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Dialog. Neue DDR-Dramatik. Vier Stücke

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Sinn und Form. Beiträge zur Literatur. Hrsg. v.d. Akademie der Künste der DDR. 34. Jahr (1982), Heft 3-4.

Paul Wiens hat kaum sein Amt angetreten (mit dem 1. Heft 1982), das 3. Heft bringt den Nachruf der Akademie der Künste der DDR auf ihren plötzlich verstorbenen neuen Chefredakteur. Von den Beiträgen zur DDR-Literatur in diesem Heft (vertreten sind diesmal Jurij Brezan, Otto Gotsche, Jochen Laabs, Kurt Stern, Volker Braun und Johannes Bobrowski) seien die Texte der beiden letzten Dichter besonders hervorgehoben. In dem autobiographischen Prosatext "Im Gefangenenlager" verarbeitet Bobrowski die ersten Jahre seiner sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenschaft. Es handelt sich um eine ganz frühe Erzählung (1950/51 entstanden), die hier zum ersten Mal veröffentlicht wurde. Volker Brauns "Geschichten von Hinze und Kunze" wurden erstmalig in Ian Wallaces GDR Monitor (1980) abgedruckt, ihre verspätete Veröffentlichung in der DDR ist immerhin bemerkenswert, geht es doch um sehr kritische Auseinandersetzung mit dem "real existierenden Sozialismus" in der DDR, um radikale Fragestellungen, die u.a. das Problem der Basisdemokratie betreffen und in der allegorischen Parabel "Larvenstadium" die Klage aussprechen, "daß die freie Gesellschaft der unterdrückten gleiche, daß sie, als die Herren, wie Knechte lebten." Die Überwindung des "Larvenstadiums" wird durch das metaphorische Gleichnis von der Metamorphose des Schmetterlings als naturgesetzlich projiziert. Es gibt aber zu denken, daß Braun die Antwort nicht dem unerschrocken fragenden Hinze, sondern dem Parteisekretär Kunze in den Mund legt: "Aber ebenso wahr und wichtig, sagte Kunze, ist unser Unbehagen, dem die neue Welt eng und dunkel dünkt wie eine Hülse, und unser Druck, der sie sprengen wird" (S. 592). Am Anfang des 4. Heftes steht das Gedicht "Weißt du, was der Frieden ist?" von Paul Wiens (in der handschriftlichen Fassung), auf das eine kurze Würdigung des verstorbenen Dichters von Fritz Rudolf Fries folgt. Das Heft enthält einen Auszug aus den Lebenserinnerungen "Meine unruhigen Jahre" von Erwin Geschonneck, der sich mit der ersten Einführung von Strittmatters "Katzgraben" beschäftigt, und einen Brief von Geschonneck an Strittmatter. Von besonderem Interesse für den Kunsthistoriker sind Horst Dreschers "Die letzten Briefe Vincents". Eike Middell untersucht in dem Aufsatz "Wie man ein Klassiker wird", inwieweit Peter Hacks' Dramaturgie der Aesthetik Schillers verpflichtet ist. Aus dem Rezensionsteil "Umschau und Kritik" sei noch Karin Hirdinas Besprechung von Franz Fühmanns Saiäns-Fiktischen erwähnt. Beide Hefte enthalten wieder eine Reihe von Übersetzungen (aus dem Spanischen, Tschechischen, Polnischen, Russischen, Amerikanischen, Französischen, Indonesischen und Bengali), auf die hier nicht weiter eingegangen wird, die aber fast durchweg als informative und gut lesbare Beiträge zu empfehlen sind.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Dialog: Neue DDR-Dramatik. Vier Stücke. Berlin: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1981. 146 pages.

This volume marks the debut in print of four aspirant GDR playwrights, all of them in their thirties and all of them at one time stagehands. The first piece, Jürgen Gross's Trampelpfad, is derived from a novel, Regen in einer fremden Stadt, written by Daniel Granin, a contemporary Soviet writer who made a name for himself during the literary thaw that followed Stalin's death. It concerns an adulter-

ous affair between a very ambitious but not very successful middle-aged engineer from the big city and a single woman from the provinces in her middle thirties. Three or four times a year he comes to her faraway town to adjust some sort of faulty regulator in a local factory. The fact that he helped install it and that it keeps breaking down and he is the one sent to fix it repeatedly is meant to indicate his failure in the market place. It is also the real but very hidden reason he takes up with a lonely woman of fading good looks reduced to pining away her life for him for 48 of the 52 weeks in a year. He needs her as an ego-booster. When she finally confronts him with the lie that she has a chance of getting married in order to force him to break with his wife, a miracle of sorts happens which is certainly one of the more ironic comments in "socialist" literature on the notion of "hero of labor." The engineer is suddenly inspired to discover the flaw in the regulator. He becomes a celebrity overnight, a he-man of the industrial circuit who no longer requires the motherly bolstering of his long-suffering mistress. Not only does he dump her; he dispatches her by ruining her good name, so that no one else will have her, either. In transferring to the stage Granin's story of the social hero as private cad, Gross circumvented the obstacle of narrative flow by having the lovers tell their story to an audience acting as judge and jury -- a device as aesthetically astute as it is logically unconvincing. The three remaining plays have little plot content and strike one as elevated exercises in creative writing. The best play in the book is clearly Albert Wendt's Die Dachdecker, a sometimes genuinely humorous but always very serious-minded take-off on the well-known poem at the end of Faust II in which the tower warden Lynkeus affirms the goodness and beauty of existence in the face of the many downs of life. From the heights of Berlin the foreman of a group of roofers gazes out upon the world, sees the totality of human joys and ills, and embraces the principle of limitation ("Wir sehen das trotz dem"). Despite the fact that in the course of a single day they fall victim to sundry mishaps and misunderstandings, the roofers will doggedly perform their task, and in this way contribute to the construction of the edifice of socialism much in the same way that the medieval bricklayer felt he was building a cathedral and not just laying bricks. The underlying message is clear: to stay a course no longer buttressed by revolutionary fervor, to refuse to let oneself be discouraged by the realization that the perfection of society is a long-term proposition, indeed. Jörg-Michael Koerbl's Alte Männer am Meer is a trifle precariously sustained by a single cat in the bag and a pair of coincidences which, taken together, are impossible to digest. Two decrepit army buddies run into each other at a seaside rest home after some thirty years and reminisce about the good old days when they were helping to shoot up most of Europe. They meet a third veteran, an employee of the home. He turns out to be the dreadful skeleton in their closet, a deserter whom they had once shot and left for dead. End of trifle. The play (unwittingly?) suggests that three decades of socialism are not enough to stamp out recurrent fascistic attitudes. The fourth piece, Georg Seidel's Kondensmilchpanorama, is the most ambitious in form and the most banal in content. At the end of this incongruous mixture of prose and at times fairly pretentious verse one no longer cares whether the materially secure Klaus and Jutta will or will not dissolve a spiritually empty marriage. The final words of the play, spoken by their older counterparts, the parents of Jutta, reinforce the feeling that the ambience somehow resembles the world of Chekhov's depleted characters: "Besser wirds nicht. Aber schlechter vielleicht auch nicht." And that feeling is the most interesting thing about this play.

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