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Klaus Hermsdorf: Literarisches Leben in Berlin. Aufklärer und Romantiker

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in the GDR seems to include the theater in an overall production schedule. This stress, however, is entirely appropriate in a handbook. Lederer rightly points out that few East German playwrights beyond the most prominent are known in the West. He takes on the challenge of presenting the entire landscape of play performance, a daunting task.

His general operating principles preclude evaluative judgement and "arbitrary standards of any kind, be they literary, cultural, sociological, or political. Nor is this the place to trace the historical development of GDR drama. Instead, the purpose of this work is to serve as a reference source on who wrote what when, where and when it was first performed, and whether (and if so, where and when) it was published" (2-3). In the body of the book, Lederer lists alphabetically all authors (including those who have emigrated) with biographical data (when applicable, the date and place of publication, and the English translation of the title). There are 700 names and more than 3,000 titles, conveniently cross-referenced. The author has also provided a title index of all the plays at the back.

The Handbook is a useful tool for those interested in a record of play production in the GDR, particularly for those colleagues in theater studies with no command of German or researchers in literary sociology. The book's strengths are self-explanatory: the entries are accurate, alphabetized, and accessible.

This work does not provide an overview of theater in the GDR. Productions of foreign plays, adaptations, or contemporary reinterpretations of the classics are not included. Directors are not listed autonomously. Alternative theater productions and performance art are also understandably excluded. The entries are not discursive; there are no play summaries, no indications of the play's reception or longevity, or quality. The information provided is purely quantitative. A reader would not know, for example, that the NYU production of Heiner Müller's Hamlet Machine, the result of a collaborative effort with Robert Wilson, won an Obie award. The reader must already have a certain expertise in the field in order to make full use of this tool.

Lederer's Handbook begins to document a genre--theater production--which intrinsically resists thorough documentation. His work fulfills a need for basic data

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Literarisches Leben in Berlin, Aufklärer und Romantiker. By Klaus Hermsdorf. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1987, 456 pages.

Klaus Hermsdorf has carried out well the enviable task of writing about a rich period in the history of a city he knows intimately. He properly emphasizes the lateness of Berlin as a city of importance, how recently it emerged from provinciality, even barbarism. Hermsdorf's study has the virtue of not being narrowly literary; it includes architecture, music, religion, politics, the entire cultural life of the city. This encyclopedic approach is especially valuable when it contributes to our understanding of a work, as is the case with Minna von Barnhelm.

The subtitle of this work implies a question which, curiously enough, is never put directly by the author: Why was there no Sturm und Drang or Klassik in Berlin, why was there a "Lücke in der Generationsfolge?" Part of the answer is to be found in the dominant influence exerted by the secret hero of the first part of the book, Friedrich Nicolai, whose shortcomings, pedantry, superficiality, and inability to grow beyond a certain point are well known by Hermsdorf. Nonetheless his admiration shines through for Nicolai's indefatigable energy, steadfastness, and the multiplicity of his publishing endeavors, particularly the comprehensive Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek. Nicolai's control of the market, Frederick the Great's antagonism towards newer German literature, and the lack of a university all contributed to making the Enlightenment so institutionally entrenched in Berlin that it lasted longer there than elsewhere (indeed, it outlasted its own epoch), thus making it difficult for Stürmer und Dränger or Klassiker to find a home in Berlin. The possibility did exist, but it was not to come to fruition: Moritz died too young, Schiller was seriously tempted during his visit but finally decided not to

move to Berlin. Classicism succeeded only in architecture and on the state of the national theater under Iffland's direction. The Romantics, whom Hermsdorf defends from the charge of fleeing from reality, were literally the pupils of the Berlin Aufklärer, who were replaced by their students in a change of generations.

A few reservations: 1. Hermsdorf's discussion of early maps is excellent, but one wishes for even more illustrations. 2. If one must have allusive subheadings whose meaning is clear only after one has read the section, then Hermsdorf's are good. The reader interested in the rise of nationalist sentiment in Prussia during the Seven Years' War, however, will not likely be helped by a title with an oblique reference to a phrase by Goethe: "Der norddeutsche Schatz..." 3. In discussing the attack on the Enlightenment after the death of Frederick the Great, Hermsdorf misses a good opportunity by not going into the controversy stirred up by Zimmermann, Frederick's last doctor, that soon involved (among many others) Bahrdt, Hippel, the Berlinische Monatsschrift, Nicolai, Knigge, and Kotzebue.

Finally, Hermsdorf provides some observations on the past that an audience used to reading between the lines will find particularly applicable to the present: "Der König wußte auch, daß der Gedanke frei sein mußte, wenn er sich entfalten sollte." "In zentralistisch regierten Ländern sind vielleicht nicht die ruhigsten, aber die besten Posten in der Hauptstadt zu finden." "Seines Tobaks, seiner Tasse Kaffee beraubt, wird selbst der deutsche Philister rebellisch." And some well-chosen quotations: "Die Macht des Staates ende vor der Gesinnung seiner Bürger," (Mendelssohn). "Die Freiheit laut zu denken'-diese zu gewähren sei das Gebot der Staatsklugheit," (Berlinische Monatsschrift). The best of all: "Wie selten sich die Absichten der Regierenden in den Ergebnissen ihrer Handlungen wiederfinden!"

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The stated goal of this collection of essays is to examine the social and cultural circumstances surrounding literary creativity in Berlin during the Second Reich and the Weimar Republic. For the most part, the studies achieve this purpose, resulting in some very interesting pieces. This perspective enriches even those that tend toward biographical overview (the editor's long introductory essay on Fontane) or literary analysis (Inge Diersen's examination of views of the city in late-Weimar "Zeitromane").

Famous names in German literature appear among the essay titles: Fontane, Brecht, Hauptmann, Heym, and Benjamin. Peter Gust's essay examines early Expressionist groups through the example of Heym, and Wruck's Fontane study devotes considerable space to the influence of Berlin literary circles on that author's writing. Therese Hörnigk takes a thorough look at Brecht productions through the Berlin press between 1922 and 1932. In a fascinating study, Gudrun Klatt explains how Walter Benjamin used his experience and views of nineteenth century Berlin and Paris to come to terms with twentieth century fascism. Brigitte Stuhlmacher examines the role typical Berlin housing types, the "Mietskaserne" with "Vorderhaus" and "Hinterhaus," have as structural and symbolic motifs in Hauptmann's Die Ratten and Hermann Sudermann's Die Ehre.

In addition to Sudermann, lesser literary lights also appear: Paul Lindau, Georg Brandes, Stanislaw Przybyszewski, Johann Sassenbach, and Franz Jung. David Bathrick's examination of the Berlin avant-garde of the 1920's through the example of Jung is a good companion piece to Rolf Göbner's intriguing study of Ukrainian writers and artists of the same time and place. Frank Hörnigk's piece on the National Socialist "Kulturkampf" um Berlin" is particularly valuable. It and Gunnar Müller-Waldeck's study of the interplay of "Rundfunktheorie" and literary concepts establish the connections of literature to society, history, and technology that we Germanists could explore more often. Wolfgang Höppner discusses another neglected but