

Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon: 21 Essays and a Bibliography by Ulrich Weisstein

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finding in the Scriptures 'types' which prefigured Christ and His Kingdom. Professor Gardner Stout Jr sees *A Tale of a Tub* as an expression of Swift's whole being in which he liberated his buried life, and 'anatomised madmen whose higher faculties were possessed by their sexual and excremental impulses'. Possibly: but on reading Professor Green's 'Swift: some caveats', the reader may come to the conclusion that criticism of Swift is most successful when related to the scientific and religious movements of the day: Johnson is a surer guide to Swift than Freud. Mr Wilding's essay 'The Politics of *Gulliver's Travels*' is notably successful because he sees what is in the text and not what, perhaps, he would like to find there (Professor Greene's final caveat). Previous critics of the political novel have gone back no further than the mid-nineteenth century; Mr Wilding considers *Gulliver's Travels* as part of a tradition leading to William Morris, Conrad, Orwell, and Alan Sillitoe's *Travels in Nihilon* (1971).

Few critics have bothered to consider Garrick as a poet. Professor Hainsworth has produced a critical survey, stressing the essentially dramatic qualities of his verse which reveals something of the taste of the theatre-going public: it was certainly patriotic — Garrick wrote *Heart of Oak* for a pantomime — had an insatiable appetite for Prologues and Epilogues, and was easily roused in its religious and political sensitivities. Professor Donaldson, in his 'Cato in Tears', shows that the eighteenth century preferred its heroes to bear their sorrows 'as a man', that is, to weep. It eschewed absolute stoicism as becoming only to a beast. The argument is backed up by a wide range of examples but chiefly Addison's *Cato*, known to all readers of Voltaire but seldom analysed.

This handsome volume which began with a personal reminiscence of Nichol Smith by Bodley's Librarian ends with a fitting contribution — an account of the Nichol Smith collections at Edinburgh and Oxford by Mr A. S. Bell, Assistant Keeper of Manuscripts at the National Library of Scotland.

P. J. S. WHITMORE

LONDON

*Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon: 21 Essays and a Bibliography.*

Edited by ULRICH WEISSTEIN. (A Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages sponsored by the International Comparative Literature Association, Volume 1) Paris: Didier; Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó. 1973. 360 pp. 70 F.

This substantial volume of essays, for the most part freshly commissioned, is intended, as the editor explains, to complement three major contributions to the study of Expressionism: Wolfgang Rothe's *Expressionismus als Literatur* (1969), which concentrates on Germany and examines both general topics and a representative range of writers; the proceedings of the 1969 Strasbourg colloquium, published in 1971 as *L'expressionnisme dans le théâtre européen*; and the proceedings of the Convegno Internazionale di Studi sull'Espressionismo, which so far have been published only in part and offer an inter-disciplinary rather than an international approach in various fields. The present volume retains German Expressionism as one of its co-ordinates and explores foreign influences on German Expressionist drama, poetry and prose, and conversely, ways in which foreign literatures derived impetus from German Expressionism and often then went on to develop a form of Expressionism for themselves: thus there are essays on Vorticism, English drama and prose writing, and on poetry, prose and drama in Scandinavia, Belgium, Holland, Rumania, Hungary, Poland, Russia, among the South Slavs and in the U.S.A.

The essays clearly break new ground, and taken together represent a valuable

summary of literary links and interaction both between national cultures and between the arts: there are absorbing investigations of the relationship between Expressionist literature and painting, and between Expressionist literature and music, and an examination of the problems involved in applying the term Expressionist to the film. It is perhaps inevitable that the more analytical essays should appear to carry the greater intrinsic interest. The surveys of Expressionism in the national literatures tend to be more narrative/descriptive in character. Nevertheless they represent an important function of the work, for they enable the specialist student of a national literature to consider specific authors and works and trends, which are here identified, in their relationship to manifestations in Germany and in other countries. Conversely, the non-specialist reader can learn *something* of the influence of Expressionism in the various unfamiliar national literatures and obtain at least the basic information about authors and works. How far he or she would get without a reading knowledge of the respective languages is another matter.

The editor of essays covering such a range of topics by diverse contributors inevitably has problems, and not all of them have been solved. There are quite a few misprints, including some slips in names (Hermann Bang, Axel von Jawlensky, Dennis Johnston, Hampsted; and *Mataré* for the periodical *Marcatré*); there are some questionable assertions (Toller's *Die Maschinenstürmer* does not present the machine as the tyrant of man in quite so simplistic a manner as H. F. Garten suggests); there is some overlapping in considering separately the influence of Marinetti and the Futurists on poetry and on drama; despite the editor's personal insistence on regarding Expressionism primarily in terms of style and within a clearly limited period, other contributors tend to stress themes and subject-matter rather than techniques, or to regard Expressionism as a perennial rather than a historical manifestation; unlike the other accounts, the essay on Russian Expressionism does not give translations of the titles of works cited, so that the non-specialist cannot readily follow them up; Lotte Eisner's contribution on the film, taken over from the Florence Convegno, adds disappointingly little to her essay in *L'expressionnisme dans le théâtre européen*, and indeed is less effective without illustrations and with a reduced sense of chronology. But the most persistent reservation arises from the style of a number of the essays themselves: they are all in English, which offers a valuable degree of accessibility, but several of them have been translated, and despite the editor's gallant acknowledgement, Miss Linda Brust has often produced a curiously un-English rendering, even by trans-atlantic standards, as well as some rather dubious phrases (is 'this well-constructed drama' (p. 286) a translation of 'une pièce bien faite'?), and some downright mistakes: 'In spite of a certain interest displayed by circles within the conservative Swiss citizenry for the all but conservative tendencies and utterances of most of the emigrants . . .' (p. 106). More parochially, one could regret the understatement of English attention to Expressionism: that no credit is given in the brief survey of the 'reception' of Expressionism in English-speaking countries (p. 30) to Samuel and Hinton-Thomas for their pioneering pre-war study, or to J. M. Ritchie for his more recent series of translations of Expressionist plays (1968-9, 1970).

These are, however, for the most part relatively superficial blemishes. This is a handsome volume and a major contribution to the study of Expressionism, well ordered, stimulating in its range, and informative. It includes a very full bibliography of the theory and history of Expressionism in the various art forms and in the various countries discussed, although it does not cover studies of individual writers. It will prove a valuable tool for comparatists, and for student and specialist scholar alike.

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