

life. Yet these same stories, which engage us when they are dramatized individually on radio, are considerably less captivating published as a collection and without benefit of an interpreting voice.

Part of the problem here is the publisher's (or writer's) temerity in calling this collection of anecdotes a novel. The reader of a novel has a right to expect a reasonable range of information about each of the central characters, as well as the prospect of growth—of change of some kind—in at least some of them. But the characters in *The Street Where I Live* are static; we know little more about them in the final vignette in which we see them than in the initial one. Like Dickens's Mrs. Micawber (*David Copperfield*), they say much the same thing in much the same way about much the same kind of situation each time they appear. This is a pity, for the potential is enormous for the development of such characters as Mrs. Kolosky and Mrs. Weinstein, the two gossiping harridans who dominate the other women on the street.

Still, although the characters are undoubtedly flat in E. M. Forster's terms, they are nonetheless individualized, and the manner in which Ms. Haas accomplishes this individuality sets the tone of the book. For each of the characters is a type-cast representative of a specific ethnic group—in the manner of the stage Irishman—and is set apart from the others as much by his peculiar way of mutilating the English language as by anything else. Believing all the usually pejorative myths about one another's national characteristics, religion and moral codes, the characters here never really come to terms with their neighbors. But they do have to live with each other, and the resulting conversations, confrontations, and general confusion is the stuff of light comedy.

Memorable moments occur when Ukrainian Mrs. Golombioski translates the program of a local cultural evening to Regina Britannia, when Mr. Franciosa berates his hockey-mad boy Angelo, and when the Widow Siboolka visits a gypsy fortune-teller. And on occasion, anecdotes transcend the localized setting. The antics of Orest the Undertaker, who "saves" clothes from corpses to rent at wedding parties, and then worries in case someone will recognize them, could amuse readers from various cultural backgrounds. And the activities of the druggist's two daughters who, when left to mind their father's shop one afternoon, ravish its candy counter

and cosmetic shelves, have the potential to arouse memories of similar youthful escapades in many readers' minds.

Those who will enjoy the book most, however, are those readers who have experienced the kind of scenes it recreates. For most others, *The Street Where I Live* will be of limited interest, providing a light-hearted, mildly satiric look at just how ridiculous we humans can sometimes be.

Stan Atherton

WERNER WEBER

Forderungen: Bemerkungen und Aufsätze zur Literatur

(Demands: Comments on and Studies of Literature)

Zürich: Artemis, n.d. Pp. 312. Fr. 19.

Werner Weber, since 1951 Feuilleton-Editor of the reputable Swiss newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, has published a great number of articles and reviews many of which have been reprinted in the form of collections and diaries (*Figuren und Fahrten*, 1956; *Zeit ohne Zeit*, 1959; *Wissenschaft und Gestaltung*, 1959; *Die Reise nach Sancheville*, 1960; *Tagebuch eines Lesers*, 1965). His achievement in the field of literary criticism has been acknowledged by several academies and institutions in Switzerland and Germany

Forderungen . . . begins with a short article on Émile Zola and Flaubert. Zola's words on the death of Flaubert (which remind Weber of Victor Hugo's "La mort de Balzac") are examined and analyzed. Zola's description of his trip—along with Daudet, Charpentier, Edmond de Goncourt, and Maupassant—to Croisset to visit Flaubert on March 28, 1880 and then his return on May 8, 1880 to the same place in order to attend the funeral of "Monsieur Gustave" is intelligently discussed and evaluated.

The next four pages deal with Baudelaire and what Claude Pichois in his *Baudelaire devant ses contemporains* calls the "Legende du Baudelaire. La vrai et la factice, le réel et le mythique." After

presenting an interpretation of Baudelaire's poem "Paysage," Weber—guided by a few comments made by André Gide in 1918-19—examines Baudelaire's poem "L'invitation au voyage" and especially the two lines "Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,/ Luxe, calme et volupté."

In other articles Weber discusses André Gide's "Le retour de l'enfant prodigue" in the light of Gide's relationship to Georges Simenon (whom Gide regarded as the greatest novelist!). Further essays deal with Alain (Emile Auguste Chartier), Paul Claudel, Paul Léautaud, Jean Paulhan, Wallace Stevens, Dylan Thomas ("The Hunchback in the Park"), Leonard Cohen ("Suzanne"), the Beatles (and their lyrical and elegiac world), Hermann Hesse (and his popularity in the USA), and the Swiss author Jeremias Gotthelf.

The second section of the book—entitled "Gegenwart aus Vergangenheit" (The Presence of the Past)—deals with different aspects of the works of Goethe, Fontane, Keller, and other German-speaking writers of the nineteenth century.

The third section ("Ermittlungen" [Investigations]) is undoubtedly the most

rewarding part of the book. In an article on Alfred Andersch's novel *Efracim* (1967) Weber examines Andersch's so-called "zerstörte Ordnung" (disrupted order); in another one on Siegfried Lenz's *Deutschstunde* (1968), Weber analyzes the role of the narrator in this as well as in other contemporary novels. Equally challenging and rewarding is Weber's article on Günter Grass and his novel *Örtlich betäubt*, 1969 (*Local Anesthesia*). Grass's style (which Weber calls "Redefetzen" [Speech fragments]), his irony, and his so-called "Ironisierung der Literatur" (ironizing of literature) are examined and commented upon.

Among the other writers Weber deals with one finds Gabriele Wohmann, Günter Eich, Paul Celan, Wolf Biermann, Johannes Bobrowski, Jürg Federspiel, Peter Bichsel, and Adolf Muschg. In spite of Weber's attempt to make this book look like one tight unit, it remains what it is, "Comments on Literature." But this does not change the fact that in spite of its "fragmentary" nature it provides good reading, excellent reading, one could say.

S. Elkhadem