

1982

## Manfred Pieske: Vom viel zu kleinen Glückspfennig. Märchen für Erwachsene

Dennis R. McCormick  
*University of Montana*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/gdr>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

---

### Recommended Citation

McCormick, Dennis R. (1982) "Manfred Pieske: Vom viel zu kleinen Glückspfennig. Märchen für Erwachsene," *GDR Bulletin*: Vol. 8: Iss. 2. <https://doi.org/10.4148/gdrb.v8i2.620>

This Review is brought to you for free and open access by New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in *GDR Bulletin* by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact [cads@k-state.edu](mailto:cads@k-state.edu).

addition of a very useful chronology of the most important events in GDR history, 1945-1978. Laudable as this addition may be, it is hardly enough to compensate for the continued refusal of the volume's editors (the late Peter Christian Ludz, in collaboration with Johannes Kuppe) to include any materials published in the GDR in what is otherwise a most useful and well-organized bibliography. Ludz' lame explanation that "the vast majority of users of this handbook have no access to GDR sources" (p. 1259) is anachronistic at best and difficult to reconcile with his claim for its thorough revision and enlargement.

A comparison of the entry "Literatur und Literaturpolitik" in the 1975 and 1979 editions may be indicative of how little real revision has actually taken place. The author of this article, Hans-Dietrich Sander, has made no attempt to revise the polemic view of GDR literature which he advanced in the early 1970's, but merely added a "seventh phase," in which the entire literary development between 1973 and 1978 is sketched exclusively in terms of dissidence and repression. Nothing is said about significant changes in literary theory and research of the 1970's; the most significant enlargement of the article is the lengthening and updating of the concluding list of writers who have left the GDR to include the émigrés of the Biermann era. Although no honest critic would suggest that this problem be glossed over, the reader of Sander's article never does get a picture of the larger context in which these events must be understood.

Students of the GDR who do not have a copy of the 1975 edition will be well rewarded by an investment in the revised edition; those who already have the earlier version might consider spending ten Marks less and acquiring a copy of the GDR's own Handbuch DDR (Liepzig: Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1979), a handsome volume with a wealth of useful statistics, maps, and illustrations, albeit from a partisan point of view as the DDR-Handbuch and somewhat less convenient to use. But the bibliography of GDR titles that would complement the Ludz volume is, alas, lacking here, too.

Patricia Herminhouse  
Washington University

\*\*\*\*\*

Vom viel zu kleinen Glückspfeffig. Märchen für Erwachsene.  
Von Manfred Pieske. Rudolstadt: Greifenverlag, 1981.  
199 Seiten. 7,40 M.

The eight "Kunstmärchen" of this volume are heavily indebted in both form and content to the conventions of the traditional "Volksmärchen". One encounters in these pages a panoply of good and evil giants, dwarfs, gnomes, witches, demons, spirits, magicians, kings, queens, and assorted creatures from the animal kingdom, some of which (of course) are actually enchanted human beings. Most of the stories begin with the formulaic "Es war einmal..." and continue in the unpretentious, naive style characteristic of the folktales. One tale, "Märchen vom zufälligen Zufall," even features the brave little tailor of the Grimm collection as the hero of the piece, with a cameo appearance by Rumpelstilzchen. If the elements of these tales seem largely familiar, however, Manfred Pieske has woven them into eight marvelously original flights of fancy whose underlying themes range from the personal, ethical sphere to allegorical representations of social and political issues. The title story, for example, deals with a young man transformed by a witch into a "Glückspfeffig" which always seems to bring its finder ill fortune. Only when a finder uses the wishes to which he is entitled unselfishly is the spell broken and the young man reunited with his father.

The "Märchen vom Gnomen, der eine wunderschöne Frau liebte" is a remarkable fantasy which also turns upon the theme of selflessness, albeit in a very different context. Here, a man is condemned to appear as a hideous gnome until he solves "das Rätsel des kategorischsten, selbstlosesten Liebesdienstes für die Geliebte" (130). The solution to the riddle, it turns out, is to be so selfless, so lacking

in possessiveness or jealousy as to cheerfully allow his wife a night of sexual bliss with another man. The story is amusingly told in the first person from the perspective of the unsuspecting and frequently nonplussed surrogate lover.

An example of a tale dealing with social issues is the "Märchen vom künstlichen Polipatschka," a simple but timely allegory on the dangers of attempting to satisfy questionable material needs through uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources. Even sharper criticism of certain aspects of GDR society can be seen in the "Märchen vom König, der einen Fingertupf haben wollte." The ruler of this unnamed mythical kingdom lives in total isolation from the people, surrounded by sycophants and yea-sayers who report only what the king wants to hear. When he gains the power to read the real thoughts of the people (and of his ministers), the king is so horrified that he renounces the gift of clairvoyance. Truth is such a rare and forbidden commodity in this kingdom that one minister chastises another at one point with the words: "Dein Wahrheitsfanatismus hat einen schlimmen naturalistischen Zug" (143). For the most part, however, Pieske's tales are so rich in fantastic figures and occurrences as to invite any number of possible interpretations, and I do not think he has chosen the fairy tale form solely as a convenient camouflage for criticism of GDR reality. Nor is it a flight from that reality. I believe, rather, that Pieske's interest in the world of fantasy stems from a thematic concern with the role of fantasy itself. In the "Märchen vom zufälligen Zufall" a race of giants is portrayed as smug, self-satisfied, dogmatic, and incapable of admitting error. When confronted by the race of "Märchenvolk," only the liberals among them welcome their fresh ideas and stimulating new approaches. Like most of the others this tale ends happily with the giants regaining the ability to value and use their imagination through intermarriage with the "Märchenvolk." If one is permitted to equate "Riese" with "Erwachsene," then this tale can be seen as an allegory for the intended effect of these "Märchen für Erwachsene" upon the readers of Pieske's delightful book. Finally, if the tales alone provide insufficient stimulus, thirteen wonderful illustrations by Regine Grube-Heinecke can hardly fail to arouse even the most atrophied imaginations.

Dennis R. McCormick  
University of Montana

\*\*\*\*\*

Armin Müller, Taube aus Papier. Erzählung. Rudolstadt: Greifenverlag 1981.

Die Nachricht vom plötzlichen Tod der Schauspielstudentin Sabine, Hauptdarstellerin in einer kurz vor der Premiere stehenden Absolventenaufführung, löst bei dem tiefbetroffenen Autor des Stückes die Frage aus: War es Unfall, Selbstmord oder Mord? Nun beginnen für den Ich-Erzähler die Recherchen, die Begegnungen und Gespräche mit denen, die Auskunft über das Mädchen geben können; Fragen als Ausgangspunkte des Erkenntnisprozesses, der Literatur heißt. Gefragt wird nach der ethisch-moralischen Beschaffenheit der Figuren, ablesbar an ihren Beziehungen untereinander. Vergangenheit, "dieser anwachsende Haufen von Erinnerungen" (Christa Wolf), wird abgerufen, Gründe und Mutmaßungen werden angegeben; von Verstrickungen und Schuld ist ebenso die Rede, wie Unaufrichtigkeit, Täuschung oder Verschweigen bei den Befragten ins Spiel kommt. Die Unfähigkeit, sich zu den Ereignissen um Sabine äußern zu wollen, die Angst vor sich selbst wie vor dem anderen, dominieren.