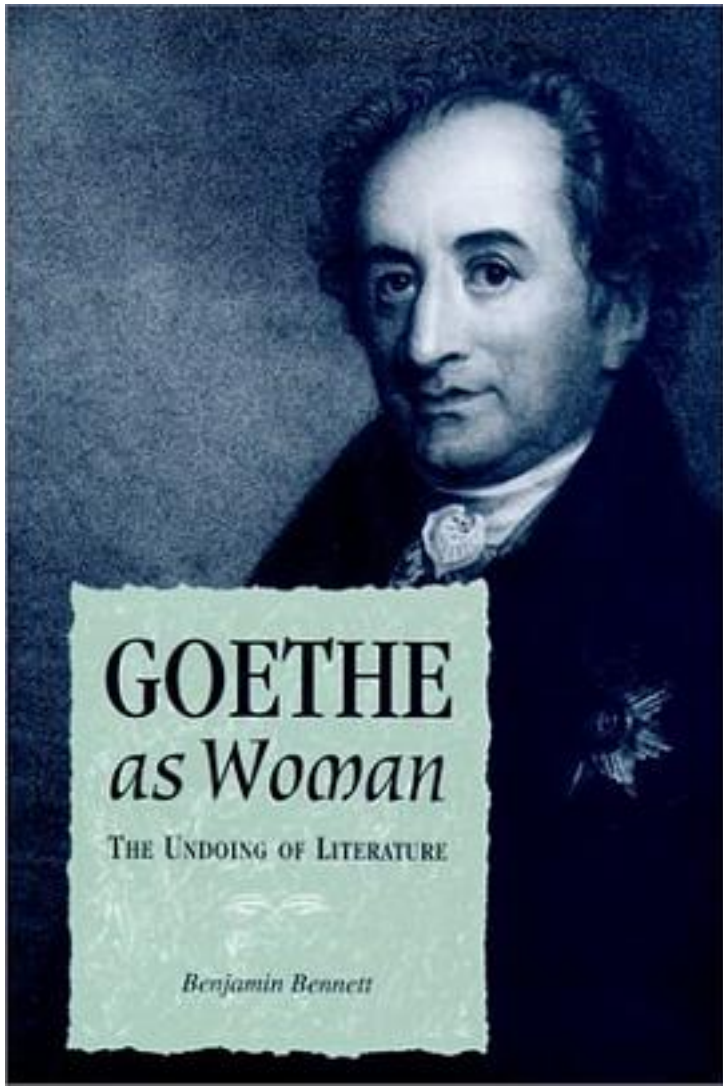


Goethe as Woman



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The most celebrated of German poets, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe is today as much an institution as a writer. This innovative study shows unexpected relations between Goethe the artist and "Goethe" the posthumous tradition, and considers the radical historical metamorphosis of his textual being. Drawing on a lifetime of reading and reflecting on Goethe, Benjamin Bennett focuses on that writer's own struggle with the idea of reading, and with an understanding of the "wrongness" of literature that opens onto the possibility of woman as a needful destabilizing factor. Bennett shows that even in his early writing Goethe exhibits a highly developed theoretical resistance against both the aesthetic and the national aspects of what was understood as literature in his time, an attitude that would lead him to experiment with gender difference as a means of staking out new literary positions. Bennett reviews a number of Goethe's works, offering a bold new interpretation of Werther, fresh insights into *Die natürliche Tochter*, and an assessment of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* that reveals Goethe's feminine voice. He establishes important parallels between Goethe's position and that of modern radical feminism regarding the problem of literary revolution, uncovering a web of suggestions that spreads throughout Goethe's work and the history of reading. Engaging a wide range of prominent thinkers from Nietzsche and Freud to Derrida and Irigaray, Bennett shows the centrality of Goethe to today's literary issues. His book offers Goethe scholars new grist for ongoing consideration of the author's work.

作者介绍:

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