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Introduction

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Conard: Introduction
INTRODUCTION

The papers of the first Böll Seminar (1972) sponsored by the Modern Language Association of America were published in the pages of the *UDR* in the fall issue of 1973 (*UDR*, 10, No. 2). At that time the hope was expressed that if the Böll Seminar were renewed, the *UDR* would be pleased to publish the continuing Böll research. Thus with the co-operation of Erhard Friedrichsmeyer of the University of Cincinnati, organizer of the 1973 seminar, the participants: Professors Margareta Deschner of Southern Methodist University, Klaus Jeziorkowski of the University of Frankfurt, Gertrud Pickar of the University of Houston and Keith Stewart of the University of Cincinnati, and especially of the editor of the *UDR*, Professor Lawrence A. Ruff, this second Böll issue is appearing.

Keith Stewart's article surveys the American reviews of Böll's work from the first appearance in the United States in 1954 of *Acquainted with the Night* through the publication of *Group Portrait with Lady* in 1973. Böll's works demonstrated varied styles and interests in that nearly twenty-year period, and still the reviews of the novels and short stories of one of this century's most talented writers and Nobel laureates were consistently mixed. What American reviewers value in a work of literature and often fail to find in Böll is still a mystery to be explained.

Margareta Deschner's analysis of *Group Portrait* centers on its heroine Leni Pfeiffer. With support from insights gleaned from Böll's *Frankfurter Vorlesungen* she concludes that Leni is a vision of the writer's feminine ideal, the new woman, not only Eve, but also Maria and Magdalene combined.

Gertrud Pickar's perceptive analysis of the narrative point of view of *Billiards at Haf-past Nine*, *The Clown* and *Group Portrait*—works published from 1959-1971—reveals a variety of narrative methods employed by Böll in this period, and her disclosures offer evidence that Böll is a subtle innovator in his use of previously developed artistic techniques.

Klaus Jeziorkowski broadly defines a political author as anyone who publishes, arguing that when one brings his work before the public, that work becomes something social; it establishes dialog if only one reader is found. In this comprehensive sense, he sees also Celan, George and Rilke as political writers. With such a starting point it follows that Jeziorkowski does not divide Böll's oeuvre into belletristic and essayistic but treats its entirety as a contribution to Germany's recent political literature.

An additional Böll contribution by Prof. Ingeborg Carlson of Arizona State University on *Group Portrait* complements Prof. Deschner's article. Where Prof. Deschner concludes that *Group Portrait* embodies in the heroine Böll's "new woman," Prof.

Carlson sees the novel as a summons to a new social order, one without class distinctions, socialistic in nature, and founded on the religious principles of the Gospels.

Concluding this issue on German literature are articles by Eva Friedman on Theodor Storm's novellas, Bodo Fritzen on irony in Dürrenmatt's *The Physicists* and *Romulus the Great*, and by Dennis McCort on Goethe's threnodies.

Robert C. Conard