



Our Local Poet: Annette von Droste-Hülshoff

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Annette von Droste-Hülshoff



Annette von Droste-Hülshoff is still one of the most important women in the history of German literature. She was one of the few women in the premodern period, who actively produced literature at a very high level. Her work was received exceptionally strong and she became well accepted as a role model especially for female writers. In addition, Droste Hülshoff's work and her life became subject of many scientific and literary products.

Born in 1797 in Hülshoff Castle near Muenster, she was the daughter of a German noble family. She was born prematurely and she was often sick. As an aristocrat, she had the privilege of being educated by a scholar. Professor Anton Matthias Sprickmann taught Annette von Droste-Hulshoff from 1812-1819. He recognized the linguistic talent of the young woman, so he promoted and encouraged her. Annette was also supported by her family, to whom she was connected closely all her life. Thus supported and motivated, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff focused on her literary work and was aware of her extraordinary abilities all life long. To name just a few of her many contacts, she was for example in personal and written contact with August Wilhelm Schlegel, the Brothers Grimm and the family of Schopenhauer.



After her father's death in 1826, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff left Hülshoff Castle together with her mother and her sister, and moved into the dower house Rüschaus because her brother Werner von Hülshoff had taken it over. Annette's sister, Jenny von Droste-Hulshoff, moved to Lake Constance into Meersburg Castle together with her husband Joseph von Laßberg.

A prominent role for Annette's career were her encounters with Christoph Bernhard Schlüter, a professor of philosophy in Münster, and her friendship with the journalist and author Levin Schücking from Meppen. After Schlüter had at first refused to read some manuscripts that Annette's mother had sent him, he later realized her talent and became her discoverer and mentor.



Schücking was the son of a female friend of Annette's. When this friend died early, Annette got Levin a job as a librarian at Meersburg Castle on Lake Constance, because she was feeling associated to him very closely. From 1841 onwards, Annette lived over there most of her time and understood Levin as a kind of inspiration. But she kept a good relationship with her mother and went back to visit to Münster. In 1848, poetess Annette von Droste-Hülshoff died at Meersburg Castle.



Annette von Droste-Hülshoff has left a small but profound work. Her short novel "Die Judenbuche" and her poems and ballads ("The Boy in the Bog") are known beyond the borders of Germany and are still read

and taught at German schools.

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