Research in Progress

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the book particularly valuable for anyone beginning the study of GDR literature: the historical information on the GDR literary scene, including the Bitterfeld Movement and Socialist Realism, and the pagination concordance of Aula editions, which enables one to check references in any of the three Aula editions. Perhaps the book's greatest merit is its evenhanded approach to its topic; Langenbruch devotes careful attention to GDR political realities and considers both East and West German interpretations of Die Aula, yet he clearly realizes that he is analyzing a literary work, not writing a political polemic. This recognition, so essential for a study of dialectical humor, is sadly lacking in many publications on GDR literature. Probably neither his method nor his classification of Kant as a proponent of "critical pro-socialism" will satisfy all his readers, yet everyone will understand Kant better after reading this work.

Because the book is in English, it will reach a larger audience, an important consideration in view of the proliferation of "literature in translation" courses. Nevertheless, the choice of language is the one main drawback of this otherwise excellent book: frequent Germanisms interfere with the ease of reading which one would expect from the author's clear thinking and logical organization, and readers who know little German may not understand his meaning in a few places. Certainly the author is not solely responsible for this flaw; a company which publishes in English should have lectors and editors competent to eliminate linguistic problems. However, this defect is largely cosmetic, and the work as a whole is a significant scholarly achievement which represents a major contribution to the growing corpus of GDR literary research.

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