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Expressionism by R. S. Furness; Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon by Ulrich Weisstein; Epochen deutscher Kultur von 1870 bis zur Gegenwart by Richard Hamann; Jost Hermand; Expressionismus by Silvio Vietta; Hans-Georg Kemper; Denk- und Stilformen des Expressionismus by Christoph Eykman; Contemporary Theory of Expressionism by Geoffrey Perkins

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besondere Proß, der ein Fußnotenautor ist. Alle drei bringen wichtige Neuansätze und sind einseitig. Am meisten Anspruch erhebt Proß, am gewichtigsten scheint mir Lindner, am konkretesten, wenn auch mit einem begrenzten Ansatzpunkt, Schmidt-Biggemann. Der Jean Paul für das Gemüt, der Jean Paul der Festreden kommt in diesen "Jubiläumsarbeiten" wie im Jubiläumsjahrbuch nicht mehr vor; statt seiner einer der aufschlußreichsten Autoren der Zeit um 1800, der eine andere Perspektive des Zeitalters erlaubt als Sturm und Drang, Klassik und Romantik; vielleicht etwas verzeichnet durch dialektisches Geschichtsdenken. Aber Ludwig Börne muß vor 150 Jahren etwas bei Jean Paul gesehen haben, was sich wissenschaftlich belegen läßt. Es war an der Zeit, daß das einmal geschah.

Bleibt die abschließende Frage: Wann wird die Jean-Paul-Welle oder -Mode die andere Seite des Atlantik erreichen? Zwar gibt es Dorothea Bergers *Jean Paul* (New York, 1972) in der Twayne Serie; aber es steht nicht gerade im Brennpunkt des Interesses. Eine der seltenen Buchveröffentlichungen ist das von M. R. Hale übersetzte und eingeleitete Werk *Horn of Oberon. Jean Paul Richter's School for Aesthetics* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973). Allerdings ist mir nicht zu Ohren gekommen, daß diese verdienstvolle Übersetzung und Einführung Jean Paul bekannter gemacht hat. Wir brauchen wohl eine Transzendentalismus-Mode, um uns mit dem damals hochgeschätzten Jean Paul zu befreunden.

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II LITERARY HISTORY & CRITICISM

- FURNESS, R. S., *Expressionism*. (The Critical Idiom, 29.) London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. (1973). 105 pp. \$2.25
- WEISSTEIN, ULRICH (ed.), *Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon*. Paris, Budapest: Librairie Marcel Didier, Akadémiai Kiadó (1973). 360 pp.
- HAMANN, RICHARD, and HERMAND, JOST, *Epochen deutscher Kultur von 1870 bis zur Gegenwart*. Bd. 5: *Expressionismus*. (Lizenzausgabe Sammlung Dialog.) München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung (1976). 244 pp.
- VIETTA, SILVIO, and KEMPER, HANS-GEORG, *Expressionismus*. (Deutsche Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert, Bd. 3.) München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag (1975). 389 pp. DM 19.80
- EYKMAN, CHRISTOPH, *Denk- und Stilformen des Expressionismus*. München: Francke Verlag (1974). 192 pp. DM 14.80

PERKINS, GEOFFREY, *Contemporary Theory of Expressionism*. (Series British and Irish Studies in German Language and Literature, Nr. 1.) Bern, Frankfurt: Herbert Lang & Cie (1974). 182 pp. sFr. 32

Despite, and indeed because of, the by now voluminous scholarship on Expressionism, new introductory surveys are welcome. In keeping with the purpose of the series "The Critical Idiom," Furness attempts to describe "both that which is called expressionism in general and also what is called German Expressionism" (p. 1). The former he outlines in the chapters "Origins" and "Formal Innovations," emphasizing the roles of Whitman, Nietzsche, Strindberg, Dostoevsky, and Marinetti. The bulk of the presentation is a historical outline of Expressionism in Germany illustrated by poetry texts and play summaries. Parallel movements and influences both prior to and succeeding Expressionism outside of Germany are surveyed in the chapter "Wider Horizons: Europe and North America." A final chapter carries random remarks on the decline of Expressionism as well as on its survival both in Germany and elsewhere. The selected bibliography of German and English sources with brief annotations is helpful but should have included Sokel's *Anthology of German Expressionist Drama* (New York, 1963), Victor Miesel's *Voices of German Expressionism* (Englewood Cliffs, 1970), and the several monographs on major expressionists which have appeared in the Twayne World Authors Series.

There is much factual information for the newcomer in this little book, but there are also gaping deficiencies. The entire constructionist aspect of Expressionism is omitted, Dada is viewed one-sidedly as "nihilistic antics," the formal characteristics and innovations of Expressionism are not touched upon, whereas the debt to French Symbolism is dwelt upon, a tie with Naturalism is forced (Zola's political-activist concerns are a "link" to German Expressionism), etc. Too often the commentary is empty phraseology or simply erroneous: Zola's admission of subjectivity in art is "not far removed from the expressionist position" (p. 76); Kokoschka's *Mörder Hoffnung der Frauen* "cannot be given a satisfactory interpretation" (p. 27), *Menschheitsdämmerung* "seemed to prophesy a new millenium" (p. 35). The book teems with similar amazing aperçus, and for that reason it is fervently to be hoped that it will not fall into the hands of the trusting uninformed for whom it was written.

Weisstein's *Expressionism as an International Phenomenon* is the first volume in the series "A Comparative History of Literature in European Languages," sponsored by the International Comparative Literature Association and is conceived as a kind of companion volume to Roth's *Expressionismus als Literatur* (Berne, Munich, 1969). The editor has consciously avoided duplicating any material in that volume, hence the focus in essays on German Expressionism is on foreign influences. Individual essays survey Expressionism in Scandinavia, Belgium and

Holland, the South Slavic area, Rumania, Hungary, Poland, and Russia. These are compact, informative summaries which provide a very handy introduction to the movement in these lesser-known literatures. In addition, essays are included on English, American, and Russian theater.

Other chapters, with less emphasis on the international focus, are valuable for approaches not ordinarily included in discussions of literary Expressionism. Richard Brinkmann's essay "Dadaism and Expressionism" reappraises Dada and attempts to account for that movement's current viability, as opposed to Expressionism's now purely historical interest. Paul Hadermann's chapter "Expressionist Literature and Painting" examines some of the interrelationships between art and literature. It is sensible discussion of literary and pictorial devices, which carefully skirts the pitfalls inherent in trying to identify any but the most indisputable equivalencies between the genres. Henry Lea pursues a similar aim in "Expressionist Literature and Music," seeing the relationship of expressionist music to song texts (especially those from Romanticism) and familiar melodies quoted in expressionist works as one of *Verfremdung*: "The musical treatment destroys the illusion [of realism] and calls for a critical judgment" (p. 151). Equating traditional harmony to literary realism, Lea considers the use of the twelve-tone scale to be "directly related to the rejection of mimesis found in Expressionism" (p. 157). Lotte Eisner's "Contribution to the Definition of the Expressionist Film" is the criterion of lighting effects. Expressionist technique "turned light into a frenzied cry of anguish," whereas the far more prevalent impressionist lighting is flowing, soft, and rich in nuances. By this criterion there are "altogether no more than a handful of purely expressionist films, the majority of the works so far referred to being either films with expressionist settings or using expressionist techniques of acting" (p. 163).

Prof. Weisstein has compiled a comprehensive annotated bibliography for this volume, which is a model of accessibility: beyond the usual lists of anthologies, documents, etc., there are discussions of Expressionism organized by country and sections devoted to such topics as "The Word 'Expressionism'," "Expressionism and Drama," "The Impact of German Expressionism on Other Countries," "Expressionism and the Other Arts." Altogether this compilation of essays and bibliography on international Expressionism—the first of its kind—will prove very useful to the comparatist.

There has long been a need for a total view of the arts during this period when the arts were so closely interrelated; the first broad-scale attempt is the Hamann-Hermand study, *Expressionismus*, the final volume in their series "Epochen deutscher Kultur von 1870 bis zur Gegenwart." As in the earlier volumes of the series (cf. *GQ* XLVIII [1975] p. 266 ff.), the perspective embraces art, literature, music, and architecture. The presentation is not a historical survey and makes no attempt to give a

complete or proportionate treatment—Kafka, Kollwitz, Barlach are scarcely mentioned—and the customary distinctions between movements within the epoch are underplayed. Hermand intends to characterize the epoch, testing the validity of the concept Expressionism and offering a critique of the expressionist revolution. The three main parts of the book deal in turn with 1) the total uprising against the prevailing order, 2) the Utopian goals of the expressionist revolution, and 3) the collapse of the revolution.

In Hermand's view the fundamental urge shared by the artists of this period, despite their diversity, is the need to rebel against the bourgeois establishment and to do that with as shocking means as possible; the means is basically an "aggressive deformation" of reality and leads to caricature even where the artists' intention is unequivocally positive (*Der blaue Reiter*). Though this deformation is most obvious in art, it is also prevalent in literature. Activism, intensity, and the expression of the chaotic simultaneity of modern life are the goals of Expressionism, both in art and literature. In general the "new humanity" proclaimed by Expressionism turns out to be only an intensified form of the old humanity: Rousseauism, romanticism, cultivation of the self. But behind the avowed goals of Expressionism Hermand finds a hidden goal of which the expressionists themselves were largely unaware: the urge to depersonalize. Thus, the ideal of the expressionist revolution is not individual and personal as it may seem to be, it is ideational, conceptual. It is the basic urge to depersonalize which lay at the root of the expressionists' emphasis on the instinctual and subhuman, the primitive, the world of schizophrenia, the sex drive, and, more obviously, it is the impulse behind the emphasis on the abstract, the idea, the typical, the problem. Expressionist literature is a game of intellect: "Ihre Handlungen haben weder die Realität des Wunders noch die Frische der unmittelbaren Alltäglichkeit sondern unterstehen ganz der Logik der Idee und der mathematischen Begriffseindeutigkeit" (p. 126). One does not find nature in their works, as their manifestos would imply; rather, one finds denatured (*entnaturt*) artificiality. Expressionistic painting does not represent the humane but only the crassness of the expressionists' means of artistic expression; line, color, form for their own sake. In contrast to the accepted view that the expressionists were fighting dehumanization by a technical world, Hermand finds that they were in fact shifting from a humane interest in man towards a dehumanized and dehumanizing constructivism. He points out that it is consistent with the age of mass production that it is products, not human beings, around which society centers. He sees this however as positive: only if a complete depersonalization is achieved can the danger of lapsing into a pointless romantic Utopianism such as Messianic Expressionism be avoided. There were voices raised (though not by expressionists) in favor of a new attitude: let the criterion be not what one *is* but what one *produces*.

Thus Hermand finds some good in Expressionism: it helped pave the way for an ultimately more humane status of work and the worker in a society which values production rather than rank or class. The concept Expressionism he would leave untouched; though the era is characterized not by a single expressionism but by many contradictory expressionisms, the term is appropriate as an epoch designation for the very reason that the contradictory tendencies are characteristic of the era.

Hermand's rejection of Expressionism is startling in the face of the current popularity of expressionist art and literature. It is an enlightening perspective, however, and a healthy corrective. The presentation has a lively, journalistic tone, but the glee of polemic detracts from accuracy and persuasiveness. One is continually tempted to argue about relevance, interpretation, proportion, and logic, about slanted emphasis on obscure artists and convenient inattention to major figures. A more important issue however is the validity of the criterion with which Hermand gauges art. For Hermand art must reproduce reality. Deviations from the accepted reproduction of reality are grotesque (depersonalized); emphasis on formal elements—line, color, composition (or their correspondences in literature)—occurs at the cost of humane content. Hermand finds this also true of music: Schönberg's twelve-tone method of composing has something depersonalizing and artificial because it dispenses with the "natural" crescendos and decrescendos of human feeling, emphasizing instead the constructivistic elements. Lovers of art, music, and literature may well find this interpretation of humaneness in art painfully naive; the logic on which it rests is in any case not at all persuasive.

Vietta and Kemper in their study *Expressionismus* also understand Expressionism as a period concept and view the epoch as characterized by a dialectic of dissociation of the ego on the one hand and attempts at renewal on the other. The main discussion of the book is divided into two parts: "Probleme—Zusammenhänge—Methodische Fragen" (Vietta) and "Analysen" (Kemper). Vietta sees dissociation of the ego as the fundamental expressionist experience manifest in the *Reihungsstil* popularized by van Hoddis, in Benn's synecdoche ("Grüne Zähne, Pickel im Gesicht/winkt einer Lidrandentzündung"), and in the reduction of human beings to objects, the personification and demonization of things, so characteristic of expressionist literature. Vietta discusses in great detail not only the philosophy and social thought which bear on the period but also the role of the urban setting and the influence of film and the mass media. Vietta quite rightly and profitably gives most of his attention to these aspects and to the crisis of identity, matters which have been neglected by critics. Messianic Expressionism, already fully treated by scholars, is dealt with rather summarily.

Kemper's analyses are intended to "check, differentiate, and augment" Vietta's presentation. They are methodologically oriented

towards the reading process and assume a sophisticated reader who is acquainted with traditional literary forms, themes, and motifs, and with the historical context in which each work originated. An analysis of Trakl's "Geburt" provides a model for approaching literature through the reader's experience of it. The process is schematized as three readings: during the first the reader experiences the destruction of the expectations conditioned by the lyric tradition; a second reading alerts him to the deliberate structural discrepancies in the poem; a third reading brings to bear not only other Trakl poetry but also biographical documents and literary influences. The analysis thus goes far beyond what even Kemper's assumed reader is likely to experience; in the end it is a highly informative but fairly conventional *explication de texte*. Nor can Kemper's other analyses—Kafka's *Das Urteil*, Sternheim's *Die Hose*, Edschmid's *Der Lazo*—do much to correct the erroneous view of Expressionism which Vietta and Kemper feel has arisen from the tendency on the part of scholars to concentrate on close readings of major authors. In general, despite the elaborate discussions of methodology, the book does not present insights strikingly different from those of earlier scholarship. Yet, because of the unusually painstaking concern with methodology, the abundance of examples, the detailed examination of the social and philosophical context of Expressionism, both authors' knack for discovering new aspects in the expressionist "classics," the thoughtful criticism of earlier scholarship, this book is a superb introduction to Expressionism. The bibliography of some 750 items cited in the text reflects the vast labor which produced it.

Eykman, in his collection of essays *Denk- und Stilformen des Expressionismus*, wishes to show the high degree of unity which exists behind the often contradictory diversity. His studies are intended to provide diachronic views of the "thematic and stylistic achievement of German Expressionism," singling out aspects for examination which have heretofore been neglected. These are well chosen and for the most part go to the heart of expressionist concerns. The ambivalent relationship of expressionist writers to politics is examined; their social philosophy is explored through a careful analysis of such key concepts as *Gemeinschaft*, *Gesellschaft*, *Masse*; the two popular motifs—the end of the world and the Last Judgment—are explored and related to the envisioned New Man. The most detailed essay in the book presents an analysis of the theology of Expressionism, surveying the widely divergent concepts of God, the conception of Satan, the mysticism of the expressionists, the role of art as the supplanter of religion. What emerges is again characteristically ambivalent: religious thought patterns and conceptions tend to be either a cipher for human impotence or a projection of a new, perfect man. A chapter "Das Ich, die Dinge und die Wirklichkeit im deutschen Expressionismus" finds the relationship of Expressionism to the objective

world skeptical: in the search for a deeper-lying reality, apparent reality is rejected (with resultant distortion in its depiction by artists). Two essays deal with literature in its formal aspects: "Das Märchen im Expressionismus" demonstrates that the fairy tale still existed during the expressionist period, albeit in altered form, and that it was not by any means merely a political tool; "Das Pantomimische als Strukturelement im expressionistischen Drama" shows the role of pantomime to be far more important than has been generally acknowledged. These concise and lucid essays are stimulating reading and will hopefully inspire further investigation along these lines.

Geoffrey Perkins seeks to show, in his survey of *Contemporary Theory of Expressionism*, that "contrary to the beliefs of many historians, there was such a thing as a cohesive theory of Expressionism, a theory moreover that continues to cloud discussions of that movement even today" (p. 68). Perkins pieces much of this theory together from the writing of what one contemporary quite rightly called "aesthetisches Dilettantentum," the journalists who did not themselves paint or write literary works. But one can scarcely hope for a perceptive total view of any art movement in the *Trivialkritik* which accompanies it, and Perkins finds that the feuilletonists of the day had little to say about expressionist art which really seems relevant to the creative work of the movement.

The reader is likely to feel some reservation at the outset with regard to Perkins' method: he reconstructs his dinosaur from the bones of many specimens, a procedure which may or may not produce an accurate prototype. Moreover, Perkins' explanation of the expressionist critics' approach is a flight of journalistic fancy: he sees in it an escape from the dilemma of being duty-bound as critics to explain and defend an art which was not accessible to the average member of society: "Much of it was non-figurative, all of it represented deformation or distortion to some degree. Meaning in the traditional sense had therefore become obscure. The apologist thus took the form, the colors and lines, or the style, pathos, distortion, abstraction, to be the carrier of the picture's or the poem's significance. Since there was no obvious subject, or since the point of distortion was not apparent, the deformation itself or the qualities of forms became imbued with some deeper inner meaning" (p. 125). Aside from the fact that in this regard the critics probably took their cue from the artists themselves, one must observe that most expressionist art *was* "figurative" and that surely there is *no* expressionist poem without an "obvious subject." Perkins' complaint that the critics failed to provide a standard for evaluating art is correct but unfair; the criticism he is dealing with is *Geistesgeschichte*, whose primary concern is not to evaluate individual works of art but to record the totality of forces which gave birth to it. The critics were not shirking their duty; they conceived of their duty in quite other terms than does Mr. Perkins.

Though the reader may be distressed by the many misprints and the awkward formulation, the book does offer a useful account of the historical, political, and philosophical background of Expressionism as well as detailed summaries of the views of Alois Riegl and Wilhelm Worringer. The bibliography included is comprehensive, but the division of the chronology in some sections renders it very difficult to use.

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BROWN, JANE K., *Goethe's Cyclical Narratives: "Die Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten" and "Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre."* (University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, Nr. 82.) Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press (1975). 141 pp. \$10.25

Hatte Goethe bereits die *Lehrjahre* "eine der incalculabelsten Produktionen" genannt, so haben sich die *Wanderjahre* als noch schwieriger, ja fast unzugänglich erwiesen. Seit beinahe hundertfünfzig Jahren bemüht sich die Literaturkritik, das Geheimnis des Alterswerks zu eruieren oder doch wenigstens mit Hilfe verschiedener kritischer Methoden einen Sinn zu erstellen. In der technologisch orientierten Gegenwart wiederum, die sich vor allem für das "Wie" interessiert, dürfen Versuche nicht überraschen, die den unaussprechlichen und doch sprechenden Zauber des eigenwilligen Werkes mit den Hilfskonstruktionen genauester Strukturuntersuchungen zu lösen suchen. Zwar erscheinen solche Ansätze zunächst bescheidener als zum Beispiel die eines imposante Gedankenbögen schlagenden Geistesgeschichtlers, allein sie setzen fast unmerklich ein gestandenes Maß Hybris voraus, indem sie sich zum Ziel setzen, durch strukturelle Indizienketten die leisen Regungen und endgültigsten Absichten der dichterischen Phantasie zu rekonstruieren. Man befließigt sich, das Naturgeheimnis nachzuvollziehen.

Auch Browns Arbeit ist in erster Linie eine Strukturanalyse der *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten* und der *Wanderjahre*—zwar anspruchsvoll aber vollkommen unpräventiös. Der Verfasserin geht es darum, zu einem Verständnis der scheinbar chaotischen Form des "Romans" zu kommen und ein einsichtsvolleres Lesen zu ermöglichen, indem sie das Verhältnis der Romanhandlung zu den eingeschobenen Novellen klärt, die verschiedenen Erzähl- und Erkenntnisperspektiven erläutert, das Ganze gegen den Zeitgeist des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts abhebt und die literarischen Einflüsse belegt.

Die *Unterhaltungen* dienen als Auftakt, da sie bereits die Hauptthemen und manche erzähltechnischen Mittel der *Wanderjahre* aufweisen. Im Mittelpunkt beider Werke steht das problematische Verhältnis des