

1988

## Daniela Scheel: Zwischen Wertung und Wirkung. DDR-Zeitschriftenprofile 1950-1980 am Beispiel von Geschlechtsrollenproblematik und Frauenleitbild

Elizabeth Mittman  
*University of Minnesota*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/gdr>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

---

### Recommended Citation

Mittman, Elizabeth (1988) "Daniela Scheel: Zwischen Wertung und Wirkung. DDR-Zeitschriftenprofile 1950-1980 am Beispiel von Geschlechtsrollenproblematik und Frauenleitbild," *GDR Bulletin*: Vol. 14: Iss. 1. <https://doi.org/10.4148/gdrb.v14i1.850>

This Review is brought to you for free and open access by New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in *GDR Bulletin* by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact [cads@k-state.edu](mailto:cads@k-state.edu).

den "Austausch der bewußten Denkinhalte" gebracht haben.

Ich erachte dieses Buch als ein sine qua non für alle Germanisten, die sich mit dem Problem der Vergangenheitsbewältigung in der deutschen Nachkriegsliteratur befassen. Aber es will und soll sich ja nicht nur an Germanisten wenden, im Gegenteil, viele von ihnen leisten Trauerarbeit--in jeder Hinsicht. Meiner Ansicht nach sollten sich besonders die "Nachgeborenen" mit dieser Materie auseinandersetzen anstatt mit dem Zufallsergebnis des Geburtsdatums zu prahlen.

Das Buch wäre interessanter geworden, wenn Wittstock sich nicht nur auf Fühmann und Wolf beschränkt hätte. Welche Ergebnisse würde seine Art der literarischen Analyse bei Schriftstellern wie Johnson, Böll, Lenz zu Tage fördern? Oder, bei und bewegen wir uns mal chronologisch weiter, Biermann, Kunert, Loest? Aber letzteres ist wohl zu sarkastisch, und ich nehme es wieder zurück.

Fritz König  
University of Northern Iowa

Zwischen Wertung und Wirkung. DDR-Zeitschriftenprofile 1950 - 1980 am Beispiel von Geschlechtsrollenproblematik und Frauenleitbild. By Daniela Scheel. Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1985. 207 pp.

Scheel's study proceeds from the hypothesis that the function of the media in the GDR has shifted as a result of developments in the social sciences there, so that while they still propagate official norms and ideals, they nevertheless demonstrate an increasing tendency toward the reflection of "reality." Thus, Scheel's questions revolve around the triangular relationship between the SED, mass media, and (theoretically) independent sociological research. The body of the book consists of five chapters in which the author attempts to disentangle the complex web of influences and the flow of information by analyzing individual factors.

In Chapter One ("Die Massenmedien als verlängerter Arm der Partei"), Scheel discusses the GDR press

in terms of propaganda, agitation, and organization. Journalists are caught between their place as recipients of directives from the SED and the desire to develop their creative skills on a more individualistic (bourgeois) model. This situation is described as part of a "Ritual von Beschränkung und Ermutigung" (36). Chapter Two ("Das System der Massenkommunikation") is a more detailed discussion of the highly developed institutional structures within which journalists must work in the GDR. These structures function both vertically (hierarchical organization) and horizontally (long-term planning). In examining these restrictions, Scheel is interested in finding possible "Freiräume" where journalists can bring in perspectives that go beyond the Party line at any given time. She finds potential for such spaces in non-Party weeklies, magazines concerned with domestic issues. For her case study she chooses the Neue Berliner Illustrierte (NBI) and Für Dich (the main women's journal) in order to examine the portrayal of women, a topic relatively free of taboos and thus accessible to the Western scholar. As popular publications, these magazines are concerned with attracting readers and employ methods of "lebendige Menschendarstellung" and entertainment. In order to be pleasurable, they need to be believable and hence somehow closer to reality than the traditional models of propaganda would allow. Scheel postulates that journalists, in search of sources of information, have turned to and been influenced by sociological research. In Chapter Three ("Journalismus und Gesellschaftswissenschaften"), Scheel outlines the struggles of both fields with the limitations of Marxist-Leninist theories in what she calls the opposition of utopia and reality. In the GDR, these problems are debated in terms of the development of the "sozialistische Persönlichkeit," whereby effectiveness takes precedence over the communication of factual information.

In the last two chapters, Scheel traces the "official" vs. the "real" status of women in the GDR, emphasizing the often enormous gap between Party declarations and the results of sociological research, and attempts to ascertain which of the two has had the most effect upon media images. Contrary to her initial hypothesis, Scheel determines that the SED

innovation, realistic portrayal and self-criticism, journalists respond. Sociological research also reflects a certain dependence upon messages from the SED; in any case, the print media appear to be relatively untouched by research results.

While Scheel poses a number of questions which are of interest and importance to GDR studies, this study is problematic in its structure and argumentation. Written as a West German dissertation, it proceeds from hypothesis to detailed and often laborious analysis to a conclusion which disproves the initial hypothesis. This is very disorienting to the lay reader who is unfamiliar with methods of sociological research and GDR media studies. The book's major contribution lies in the wealth of detailed information about the institutions of journalism and sociology in the GDR, and in the contemplation of provocative questions regarding the relationships between these institutions. Scheel's oppositional model of utopia/reality is seductive, and in many cases valid, but it is also problematic. This schema implies that the SED is somehow independent of material realities, and that we can determine a certain absolute reality apart from political institutions. Furthermore, the discussion of the media completely ignores current theoretical discussion in the West about the influence and power of mass media; Scheel seems to regard the processing of information as a one-way street. It would be worthwhile to consider the possibility that the word shapes reality, and not just the other way around.

Elizabeth Mittman  
University of Minnesota

## BOOKS RECEIVED: Literature

Arlt, Ingeborg. Das kleine Leben. Erzählung. Berlin-Weimar: Aufbau Verlag, 1987, 165 S.

Bauernmarkt. Dorfgeschichten einmal anders. Halle-Leipzig: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1987, 280 S.

Bernhof, Reinhard. Tägliches Utopia. Gedichte. Leipzig: Verlag Philipp Reclam jun., 1987, 152 S.

Bieker, Gerd. Dorflinde. Roman. Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1987, 343 S.

Brezan, Jurij. Eine Liebesgeschichte. Reise nach Krakau. Zwei Erzählungen. Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1987, 273 S.

Brezan, Jurij. Erzählungen. Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1987, 384 S.

Dünne Haut. Tagebücher von Frauen. Hrsg. von Erika Rüdener. Halle - Leipzig: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1987, 319 S.

Eckart, Gabriele. Per Anhalter. Geschichten und Erlebnisse. Berlin: Buchverlag Der Morgen, 1987, 143 S.

Feyl, Renate. Idylle mit Professor. Roman. Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1987, 245 S.

Friedländer, Vera. Fliederzeit. Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1987, 296 S.

Gosse, Peter. Erwachene Mitte. Gedichte, Geschichten, Stücke, Essays. Leipzig: Verlag Philipp Reclam jun., 1986, 295 S.

----- Mundwerk. Essays. Halle-Leipzig: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1983, 159 S.

Grosz, Christiane. Die Tochter. Berlin - Weimar: Aufbau Verlag, 1987, 237 S.