

But our criticism will not change the fact that Professor Moussa-Mahmoud has succeeded in giving the reader a clear idea of the development of the Egyptian novel from its early beginnings as imitations of European works, to the independent and original novels which are now being produced. This is undoubtedly a valuable addition to the very limited library on the Arabic novel.

S.K.

### HILDEGARD EMMEL

*Geschichte des deutschen Romans. I.*

Berne: Francke, 1972. Pp. 372.  
Sfr. 25.

The difficulties encountered in writing a history of the German novel—or, indeed, any national literary history—are numerous. To what extent are influential works of other literatures to be included? Which does more justice to the abundance of material: extensive presentation of facts, or intensive interpretation? Which methodological approach to literature is to be given preference? Should works on the theory of the novel be brought into the discussion?

Hildegard Emmel is well aware of these problems, and she does not pretend to have found the final solution to them: “[The literary historian] entscheidet als Leser selbstverständlich subjektiv, und seine Darstellung ist es auch. . . . Verbindliche Maßstäbe der Wertung besitzen wir nicht . . . .” These remarks, however, should not lead the reader to expect a revolutionary reevaluation of the material treated. Professor Emmel has opted for selective interpretation, and she has based her selection and evaluation upon established literary-aesthetic criteria: “Repräsentative Einzelwerke gelten als Orientierungspunkte.”

Every novel which she has analyzed in detail belongs to the canon of established works. Each is interpreted with respect to its various literary aspects and is examined with regard to its contemporary literary

milieu. But the question arises, to what extent can the best works of an era be designated “representative”? Popular fiction is treated only occasionally, and then, in a cursory manner. One wonders if a detailed analysis of a “repräsentatives Einzelwerk” from this field should not have been included. Comparisons between recognized and light literature might have provided interesting insights into several problematic areas, such as those of literary taste, the circumstances giving rise to a novel, and the factors determining its reception by the public.

Once one has come to accept the basic concepts of the book, one will read it with both pleasure and profit. Beginning with the novels of Jörg Wickram (1500-1560), it traces the development of the genre through Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (1821 and 1829); Wieland and Goethe are treated in greatest detail, especially the period which begins with *Don Sylvio* (1764) and ends with *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-96). From time to time, reflections on the theory of the novel are discussed; statements made by contemporary critics are set up against the works in question and interrelationships are pointed out.

Hildegard Emmel successfully avoids assigning the novels to the conventional literary pigeonholes, the ones labeled “Enlightenment,” “Storm and Stress,” “Classic,” and “Romantic.” Illuminated by her convincing interpretations, which are well-substantiated by facts and quotes, the works speak for themselves and show fresh individuality. Additionally, her relatively detailed analysis enables the reader to compare the various novels, so that each work sheds light on the next. Chapter II, where English novels are given their rightful place with regard to the German literary scene, deserves special praise.

This first volume of Hildegard Emmel's *Geschichte des deutschen Romans* is, within its own chosen limits, a thorough, reliable, and excitingly readable book.

Ingrid Schuster