works aim to arrive at a description and characterization of a genre. Modern *Poetiken* are generally descriptive. →GATTUNGEN.

A.O.

POETISCHER REALISMUS →REALISMUS

POINTE

The pungent and unexpected twist in a joke, aphorism or anecdote: the gist or essential meaning.

POLICHINELLE →PULCINELLA

POLITISCHE DICHTUNG

Writing which reflects either directly or indirectly in its content political or social concerns, usually, but not always, associated with the desire to bring about change. It thus comprises a broad category which may also embrace the terms →TENDENZ-DICHTUNG and →ENGAGIERTE LITERATUR. Disagreement exists as to the exact nature of *politische Dichtung*, and at least three types may be distinguished: (1) the author produces political propaganda, either of an affirmatory or critical kind, and suppresses his own personality; (2) the author writes on behalf of a particular ideology, but retains his artistic autonomy; (3) the author expresses his personal reaction to a given political situation. A distinction can also be made between works of *politische Dichtung* which are specifically intended to have a political impact and those which acquire a political significance only in the course of time. Although *politische Dichtung* embodies a strong and enduring tradition in German literature, which may be traced back at least as far as Walther von der Vogelweide's *Spruchdichtung* (1198-1227), only comparatively recently has it achieved literary respectability. There has always been the suspicion, particularly in the case of lyric poetry, that literature which articulates a political message impairs its own aesthetic worth, since ambiguity and artistic innovation, which are considered necessary components of a literary work, must invariably be limited. Conversely, it has been argued that to couch a political message in literary terms impairs its political effectiveness. Another school of thought, however, maintains that the category is superfluous anyway, since all writing is inherently political. Some favoured forms of *politische Dichtung* are the ballad (Brecht, *Von der Kindesmörderin Marie Farrar*, 1922), the satirical novel (Heinrich Mann, *Der Untertan*, 1918) and the documentary theatre (Weiss, *Die Ermittlung*, 1965). →BALLADE, →DOKUMENTARTHEATER.

POLYHYMNIA

Muse of dance and music. →MUSEN.

POSITIVER HELD

Term current in Soviet and early GDR discussions about Socialist Realism (→SOZIALISTISCHER REALISMUS) but superseded in the GDR in the mid-1960s by the term *sozialistisches Menschenbild*. Initially, the *positive Held* was to be an uncomplicated as well as an exemplary and selfless character. Unlike the hero (→HELD) he was not tormented by self-doubts. Nor did he question the social/political system to which he subordinated all personal concerns in unflinching devotion to the revolutionary transformation of society. With increasing adherence to the heritage of bourgeois classical literature in these societies came also the recognition that the *positive Held* remained a lifeless, cardboard figure. Far from inducing identification/emulation in the reader, he rather undermined the entertaining as well as the edifying intentions of Socialist Realism. Hence the demise of the *positive Held* in favour of more differentiated and complex literary figures.

B.E.

POSITIVISMUS (positivism)

Positivism was the predominant method in German literary criticism (→LITERATURGESCHICHTE, →LITERATURWISSENSCHAFT) during the second half of the 19th century. The positivists preferred to deal in data and facts only and rejected metaphysics and speculation of any sort. Positivism in literary criticism was the attempt to adopt the method of the sciences for the study of literature. For this reason the activities of these scholars were somewhat restricted. On the one hand they had to secure the facts which meant producing reliable editions, biographies, lexica and the tracing and recording of literary sources, on the other hand the aim was the writing of a history of literature based on this information. The most representative literary historian was Wilhelm Scherer (*Geschichte der deutschen Literatur*, 1883) who attempted to explain German literature and its development in terms of the writer's background (milieu, heritage) his upbringing (education) and his personal experiences. The emphasis was on the genesis of the literary text rather than on aesthetic considerations.

Although positivism as a means of studying literature was superseded at the turn of the century in favour of greater emphasis on →INTERPRETATION, the remaining merit of this method is to be seen in its contribution to the documentation and recording of sources, texts and data which form the basis for Literaturwissenschaft as practised today.

A.O.

POSSE

Derived from the med. →FASTNACHTSPIEL, also known as *Possenspiel*, the term is now restricted to the 19th century comedies influenced by the →COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE and the French *vaudeville*. *Posse* is low comedy, in local dialect, akin to farce and burlesque. The schematic plots provide occasions for song and dance. The *Posse* can be satirical, especially in the so-called →COUPLET. Theatrical success often depended on the skill of the individual actors, for whom the plays were especially written. The *Lokalposse* and *Sittenstück* aimed at a pseudo-realistic

portrayal of (petty) bourgeois life. The main centres of this urban entertainment were Berlin and Vienna. Raimund (1790-1836) transcended the genre, and Nestroy (1801-1862) gave it literary merit. The *Posse* finally gave way to the Viennese *Operette*, yet the influence of Nestroy's *Possen* can be felt in Horváth (1901-1938), Brecht (1898-1956) and Dürrenmatt (1921-1990). →ZAUBERSTÜCK.

F.W.

POSTILLE

Devotional book which contains explanations of biblical texts. Also known as *Hauspostille*, which was a collection of biblical quotations intended to be read to the family. The term *Postille* is now applied to any literary work which is aimed at a particular group.

POSTMODERNE

Controversial term used in literary criticism to indicate the development of literature away from restrictive modernism (→HERMETISCHE LITERATUR, second definition) towards pluralism, "pla(y)gialism", pastiche, and a new appreciation of premodern values and ideas. *Das Treffen in Telgte* (1979) by Grass shows all these features. (The world bestseller of postmodern literature is the novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980) by Umberto Eco.) The term *Postmoderne* is problematic in that most, if not all, of the allegedly postmodern characteristics can be traced back to certain ideas of avant-garde modernism itself. Another problem is that in architectural criticism the term is used in a different way to indicate the overcoming of narrow functionalism.

H.D.

PRÄFIGURATION (prefiguration)

Usually a literary work, or an element from a work, employed for symbolic effect in a subsequent piece of literature, e.g. the use of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1595?) in Keller's *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* (1856) or Dante's Beatrice in Hesse's *Demian* (1919). Other sources - paintings, games, films, or, most frequently, earlier parts of the same text - can also serve as prefigurations, provided they signal a pre-existent pattern against which the events and characters of a work are to be interpreted. The term derives from figural Bible exegesis (→EXEGESE) and denotes a scheme whereby the persons and events of the O.T. were interpreted as prophecies of the N.T. and its history of salvation. In its modern, generally secularized use 'prefiguration' has lost this prophetic connotation; it no longer suggests the subservient, predictive role of the earlier text nor does it imply that the post-figuration will necessarily fulfil all the expectations initially aroused by such a scheme of symbolic correspondences. Prefigurations can be either explicit or covert. They can have a variety of functions: adding a heroic aura to a modern realistic plot, exploiting satirically contrasts between the contemporary world and that of the prefiguration, playing with the reader's expectations or introducing a sense of patterned fatalism into a work. →VORAUSDEUTUNG.

J.J.W.

PRÄGNANZ

Brevity of expression, succinct and pithy.

PRÄSENZBIBLIOTHEK

A library where books may be consulted, or read on the premises, but not borrowed.

PREISLIED

In old Germanic poetry, a poem in praise of some august personage, usually on an occasion such as a military victory or a death.

PREZIOSITÄT

1. Preciosity: refinement of language, ideas or style which is so excessive that it appears affected and self-conscious.
2. Préciosité: French literary movement of the 17th century which developed in the salons of influential aristocratic women who dubbed themselves 'les précieuses'. One leading *Précieuse* was the Marquise de Rambouillet (1588-1665), whose salon in the Hôtel de Rambouillet (1618-1650) was frequented by the major writers, thinkers and members of the nobility of the period. The *Précieuses* sought to elevate and refine the French language, in order to enhance its suitability for artistic expression. They deplored coarseness and bluntness, and aimed at purity and delicacy of expression, manners and style. This fastidiousness led to some abuses and extravagances, which Molière satirized in *Les Précieuses ridicules* (1659). However, in his preface he stated emphatically that "...les plus excellentes choses sont sujettes à être copiées par de mauvais singes...", pointing out that he was poking fun at the excesses, and not at préciosité itself.

F.K.

PRIMÄRLITERATUR

Creative literary works, as distinct from works about them. →SEKUNDÄRLITERATUR.

PROBE (rehearsal) →GENERALPROBE

PROBLEM, PROBLEMATIK

1. Question, usually of an intellectual or spiritual nature, which is put forward for discussion and solution.
2. For Emil Staiger (*Grundbegriffe der Poetik*, 1946) *Problem* is one of the constituents of the quality →DRAMATISCH. *Problem* in this context means the envisaged aim which is to be achieved by literary means. For this reason the problematic style is end-oriented, i.e. everything is employed for the purpose of reaching the conclusion (in a drama) or the point (in an aphorism or a joke). →PATHOS.

A.O.

PRODESSE ET DELECTARE

Quotation from Horace's *Ars poetica*, which states that the dual function of poetry is to provide both aesthetic pleasure and moral guidance.

PROLEGOMENA

Introductory or preliminary discourse of a literary work.

PROLETARIERDICHTUNG →ARBEITERDICHTUNG

PROLETKULT

Russian abbreviation for proletarian culture. Organization founded in Russia in 1917

with the goal of fostering and developing a specific culture of, and by, the proletariat. In 1923, after a period of great cultural activity, it was dissolved, because its leader, Bogdanov, wanted it to be independent of party political lines.

PROSA (prose) = ungebundene Rede

As Monsieur Jourdain was instructed in Molière's *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* II, 4 (1670): "tout ce qui n'est point prose est vers; et tout ce qui n'est point vers est prose". Prose is ordinary language in speech or writing, free from the regular rhythms and rhymes of verse. The adjective *prosaisch*, like *prosaic*, carries more than a suggestion of pejorative meaning, indicating a degree of dullness or the absence of inspiration. In literary criticism, however, *Prosa* is contrasted with *Poesie* (→DICHTUNG), and as *Kunstprosa* prose can become a vehicle for imaginative and emotional as well as intellectual and informative discourse. In general, prose appeals to the intellect, and poetry to the imagination, and in this sense the devices of poetry are unsuitable for the purpose and function of prose. Attempts have been made to use prose in the same way as verse, e.g. Baudelaire in his *Petits Poèmes en prose* (1869) or Peter Altenberg (1859-1919), but more usually authors writing in prose, wishing to achieve the effects of verse, have tended to include verse in a prose-work. German prose writing was, with some exceptions, undistinguished before Lessing (1729-1781). His critical essays and polemics owe much to his wide acquaintance with French and other writers of the European Enlightenment (→AUFKLÄRUNG). Lessing's prose is a model of lucidity, cogency of argument, vigour and unambiguousness, and these qualities are normally the aims of prose as opposed to the aims of poetry. A generation later, with Goethe, German prose acquired new parameters corresponding to Goethe's very wide-ranging human sympathies and intellectual interests, his imaginative power and encyclopaedic reading. During the 19th century prose displaced verse as the vehicle for drama.

J.M.L.

PROSAGEDICHT (prose poem, poème en prose) = Poème en prose

Short prose form which through its choice of language and rhythm approaches poetry in its suggestive and lyrical qualities, but can be differentiated from it because of its lack of metrical lines, rhyme and verse division. →LYRIK, →LYRISCH.

PROSODIE (prosody)

The study of versification, incorporating such elements as sound, metre, rhythm, stanza form etc.

PROSPEKT

1. Backdrop, the wall at the rear of a stage set which is painted to create the illusion of a specific place.
2. Prospectus: descriptive account of the main points of a forthcoming literary work or commercial enterprise.

PROTOKOLL (minutes of proceedings, report of a meeting)

PROZESSIONSSPIEL →FRONLEICHNAMSSPIEL

PSEUDONYM (nom de plume, pen-name, pseudonym)

Assumed name under which an author or artist is known. e.g.: Novalis = Friedrich

von Hardenberg.

PSYCHOANALYTISCHE LITERATURWISSENSCHAFT (psychoanalytical literary criticism)

School of criticism which applies the techniques of psychoanalysis to literary criticism.

PUBLIZIST (journalist)

Person who writes on current political and social issues.

PULCINELLA = Polichinelle

Stock male character from the →COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE.

PUNCH

Comic figure modelled on →PULCINELLA. →COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE.

PUPPENSPIEL (puppet or marionette show)

Both the performance of a play by puppets (*Handpuppen*) or marionettes and the actual puppet or marionette theatre are referred to as *Puppenspiel*. It was a very popular form of entertainment, esp. in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The *Puppenspiel* is particularly significant in the history of German literature, since it was when as a boy in Frankfurt Goethe (1749-1832) saw a *Puppenspiel* performance of *Dr Faustus*, that he first became acquainted with the Faust legend. This experience contributed to his life-long preoccupation with the theme.

A.O.

PURGIERTE AUSGABE (bowdlerized edition) →AUSGABE

PURISMUS (purism) = Reinheit der Sprache

Purity of language became something of a fetish in 17th century Germany. It was connected with the rising tide of literature written in the vernacular, and reflected a new-found pride in its ability to convey complex and subtle ideas. The most important aim was to stamp out the use of dialect, French and incorrect Latin mixed in with the German. These and other rules were contained in the poetic theories which prescribed the correct way of writing. Literary societies (→SPRACHGESELLSCHAFTEN) played a major role in spreading purism throughout the German-speaking world. Some writers took it to extremes by coining new words to replace those that were based on a foreign language, even if they were commonly used. Although such excesses provoked ridicule and opposition, the trend continued strongly during most of the 18th century. In later times puristic tendencies were increasingly connected with narrow-minded nationalism.

E.Kr.