

und gesellschaftliche, weniger die kulturelle Abgrenzung“ Österreichs von Deutschland „erwünscht“ gewesen, grenzt an Ahnungslosigkeit. Gerade die Kultur wurde von der Politik für ihre Abgrenzungsideologie missbraucht. Ähnlich wenig ergiebig ist RADOSLAVA MINKOVAS Beitrag zu Musils ›Törleß‹. Befremdlich mutet ihre kurzschlüssige Behauptung an, der Zögling Reiting ahne „mit seinen Zukunftsvorstellungen [...] die kommenden Kriege und die Diktatur“ voraus, wodurch „seine Übungen in Macht und Gewaltausübung in Ansätzen der nationalsozialistischen Macht- und Kriegsmaschinerie“ gleichen würden.

Einen geradezu mustergültig ins Thema der Tagung beziehungsweise des vorliegenden Bandes passenden Beitrag über Komik zwischen den Kulturen“ legt BEATRIX MÜLLER-KAMPEL mit ihrem Vergleich des süddeutsch-österreichischen Kasperl mit dem tschechischen Kašpárek vor. Die Verfolgung verschiedener „Traditionslinien“, die genaue Erfassung von Differenzen im Detail (der Kleidung, Requisiten etc.) und im Charakter sowie die Berücksichtigung unterschiedlicher Vorstellungen vom Zielpublikum beziehungsweise der ideologischen Ausrichtung zeichnet diese informationsreiche Studie aus.

Demgegenüber bringen der Beitrag von VLADIMIR SABOURIN über Lorenzo da Ponte und die drei studentischen Arbeiten keine neuen Einsichten. Es ist zweifellos sehr verdienstvoll, akademischen Nachwuchs durch die Eröffnung von Publikationsmöglichkeiten zu fördern, allerdings bedürfte es nicht nur, aber gerade auch bei diesen Aufsätzen der schon eingeforderten Lektorierung.

Kurt Bartsch (Graz)

HEINZ KOSOK, *The Theatre of War. The First World War in British and Irish Drama*, Basingstoke and New York (Palgrave Macmillan) 2007, viii + 286 pp.

The First World War, as the subtitle of this pioneering publication refers to the early 20th century conflict in which Britain suffered unheard of losses, has been and still is commonly called The Great War. Its impact on the cultural memory of a whole nation goes beyond rational assessment as the manifold literary response it has provoked amply shows. Another world war and several further military engagements have occurred since the armistice of 1918, but the initial event is still reflected in literary works comprising different genres. The dramatic output above all has been extremely extensive; yet Heinz Kosok's book, as the author convincingly shows, is the first of its kind to offer a comprehensive account of the numerous plays that have been produced (and are still being written), since the inception of hostilities in the summer of 1914, or in a few instances even before that momentous event. The reason for this anomaly might be found in the uneven quality of the texts and above all in the sheer weight of the extant material. The reader of this wide-ranging and painstaking book can only wonder at the dedication and the sheer amount of work that this daunting task must have demanded.

The majority of the more than two-hundred plays that are assessed in the ›Theatre of War‹ were available as publications or could still be obtained in typewritten form. The dates of production, wherever it occurred, are duly considered, as is the criticism which the presentation on the stage, or any subsequent productions, brought about. In cases where the text of a noteworthy dramatic piece could not be retrieved, the author has managed to gather

pertinent information from a reading of the reviews. In fact, the detailed data contained in the twofold checklist supplementing the main part of the work amounts to a scholarly contribution on its own. It will offer a reliable basis for further literary criticism beyond the present study.

An investigation of such magnitude requires a clearly structured approach. Eschewing a chronological account of the dramatic output Kosok has divided his analysis into several thematic parts. Whereas sections I and II deal with the subject matter and its dramatic treatment respectively, the following, shorter divisions focus on the (emotional or intellectual) attitude involved in the plays under discussion, assess their reception, and finally attempt an evaluation of their artistic merit. The discussion of the topics centres on what would have been the major concerns of the playwrights and the theatre-going public: The immediacy of military engagement, the involvement on the home front, the fate of the individual combatants, a retrospective view of the events leading up to the conflict as well as an optimistic or more often sceptical outlook on the future - the hope for an ensuing world peace or a lingering fear of further and even more disastrous wars. As the subtitle of book indicates, a special chapter is devoted to the role of the Irish people in the Great War, which prompted an entirely different allegiance in the North and then again in the South of the island, where enlistment in the British army might be viewed as treasonable. This so very complex and delicate issue is treated with special circumspection by the author. After all, only the last decades have seen a number of plays coming to terms with the ambivalent Irish situation, whereas the major contemporary output dealt with the Easter Rising of 1916, when the proclamation of an independent Irish republic was crushed by the British army. Among a number of minor dramas Sean O'Casey's controversial ›Plough and the Stars‹ is discussed at some length. The British soldiers who are here introduced into a Dublin setting are engaged against Irish patriots. The literary interest in these reprehensible historic events has only recently lost its momentum.

How were the manifold aspects of the Great War dramatically rendered? It might seem obvious that playwrights would aim at authenticity in their works, which were after all written for an audience avid for information and eager to have their sympathies for the men actively engaged in the conflict emphatically confirmed. Nevertheless, a few writers did choose to go beyond the military milieu, opting for a symbolical or even allegorical form of writing. It was above all the ambience of the Big House that lent itself to a heightened, less restrictive treatment of the issue. Here George Bernard Shaw's self-styled 'fantasia' ›Heartbreak House‹ is singled out as an exemplary composition. It would seem that the kaleidoscopic, enigmatic piece gains in significance through its overall ambiguity. While early 20th century German drama was determined by the expressionistic style, this dynamic form reached the English literary scene at a later stage only: in this respect O'Casey's ›The Silver Tassie‹, which invokes a nightmarish tableau of the horrors of war in its second act, is cited as one of the few exceptions here.

Set against works guided by aesthetic leanings of this scope, a straightforward, direct presentation must have seemed preferable. It would be wrong though to place the many plays responding to this call on the same artistic level. To assess their varied quality, Kosok has resorted to probe the realistic approach sustained or pretended in these writings. In his view nearly all attempts to achieve a high degree of reality on the stage deviated into facile theatricality. Even a classic like R. C. Sherriff's ›Journey's End‹ falls short of evoking the totality of war, whereas short plays through their innate concentration on one single situation may convey a sense of the real experience at least.

It might seem that the large output of dramas centring on or thematically related to the Great War must have been motivated by the same convictions and intentions. Yet this is not the case, as the author shows by tracing their drift to a disparity of attitudes. Besides the appeal to patriotism and the jingoism nurtured by a war hysteria, some writers were also inspired by pacifist ideals, yielding to an awareness of the futility of the fighting and, in the years to come, responding to the widespread fear of future and even more calamitous conflicts. A survey of the records shows, however, that unmodified anti-war plays might run into difficulties with the Lord Chamberlain's office while the combat was still going on, or even failed to engage an appreciative audience. John Drinkwater was well advised to set his poetic drama ›X=O: A Night of the Trojan War‹ in a mythical situation. Tendencies of this kind doubtless lowered the artistic standards of the British theatre. As a telling instance of the decline Kosok cites Somerset Maugham's uncompromising ›For Services Rendered‹, which had to close after a brief West End run, the prominent status of the writer notwithstanding. On the other hand, the experience of the war years promoted the rise of amateur theatricals and led to the production of noteworthy non-commercial plays, often written by women for an all-female cast.

It stands to reason that a literary history forgoing a division into periods for a study of different aspects of literary production will need to consider some outstanding works several times. This may have suggested a final summing up in which a more general and final evaluation of plays that have merited extra attention is attempted. The author proceeds with particular caution in this section, drawing on a number of well established criteria to achieve a balanced judgement on a small selection of dramas that have featured prominently in the preceding discussion. As one might expect, anti-war plays that elevated their commitment to a higher level are here deemed superior to seemingly authentic displays. Judged by the same standards, artistic structures enfolding a variety of themes are held to gain in significance through their complexity, whereas ingenuous and straightforward dramatic compositions appear trivial. In the final count, Shaw's ›Heartbreak House‹, Reginald Berkeley's ›The White Château‹, the chronicle of a Belgian Big House set between the frontlines, and Maugham's macabre ›For Services Rendered‹ strike the author as more meaningful and relevant than the majority of the many dramas that have been discussed in the course of this detailed and searching analysis. Even these three masterpieces are, however, surpassed by ›The Silver Tassie‹ (which was recently set to music as an opera). "In contrasting the soldiers' front-line experience with the world of petty quarrels and shallow emotions at home, O'Casey achieves a higher degree of complexity than most" (228). It is telling that Sean O'Casey, who never was called up, should have dismissed ›Journey's End‹ as a stylised embellishment of the horror of war, a censure that Kosok reprints in full. But wouldn't the world-wide success of Sherriff's play merit a less disdainful assessment? Notwithstanding its conventional structure and outmoded code of honour, ›Journey's End‹ has appealed to several generations of theatregoers as a credible, compelling impression of the calamity. After all, the atmosphere of boredom, tension, fear, resignation, despair and the prevailing sense of futility that are evoked in these scenes might recall the reality of war, of all the pernicious wars that are still fought in so many parts of the world.

Another theatrical piece not included in the final evaluation was clearly deemed worthy of special, or in fact specific, consideration. A separate chapter is dedicated to ›Oh What a Lovely War‹, a multi-media spectacle collectively produced by Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop for a small East End establishment, which proved so successful that it presently transferred to the West End. Kosok offers a detailed account of its genesis and reception.

Taking its cue from a variety of popular songs of the Great War, the show proceeds on the lines of early 20th century seaside entertainments. As he takes pains to point out, the active audience response to the lively presentation might also be traced to the striking topicality of this “unconventional solution” to a universal issue. When ›Oh What a Lovely War‹ appeared on the stage in the critical year of 1963, it was generally received as a show-piece on the futility of war.

The futility of war – The polysemic title of the book calls to mind the image of the “theatre of war” in canto 78 of Ezra Pound’s Pisan Cantos, which closes with the dictum “there are no righteous wars”.

›The Theatre of War‹ is an extremely thorough, highly rewarding, and inspiring book, which should initiate further studies in a hitherto neglected field.

Herbert Foltinek (Wien)

Heißer Streit und kalte Ordnung. Epochen der Querelle des femmes zwischen Mittelalter und Gegenwart, hrsg. von FRIEDERIKE HASSAUER unter Mitarbeit von KYRA WALDNER, WOLFRAM AICHINGER, ANNABELL LORENZ, NIKOLAOS KATSIVELARIS, Göttingen (Wallstein) 2008, 435 S.

Seit mehr als einem Jahrzehnt liefert die Wiener Forschungsgruppe um Friederike Hassauer wesentliche Impulse zur Untersuchung der *Querelle des femmes*, wobei sie ihr besonderes Augenmerk – in diesem gesamt europäischen, seit dem 14. Jahrhundert geführten Streit um die Frauen – auf die Iberoromania legt. Der nun vorliegende neue Sammelband zu diesem Thema trägt mit seinem breit gefassten Spektrum an Einzelbeiträgen weitere exemplarische Steinchen in jenem großen Mosaik von Stimmen, Themen und Argumentationen vom Mittelalter über die Aufklärung bis in unsere Gegenwart zusammen.

Schon vor der Lektüre der einzelnen Aufsätze provoziert der Titel des Sammelbandes zum Nachfragen: Was meint eigentlich die *kalte Ordnung* im Gegensatz zum *heißen Streit* in dieser *Querelle des femmes*? FRIEDERIKE HASSAUER erklärt dieses Wortspiel in ihrer inspirierenden Einleitung (11–46), indem sie die jahrhundertealte Ordnung der Geschlechter als sedimentierte „Formationen von Wissen, Institution, Repräsentation und Identität“ (24) liest, die durch querellistische, auf Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit zielende Einwürfe punktuell erhitzt und damit begrenzt verformbar wird, um dann wiederum mit neuen vermeintlichen Gewissheiten und veränderten wirkungsmächtigen Interpretationen zu erstarren. Insofern erweist sich die *Querelle des femmes* als beständige strategische Verhandlung und Verschiebung von geschlechtlichem Ordnungswissen und Argumentationssträngen, was im Sinne Foucaults als Dispositiv verstanden werden kann. Dieser Bewegung – sowohl auf der Grundlage subjektiver Aussagen als auch auf der Ebene der Diskurse – widmen sich verschiedene Aufsätze des Sammelbandes. Den weiteren Beiträgen liegen andere Ebenen in dieser machstrategischen Auseinandersetzung zugrunde: In ihnen werden entweder die institutionellen Auswirkungen der *Querelle des femmes* auf unterschiedliche Zugangs- und Teilhabemöglichkeiten der Geschlechter untersucht oder subjektive Verortungen einzelner Protagonistinnen und Protagonisten beleuchtet (24ff.).