



**Dorothee Elmiger, *Aus der Zuckerfabrik***

**Hard cover, 272 pages, 23 €**

**Hanser Verlag**

This book is difficult to grasp. It doesn't tell a fictional or fictionalized story, which is why the question arises whether "Aus der Zuckerfabrik" (Out of the Sugar Factory) can be regarded as a novel at all. The publisher was prudent enough to refrain from designating a genre, which did not seem to bother the jury of the book award.

What is at stake? Hard to answer.

Maybe the question should be more like this: What is this book?

That's better.

At the beginning of "Aus der Zuckerfabrik," we meet a narrator ego who outlines the intention of the book: to write down the information, pictures, news, etc. that has been put into it over the past five years. With no intention of forming a story out of it. A collage, in other words, whose immanent references may or may not arise. "Aus der Zuckerfabrik" thus has a performative character: the book tells about its own genesis.

What to think of it? Hmm. I don't know either. While reading it, I felt a bit like I was listening to twelve-tone music. Whether you like it or not, the ear is constantly searching for major or minor chords and finds nothing to hold on to.

Critics say that Elmiger's mode of storytelling is 21<sup>st</sup>-century realism. This thought makes sense and accompanied me while I read "Aus der Zuckerfabrik." No matter what this book may or may not tell you, the approach can be appreciated: the attempt to reflect our time through the way we tell stories.

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