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## Eberhard Haufe, ed.: Johannes Bobrowski. Peter Huchel. Briefwechsel

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the womb: "bin vollendet, will raus,/ durchkommen. laß mich raus." Yet the very expression of this desire brings about a wish for its opposite: "es ist kalt hier./ wo bringt ihr mich hin/ o furchtbare welt." This poem, or poem fragment, ends with a contradiction: "ist ja gut, ist ja gut, . . . NEIN/ es ist nicht gut." Fragment, outcry, contradiction, claustrophobia, desire for shelter. All these characterize flanzendörfer's work, and—since in his own words, "der Text bist du selbst"—its creator.

One may spend a lot of time trying to de-code this book, asking, for example, why a particular text is written (or printed or scrawled) near, on or below a given photograph or drawing. Is it enough to say that such inscriptions are anti-captions, thus coining a new word in the manner of flanzendörfer?

A reviewer is generally expected to evaluate the quality of the work reviewed. I do not believe this is possible or desirable in the case of flanzendörfer. As an "in schrift" (sic) to the book, the following may be read: "wenn gemeinsamkeit dunkelkammer ist,/ sind wir allesamt belichtet & als solche tragbare . . ." In light of these words, *unmöglich es leben* is best viewed as a coffin containing the remains of flanzendörfer's text/self.

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**Haufe, Eberhard, ed. *Johannes Bobrowski . Peter Huchel: Briefwechsel. Marbacher Schriften 37.* Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1993. 73 pp. ISBN 3-7681-9998-3. DM 30.**

Scholars interested in Bobrowski and/or Huchel will find in this volume information on their professional lives as well as some primary material concerning GDR literary history. It contains letters, written between 1955-1964, by two of the greatest writers of the former German Democratic Republic. Despite that fact and the expectations it may raise, the heretofore unpublished letters do less to provide impetus for reexamination and continuing analysis of these authors' works, than to shed light on their complex personal and professional relationship. Even this light is dim without Haufe's illuminating afterward. There is no philosophical profundity to be found in the correspondence nor does it provide new, instructive insights on the authors and their work.

Thus, one should not expect the literary caliber of the published correspondences of Goethe and Schiller, Benjamin and Scholem, or Wolf and Reimann. Instead of aesthetic positions, literary issues, or philosophical explanations we have business-like exchanges between publisher/poet (Huchel) and a nascent literary talent (Bobrowski). Still, this handsome volume informs the reader about the professional relationship of the two writers. Moreover, it contains one more example of how the East German state showed its approval or disapproval of literary activity, playing the political and psychological game of granting visas to some and not others: here Bobrowski was granted permission to travel to West Germany for professional visits while Huchel was denied.

As editor of Bobrowski's collected works and with personal contacts to Huchel's family, Eberhard Haufe was in an excellent position to bring this correspondence to print. He contextualized it with his extensive knowledge of the professional and private lives of the two authors. Although the letters deal with the business of literature and a few personal exchanges, they touch upon two major events in GDR literature: Bobrowski's discovery as a literary talent and Huchel's resignation as editor of *Sinn und Form*. The two events are connected as Bobrowski, having gotten his start from Huchel in *Sinn und Form*, went on to win prize after prize for his poetry, while Huchel came increasingly under pressure to refocus *Sinn und Form* to help the development of a "sozialistischen Nationalkultur." As Haufe points out, both authors desired to affirm literary expression in its value to humanity, and thus could not allow its usurpation for the narrow interests of the state. They both approached literature from the broader perspective of national or international culture as opposed to serving the purposes of a specific ideology. This common attitude laid the ground for a professional friendship. Still, each had to deal with the state in his own way. Huchel, taking a more confrontational approach, eventually resigned the editorship of *Sinn und Form* as pressure on him grew to produce what would amount to another *Parteiorgan*. Bobrowski was not interested in becoming an exclusively "East German" poet: "Entweder ich mache deutsche Gedichte oder ich lerne Polnisch" (52). In an evasive move he contracted with the Unionverlag of the Christian Democratic Union of the GDR to create distance

between himself and the ruling party as well as for material advantages.

The diverging career paths of the two men became a cause for animosity between them when, as the implication goes, Bobrowski distanced himself from Huchel due to the latter's political difficulties. The relationship was damaged beyond repair and Bobrowski, despite his move, still could not avoid coming under government suspicion. Fortunately for Bobrowski his literary material, the eastern neighbors and reconciliation with them, kept him in relatively good standing with the regime while Huchel went into seclusion, a *persona non grata*. Bobrowski's literary concerns harmonized with the foreign policy of the German Democratic Republic and possessed undeniable relevance for the entire German-speaking world. Huchel, however, could strike no such compatibility with the regime without compromising his literary judgment.

The volume possesses a few amenities including pictures of the two authors from 1965, facsimiles of their original letters and poems, and extensive notes that explain persons mentioned, place names, and provide further information on situations alluded to in the letters. Haufe offers a thorough and informative discussion of the context in which the correspondence took place. In general the book's material is accessible, well-organized and significant for understanding the literary praxis of the former German Democratic Republic.

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***Johannes Bobrowski oder Landschaft mit Leuten. Eine Ausstellung des Deutschen Literaturarchivs im Schiller-Nationalmuseum Marbach am Neckar. Ausstellung und Katalog: Reinhard Tgahrt in Zusammenarbeit mit Ute Doster. Marbacher Kataloge 46. Marbach am Neckar: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 1993. 848 pp., 275 illustrations. ISBN 3-928882-99-6. DM 40.***

Der vorliegende Katalog verdankt seine Entstehung der Ausstellung des Deutschen Literaturarchivs über den Lyriker und Erzähler Johannes Bobrowski (1917-1965), der, als erster der in der DDR ansässigen Autoren, über die innerdeutschen Grenzen hinweg die vorbehaltlose Anerkennung seiner im Westen tätigen Kollegen fand und 1962 in

Aschaffenburg den Preis der Gruppe 47 erhielt. In der DDR stellte die Anerkennung sich erst nachträglich ein, und es ist meines Erachtens das besondere Verdienst Stephan Hermlins, die Klippen, die sich in dieser Beziehung ergeben hatten, sogleich mit Geschick zu umrunden. Auf den Seiten 158-160 des Katalogs zeichnet sich dies ab. Hermlin erinnert sich hier an eine Gesprächsrunde mit DDR-Schriftstellern in Berlin am 28. Oktober 1962. Er hatte es bewirkt, daß Bobrowski von der Gastgeberin Anna Seghers, die von dem Preisträger noch nicht gehört hatte, eingeladen wurde; ostentativ gratulierte er dann Bobrowski zur Verleihung des westdeutschen Preises und hielt fest, daß dies nicht nur eine Ehrung Bobrowskis bedeute, sondern für die ganze DDR eine Ehre sei. Bezeichnenderweise schreibt Hermlin dann: "Niemand wagte eine Entgegnung, aber die Blicke einiger der Anwesenden richteten sich mit einem Haß auf mich, den ich bis heute nicht vergessen habe" (160).

Im Vorwort des Katalogs hält Ulrich Ott fest, daß in den Ausführungen ein "Wechselspiel zwischen dem Individuellen—Johannes Bobrowski—und dem Übergreifenden—Landschaft mit Leuten" stattgefunden habe, daß nicht nur Leben und Werk des Dichters intensiv beleuchtet werden, sondern auch die politische und literarische Zeitgeschichte ständig ins Blickfeld gerate. In der Hauptsache gründet der Katalog sich auf den literarischen Nachlaß Bobrowskis, der vor einigen Jahren vom Deutschen Literaturarchiv erworben wurde. Sodann ist auch auf andere Bestände, beispielsweise auf das Archiv der Zeitschrift *Merkur*, zurückgegriffen worden sowie auf Briefschaften und Sammlungen von diversen Persönlichkeiten, u.a. von Werner Zintgraf, Peter Huchel, Peter Jokostra, Manfred Seidler, Gerhard Rostin, Max Hölzer und Christoph Meckel. Daß der umfangreiche Band in nur drei Monaten entstanden ist, überrascht den Rezensenten. Die diesbezügliche Initiative der für den Band Verantwortlichen ist in der Tat bewundernswürdig; in einer solch kurzen Frist kann so etwas wohl nur im Marbacher Literaturarchiv geschehen.

Unterteilt ist der Band in vier große Teile nebst einem "Nachspiel" und Anhang. Im 1. Teil ("Ein jäher Ruhm im geteilten Deutschland") wird die erstaunliche literarische Karriere Bobrowskis, die sich im wesentlichen von 1955 bis 1965 vollzog und vor allem die Publikation der Gedichtbände *Sarmatische Zeit* und *Schattenland Ströme* sowie des Romans *Levins Mühle* umfaßt, ausführlich