



# **Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship: A Reader's Commentary (Studies in German Literature Linguistics and Culture)**

*Jane V. Curran*

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## **Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship: A Reader's Commentary (Studies in German Literature Linguistics and Culture) Jane V. Curran**

Goethe's Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre is commonly acknowledged to have played a pivotal role in founding the genre known as the Bildungsroman. Although a wealth of critical material has accumulated since its publication in 1795-96, a detailed commentary in English on this novel of 'apprenticeship' has been lacking from the corpus. Jane V. Curran's full-length commentary fills this gap. In her analysis, Curran presents the standard material familiar from traditional commentaries, but includes passages hitherto neglected, presenting new insights in a new form. Curran stresses the importance of narrative techniques, traces the development of the characters, and draws the reader's attention to the intertextual echoes, the use of symbols, and the many instances of irony. Curran also points out parallels between Wilhelm Meister's experiences and Goethe's life, and illuminates contemporary issues that are touched on in the novel, particularly the development of the German theater. The book provides notes with additional information for the interpretation of Goethe's work, including factual details of general interest, scholarly sources, and background information. This is a vade mecum not only for students of Goethe and of German literature, but also for all those interested in the development of the Bildungsroman. Jane V. Curran is chair of the German Department, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

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