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Howard Gaskill et al., eds.: *Neue Ansichten. The Reception of Romanticism in the Literature of the GDR*

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Lebens strebende Welt" (147) ankämpfe, andererseits aber auch mit seinem schon immer zum Trübsinn und zur Melancholie neigenden Naturell, das ihn überall, also auch in der BRD, zum verhaßten Unkenrufer und zur unliebsamen Cassandra gemacht hätte.

Den Band beschließt eine Auswahlbibliographie zur DDR-Lyrik und zu Endler. Die Anmerkungen, die der Herausgeber Manfred Behn beisteuerte, sind hilfreich, aber zu knapp. Leider enthält das Buch auch zahlreiche Druckfehler, darunter auch sinnentstellende wie "gedankt" statt "gedenkt" (40). Im Quellenverzeichnis findet sich ein Aufsatz verzeichnet ("Fragmente über Sarah Kirsch und ihre Kritiker"), der dann doch keine Gnade vor der "mürrischen Laune des Luchterhand-Verlags" (7) gefunden zu haben scheint, wie Endler humorig anmerkt.

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Gaskill, Howard et al., eds. *Neue Ansichten. The Reception of Romanticism in the Literature of the GDR*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 1990. 236 pp. (GDR Monitor Special Series No. 6).

This collection of fourteen papers from the 1989 Edinburgh conference (28-31 August) on the reception of Romanticism in the literature of the GDR provides insightful commentaries on the intellectual, literary, and political battles waged in the forty years of the existence of the GDR. In fact, one might speculate along with the editors in their preface from August 1990 and Karen Leeder in the added footnote to her paper ("Towards a Profane Hölderlin: Representations and Revisions of Hölderlin in some GDR Poetry") how far the tumultuous events of the fall of 1989 represent "the translation of poetic aspiration into political reality" (231, n.46). Conference invitations to Christa and Gerhard Wolf, Günter de Bruyn, Stephan Hermlin, and Heinz Czechowski had proved unsuccessful; however, Germanists from both Germanys were represented and their papers included in the proceedings: Ursula Heukenkamp and Margret Liebezeit from the Humboldt-Universität Berlin and Elke Liebs (now University of Oregon) and Hannes Krauss from the Universities of Essen and Münster respectively.

By casting the net wide in regard to a definition of Romanticism, the conference organizers received papers with a broad range in topics. The majority of the papers explore the rediscovery and re-appropriation of Romanticism in GDR prose and poetry since the 1970s (e.g. in Wolf, Morgner, Struzyk, Seghers, Zeplin, de Bruyn, Fühmann, Bobrowski, Huchel, Kirsten, Braun, Czechowski, Mensching), others address the rethinking of *Erbetheorie* after the cult of German Classicism and Goethe, and some branch out into more remote affinities, as does Hannes Krauss's article, "Die Kunst zu erben—zur romantischen Rezeption (nicht nur) romantischer Literatur: Über Sigrid Damm, Christa Moog und Brigitte Struzyk," by including in his examples of "provisorisch einfühlende Wissenschaft" (next to Damm's books on Lenz and Cornelia Goethe and Struzyk's *Caroline unterm Freiheitsbaum*) Christa Moog's *Aus tausend grünen Spiegeln* (1988), in which Moog links together her own self-explorations (after leaving the GDR for the West) and a literary tracing of the British author Katherine Mansfield (who died sixty years ago).

In the opening essay on literary salons in Berlin around 1800, Margret Liebezeit highlights the salons' functions as "Fluchort" and "Protestmöglichkeit" next to "Geselligkeit und Bildung" (5). Liebezeit sees Henriette Herz's ability to combine different interests within herself and in her salons paralleled in several GDR authors: in the engineers Zeplin and Laabs, the mathematician Helga Königsdorf, the psychologists Schubert and Pietrass, and the philosophers Braun, Hein, and Feyl. Rahel Varnhagen's hopes for a politically and socially changed world demanded of her, according to Liebezeit, a continual building of bridges to others and exuding complete honesty and frankness in her two salons and in her daily morning ritual of letter writing—a quality that Helga Königsdorf adhered to in her insistence on truth in *Respektloser Umgang* (1986) out of an existential urgency on the eve of potential nihilation.

In his treatment of Günter de Bruyn's *Märkische Forschungen* (1978), Dennis Tate addresses the historical dimension and provocative contemporary parallels embedded in de Bruyn's biography of the fictitious character of Max Schwedenow modelled after the 'Romantic' Jean Paul as a creative author between the productive cultural upheaval of the French Revolution era around 1800 and the repressive regime of the Restoration. Significantly, de Bruyn's interest in Romanticism in his 'märkische Forschungen' encompasses this broad period, suggesting the stimulation of comparative thinking in his GDR readers and "Freunde der Literaturgeschichte," as the sub-title reads. In reference to Georg Lukács's earlier dismissal of Jean Paul within the GDR *Kulturerbe* and Harich's falling prey to the same schematism in his rehabilitation of Jean Paul, Tate posits the basis of the plot of *Märkische Forschungen* with the fundamental differences in the methodologies of Wolfgang Harich's opus *Jean Pauls Revolutionsdichtung* (1974) and de Bruyn's *Das Leben des Jean Paul Friedrich Richter* from 1975.

Joyce Crick examines the familiar Romantic trope of illness in Christa Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.* and Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*. Fundamental differences between the authors' representations of time are deemed highly significant. Mann's narrator is telling the more or less completed story of his hero Castorp, whereas Wolf's narrative as present process continually emphasizes the "jetzt" and represents time as running out. With her focus on an ongoing vision, Wolf demands the readers' sharing in the narrator's "mourning, searching, remembering and finally re-incorporating of the central figure and her values" (68).

Beverly Hardy's excellent discussion of Wolf's *Unter den Linden* convincingly suggests that both E.T.A. Hoffmann and Wolf employ the technique of combining fantasy with reality to highlight the putrefaction of the society they belong to. Likewise, Anthony J. Harper's treatment of Franz Fühmann's E.T.A. Hoffmann perspective stresses the acute relevance of Hoffmann's models in the GDR in relation to the individual, society, and authority. Ursula Heukenkamp's paper, "Diskurse über den Irrationalismus in der SBZ/DDR zwischen 1945 und 1960" pays tribute to Ernst Bloch's insistence on placing freedom of humankind at the core of Romantic thought and on dispelling any connections between fascism and Romanticism.

In Hanne Castein's discussion of Morgner's use of the fantastic and the double in *Trobadora Beatriz* and *Amanda*, the rebellious half is seen as Morgner's female version of Goethe's Faust "im gelobten Land." All of Morgner's travelling heroes and heroines are viewed as part of the

author's utopian design to expand the space of the individual and to instill an eagerness, particularly in women, to realize their human potential. Elke Liebs's interesting overview of the reception of myth and fairy tales in GDR prose shows with the exemplary motif of the "Nixe," of Undine and Melusine, that the origin of such figures goes back to Homer and the Old Testament and even further. GDR writers have mostly employed these Romantic figures and their subversive powers as social criticism to demonstrate the abuse of power in patriarchy and in their scientifically oriented society.

Papers in this collection dealing with the reception of Goethe's *Faust* in the GDR, or with Romantic links in Bobrowski, Huchel, Kirsten, and Braun provide ample examples of the unrest and revolutionary potential that had long been inserted in GDR literature as subtexts, disguises, or spaces of free association. This first-rate anthology should be placed on the shelf of any library or student engaged in GDR studies.

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Gerber, Margy et al., eds. *Studies in GDR Culture and Society 10: Selected Papers from the Fifteenth New Hampshire Symposium on the German Democratic Republic*. Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1991.

This group of essays was originally presented as papers in June, 1989 at the well-established New Hampshire symposium. They are the first essays to be published in this series since the changes in East and West Germany, and thus were presented in a radically different context from that of today. Yet the editors and authors have done a commendable job of demonstrating the relevance of each essay to both historical events and the present situation.

Of the twelve papers, the first five concern politics and political theory; one is about GDR film, and the last six address the literature of such writers as Franz Fühmann, Helga Königsdorf, and the so-called "Sächsische Dichterschule." The first six essays are in English as are two of the six literary essays; so those topics which might interest specialists not familiar with the language are accessible to the widest possible audience.

The first essay, by Mike Dennis, addresses the failed relationship between GDR socialism and scientific-technical progress. Among his conclusions he cites these observations: "the economy was clearly insufficiently flexible to close the technology gap with the advanced Western industrial countries and it was faltering under increasing strain from the flow of resources into the social welfare program and the costly autarchic high-tech strategy" (28). It makes good, informative reading, with clear arguments leading into the actual events of late 1989.

The next article, by Hubertus Knabe, describes itself as a study of "pre-Wende debate about democratic reform," with special focus on "Legitimacy and Legitimization in the GDR" (31). It is a detailed and lively account, which points to the role of the Protestant churches as a forum for debate and outlines "the deficits in the legitimation of political rule" (51). As a document of events preceding change, its value is clear and its scholarship commendable.

Uwe-Jens Heuer's essay "The Classic Concept of Democracy and Our Times" (53-64) is a nice complement to Knabe's article because its theoretical approach broadens one's sense

of the concept of democracy, particularly as that term is used in political systems which contrast with capitalism. The author relates his discussion to events in the GDR and other Eastern European countries in a helpful, convincing way.

The last two articles in the "social sciences" group are "The Relationship of Socio-Structural Development and Political Culture in the GDR: Hypotheses" by Dietrich Staritz (65-73) and "New Research Results and Tendencies in GDR Historiography: A Paper and a Necessary Addendum" by Rolf Badstübner (75-83). Their titles are accurately descriptive and their contents of great general interest.

In the film and literary essays which follow, there is a fascinating variety of approaches while at the same time certain common threads of social criticism and personal alienation become visible in each. Barton Byg's essay "Two Approaches to GDR History in DEFA Films" (85-103) has the special strength of describing each of three films "that successfully portray postwar developments over the period from 1945 to 1965" (89). These may not be as familiar to the interested reader as other films of a similar period and they are therefore of considerable interest.

There are two different essays on Helga Königsdorf's *Respektloser Umgang* (Nancy A. Lauckner, "The Treatment of the Past and Future in Helga Königsdorf's *Respektloser Umgang*: 'Sich der Erinnerung weihen oder für die Zukunft antreten? Mit der Vergangenheit im Bunde'" [151-164] and Jeanette Clausen, "Resisting Objectification: Helga Königsdorf's Lise Meitner" [165-180]). The juxtaposition of these two very different but mutually enriching and well-written essays is quite fruitful. Each is certainly to be recommended.

The last two essays are original in their conception and very good. Reinhard Andress discusses "Feudal-absolutistisches Barock and DDR-Literaturverhältnisse: Johann Christian Günther in Joachim Walthers Roman *Bewerbung bei Hofe*" (181-196). In this essay, as in the preceding two, the author considers the use of a historical figure in a novel, but here he is able to add greatly to the depth of his analysis because of his own personal conversations with Joachim Walther. For this reason, the reader is in the felicitous position of looking forward to footnotes as well as text while reading a discussion of ethos and responsibility in two different, but perhaps comparable, ages.

The last essay, "Lyrik der 'Sächsischen Dichterschule'" by Gerrit-Jan Berendse, is a particular pleasure because there seem to be so few essays offered in recent years which address lyric poetry as a genre, closely consider variant versions of single poems, attempt to define poems by theme or offer a coherent view of a group of contemporary poets—all of which this essay is able to accomplish. Whether the terms used here find wide acceptance or not, this creative view of poetry by such authors as Heinz Czechowski, Karl Mickel and B.K. Tragelehn (all born in Dresden) as well as Rainer Kirsch, Rainer Kunze and others (born in Saxony) is one which will challenge and perhaps even delight the reader.

These twelve essays, nicely grouped and balanced, full of insight, originality and historical significance, compose one of the most successful sets of papers of high quality which a reader could wish to find.

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