

Pallus, Walter and Gunnar Müller-Waldeck, eds.
Neuanfänge: Studien zur frühen DDR-Literatur.
Berlin: Aufbau, 1986.

The purpose of this collection of essays is an attempt to reevaluate early GDR literature. Although one only encounters famous names among the essay titles: Johannes R. Becher, Günter Weisenborn, Bertolt Brecht, Hanns Eisler, Friedrich Wolf, Anna Seghers, Arnold Zweig, and Stephan Hermlin, the editors justify their study by comparing the need for a reevaluation of literature with the current reevaluation of society. For the most part, the essays are successful in attaining their goal. I found that the essays inspired new insights into the works of these well-known authors and will serve to further discussions surrounding these works.

In each essay a thorough discussion of the author's early works is accompanied by an interpretation of the works, relating them all to the discussions which have surrounded the debate on the literary heritage of the GDR. Many of the essays begin by relating the author's experiences and writing in exile with the situation in a newly forming socialist society. For many writers it was during their exile when the first attempts at formulating their own theories began and the consequences of their writings could be examined.

The essays in this collection seek to find answers to the following topics: the relationship of cultural politics to aesthetics; the relationship of the works to reality and the need to follow tradition; writing methodology and reader and critic reception.

Hans Jürgen Geerdtz examines the relationship of socialist ideology with poetic methodology in the works of Johannes R. Becher. Particularly interesting is the study by Gunnar Müller-Waldeck concerning the relationship of heritage and dramatic methods. He discusses the GDR-dramas produced around the year 1950 and their treatments of the Peasants' War. For his purposes Müller-Waldeck chooses Weisenborn's Eulenspiegel-Ballade, Eisler's Johann Faustus, and Friedrich Wolf's Thomas Münzer. He provides an excellent contribution to the heritage discussion which is ongoing in the GDR. Walter Pallus examines the influences and causes of Anna Segher's narrative produc-

tion, particularly the manner in which her ideas are further developed in her works after her return from exile. Special consideration is given to Das Argonautenschiff. Georg Wenzel comments on the later works of Arnold Zweig, concentrating his discussion on Zweig's novel Träum ist teuer. Andreas Zecher and Walter Pallus devote their essay to a discussion of the renewal of the humanist heritage in the works of Stephan Hermlin.

Despite the concentration on well-known GDR authors, this collection does prove to be an interesting analysis. It is valuable for the insights it delivers regarding the relationship of the works of these early GDR writers to the current discussion of the literary heritage. The essays are certainly worth reading for those scholars concentrating on this area of GDR literature, for they do further the discussion which already pertains to these works. In addition all of the contributors provide excellent documentation and additional sources of information which can prove to be invaluable to the serious GDR researcher.

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Rost, Maritta and Rosemarie Geist, eds. Stephan Hermlin Bibliographie. Leipzig: Reclam, 1985. 280 pp.

Witt, Hubert. Stephan Hermlin: Texte, Materialien, Bilder. Leipzig: Reclam, 1985. 327 pp.

In einem Gespräch mit der FDJ-Zeitung Junge Welt nahm Stephan Hermlin unlängst wieder einmal Stellung zu den Themen Vergangenheitsbewältigung, Antifaschismus heute, Geschichtsbetrachtung. "Ausgerechnet die deutsche Republik, die sich ehrlichen Herzens eine Republik der Antifaschisten nennen darf," so stellen am Anfang des Gesprächs die jungen Genossen der Zeitung fest, "gerät ins polemische Sperrfeuer des ideologischen Gegners: Skinheads, das Aufklackern faschistischen Ungeistes, wie sporadisch und vereinzelt auch immer, seien Ausdruck der Tatsache, daß auch bei uns Vergangenheit nicht richtig bewältigt worden sei." Hermlin erinnerte daran, daß er sich schon immer "gegen die