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Christa Grasmeyer: Verliebt auf eigene Gefahr

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("Ich sehe - mein freund..."), Philosophisches ("Ich sehe - die Zeit:/eine Lichtflüssigkeit."), die eigene Lebenserfahrung ("Ich sehe - mich leben..."), und Politisches ("Ich sehe - die erde, mein raumschiff..."). Seine Stärke liegt allerdings in der Durchdringung der Blickrichtungen, wie das 4.Heft, "Dienstgeheimnis", besser allerdings noch das ganze Buch zeigt, das in erster Auflage 1969 erschien (mit dem Untertitel "Ein Nächtebuch") und ebenfalls vollständig als "vierte Linie seiner Hand" wiederabgedruckt ist. "Dienstgeheimnis" ist meiner Meinung nach Paul Wiens' dichterisch stärkste, wenn auch seine am wenigsten tagespolitisch eingreifende Lyrik. Einige der besten Gedichte aus dem "Nächtebuch" sind im 4.Heft aufgenommen (so das durch Hieronymus Bosch angeregte "Stoffwechsel"). Seine durchaus eigenständige und ausdrucksvolle Metaphorik bringt Wiens in diesem Zyklus zum ersten Mal als stärkste treibende Kraft ins Spiel.

Diese Linie setzt Wiens im 5.Heft, "Yaon" betitelt, fort. Die Gedichte in "Yaon" sind wohl durchwegs neuere: "Der Salzmann" z.B. hatte Wiens 1976 in einer Dankrede anlässlich der Verleihung des Becher-Preises als eines "aus dem Buch, an dem ich gerade arbeite" zitiert. Dieser neue Gedichtband ist nach meinem Wissensstand (DDR-Gesamtkatalog 81/82) allerdings bisher nicht erschienen - die Vermutung liegt nahe, daß "Yaon" ein Stück dieses Buches ist. (Vielleicht auch, daß diese, im weitesten Sinn "hermetische" Seite Wiens' nicht die beliebteste seiner Verleger ist.) Neue Bilder werden hier vorgestellt: die Yaon-Figur z.B., ein kosmopolitisch - poetisches Seelenwesen, das in fruchtbare Auseinandersetzung mit dem lyrischen Ich tritt: "Er läßt mich nicht in ruhe. / Er läßt mich nicht allein / (...) Yaon sagt: / Die wahrheit / ist eine bittere mandel / Oder: / Du musst dich entziffern." Alte Bilder werden aus neuer Perspektive geschildert: z.B. erhält Wiens' Metapher vom Dichter, der "nur Kinder zeugt" (in: "Wolkensteiner") im Gedicht "Erleuchtung"

eine Erweiterung: "der pelikan mein alter vater / füttert mit klängen seine brut / mit zeitklang und mit klangzeit. / Der pelikan weiss wie / die zeit wächst und wo: / in uns durch uns aus uns." Bisher wurde den Musterzeichnungen noch keine Erwähnung getan. In den "Vier Linien" erscheinen sie als Tintenzeichnungen und werden vom Autor "seelenbewegungsmuster" genannt. In "Innenwelt" treten sie in weit größerer Zahl als vielfarbige, kreis- und ellipsenförmige Muster auf, die, ineinanderlaufend, manchmal zu Geschöpfen und Getämen werden. Mangels genauerer Angaben seitens des Autors möchte ich behaupten, daß sie durchaus ihr Eigenleben führen und (deutlicher noch als in den "4 Linien", wo manche der Bilder doch auf ein spezielles Gedicht zu verweisen schienen) in ihrer phantasievollen Abstraktheit eher eine "Gegengeschichte" zu den Gedichten erzählen, als deren eindeutige Verbildlichung sind.

Wie gesagt, traurigerweise kann - außer den wohl erstmals in dieser Fülle mitaufgenommenen Zeichnungen - "Innenweltbilderhandschrift" nicht als ein Buch gelten, das viel Neues von und über Paul Wiens bringt (und ich bin überzeugt, daß da noch viel im Nachlaß lagert). Es sei denn man betrachtet seine Handschrift als notwendig zum Verständnis seiner Gedichte - aber so weit würde man wohl selbst bei seinem "strengen Lehrer" Stefan George nicht gehen wollen.

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Verliebt auf eigene Gefahr. By Christa Grasmeyer. Illus. Schulz/Labowski. Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1984. 176 p.

Verliebt auf eigene Gefahr is a love story for adolescents, who are themselves perhaps experiencing some of the same fears and reservations as the novel's two heroes, the

kindergarten teacher Irene Gadow and the young builder Johannes Michal. Each has ample cause to feel afraid of a relationship: Irene was once engaged, only to be jilted by her fiance; Johannes is divorced from his ex-wife "Grit," a militant feminist -- "(eine) Emanzenziege" (33) -- who now has custody of their young son. Both characters are seen to be alienated and alone, distrustful of other adults. Thus it is through those who pose no threat to them -- children or Johannes' pet dog -- that the two people come to feel comfortable around one another. Their friendship grows, their love matures, though each has difficulty forgetting the hurt and bitterness long enough to make a genuine commitment to the other. They begin to quarrel, they separate, and Johannes decides to leave for another job elsewhere in the country. The novel closes with his decision to return to Irene, strengthened in his love for her and convinced of their need to resolve their differences together.

The heroes' destinies unfold within a sort of symbolic landscape, bounded at one end by a ruinous hunting lodge which Johannes is helping to rebuild and restore -- like the wreckage of his own past. At the other end is the Kurheim in which Irene -- herself in need of emotional and psychological cure -- works with children. Between these two geographic points lies a dark forest, so familiar to readers of traditional fairy tales. And it is indeed the fairy tale as literary form, which comes to shape the story's plot: first of all it is while on a walk in these woods that Johannes finally admits his love for Irene. As such the forest serves as the real life setting for the heroes' re-enactment of the Rotkäppchen tale, earlier performed by Johannes with the help of puppets found in Irene's kindergarten. For in an effort to express his innermost feelings to Irene and in doing so to overcome some of their mutual fears, Johannes resorts -- as children often do -- to the puppet theater. His version, however,

differs from the original in several significant respects. The wolf, for instance, is not one to prey upon the little girl; rather he truly loves her. She too loves the wolf, but is afraid of being hurt: "Mütter warnen immer vor den Wölfen, weil Wölfe leidenschaftlich sind. Leidenschaft schafft leiden." (63) Finally the girl's journeys to her grandmother become occasions for clandestine rendezvous between the two lovers. Following his performance Johannes extemporizes on the need to reinterpret traditional folk tales in accordance with the demands placed upon children by contemporary society: "Wir haben nun die Aufgabe, diese uralten Weisheiten neu zu erschließen und Lehren daraus zu ziehen. Unser Kulturerbe zeigt uns den Weg zu Glück und Lebensfreude." (65) It should be noted that the hero's sentiments are completely in keeping with official policy regarding Germany's cultural heritage, whereby folk tales and Germanic legends have come to enjoy a vital renaissance dating back to the late 60s and early 70s.

For both Johannes and Irene the fairy tale seems to contain clues to their identities, solutions to their problems. In so doing, Grasmeyer's novel seems to afford youngsters the same opportunity better to understand the anxiety and the uncertainty brought about in their own young lives by their experience of first love, broken romance, parental divorce, peer pressure, and so forth. This too is in keeping with traditional views in the GDR, according to which children's literature should provide a forum for the debate and discussion of social problems facing young people in an ever-changing society. Unlike the fairy tale retold in the novel, Grasmeyer's story concludes not with the traditional "happy end" but only with the possibility of such. Johannes and Irene will give their love another chance. They have fallen in love at their own risk -- "auf eigene Gefahr" -- and will indeed live happily ever after, one feels, if -- and only if -- they both

accept the very real risks involved in a meaningful relationship involving mature adults. It is a message that Grasmeyer's young readers would do well to take to heart.

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The Death of Socialist Realism in the Novels of Christa Wolf. Von George Buehler. Europäische Hochschulschriften, Vol. 787. Frankfurt/M., Bern, New York, Nancy: Peter Lang, 1984. 208 p. \$25.25

In this study George Buehler traces the literary works of Christa Wolf from the beginning of her writing career in the early sixties to her novel Kein Ort. Nirgends by focusing on her progressive deviation from the official literary method of socialist realism during these two decades. The first third of the book provides the historical and ideological background for this analysis: In Chapter I the author gives a detailed documentation of the cultural policy in East Germany since the end of World War II; surprisingly, the spectacular events following the 'Biermann affair' in the seventies are not mentioned. Chapter II provides broad information on the emergence of the concept of socialist realism in the USSR in the early thirties. This process is shown as a conscious effort on the part of high party officials to direct art production towards the promotion of socialist ideology. The foundation of the Schriftstellerverband in the GDR and the immediate adoption of socialist realism as the normative literary method appears as a repetition of this pattern under Soviet directives.

Of course the shortcomings of socialist experiments such as the disappointing results of the Bitterfelder Weg (1959) have to be men-

tioned; Buehler however discredits this attempt to open up factories to writers, and the 'realm of literature' for workers, on rather dubious grounds: the idea of teaching writing as a "craft" contradicts the author's concept of the "true writer" who is by "nature more 'sensitive,' more 'perceptive,' more 'empathetic,'" and possesses the rare and "inherent gift" of expressing his insights artistically (p. 16).

In the second part of Chapter II Buehler lists and defines five criteria for a socialist realist piece of literature: 1. Objective Reflection of Reality, 2. Partiality (Parteilichkeit), 3. National Orientation (Volkstümlichkeit), 4. The Typical, 5. The Positive Hero. He sheds light on the historical emergence of these aspects by showing earlier efforts of Lenin or even Engels to come to terms with the function of art in a socialist society.

In Chapters III-IV Buehler uses these five criteria in order to investigate the extent of socialist realism in Christa Wolf's work. Her first publication, Moskauer Novelle (1961) can serve as a model for socialist realist literature, since it shows the "triumph of good over evil, socialism over capitalism and humanity over inhumanity" (p. 71). In a detailed analysis of her subsequent publications Der geteilte Himmel (1963), Nachdenken über Christa T. (1968), Kindheitsmuster (1976) and Kein Ort. Nirgends (1979) Buehler shows how Christa Wolf gradually develops her own style - and thus deviates from a strict concept of socialist realism. (Buehler attributes a similar level of emancipation from socialist realism to Nachdenken über Christa T. and Kindheitsmuster and thus does not devote further study to the latter.)

Since the author often seems to equate Christa Wolf's development beyond a socialist realist style with the denial of socialist ideology, the reader is left with the impression that Christa Wolf is a 'heretic' in her own society. Similar western partiality becomes