

1975

Theodor Langenbruch: Dialectical Humor in Kant's Novel "Die Aula"

Nancy A. Lauckner
University of Tennessee-Knoxville

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

Lauckner, Nancy A. (1975) "Theodor Langenbruch: Dialectical Humor in Kant's Novel "Die Aula"," *GDR Bulletin*: Vol. 1: Iss. 3. <https://doi.org/10.4148/gdrb.v1i3.309>

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.

Margy Gerber, "Confrontations with Reality in Hermann Kant's Die Aula", Monatshefte 67 (Summer 1975) No. 2, pp. 173-184.

DIMENSION

The VI / 3 issue of DIMENSION includes the first published English translation of Peter Hacks Omphale, translated by André Lefevere. The special 1973 issue of DIMENSION devoted entirely to GDR literature is still available for \$5 from the Department of Germanic Languages, University of Texas at Austin, Texas 78712. Under the guest editorship of Günter Kunert, the volume contains recent writings of 23 authors in the German original and in English translation.

FILMS

Twenty GDR films will be shown during January, 1976 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Subsequently, during February and March, 1976, they will be shown at the Pacific Film Archive, University of California at Berkeley. After March they will be available for general rental in the U. S. through Audi-Brandon, with offices in Illinois, California and New York. More details are being sought for a future Bulletin.

BOOK REVIEWS

Marlies Menge, Tips für Reisen in die DDR, Von Rostock nach Klingenthal, (West Berlin: Gebr. Holzapfel, 1974), 192 S. + Übersichtskarte.

The German teacher in general, and the teacher of German area studies or GDR literature in particular, should find this paperback useful and informative. It is essentially touristic public relations written by a West German journalist (Die Zeit) for West German readers, but it provides a tidy overview of how and when to travel in the GDR. Menge assumes biases and preconceptions in her readers; she is herself not

neutral, but at least candid and sincere in her attempt not to let her bias cloud her vision.

The book has four parts: part one, "Reisen Sie doch mal!" consists of ten short articles which are reprinted from Die Zeit travel section, largely historical-cultural information in anecdotal style. Part two, "Die Deutsche Demokratische Republik und ihre 15 Bezirke," treats the administrative districts in Baedeker fashion, including useful addresses and sight-seeing attractions, along with geographic and demographic data for each district. Part three, "Für jeden gibt es Möglichkeiten, in die DDR zu reisen," deals with practical travel particulars and the various sorts of private, commercial, and package-tour arrangements available at time of publication (1974), including detailed prices. Part four, "Voraussetzungen, die zu erfüllen sind--Bestimmungen, die man beachten sollte," is list of things one may and may not legally do, import, and export on a trip to the DDR; this is essentially the same information found in official West German publications, such as the booklet Reisen in die DDR, available at all larger train stations and travel bureaus.

At DM 7,80 (\$3.25), this modest guidebook is no great bargain, but it may have considerable value in expanding the American tourist's view of the GDR beyond the confines of East Berlin and day trips across Checkpoint Charlie.

Richard Rundell
New Mexico State University

Langenbruch, Theodor. Dialectical Humor in Kant's Novel "Die Aula". Abhandlungen zur Kunst-, Musik- und Literaturwissenschaft, No. 163. (Bonn: Bouvier, 1975).

This book will be of interest to both scholars and students of GDR literature. While it is not intended as an exhaustive analysis of Die Aula, this study of dialectical humor, "the aesthetic conscience of Socialist Realism," provides provocative insights into Kant's work and GDR literature as a whole. Langenbruch carefully analyzes Kant's use of this technique as the organizing principle of character, style, language, and structure in the novel. The treatment of form and content as inseparable entities fills an important need in Aula scholarship. The section on literary references in Die Aula is especially useful in its identification and analysis of references to obscure socialist literary works unfamiliar to many Western readers. Several features make

the book particularly valuable for anyone beginning the study of GDR literature: the historical information on the GDR literary scene, including the Bitterfeld Movement and Socialist Realism, and the pagination concordance of Aula editions, which enables one to check references in any of the three Aula editions. Perhaps the book's greatest merit is its evenhanded approach to its topic; Langenbruch devotes careful attention to GDR political realities and considers both East and West German interpretations of Die Aula, yet he clearly realizes that he is analyzing a literary work, not writing a political polemic. This recognition, so essential for a study of dialectical humor, is sadly lacking in many publications on GDR literature. Probably neither his method nor his classification of Kant as a proponent of "critical pro-socialism" will satisfy all his readers, yet everyone will understand Kant better after reading this work.

Because the book is in English, it will reach a larger audience, an important consideration in view of the proliferation of "literature in translation" courses. Nevertheless, the choice of language is the one main drawback of this otherwise excellent book: frequent Germanisms interfere with the ease of reading which one would expect from the author's clear thinking and logical organization, and readers who know little German may not understand his meaning in a few places. Certainly the author is not solely responsible for this flaw; a company which publishes in English should have lecturers and editors competent to eliminate linguistic problems. However, this defect is largely cosmetic, and the work as a whole is a significant scholarly achievement which represents a major contribution to the growing corpus of GDR literary research.

Nancy A. Lauckner
University of Tennessee-
Knoxville

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

David Bathrick, "Agriprop: Collectivisation and the Drama in the GDR" (paper for 1975 Wisconsin Workshop at University of Wisconsin-Madison), Department of German, Van Hise Hall, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc., 53706.

Carl Colditz, "The Works of Volker Braun", Department of German, Wayne State University, Detroit, Mich., 48202.

John A. Erikson, "Funktionswandel der Erzähltechnik einiger ausgewählter DDR-Romane" (University of Minnesota dissertation), Franziskus Kollege, 2 Hamburg 13, Sedanstr. 24, Spt. 23.

Valerie Greenberg, "Younger Women Writers in the GDR" (Dissertation), Department of Germanic Languages and Literature, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina 27706.

Patricia Herminhouse, "Die Frau und die Phantasie in der neueren DDR-Prose", Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo. 63130.

Lisa Kahn, "Orpheus im Osten" (paper for 1975 SCMLA dealing with six Orpheus poems of Günter Kunert as being in the "western" literary tradition), Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas, 77004.

Basil Mogridge, "Johannes Bobrowski: Pinnau und andere" (paper for Fifth Congress of the IVG), Department of German, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

Gerhild G. Stiewe, "Die Rolle der Frau in der DDR Literatur" (University of Minnesota dissertation), Department of German, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn. 55455.
