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# Viktor Žmegač, ed.: Geschichte der deutschen Literatur - vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart, 1918-1980

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correct department, the rules had to be bent slightly to accommodate the unusual nature of the birth.

Other such bureaucratic idiosyncrasies occur when Marietta tries to re-enter the country with her baby and also when she tries to claim the money owed her for being a mother. She cannot receive this money because, although she has her baby as proof of motherhood, there are no medical records verifying the pregnancy.

Lothar Hörnicke takes a rather simple story, the premise for which was a dream, and develops an interesting juxtaposition of dream and reality and manages to poke fun at some of the more ridiculous bureaucratic maneuvers of the GDR. Hörnicke manages to criticize without causing his novel to become tedious critique.

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Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur - vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart, 1918-1980, Band III. Hrsg. Viktor Žmegač, Athenäum, Königstein/Ts., 1984. 876 S.

The concluding book in Viktor Žmegač's three volume history of German literature covers the period 1918 to 1980. The third volume is divided into six sections providing analyses of the various epochs and literary trends in the different German-speaking countries since 1945. The chapter on GDR literature, upon which this review will focus, was written by John Milfull.

Milfull, like the other authors on their respective fields, offers not only a thematic overview of specific trends but also individual interpretations of exemplary works. He begins his study with the early years of the GDR and the questions facing the literary "Remigranten." Their primary concern, the establishment of a socialist-oriented literature, is considered with regard to Milfull's four "Geburtshelfer" of the GDR literary tradition: Anna Seghers, Bertold Brecht, Eduard Claudius, and Stephan Heym. Although sharing a basic fundamental approach, each of the authors represents a

unique position and/or concept, and the plurality of their methods significantly shaped subsequent literary trends. Milfull is correct in pointing to the gradual "Entdogmatisierungsprozeß" in GDR writing which, in spite of several setbacks in the 60s, proved to be a central element in establishing a productive literature. Moreover, Milfull does not limit his analysis to an overview of literary genres and representative names. Instead he focuses on the writer and his or her audience and examines "wirkungsästhetische Probleme bei Lyrik, Drama und erzählender Prosa." His approach is convincing for he sees literature within the overall context of "Kulturpolitik der DDR" and in its relationship to the working class population. Furthermore, he never loses sight of theoretical concerns and the oft-occurring contradictions resulting from putting theory into practice. In terms of "Rezeption," Milfull recognizes one distinction within the genres, namely that while novels and theater pieces are received quite differently in East and West, GDR poetry seems immune from such distinguishing traits. Thus poets such as Bobrowski, Kunert, Kunze, and Kirsch enjoy what can be termed a "gesamtdeutsche Leserschaft."

Another strength of Milfull's contribution is his depiction of the literary climate in the GDR, in particular his exposition of the first Bitterfelder Konferenz (1959) and the resultant literary maxims. Finally, the interpretations of works by numerous authors (e.g. Seghers, Brecht, Wolf, Neutsch, Kant, Strittmatter, Hermlin, Müller, Braun, Plenzdorf, Hacks, Morgner, Mickel) provide detailed commentary illustrative of overriding trends in GDR literature.

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The Silence of Entropy or Universal Discourse: The Postmodernist Poetics of Heiner Müller. By Arlene A. Teraoka. New York University Ottendorfer Series. Neue Folge Band 21. New York: Peter Lang, 1985. 240 pp.

In Kuhnian terms most dissertations are "normal science," i.e. the detailed demonstration of generally