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Review

Reviewed Work(s): *On Textual Understanding and Other Essays* by Peter Szondi and Harvey Mendelsohn

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Source: *The German Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (Summer, 1988), pp. 451-453

Published by: Wiley on behalf of the American Association of Teachers of German

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/406448>

Accessed: 29-08-2018 23:58 UTC

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und gleichzeitig trotz der scheinbaren Distanzierung engagierter. Der Vergleich Jean Pauls mit orientalischer Poesie lohnt sich durchaus und verweist auf eine Strömung der Literatur der Goethezeit, die mehr zu beachten wäre. Goethes *West-Östlicher Divan* wird dann zum Gipfelpunkt einer länger dauernden Tendenz.

Als Interpretation der "Vergleichung" ist Birus' Text gründlich und grundlegend. Es ist eher überraschend, daß niemand vor Birus sich an diese Arbeit gemacht hat. Die Arbeit vermittelt wichtige Aufschlüsse über den älteren Goethe, über Jean Paul, über ihre Beziehung und die deutsche Literatur am Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts, alles mit wiederholten Spiegelungen. Man ist allerdings versucht, sich noch mehr zu wünschen, z. B. eine genauere Bestimmung der Rolle Herders in dieser Konstellation, oder als Ergänzung die Perspektive Jean Pauls auf Goethe — bietet doch die *Vorschule der Ästhetik* eine sehr wesentliche kritische Würdigung Goethes, und war doch Jean Pauls Beziehung zu Goethe nicht minder ambivalent als die Goethes zu Jean Paul. Und schließlich: bei der augenblicklichen Diskussion über die Sprache und poetische Verfahrensweise Jean Pauls hätte man sich von dem gründlichen Kenner der Jean-Paul-Literatur ein Wort zum Streit der Gelehrten gewünscht.

So wie es vorliegt, bietet das Buch wichtige Aufschlüsse und vielfältige Anregungen, so daß es für viele Forscher unentbehrlich sein dürfte.

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WULF KOEPKE

I. LITERARY THEORY AND COLLECTIONS

SZONDI, PETER. *On Textual Understanding and Other Essays*. Trans. Harvey Mendelsohn. *Theory and History of Literature* 15. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986. xxi + 224 pp. \$29.50, cloth; \$13.95, paper.

Peter Szondi is a critic with an excellent philosophical background, a fine literary sensibility, and a clear writing style, so the publication of the present volume must be greeted with pleasure.

The title essay argues for a theoretical hermeneutics, that is, a literary criticism that, instead of simply accumulating facts, would attempt to legitimate itself as a science. As part of his assault on positivism Szondi criticizes the traditional theological-philological method of citing parallel passages. Peter Juhl (*DVjs* 1975) has convincingly argued that Szondi is wrong on this point. By citing parallel passages, one can give objective, if not conclusive, evidence for particular interpretations. The critic must of course *interpret* the second passage and *argue* for its relevance—despite the differing context—to the initially more cryptic passage. These rules are often abused, but the possibility of abuse does not as such negate the validity of a particular method. Szondi seems right, however, in arguing that the ultimate meaning of a passage relates less to the consciousness that created it than to the logical structures of meaning it embodies.

The second essay, though historically important for its overcoming of Heidegger, is nonetheless the weakest in the volume. Interestingly, Szondi refutes in practice

the argument he just gave against parallel passages (see p. 28). More significantly, he misreads the historical development of Hölderlin's lyrics, situating the hymns, with their erasure of the self and elevation of the universal, after the odes and elegies. Not only is Szondi's account chronologically incorrect, it is absurd to call Hölderlin's elegies, with the exception of "Menons Klagen um Diotima," self-centered; they deal with totality, the gods, history, prophetic vision, etc. In addition, the late Hölderlin, as Jochen Schmidt has argued, could be said to have moved not towards the universal but towards the particular, in the sense of a reception, transmission, and realization of the universal. Finally, the problematic "ich" in "Wie wenn am Feiertage . . ." might be read not as a focus on personal suffering, a weak subjectivity, but as an absolute and overconfident subjectivity that, in Hölderlin's anti-Fichtean framework, makes it impossible for the poet to receive divinity.

Chapter 3 is an excerpt from Szondi's study of the tragic and includes discussions of Schelling, Hölderlin, and Hegel. For Schelling the tragic is the unity of freedom and necessity. For Hölderlin it is the appearance of divinity in man, the realization of unity in difference, as sacrifice. In his commentary on Hegel Szondi charts the development of the philosopher's concepts of tragedy and dialectic out of his early writings. Szondi's lucid discussion of tragedy, which focuses on the concept of dialectical reversal, would be worth translating in its entirety.

Szondi next offers two studies on Schlegel. In an attempt to define romantic irony Szondi focuses not on absolute subjectivity or on the unrealizability of the infinite but on a self-consciousness that is aware of itself and of the conventions of art. In the second essay Szondi analyzes Schlegel's call for a philosophical theory of poetic genres. A study of genre should be not an empirical classification of existing forms but a series of definitions derived from a single principle. Nonetheless, Schlegel sees the need for a unity of deduction and induction, an insight later developed by Hegel (and, one might add, by Szondi himself in his book on modern drama). Where Schlegel differs from Hegel is in his argument that the epic, in the form of the novel, represents the pinnacle of aesthetic forms, a claim that is today—with the advent of film—of mainly historical interest.

Szondi also presents a useful historical and philosophical introduction to Schleiermacher's attempt to give hermeneutics a theoretical foundation, to develop a theory that "could claim general validity irrespective of the differences in the texts to be interpreted" (p. 98). As part of his introduction Szondi carefully distinguishes the theories of Schleiermacher and Dilthey.

In his next essay Szondi reflects on Diderot's theater as the celebration of human goodness and virtue, qualities that Diderot thought could also be realized in the family. Szondi uncovers contradictions in Diderot's thoughts on these matters, and he concludes with an excursus on Lessing, highlighting differences with the idealist notion of tragedy and relating the premise of Lessing's definition of tragedy to his objection to the *Ständeklausel*. In his analysis Szondi attempts to show regressive moments of self-pity and escape in Lessing's dramatic theory; he thus cleverly offers an historical critique without taking recourse to extrinsic categories of criticism.

While the first six essays relate to German Romanticism and Idealism, the last three have as a common thread the writings of Walter Benjamin. The first is a sensitive study of metaphor, as the tension between distance and nearness, in Benjamin's "City Lights." In the second piece Szondi compares Proust's search for time past, the goal of which is the disappearance of time as such (this is achieved through

the coincidence of the past with the present) with Benjamin's view of the past. Benjamin, rather than seeking to erase time and with this the future, looks for seeds of the future in the as yet uncompleted past. He turns, for example, in his utopian longings to possibilities once contained in emerging technology and since repressed. In his final piece Szondi justifies Celan's translation of Shakespeare's Sonnet 105 in the light of Benjamin's theory of translation. The focus of Szondi's analysis is Celan's rendition of the *theme* of constancy through the *formal* use of repetition, paronomasia, and parataxis. Constancy is no longer the subject praised but rather the constituent element of verse.

The volume's translations are quite readable, and the translator frequently supplies the original, so that the meaning of technical terms, such as Hegel's "Sittlichkeit," is preserved. The volume contains an illuminating foreword by Michael Hayes, which attempts above all to situate Szondi in the light of major intellectual trends in German academic criticism during the 1950s and 1960s.

Szondi is a highly self-reflexive, astute, and clever critic. Students looking for exemplary scholarship in terms of rigor, clarity, and insight would do well to study these essays. However, as I have suggested above, the essays are not flawless. The editors might have introduced the individual selections, commenting on strengths and weaknesses or on the continuation of the various debates today; as it stands now, the volume doesn't completely deserve the publication date 1986.

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MARK W. ROCHE

Woman as Mediatrice: Essays on Nineteenth-Century European Women Writers. Ed. Avriel H. Goldberger. New York: Greenwood Press, 1987. 200 pp.

As Germaine Brée's introductory essay makes clear, *Woman as Mediatrice* derives from papers delivered at the 1980 Hofstra University Conference on Nineteenth-Century Women Writers. This collection of fifteen papers forms the companion volume to Greenwood Press's 1986 collection *Nineteenth-Century Women Writers of the English-Speaking World*, edited by Rhoda Nathan. The earlier book covers Anglo-American figures while the present group of essays deals with the broader European context. The papers clearly participate in the branch of contemporary feminist scholarly inquiry that seeks to bring to light the accomplishments and texts of women writers whose work has not been generally accepted into the literary canon. The volume accomplishes this task admirably. Although the time lag between the conference and the publication of this volume sometimes makes the critical and theoretical basis of some of the essays feel a bit dated, given the expansion of feminist theory in the past seven years, the short papers do present a fascinatingly varied look at the women writers of nineteenth-century Europe and the expanding roles they envisioned for themselves and their female contemporaries.

Marie-Claire Hoock-Demarle's opening essay provides the thematic underpinning of the volume, as it investigates the literary reaction of women to the growing industrialization and urban alienation in Europe in the 19th century. She begins with Mary Wollstonecraft's 1792 *Vindication of the Rights of Women* and her concept of future "masculinated women," and moves to Bettina Brentano-von Arnim's battle "to