

Hoffmeister (Gerhart). *Deutsche und europäische Barockliteratur*

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Erläuterung. An dieser Stelle möchten wir es jedoch nicht versäumen, nicht nur auf die in Brüssel von M. Vanhelleputte und L. Somville als « Bijdragen » und « Nieuwe Bijdragen tot een Motievenstudie » herausgegebenen Studien zu Thema und Motiv (« Brussels Preprints in Artistic and Literary Studies » I-III, V.U.B. 1983-1985-1986), sondern auch auf den 1988 von den selben Herausgebern besorgten Band « Motifs in Art and Literature/Proceedings of a Symposium held on the 8th of December 1984 at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel » (Löwen, Uitgeverij Peeters, 1987) hinzuweisen, in denen eine durchaus relevante und klare neue Terminologie entwickelt und angewandt wird.

Trotz einiger kritischer Bemerkungen möchten wir abschliessend noch einmal betonen, dass es sich bei « Themes & Motifs in Western Literature » um ein sehr lesenswertes Buch handelt. — Jacques J. DALEMANS.

HOFFMEISTER (Gerhart). *Deutsche und europäische Barockliteratur*. Stuttgart, Metzler, 1987 ; one vol., XIV-208 pp. (SAMMLUNG METZLER : REALIEN ZUR LITERATUR, 234). Price : DM 21.80. — Hoffmeister offers a survey of recent developments in the study of 17th-century European Baroque literature, with a clear emphasis on German material. His previous books on the subject are well known (ed., *German Baroque Literature : The European Perspective*, 1983 ; *Europäische Tradition und Deutscher Literaturbarock*, 1973) ; in fact, the book under present discussion is an updated revision of the previous material rather than a new study. Hoffmeister correctly assumes that Baroque is one of the most crucial fields of investigation in the comparative study of literature — a field that is still in need of extensive basic research from a wide variety of angles. The approach offered here is factual and analytical, although especially in the sections devoted to non-German literature not all the facts given are correct and not all the analyses are pertinent. Hoffmeister remains faithful to the older scholarly technique of comparative literature and examines international contacts and influences as well as the « national brands » of literary schools and movements. This approach is not always entertaining and by no means synthetic enough. The irritating textual organization does not make the book more pleasant to read : there is a confusing alternation of passages in different print types, and the number of typographical errors (especially in French and English words and titles) is quite staggering.

Hoffmeister's book, nevertheless, has the considerable merit of presenting a wide variety of European literatures in a fairly coherent artistic and ideological context. It is noteworthy that the author draws attention also to the major texts of usually neglected cultures, i.e., the Netherlands — although the Southern and the Northern Netherlands are incorrectly lumped together under the heading « Holländischer Barock » —, Scandinavia, and the Slavic world. Numerous simplifications are bound to occur in the light of Hoffmeister's main theme : the development of German Baroque literature as the result of correspondences and contacts with the various national literatures. This theme is worked out in five

chapters, most of which are subdivided into national or thematic sections, and all of which have massive bibliographical appendices.

The first chapter, « Zur Begriffsgeschichte von “Barock” », is quite brief in spite of its importance, for it introduces the concept of the Baroque in history, philosophy and the arts. Hoffmeister gives a rather superficial survey of some major critics' interpretations of the concept, referring, for example, to Wölfflin, Curtius, Wellek, and Warnke. Useful would have been a more consistent presentation of the problem of terminology that « Baroque » has always posed, especially so in the paragraph on Mannerism. Incidentally, James Mirollo's recent *Mannerism and Renaissance Poetry*, is one of the more important works that are conspicuously absent in Hoffmeister's bibliography.

The second chapter, « Nationale Spielarten des Barock », consists of eight sections, each devoted to a national variety. This division of the highly cross-cultural Baroque aesthetic and ideology into purely linguistic units is not only old-fashioned, it is also grossly deceptive. The German section is, understandably, much longer than any other. Within each section, Hoffmeister summarizes the literary history by means of judgments of others, highlighting certain acknowledged masterpieces and authors, but without ever really going beyond the type of literary criticism that we know from textbooks for upperclassmen in high school or freshmen in college. The tendency to chop up a literary development into chronological sections is obvious from the beginning. In the section on « Französischer Barock », for instance, Hoffmeister invents neat distinctions between « the manneristic Pléiade », « the early Baroque during the religious wars », « High Baroque », « Préciosité », and « Baroque classicism », without providing an aesthetic justification or a theoretical basis for doing so. There are striking gaps in each section. Mention is made of *L'Astrée* and *Clélie* in the section on « Préciosité », — although, strictly speaking, *L'Astrée* does not belong there at all chronologically. Other, probably more important, novels of the period are not mentioned : no word about the texts of Sorel, Claireville, Scarron, Mme de Lafayette, ... The highly influential French novelistic fiction (epic-historical, realistic-« comique » and realistic psychological) is not discussed in this chapter but much further, in chapter 3, under the heading « Barocke Wechselbeziehungen : Frankreich und Deutschland. » Why ? The major problem with Hoffmeister's book is one of organization. Information that belongs together is distributed throughout the text in order to fit the rigid division in sections and subsections, a method very different from current scholarly practice. Another example of the same organizational clumsiness is the section on the « English Baroque » in chapter 2. Hoffmeister sets out by pointing out — very rightly so — that Baroque is still an awkward term in English literary studies. Then there follows a 12-line historical survey of 17th-century English history, in which Puritanism is briefly mentioned — so briefly that truth is distorted, for Puritanism was not the simplistically unified and narrow-minded persuasion that Hoffmeister implies. The closing of the theaters is not mentioned at this point (p. 33), although there is a (all

too short) reference to this very important development later on (p. 37). Hoffmeister strains his point by incorporating Euphuism and texts such as Pettie's « Petite Palace » into the Baroque. Shakespeare's most obviously Baroque plays (*Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*), however, are not even referred to. The subsection on the metaphysical poets is too brief ; moreover, it is difficult to maintain the notion of « Donne und seinen Kreis. » The important distinction between metaphysical, meditative and devotional lyric poetry is not made, nor is the European aspect of the metaphysical movement mentioned. T.S. Eliot's comments on this movement and its name are introduced, but Frank Kermode's refutation of Eliot is not. Surely there are more poets to be mentioned than Donne, Crashaw and (in one short paragraph, which leaves out « The Garden ») Marvell, and surely there is more substantial comment to be made on e.g. Crashaw than that he tried to achieve « die Möglichkeiten der Sprache zur Ekstase » (p. 37). Throughout, Hoffmeister relies far too much on Bush, a rather old English literary history. Subsection 5 is devoted to the Puritans. It is very irritating that Hoffmeister still presents Milton's Satan as a « grandiose Barockfigur » (p. 38), a Romantic misconception that has been utterly defeated by more recent scholarly analyses of Milton's rhetorical and imagery strategies, which were designed particularly to make Satan appear as the idiot rather than the hero in the story of the Fall from Heaven. Hoffmeister's presentation of Milton and Bunyan as « Gegenpol der »metaphysicals« » is quite remarkable and deserves more explanation than is given. Although Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is mentioned, no other novels are referred to. If Sidney's 16th-century *Arcadia* is Baroque, then why no reference to Thomas Nashe's equally interesting *Unfortunate Traveller* (late 1590s) at this point ? The subsection on Dryden contains no indication that Dryden was ever active as critic and theoretician. In the bibliographical appendix, Bennett's work on the metaphysicals is absent, as is — more irritatingly so — Stanley Fish's contribution to Milton studies. The section devoted to « Holländischer Barock » in chapter 2 does not distinguish, as mentioned, between the Protestant, militant, bourgeois Northern Netherlands, and the Catholic, Spanish-ruled Southern Provinces. Hoffmeister writes that the concept « Baroque » hardly exists as literary notion in these mythically united Netherlands. Surely, the opposite is true : « Barok » and « Gouden Eeuw » are virtually interchangeable terms in studies of 17th-century Flemish and Dutch literature and the other arts. It is hard to believe that Hoffmeister lumps the Spanish-oriented Fleming Rubens together with the bourgeois Rembrandt in a paragraph on « Bürgerbarock », with the result that the unwary reader would assume, by dint of association, that Rubens' art has « anti-monumental tendencies » (p. 40). What strike the reader as unexplainable reductions and deletions are often picked up in later chapters : reference to Roemer Visscher and his two daughters ; emblem literature ; the great metaphysical poets Dullaert, Revius, and others ; the literary theories of Heinsius ; the importance of the Amsterdamsche Stadsschouwburg ; the intellectual and artistic influence of the Northern Netherlands upon Germany. I have

no comments to make on the sections on Scandinavian, Slavic, and German « Baroque » ; especially the latter discussion seems solid.

The third chapter, « Barocke Wechselbeziehungen », consists, again, of sections (e.g., « Italien und Deutschland ») which resume or complete the corresponding sections in the previous chapter. This is at least the intention. The « Frankreich und Deutschland » section, for example, still contains no reference to the works of Rotrou or Tristan. The « Holland und Deutschland » section erroneously refers to Jan van der Noot (p. 100) as « Niederländer » — van der Noot was a Brabander, from the Southern Provinces, and is a figure not readily associated with the « Gouden Eeuw » or Baroque. All in all, this third chapter surveys the purely material diffusion of certain texts and thoughts through the European cultural entities by means of translations, personal contacts, travel, ideological and religious affiliations, and the like. Many statements would require more explanation than Hoffmeister is willing to give — such as on p. 100 :

Die dt. Lyrik des Barock konstituierte sich theoretisch in Anlehnung an die Plejade ; in der Praxis hielten sich die Dichter jedoch meist an das niederländ. Muster, wie es bereits vor Heinsius in Musik, Flugblatt und volkstümlicher Anthologie entwickelt wurde.

Chapter 4 is entitled « Europäische Perspektiven » and asks, to begin with, the question, « Gibt es eine europäische Barockliteratur ? » This question might have come more logically at the very beginning of the volume and must be considered purely rhetorical, judging from Hoffmeister's own title. This is no new question, and the answer is not new, either. The most useful reference is to Frank Warnke's concept of the « multiple simultaneous influences » (p. 113). The rest of the chapter consists of an interesting set of topical discussions, devoted to social aspects of Baroque literature, the Latin tradition, rhetoric and emblem-literature, Jesuit literature, Marinismo, and various « Themen, Motive, Gestalten ». In spite of the title of the chapter, the emphasis in the sections is mostly on German material. This bias is not always as strong and does not make the discussion less interesting, although one detects a subtle tendency to identify primarily German phenomena or effects with the general European situation. This is the case, for instance, in the discussion on « Absolutismus und höfische Kultur » (pp. 118-126).

The sixth chapter is entitled « Zur Wirkungsgeschichte der Barockliteratur in Deutschland » and traces in twelve pages the fortunes of the Baroque features previously discussed in German literature and theater in the course of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Again, Hoffmeister sometimes strains his point and classifies inappropriately. Grass' *Die Blechtrommel* (1959) can, indeed, be considered a development of the picaresque, but this by itself is surely no argument for adopting the text into the « modern Baroque » category that Hoffmeister tries to establish.

There is much of interest in this book, and an impressive amount of information is brought together. Although there are some surprising gaps, the bibliographies are generally very useful and up-to-date. Hoffmeister's mastery over the material is obvious, and the simplifications that we have noted are bound to

occur in a study of this scope. One only wishes that there had not been so many. And one certainly would appreciate less typographical errors in French, English and Dutch words. It is irritating to read about « Metahysical Poetry » (p. 6), about the « Dictionnaire de la Académie Française » (p. 2), or « La Suite du Manteur » (p. 30) or the « Querelle de l’Cid » (*ibid.*), or « Petrakismus » (p. 36), or in one reference « Johannesson, K. L. » and in the next « Langvik-Johannessen, K. » (p. 44), or du Bellay’s « Déffence et illustration de la langue française » (p. 89), or in a Dutch title « Frankrijk en de ontwikkeling van de duitse Roman in de 17Eeuw », and so forth. — Kristiaan P. AERCCKE

HUBERT (Renée Riese). *Surrealism and the Book*. Berkeley-Los Angeles-London : University of California Press, 1988 ; één deel, XVII-358 blz. — Over het nieuwe boek van Renée Riese Hubert is het onmogelijk een gedetailleerde recensie te schrijven, niet omdat het een rijke studie zou zijn, maar omdat het een studie is die uitblinkt in gratuite en ongereflecteerde formuleringen. Met een kernachtige uitspraak als de volgende zou eigenlijk al voldoende eer aan het werk zijn bewezen : het is een overbodig boek omdat het uitblinkt in beschrijvend weergegeven observaties zonder enige methodologische reflectie op het onderwerp en het is een ongewenst boek omdat het, onder een mom van hier en daar geleende theoretische termen, slechts een zoveelste voortzetting is van de mythevorming rond het zogenaamd hermeneutisch ongrijpbare (enigmatische en hermetische) karakter van surrealistische kunstwerken in het algemeen.

Grote bedeningen kan men al direct bij de inleiding koesteren : zonder enige verdere onderbouwing neemt Hubert de door Johannot en anderen geïllustreerde uitgave van Bernardin de St. Pierre’s *Paul et Virginie* (1838) als toetssteen voor de conventies van mimesis die eeuwenlang de westerse artistieke traditie hebben bepaald. Vervolgens stapt zij via een korte uiteenzetting over de veranderingen die avant-garde en abstracte kunst brachten over naar het Surrealisme, dat in haar ogen gekenmerkt wordt door het ideologische streven naar transcendentie van de waargenomen werkelijkheid, hetgeen in het kunstwerk tot uiting komt als formele paradox van mimetische en anti-mimetische vormen. Direct daarop volgend stapt zij in haar betoog over naar de lezer van het Surrealistische boek dat woorden en beelden in zich verenigt, en plaatst in hem (in zijn aktiviteit die woorden en beelden samen-leest) haar methodologische rechtvaardiging — althans, zo kan men het begrijpen, want erg expliciet is Hubert over dit alles niet.

In alle boeken die zij vervolgens bespreekt, leest Hubert (zij zelf is blijkbaar die algemene lezer) de woorden en de beelden samen, volgens een principe van reciprociteit en met de criteria die de concepties overeenkomst en verschil haar bieden in het achterhoofd. Haar conclusie luidt steevast dat er weliswaar referenties zijn tussen woord- en beeldelementen onderling, maar dat die hoogstens dienen om reliëf te geven aan de niet-referentiële relaties, de anti-mimetische tendenzen, de paradox dat woord en beeld in Surrealistische boeken elkaars « onmogelijke replica » (p. 66) zijn.