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## Hohendahl and Herminghouse: Literatur und Literaturtheorie in der DDR

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ded into three segments: 1945-9, 1949-the mid-'60's, and the mid-60's to the present. Each one of these sections is again subdivided--into lyric, epic, and drama, with then a general introductory segment (the most valuable aspect of the book) which relates the development of the literature of each period to historical, cultural, and aesthetic movements and changes. The shadow of Überbau and Basis is seen on the land, but not to the degree that it confuses or distorts. The historical divisions are more than suspect. The first division should cover the return of the emigrants and the beginnings of an independent literature. But it succeeds only in illustrating one side of the development--the evolution in the light of Soviet models. At the same moment, writers were bringing with them the product of Marxist thought independently evolved in exile. Brecht and Seghers certainly do not fit the mold presented. But the greatest problem of the new literary history is its reliance on the old triad of genres. Poor Becher, Brecht, and Strittmatter, their life work divided up and loaded into pigeon holes. It is the dismemberment of GDR literature which is the most upsetting.

Overall, the history is usable, but more as a document in the history of the history of the literature of the GDR. We can only hope that Erwin Pracht's forthcoming Marxist aesthetics is less the product of consensus than the present volume.

- Sander Gilman  
Cornell University

Peter Uwe Hohendahl and Patricia Herminghouse, editors, *Literatur und Literaturtheorie in der DDR*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976. 356 pages.

This volume, the collection of several of the papers presented at the Symposium for German Literature in St. Louis in 1974, offers a series of essays that concentrate in detail on specific problems and developments. The book contains eight essays and is divided into two separate sections. The first section is devoted to theoretical considerations; the

second, to practical analysis. The theoretical essays begin with a historical investigation of cultural politics in order to ground GDR literary concepts within their social structure. These essays are stylistically more involved and somewhat cumbersome. Frank Trommler ("Die Kulturpolitik der DDR...") provides a broad historical survey of cultural politics and its roots in German socialism. He explores the concept of classicism in its relation to socialism as developed by Lasalle, Mehring, and Lukács, as well as Wagner's influence on Bebel and Zetkin.

Jost Hermand ("Wandlungen der Modernismus-Debatte in der DDR...") discusses the debate in the GDR since 1956 and analyses the development of GDR cultural policies, but views the developments more negatively than does Trommler. While applauding the general direction and availability of "cultural participation," he is highly critical of the use of such terms as "humanism," with its alleged pre-industrial connotation, which overlooks the dominance of the work sphere in contemporary society.

Peter Hohendahl ("...Zur neueren Literaturtheorie in der DDR") examines the more universal problem of the role of the literary critic, who is viewed by writers in the GDR as negatively as in the West. Hohendahl sketches the various critical tendencies from textual analysis to more linguistic approaches as they attempt to posit a viable function for literary criticism in the GDR. His objective is to help "de-program" the Western critic from his prejudices regarding literary criticism in the GDR.

The final essay in the theoretical section is by Robert Weimann ("Realismus als Kategorie der Literaturgeschichte"), one of the two GDR authors represented in this volume. For the most part he presents a rather conventional view of realism and traces remnants of "realism" theory back to Boccaccio, Rabelais and Cervantes, leading to the vaguely defined term of "humanism."

The essays in the second section attempt to relate the theoretical aspects to the more practical considerations of actual

literary interpretation. Jack Zipes (Bertolt Brecht oder Friedrich Wolf?...) traces the development of GDR drama to these seemingly divergent figures, examining the way GDR official cultural policy has incorporated both positions in a process of legitimation. He refers to both recent theatre productions, as well as to plays not performed in the GDR. The real process of legitimation appears as part of a dialectical process within a literary work itself.

P.M. Lützel ("...Zur Darstellung sozialer Mobilität im Roman der DDR") discusses the role of education and re-education in novels as different as Ole Bienkopp and Nachdenken über Christa T.

Pat Herminhouse ("...Zur Darstellung der Frau im Roman der DDR") focuses both on the depiction of women in the GDR novel as well as the attempt within literature to overcome the gap between the ideal and the real. She bases her analysis on three phases -- Aufbau, Ankunft, and das veränderte Bewusstsein -- which are linked to the economic development of the GDR.

The last essay ("...reden von uns zu uns") by Silvia Schlenstedt, a literary critic in the GDR, an "insider's" perspective on recent GDR lyrics, stands, even more than Weimann's, in sharp contrast to the others. Most striking is her almost natural acceptance of the developments in the GDR; her treatment is more explanatory than functional.

The volume provides a useful and insightful analysis of aspects of GDR literature. Despite opaque moments, it offers a thoroughness and depth too often absent in interpretations of GDR literature.

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#### ANTHOLOGIES: ONCE AGAIN!

Bettina pflückt wilde Narzissen, hrsg. Manfred Jendryschik (Haale/Saale: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1976), 443 pp.

In addition to the five anthologies of short prose reviewed in the last issue of the Bulletin, this volume deserves serious consideration. Originally published in the

GDR in 1972, it has been extremely popular there and was recently re-issued in a large edition, to judge by its availability in book stores. Larger than any of the other volumes reviewed, it has the additional advantage of being a hard-bound book at the reasonable price of GDR publications. Sixty-six stories by forty-four authors, many of them seldom included in Western anthologies, offer a fairly representative spectrum of the development of the short story in the GDR from the early 1950's through the 1970's. Old-timers, such as Eduard Claudius, Otto Gotsche, Bodo Uhse and Friedrich Wolf, are included as well as recognized masterpieces by Kunert, Morgner, Bobrowski, Fühmann, and Kant (to mention those pointed out by A. Stephan as ill-represented in the volumes he reviewed). All the more noticeable in this rich selection is the inexplicable exclusion of any work at all by Christa Wolf. Equally regrettable, but readily explainable, is the absence also of Sarah Kirsch, whose first prose works did not appear until 1973. All told, the anthology is a suitable choice for introducing students to a wide range of GDR prose writing.

-Patricia Herminhouse  
Washington University

Alexander Stephan, Christa Wolf (Autorenbücher 4). (München: C.H. Beck, 1976), pp. 143.

The new series of "Autorenbücher" is published with the co-operation of Verlag C.H. Beck and the journal Edition Text + Kritik, which in 1975 brought out a 56 page issue on Christa Wolf. Among the contributors was Alexander Stephan, whose article "Die 'subjektive Authentizität' des Autors" reads like a pre-condensation of his present volume, a valuable introduction to Christa Wolf, and a sensitive criticism, refreshingly free of dogmatic labels.

The book might be called Nachdenken über Christa Wolf, without intending to indicate any lack of precision or method in the critic. It recognizes that Christa Wolf has undergone a definable development in her dialogue with the GDR's successive socio-political phases. However, it takes seriously Wolf's demand for a