

Walker, Karl-Heinz. *Typologische und terminologische Untersuchungen zur französischen Pamphletliteratur des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts* (Paris, Seattle and Tuebingen: Biblio 17 [29], 1987.) 290 pp.

If an all-too-evocative book title has ever led you on a wildgoose chase, you will appreciate the sobriety of a heading whose promise is fulfilled by the book it names. The author begins by mapping out the course of his investigation on the nature of the pamphlet, inviting the reader to share in the process of discovery which preceded and led up to the conclusions presented in the *Fazit* at the end of the book.

Walker's observations on the pamphlet as a literary genre are divided into four distinct but interdependent chapters. The first is devoted to the task of defining the term proper, which--being of English origin--did not actually appear in the French lexicon until the 18th century, nor designate a type of text until the 19th. Consequently, the author asks if a term can retroactively denote its phenomenon, i.e. if we can call pamphlets certain early 17th-century texts which exhibit the necessary distinctive properties to satisfy a much more recent definition. For such definition, Walker is able to draw on and use as a point of departure Marc Angenot's ground-breaking theoretical work *La Parole pamphlétaire* (1982). Since the pamphlet represents only one of the three subgenres that constitute the larger genre of the "littérature de combat," Walker proposes to examine as well the remaining two--satire and polemic--in order to expose, by way of confrontation and comparison, the particular "kämpferische Struktur" (p. 44) characteristic of the genre in question. This examination takes place in Chapter Two, where selected representative text samples are analyzed and assigned to the categories of satire, polemic, or pamphlet respectively, according to the authorial stance taken. The text corpus was limited to include only publications from 1610 to 1624 in accordance with the title's warning.

Having concluded that the modern triadic genre concept of the "littérature de combat" is indeed useful for the categorization of older texts, Walker proceeds, in Chapter Three, to discuss the literary terminology and the ensuing concepts of genre specific to the 17th century. The description of the various forms of 17th-century combative literature is truly excellent. For each term (placard, mathurinade, mazarinade, libelle, livret, satire, pasquin, coq à l'asne, invective, controverse, réfutation, réplique, réponse, apologie, anti-défense, manifeste) we find an etymology, lexical definitions from contemporary sources, and excerpts illustrating usage in the interest of contextual accuracy. In Chapter Four, Walker finally concentrates exclusively on the pamphlet as he examines its structural characteristics in the light of communication theory. In this context, however, the notion of the "Wunschpublikum," i.e. the audience desired for the message conveyed in the pamphlet, appears problematic or at least demands clarification. For we cannot, as Walker seems to suggest (p. 220), equate the public at large of the XXth century with that of the XVIIth, where about 90% of the population were illiterate. The level of textual explication is not totally even throughout the chapter: although Walker's thoroughness is generally gratifying, there are times when one would prefer interpretation proper to supplant an all-too-abundant paraphrase.

Overall, Walker's manuscript reads smoothly and provides an excellent vehicle for his lucid and cogent argumentation. He manages to scale down the highly formalized (and at times incomprehensible) style of German literary criticism to a more casual level of expression. Nonetheless, a colloquialism of the sort found on p. 108 ("...den grössten Teil der Oeffentlichkeit glaubt er eh schon hinter sich zu haben...") should probably have been emended. On the other hand, in a manuscript relatively devoid of critical jargon the quote "discours enthymématique" (p. 26) merits more of an explanation than the superficial gloss "Texte, die eine Beurteilung abgeben," especially since

the definition most readily accessible in the *Petit Robert* ("enthymème: Log. Forme abrégée du syllogisme dans laquelle on sous-entend l'une des deux prémisses ou la conclusion") is not easily transferred upon the context at hand. Another pervasive and somewhat bothersome feature of the book are the numerous cross-references to primary sources strewn throughout the text. This causes the reader to halt and begin to flip pages. Since a similar inconvenience was supposed to have been remedied by notes appearing on the bottom of the page, it is all the more disturbing to find oneself thrust back in time by an author, who, for some reason, seems unprepared to provide the relevant lines of source text at the appropriate moment, be it at the cost of repeating a passage or ultimately lengthening the manuscript. This predilection for cross-references does, on the other hand, add a convenient feature to the bibliography of primary texts, for each entry is followed by the page numbers of its citation in the main body of the book. Unfortunately, however, the bibliographic entry is not complete in itself, because the exact manuscript numbers which identify the item in the catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale are only given at the first mention of the title in the text.

One last word about style concerns physical appearance: corrections traced in by hand and improper spacing should no longer be an issue in the age of word-processing. But such minor imperfections affect only marginally the readability of a pleasantly unpretentious book, which offers conclusive evidence on a relatively controversial genre and which, through its exemplary approach, presents a significant contribution to the area of genre studies.

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