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## Christoph Hein: Horns Ende

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the Federal Republic, and domestic topics like McKnight: Christoph Hein: Horns Ende industry, agriculture, sport, culture, education, and the role of women.

The conclusions drawn by this careful and thorough study are neither novel nor surprising: under a pretense of objective realism, DEFA documentaries are deliberately biased to portray the socio-political structure of the GDR in a highly favorable light. As could be expected, their reception by the general public was apparently less than totally enthusiastic: Like most people everywhere, East German audiences tend to be bored and "turned off" by obvious didactic intentions: they usually prefer non-political entertainment films, frequently the product of the Hollywood "dream factory."

Herbert Lederer  
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Horns Ende. by Christoph Hein. Berlin: Aufbau, 1985.

As a boy of 12 Thomas remembers standing in front of a triptychon, making faces at himself and trying to see all three images of himself simultaneously. Thirty years later he is haunted by the memory of Horn, whom he and a friend had discovered hanging from a tree in the forest outside of town (suicide), an apparition which admonishes him to remember what had happened, even to remember, perhaps, some things which he hadn't seen.

The triptychon forms the remarkable structural basis for this somewhat controversial novel, which generated a year-long debate before its publication was authorized. Hein expands the single narrative perspective so skillfully -- and even deceptively -- employed in Der fremde Freund to include five separate individuals, each relating the end of Horn from their own subjective point of view. However, the

historical perspective itself which is at issue in this work, is related simultaneously in triplicate (Nazi period, 1950s during the socialist rebuilding of the GDR, and the present) from the standpoint of three differing "philosophies" of history, those of Dr. Spodeck (cynicism), Kruschkatz (historical necessity), and of Horn himself (factual).

There is more to the narrative technique: reading Hein's first novel is like observing an archeologist painstakingly fitting the shattered pieces of an ancient urn back together. Unlike in Der fremde Freund, where the reader is drawn by the rhythmic quality of the language to rush to the end of the book, he is forced here to proceed slowly, meticulously, to study the pieces and fragments of the puzzle as it is being put together. The result is a provocative fragment and we are left to fill in the missing parts, those lost forever, with our own thoughts, and to contemplate whether the future is served best by digging up the past or by forgetting it altogether. Each ensuing generation, according to Horn, will take whatever fragmented information is available, complete with factual errors or deliberate falsifications and then create its own image of history. Hein questions the ability of man to relate history with truth or accuracy in this novel. Each generation's attitude or partisan reaction towards history becomes more significant than history itself in formulating consciousness.

The "controversial" nature of the novel can be traced to two elements: In the mid 1950s Kruschkatz is appointed by the Party to carry out socialist reform in the small town of Guldenberg. In his own mind he fails. He fails to prevent Horn's suicide and he fails, during his 19-year tenure as mayor, to change the mentality of the Guldenberg citizenry. His failure, however, is a matter of degree. After all, Kruschkatz' actions did help stifle Bachofen's intrigues. By comparison to Bachofen, a villain parading as an ardent

communist, the career-oriented Kruschkatz appears in a very positive light. Kruschkatz is a figure of GDR reality, a figure, in this case, whose private life becomes a shambles while his efforts in the public sphere fall short of bringing him adequate personal satisfaction.

The other element consists of the fact that Horn's death is placed in the historically sensitive year of 1957, when events in socialist countries following Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech of 1956 led to a great deal of insecurity among the intellectuals and to such events as the early emeritus status of Ernst Bloch. Although the central impact of the novel has little to do with the historical Johannes Heinz Horn, about whom not a great deal is known, it was Bloch who gave Horn a position at the Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig in the early 1950s, in part as a result of his 1933 dissertation on "Lenin als Philosoph." Now that Bloch's Leipzig lectures are scheduled to appear in the GDR, it may become possible to look at the 50s with the same sort of unequivocal objectivity as does Gertrude Fischlinger in the novel, the only true member of the working class portrayed, and one of the few persons for whom the reader's sympathy is not altered by conflicting and subjective descriptions of her by the other characters. This may depend upon which attitudes towards history are developing in the late 1980s, some thirty years afterwards.

Horns Ende addresses not only the past but the present as well. The novel makes you wonder a little about a new, youthful generation raised in socialism, but with no direct experience or memory relating to the past, or to the creation and establishing of socialism, as Kruschkatz himself discovers in his last official speech before the townspeople of Guldenberg. It also makes you wonder a bit about how a generation raised on socialism might compare to a generation such as ours, raised on TV.

Christoph Hein is one of a handful of GDR writers whose works extend beyond borders.

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Horns Ende, like Der fremde Freund or Die wahre Geschichte des AhQ, is part of world literature. Any writer uses his own environment as the structural background for artistic expression and Hein is no exception. But it would be a mistake to see Guldenberg exclusively as the GDR. In many respects, it could be a town anywhere, in either Germany, or in Europe. It could be a small town in most countries. For Horns Ende Hein has used his talent with language in a much different manner than he did in his earlier prose. Once again, he has created a small masterpiece. But it takes a second reading to realize this, to see how all the intricate pieces of this mosaic interlock. A little patience, a little pondering.

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The Basic Treaty and the Evolution of East-West German Relations. By Ernest D. Plock. Westview Special Studies in International Relations. Boulder: Westview Press, 1986. xiii + 272 pp.

In this volume we now have a meticulous, detailed account of relations between the two German states. The chronicle covers the period leading up to the Basic Treaty of 1972 in broad outline and then, in much greater detail, the evolution of the relationship under the terms of that treaty. Plock's treatment stresses the clash of juridical conceptions animating the two states respectively; and his analysis is at its best when he examines the legal implications of these divergent conceptions, both in the process of accomplishing the treaty and in moving beyond its literal provisions as the two states recognized a growing congruence of interest in the years that followed.

By focusing somewhat narrowly on relations between East and West Germany, the author tends