

turelle Äußerungen zwischen Tradition und Innovation ernst zu nehmen und genau hinzuhören. Die Analyse *Figuring the Female*, die Ellis für die drei klassizistischen Dramen Grillparzers vorlegt, lässt allein in Bezug auf das dramatische Werk dieses Autors weiterfragen: Wie äußern sich Lucretia, Drahomira, Irene, Psyche, Melusina, Libussa, Ester und Rahel?

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Die Dorfgeschichte. Unterhaltungen mit der Zeit.

Von Hans-Joachim Hahn. Bern: Peter Lang, 2021. 214 Seiten + 2 s/w
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Hahn explains the need for this study by observing that the *Dorfgeschichte* is experiencing renewed interest among contemporary writers of fiction, but has not gotten much attention from scholars in decades. The most recent full-length study on the topic is Uwe Baur's 1978 contribution (*Dorfgeschichte. Zur Entstehung und gesellschaftlichen Funktion einer literarischen Gattung im Vormärz*), but Friedrich Altvater's *Wesen und Form der deutschen Dorfgeschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* from 1930 remains the standard. As an update to Altvater, and in response to Baur's limited focus on the Vormärz period, Hahn seeks to trace the genre's prehistory and to examine its expressions in the 20th and 21st centuries. Several hundred years of literary history can hardly be covered in depth in this volume's 200 pages, as Hahn freely admits. His primary goal, then, is to develop a *Geistesgeschichte* around the use and appeal of the genre rather than a detailed discussion of its practitioners and their works.

Although the most consistent feature of this genre is not its form but rather its *Stoff*—namely, its village setting and the characters within it—Hahn devotes a chapter to the structure of the *Dorfgeschichte*. He does not deviate substantially from Altvater's pithy definition of the genre: "Dem Stoffgebiet nach *Heimatkunst*, in der Form vorwiegend *Erzählung*, trägt ihre gesamte geistige Haltung und Darstellung zunächst die charakteristischen Merkmale des beginnenden *Realismus*" (Altvater, quoted in Hahn 4). Still, in the spirit of an intellectual history, Hahn problematizes Altvater's observations by delving deeper into the stylistic, structural, and societal aspects of the genre. Key elements explored in this context are the genre's readership, themes, style, protagonists, settings, and tendencies toward sentimentality. Hahn finds strong overlap between the *Dorfgeschichte* and *Heimatliteratur*, a relationship he explores in later chapters.

Having laid out the most common structural elements, Hahn devotes the second part of his study to works and authors from the core period of the 19th century, with a brief detour into the genre's conceptual and spiritual predecessors. Brief references to short narratives by Johann Heinrich Voss, Maler Müller, and Clemens Brentano serve to orient the reader to what does *not* qualify as a *Dorfgeschichte*. Hahn turns to the Swiss writers Heinrich Zschokke and Jeremias Gotthelf as early contributors to the genre. He focuses on Zschokke's *Das Goldmacherdorf* (1817) and Gotthelf's *Uli der Knecht* (1841) to illuminate the characteristics of setting, protagonist, language,

and style that situate these works as *Dorfgeschichten*. To those structural elements Hahn adds a didacticism that is grounded in religion.

Hahn lingers over works by authors associated with the literary Vormärz, namely Berthold Auerbach, Melchior Meyr, Gottfried Keller, and Ludwig Anzengruber. Their texts are consistent with the social and democratic aspirations of the period, as seen by the sympathy toward self-determination of the village inhabitants. With some deviations, they share structural elements common to the *Dorfgeschichte*: simple narrative style that makes use of dialect or regional affects, small cast of characters, and realistic presentation (perhaps best understood here as poetic realism). Also characteristic is the use of the “Aschenputtel-Motiv,” i.e., a love interest that crosses social divides and thereby challenges conventions, demonstrated by the frequency of happy endings for socially mismatched lovers.

Comfortable in his assertion that the aforementioned writers worked within the genre, Hahn also discusses several, specifically Immermann, Goethe, Mörike, and Hermann Kurz, who produced one or more works that share its characteristics. Hahn concludes that these works are at best “Grenzfälle” since they deviate from the form in significant ways. He reaches a similar conclusion about Louise Otto-Peters, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, Ottilie Wildermuth, and Eugenie Marlitt. These women made frequent use of structural elements that are common to the *Dorfgeschichte*, but because of their elevated social status they tended to approach the village material as an idyll, more akin to Biedermeier than to Vormärz.

The third and final part of this study traces how the *Dorfgeschichte* of the 19th century gives way to *Heimatliteratur* in the 20th and 21st centuries. Like scholars before him, Hahn uses the literary output of Peter Rosegger to illustrate this transition. Rosegger was aware of the historical processes at the turn of the century that would forever alter village life. “Es werden Zeiten kommen,” wrote Rosegger, “da die Menschheit sich heiß zurücksehnen wird zur Idylle des alten Dorflebens, das an und für sich freilich nicht immer eine war, jedoch im Vergleiche zu künftigen Zuständen eine gewesen sein wird” (quoted in Hahn 162). Although, as Hahn observes, traditional village life persisted well into the 20th century, Rosegger did accurately anticipate the impulses that would lead to the popularity of *Heimatliteratur*.

The village as a literary setting found traction again in the 1960s in the GDR, and in the 1980s in the FRG. Hahn attributes the interest in the GDR to a reevaluation of the Vormärz, but he does not expand on what would have been an interesting line of inquiry. In the FRG, the 1984 television event *Heimat* brought village-life material back into the public eye. Although a different medium, the kinship of the television series with the structure, style, and purposes of the *Dorfgeschichte* has been noted.

Hahn does not speculate whether the *Heimat* series may have inspired Dörte Hansen and Juli Zeh—the two contemporary authors with whom he closes his discussion. Hansen’s bestselling *Altes Land* (2015) exhibits many of the classic elements of the *Dorfgeschichte*, including dialect and the “Aschenputtel-Motiv.” Importantly, the novel avoids the sense of nostalgia and sentimentality that would mark it as *Heimatliteratur*. This is true also of Zeh’s *Unterleuten* (2016): village life does not prove to be the idyll that some of her characters might have imagined when they relocated from the city. Both novels recall the social changes threatening village life that Rosegger saw at the end of the 19th century, but here the problems are less about displacement from an ancestral home and more about the struggle to find a *Zuhause*

in today's world. Hahn does not go so far as to claim that these two recent novels are *Dorfgeschichten*, but the similarities are worth noting, as are the differences.

The narrow focus of this genre study makes it best suited for comprehensive research libraries. However, if the recent novels by Hansen and Zeh are indeed indicators of renewed engagement with village tropes, Hahn's work could appeal to a broad spectrum of scholars.

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The Problem of the Actress in Modern German Theater and Thought.

By S. E. Jackson. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2021. 246 pages + 15 b/w images. £90.00/\$105.00 hardcover, £24.99/\$29.95 eBook.

In a scene from Arthur Schnitzler's play *Reigen* (1897), "the Count" approaches "the Actress" after witnessing her perform on stage. "You are a strange being," he says, "enigmatic you could almost say [. . . Y]ou are a problem. That is something I have always longed for" (cited by Jackson, 124). The Count views the Actress as a conversation partner who will affirm his self-conception as a philosopher. Meanwhile, "the Poet" hopes the Actress will serve as his muse. Yet the Poet and the Count end up frustrated. While the Actress offers them sex, she mocks their pretensions to genius and their efforts to realize their intellectual ambitions through her persona.

Schnitzler's *Reigen* was just one manifestation of a widespread fascination in fin-de-siècle Germany and Austria with the "problem of the actress." As S. E. Jackson shows in this illuminating study, this problem came to the fore at a time when feminists were demanding greater rights for women, expressionist playwrights were challenging theatrical and sexual conventions, and actresses themselves seemed poised to carry out what one critic called a "conquest of the stage" (19n). Depending on one's perspective, this was a moment of either possibility or danger, and this duality was reflected in the discourse surrounding "the actress." "For some the actress was a dilemma, something to be solved, delimited, and mastered; for others the actress presented a complex of ideas, a conceptual puzzle that might reveal new means to understand and offer new possibilities of the modern subject" (3). Jackson's book traces the broader social and cultural trends that made actresses an object of public concern around 1900, but the heart of this study is its focus on the actresses Gertrud Eysoldt and Tilla Durieux, who are shown to be co-creators of the modernist theatrical experience on a level with any author or director of their time.

Chapter One examines the gendered, often misogynist discourse that shaped discussions of the actress in fin-de-siècle Germany and Austria. Beginning in the 1880s, Ernst Mach's hyper-positivist undermining of the "self" spurred efforts to either shore up the ego or celebrate its demise. In *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903), the neo-Kantian Otto Weininger attempted the former by reducing the problem of the self to one of sex, arguing that while men possessed a substantive self, women were limited to either biological reproduction or pure appearance. Weininger's arguments echoed Nietzsche's assertion that women were actresses (and thus liars) by nature, as well as Rousseau's claim that the theater promoted a reign of "feminine" deception. These arguments would gain new traction after 1900 as theater critics confronted