

## REVIEWS

Rose Ausländer, *Ein Stück weiter*. Cologne: Literarische Verlag Braun, 1979, 156 pp.

Rose Ausländer, *Einverständnis*. Lithographs by Klaus Hruby. Pfaffenweiler: Pfaffenweiler Presse, 1980, 61 pp.

In reviews of poetry—(and elsewhere)—I dislike the use of the kind of ultimately meaningless generalities one typically encounters. A review should tell the reader something about the specific nature of the verse in question. In a brief discussion of Rose Ausländer it is, for better or for worse, very difficult to write with precision and incisiveness. Her own use of (poetic) words is such, that discursive language can scarcely do justice to it. For example, I once used the word “traditional” in reference to her poetry. She took offense, even though no value judgment, and certainly, not a negative one, was stated or even implied. In a recent interview in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* (June 27, 1980), she is quoted as saying “Ich bin nicht modern.” Of course there is a difference in connotation between these two ways of expressing the same thought. Similarly, she once expressed dissatisfaction with Jacob Erhardt’s use of the word “Eintönigkeit” (*JGAS*, 1970) to characterize her poetry. I thought it was a good word, in context; for me it lacks the negative connotations of the English “monotonous,” perhaps because of its use in Theodor Storm’s “Die Stadt.” Ausländer, in the *FAZ* interview, puts it this way: “Ich bleibe meinem Stil treu.” Much better, of course, but one of those formulations to which I would tend to object if it were made by a critic instead of the poet herself.

The title of *Ein Stück weiter* is indeed appropriate. The phrase has existential (a poor word, but I don’t have a better one) implications in the title poem, but is also equally applicable to the tenor of the collection as a whole. The themes and language, while definitely Ausländer, are... less coherent—no, not the right expression...more varied than in her other recent collections. But then not all of the poems are recent: “DU” was originally published (in Erhardt’s article in *JGAS*) in 1970. “Orpheus und Eurydike” is magnificent; it is also much longer than any of her other recent poems, but very different in tone from her early longer poetry. Is it early? late? or a recent revision of an early work? Ausländer maintains (*FAZ* interview) that the date of a poem is unimportant. For the lover of poetry this is true; for literary historians, more and more of whom are becoming interested in Ausländer, it is not.

*Einverständnis* is more typical of Ausländer’s recent collections. The themes and motifs (Wort, Atem, the duality of existence) will be familiar to her many readers, as will the laconic mode of expression. The title, too, is consistent with her primary concerns, and aptly characterizes the tone of her verse.

Ausländer’s verse is not hermetic, but neither is it simple. Her concerns are universal and basic, and it is this quality that renders a summary,

or even a description, problematical. In most cases, as critics have previously observed, the poem remains its own most effective commentary: "...Weltgefärbt/färben wir die Welt/mit Gedanken/müden ins Staubmeer."

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Louis Viereck, *German Instruction in American Schools*. With an Introduction by George Bernstein. Reprint of 1902 ed., New York, Arno Pr., 1979.

Louis Viereck, father of the poet and publicist George Sylvester Viereck and illegitimate son of Kaiser Wilhelm I, wrote this work at the turn of the century when the German language played a significant role in American education. Viereck provides an excellent history of the development of German language instruction from the early eighteenth century to 1900, and then analyzes in detail the following educational institutions: colleges and universities, public schools, normal schools, parochial schools, association and private schools, summer and night schools, kindergartens, instructions in athletics, singing and manual training.

"The Future of German Instruction" concludes Viereck's history of German instruction in the U.S. In this section he examines libraries, associations, publications for the promotion of German instruction, special institutions and endowments, biographical notes on American and German-American educators, and the effect of German instruction on the relations between Germany and America.

Viereck demonstrates that German-Americans were not advocating the establishment of an enclave, but rather advancing a vigorous bilingual-bicultural approach to American life. They were some of the earliest proponents of cultural pluralism. Bernstein's introduction highlights some of the values of Viereck's work and provides it with a bibliography of relevant works.

German-Americans, according to Bernstein, demonstrated that their bilingual-bicultural approach "was viable and that its introduction did not portend the chaotic fragmentation of the Republic." They showed that children could acquire an education without completely "jettisoning their original culture."

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Dale R. Wirsing, *Builders, Brewers and Burghers. Germans of Washington State*. Washington State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1977.

This small, but very good history serves as an introductory survey to the German-Americans in Washington. Wirsing indicates that "there are signs of a reviving interest in German culture, especially among the grandchildren of the original immigrants." The volume traces, outlines and discusses the role of the German element in all aspects of life in the state of Washington. Another example of an excellent local German-American history, and the kind that should be done for the other states of the Union.

Michael J. Anuta, *East Prussians from Russia*. Menominee, Michigan: Anuta, 1979.

A history of East Prussians from Russia who immigrated to the northeastern section of Wisconsin in 1890 has been assembled by a first generation American, Michael J. Anuta. The customs and the faith of the old country provided the author with background and experience, supported later by extensive research in the U.S. and Europe. The work contains many illustrations, maps, and a bibliography. It is a fine example of local German-American history, and of special interest to anyone interested in Russian-German or Wisconsin German history. It can be obtained from the author: RA 655 Westland, Menominee, Michigan 49858.

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Erna Kleist, *Meine Zeit (My Time)*. Mankato, Minnesota, 1977.

As an autobiography of a Minnesota German born in 1898 in Vernon Center, Minnesota, this small work will interest those concerned with the history of the German-Americans of Minnesota. Although it carries a German title the booklet is written in English. The author describes life in Minnesota: the preparation of food, farm life, crops, harvesting and other events from rural Minnesota. She attended "what they called English school" which did not seem to interest the author much. She preferred the parochial school which consisted of "one big room and all eight grades." A quaint book that documents an earlier day in the annals of Minnesota German life.

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Gottlieb Leibbrandt, *Little Paradise. Aus Geschichte und Leben der Deutschkanadier in der County, Waterloo, Ontario, 1800-1975*. Kitchener: Allprint Co. Ltd., 1977.

Leibbrandt has written a number of works dealing with various aspects of German-Canadiana, such as *Canadian German Society. 25 Jahre caritative und kulturelle Arbeit des Hilfswerkes der Deutsch-Kanadier* (1972) and the *Concordia Club. Jubiläumsausgabe* (1973). "Little Paradise" is a history of the German element in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada which traces the early settlement of the Pennsylvania Germans and the German immigration which commenced in the early nineteenth century. It contains an excellent chapter on German language writings (pp. 264-319) with a selection of German-Canadian prose and poetry. This fine contribution to German-Canadian history can be obtained from the author: 109 Lang Cr., Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2K 2B6

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