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PROJECT

Volume of Narrations "No Fear"

Ich habe zwei literarische Projekte.

Zum einen plane ich einen Erzählungsband, der gewisse Stoffe, Episoden und Motive aus meinen autobiographischen Erinnerungspassagen "Mehr Meer" (2009) fiktional bearbeitet und vertieft. Dabei interessiert mich besonders die Familiengeschichte, die mütterlicherseits nach Uhorod und bis ins polnische Wilna führt, väterlicherseits nach Slowenien; ferner meine Kindheitsstadt Triest mit ihrer wechselvollen Historie.

Einmal mehr geht es um Fragen wie Exil, Heimat, Identität, Grenze, Gedächtnis, aber auch um die Beschwörung mittelosteuropäischer Städte und Landschaften.

Zum anderen möchte ich eine Art Berlin-(Tage-)Buch schreiben, als Auseinandersetzung mit der Umgebung. Es soll Aufzeichnungen, Gedichte, Essays und Interviews enthalten. Geplant sind einige gezielte Recherchen in russischen und türkischen Milieus.

Lektüreempfehlung

Rakusa, Ilma. Mehr Meer: Erinnerungspassagen. Graz: Literaturverlag Droschl, 2009.

- . Zur Sprache gehen. Dresdner Chamisso-Poetikvorlesungen 2005. Dresden: Thelem Verlag, 2006.

- . Langsamer! Gegen Atemlosigkeit, Akzeleration und andere Zumutungen. Graz: Literaturverlag Droschl, 2005.

Autobiographical Writing as Bildungsroman

One might assert that the phrase "autobiographical writing" is a pleonastic expression, for is not all writing autobiographical in the sense that the author falls back on personal experience without invariably identifying with his figures in every respect? Yet, as we know, there are gradations of autobiographical writing - both Augustine's Confessions as well as those of Rousseau claim to be that very thing. Trading under the name of autobiographical bildungsromane are, for instance, Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, Karl Philipp Moritz's Anton Reiser, and Novalis' Heinrich von Ofterdingen. In Childhood, Boyhood, Youth, Leo Tolstoy evoked his maturation process in fictionalized form. Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* is an autobiographical effort that emerges as a kunstlerroman and a historical panorama.

As if self-discernment stood in a direct relationship to this crisis-ridden era, the twentieth century brought forth numerous autobiographically funded literary works - and I am consciously excluding literary memoirs here in the narrowest sense. For example, the Shoah incited texts that make memory and the search for identity their subject and which go beyond individual testimony to attain, to a certain extent, the level of a work of collective memory (Imre Kertész, Danilo Kiš).

In the course of debates by literary scholars as to the "death of the author," autobiography fell into disfavor; yet ever since the 1980s, autobiographical and auto-fictional texts have boomed; although, as a rule, they are missing that naïve quality with respect to mimesis and the delineation of self. Rather, they distinguish themselves through a high degree of reflection in that they reveal the self and memory as being quite fragile entities and they make no bones as to the constructed character of their narrative. In an astonishing variety of approaches and models, this is accomplished without any accompanying pathos and without the difference between "reality" and "fiction" being constantly underscored.

Important questions connected today to autobiographical writing are the role of memory or perception, the construction of identity, the relationship between empiricism and invention, fact and fiction, mimesis and mimicry, and they address issues concerning the narrative form, the certain genre, and last but not least the authorial intention - should one convey the impression of an authentic search for the self or should the life-narrative be packaged in the form of a bildungsroman? Often we are confronted with an ambiguity that the reader is obliged to decipher.

My last book, *Mehr Meer* (More Ocean, 2009), is an autobiographical work. In my talk I should like to discuss the work's premises and problems in this context and my analysis will be supplemented by an excerpt from the book and through a look at my current project - a volume of short stories based on autobiographical material.

Rakusa, Ilma (Graz,2021)

Gedankenspiele über die Eleganz

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