

in the second. On the other hand, Magoun's excellent translation of the *Old Kalevala* (186 pp.) alone makes this book worthwhile. As a work of art the NK tends to suffer from overpadding with parallelisms, repetitive variations, and charms, and at the time of its appearance the NK was considered inferior to the OK by contemporary Finnish song collectors (cf. A. Anttila, *Elias Lönnrot*, vol. 2 [Helsinki, 1935], p. 77). Magoun comments that "often the briefer telling [of the OK] is more effective and exhibits a terseness more like the actual songs of most singers or the compact lays of the Elder or Poetic Edda" (p. xvii).

In his short but helpful foreword (pp. xiii–xix) Magoun convincingly argues that the *Kalevala* is "the work of a lettered person using the verses of traditional singers" and that "the very concept of concatenation is nontraditional." One of his main purposes is to trace the NK back to "unconnected components" within an oral tradition. It is apparently in support of this view that he included the entire PK and other primary sources. The translations are welcome, but one wonders whether a critical comparison of selected passages might not have been more effective. Magoun does not include all *Kalevala* sources (a formidable task), or even all Lönnrot versions (e.g., "Väinämöinen," 1933). Study of the evolution of the *Kalevala* relying solely on the nonmetrical corpus supplied by Magoun, in the absence of control of the Finnish sources, would be fairly limited.

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THE LITERATURE OF EAST GERMANY. By *Theodore Huebener*. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1970. ix, 134 pp. \$6.00.

One is tempted, considering the dearth of scholarly attention to East German affairs, to welcome all efforts to remedy neglect by taking seriously the existence of the German Democratic Republic. Certainly East German literature is, as Huebener explains, not at all well known outside its native country, but the question remains whether a mere introduction, as the author labels his own work, will indeed "lead to further study of the literature of East Germany" unless it manages to persuade others of the interest and importance of the subject.

This survey begins with a sketch of the socialist literary tradition and of the specific conditions surrounding literary activity in East Germany, conveying at least a measure of the stultification produced there by a tough cultural policy. There are several important topics concealed within this introduction: for example, the position of the writer in society, the critical identification of literary items that transcend the prevailing mediocrity, or the standard attitudes toward literature of other times and places. Although the author shows his awareness of these questions, his presentation is altogether too scanty to shed new light on any of them.

What follows is a series of sketches of East German writers, twenty-five of them, ranging in length from a single page for several to something over twenty pages for Bertolt Brecht. The information is largely biographical, though some critical distinctions are added, chiefly on the older writers, such as Ludwig Renn, Anna Seghers, and Johannes R. Becher. The cursory bibliography omits most of the works which tell us more about East German literature than this one does.

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