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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Die bereinigte Moderne: Heinrich Manns 'Untertan' und politische Publizistik in der Kontinuität der deutschen Geschichte zwischen Kaiserreich und Drittem Reich by Reinhard Alter

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matic structure. In five equally weighted chapters, plus an introduction and a conclusion, Nolte examines how this theme is more than psychological and is therefore reflected in the tetralogy's plot-structure, symbolism, characters, and narrative structure. What Nolte builds up to in her final two chapters is the process of Joseph's individuation and, as a consequence, the narrator's changing behavior.

With a whole arsenal of Jungian concepts at her disposal, Nolte explains the mythical dimensions of the novels. As in any doctoral dissertation, Nolte is so intent on showing how her own work dovetails with and departs from the current scholarly literature on the subject (in this case comprising the work of among others Manfred Dierks, Käte Hamburger, and Jürgen Hohmeyer) that the reader senses Nolte's constraints at getting on with her business at hand, namely, an examination of the parallelism between Jung's and Mann's thoughts on mythology.

Clearly a serious and thoughtful reader, Nolte is strong when she shows how Mann's interest in Schopenhauer and Bachofen influenced his views on myth in *Joseph*. At different points within the first chapter, she convincingly likens Mann's thematic concerns found in the tetralogy with those in such disparate works as *Tonio Kröger*, "Freud und die Zukunft," and *Lotte in Weimar*—these parts reveal Nolte to be a penetrating reader of Mann's imaginative writing in its entirety.

The book has two major failings. The first is its skeletal, almost textbook-like Jungian reading of the tetralogy. An example of this can be found in the midst of the third chapter, when the author sums up her discussion of the role of the women in the novel: "Thus three of the women figures in the novel are to a varying degree embodiments of the constant interplay of *being* and *meaning*. The other two, Lea and Asnath, each represent merely one aspect: Lea is representative of being without meaning, and Asnath, who is almost entirely a symbolic figure, embodies meaning without being" (p. 89). The second problem is Nolte's failure to discuss humor in the novel—her analysis makes the work sound so very dry!

What one hopes from Nolte in the future is a book-length study on the parallelism between Jung and Mann not restricted to the *Joseph* novels and unencumbered by dissertationitis. No matter that Mann did not come into direct and protracted contact with Jung's writings! An unencumbered discussion of the congruence of so much of the thought of these two writers on myth is surely what Thomas Mann secondary literature could use. Now that Nolte, in a manner of speaking, has received her doctorate twice—like Joseph, she has been doubly blessed—she can march forth on her own and write a substantial study on that artistic interrelationship that rightly engages her.

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DIE BEREINIGTE MODERNE: HEINRICH MANNS 'UNTERTAN' UND POLITISCHE PUBLIZISTIK IN DER KONTINUITÄT DER DEUTSCHEN GESCHICHTE ZWISCHEN KAISERREICH UND DRITTEM REICH. Von Reinhard Alter. (Studien und Texte zur Sozialgeschichte der Literatur, 49.) Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995. Pp. v + 128. DM 48.

The two-fold thesis of this slim volume is, first, that Heinrich Mann's novel of 1914, *Der Untertan*, successfully portrays unresolved contradictions of the Kaiserreich, which survived into the Weimar era and were among the seeds of the National Socialist rise to power and, second, that in his later political reflections, Mann did not sufficiently attend to these contradictions, and this neglect contributed to his inability to diagnose the problems of the Weimar Republic and the emergence of the Third Reich.

In a brief introduction Alter chastises historians and literary critics for downplaying connections between the Kaiserreich and the Third Reich and for not appreciating the heuristic value of Mann's novel with respect to Germany's unique historical development. Alter rightly argues that *Der Untertan* captures many of the seeds of National Socialism, though he is not the first to recognize these connections, and he sometimes overstates continuity between the two eras at the expense of difference, much as those he criticizes do the reverse.

Alter then devotes the first two chapters to an analysis of *Der Untertan*. He seeks to uncover "Ungleichzeitigkeiten" in Diederich Häßling and his world and reads these as indicative of an overarching tension between Diederich's conformist subordination to traditional and hierarchical political structures and his penchant for self-affirmation and innovation, which are characteristic of capitalism, industrialization, and modernity. Diederich views the Kaiser through a dual lens as well, elevating him as a traditional symbol of authority and security and the embodiment of a modern, enterprising, grand personality. Diederich overcomes disorientation by identifying with the reactionary traditions of the past and applying these to establish his position in the present, for example, through aggression toward those who would challenge him, including Jews and Social Democrats. Diederich masters not only the ability to adapt to the reigning power structures; he can also shift allegiances, as the need arises. He is not a committed ideologue, but a pragmatist seeking ever more power.

The third and final chapter analyzes "die bereinigte Moderne." With this term Alter characterizes Mann's idealistic view of a modernity, evident, for example, in his 1921 essay "Berlin," that has begun to overcome contemporary tensions: in Alter's formulation, it represents "Großstadt ohne Entfremdung, Massenkultur ohne Vermassung, Selbstbescheidung ohne Unterwürfigkeit, Kritik ohne Selbstüberhebung, Autonomie der Persönlichkeit ohne Statuskampf" (p. 82). Ultimately, Mann seeks a classless society characterized by reason and moderation; this is best attained, according to Mann, by a spiritual radicalism combined with the avoidance of political conflict. Although Mann's optimism offered a useful counterpoint to Spengler's pessimism, it was incompatible with economic problems and political polarization. According to Alter, by turning away from the contradictions of the present to an unrealistic utopian image, Mann downplayed contemporary tensions and their thematic connection to the Kaiserreich, so well analyzed in his own novel, and underestimated the susceptibility of the German population to National Socialism.

Mann felt that Germany would inevitably mediate its tensions, and that extremist parties would have at best ephemeral success. The National Socialists would self-destruct, as their ideology was philosophically self-canceling. I would modify Alter's critique of this position and suggest that Mann was right insofar as he recognized that injustice eventually cancels itself but wrong insofar as he failed to see that it may well dominate an era before its self-destruction becomes manifest. By focusing on the normative sphere, Mann neglected the empirical.

The strength of Alter's book is in his two overarching claims. Especially appealing is the stress on Diederich's modern industrial self, which counters a traditional emphasis on his political subordination, although Alter fails to make this productive for a new reading of the novel. In terms of weaknesses, the book, though short, is nonetheless wordy and not always as clear as it might have been. Constant quotations of key phrases from other critics interrupt Alter's own language, and the book suffers from a lack of conceptual clarity, including the differences between types of tension, for example, those that are irresolvable and those that can be

harmonized, or those that are morally neutral and those that are unjust. There are few new insights into Mann's novel; indeed, Alter's book is almost completely free of aesthetic analysis, and the discussion of contradictions in Mann's novel is less than nuanced. Some of the positions seem unconvincing, as, for example, the contrast between Diederich's sentimentality and his ruthless embrace of power, which have in truth a hidden identity: by rendering his moments of insight sentimental, Diederich feels sorry for himself, which is a means of avoiding serious self-criticism: weakness toward oneself and ruthlessness toward others go hand in hand.

The book does not add significantly to our understanding of the complex causality of the Third Reich. Many of the unpleasant characteristics Alter identifies in Diederich have as much to do with the universal characteristics of the opportunist and power positivist as with particular aspects of modern German history; both moments are present, though only the latter is identified in Alter's analysis. The book is valuable primarily as an account of the development of Mann's political views; but Mann is not an original political philosopher—at least not in his writings of the Weimar era. Therefore, the book will appeal primarily as the case study of a Weimar intellectual; readers interested in Mann's biography or in the fate of Weimar intellectuals will find it useful, but the critic looking for new insights into Mann's novel will likely be disappointed.

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THE INTELLECTUAL CONTEXTS OF KAFKA'S FICTION: PHILOSOPHY, LAW, RELIGION.

By Arnold Heidsieck. Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1994. Pp. xv + 214. \$57.

The reader of this book is reminded immediately of the complexity of the Kafka world and of the enormity of potential influences leading to the creation of figures such as K., Gregor Samsa, the hunger artist, and the country doctor. Even after several decades of research, Kafka's works continue to inspire his admirers to dig deeper into every side of his life and times in search of the appropriate understanding of his awe-inspiring images.

Heidsieck's premise is that we have not looked closely enough at the intellectual environment of Kafka's time, that is, the philosophical, psychological, theological, scientific, and legal schools of the day, to which he was exposed in the *Gymnasium*, as a student, and as a member of the Prague intellectual community. Though cognizant of many other influences, Heidsieck argues that a closer understanding of these aspects of Kafka's world will yield a fresh approach and new insight into some of the enigmatic qualities of Kafka's prose.

This well researched study, based in part on unpublished materials, provides an excellent overview of many of the intellectual movements at the turn of the century and of their importance and immediacy among the Prague intellectual circles out of which Kafka's prose emerged. Philosophers such as Brentano, Marty, Meinong, and Husserl are probed as well as the psychologists Herbart, Stumpf, and Wundt and the debates about and among these figures which were so vibrant in Prague at that time. Heidsieck traces these potential influences upon Kafka's way of perceiving the world as far back as to textbooks which Kafka would have read in the *Gymnasium*. Heidsieck's method is to provide insight into the psychological and philosophical debates of the time and to demonstrate to what extent they may have directly influenced the manner in which Kafka's figures perceive the world around them, indeed how Kafka developed his peculiar narrative stance.