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| **Rifbjerg, Klaus (1931-2015)** |
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| Since the late 1950s, Klaus Rifbjerg has been a dominant figure of literary modernism in Denmark. His productivity is legendary (his bibliography includes more than 200 titles) and encompasses many genres: novels, short stories, poetry, drama (including film and TV), revue, travelogue, memoirs, children’s books, essays, and journalism. His style varies from complex and difficult modernist poetry to immediately intelligible realism. Not merely an author, Ribjerg was also editor of the literary magazine *Vindrosen* (1959-63, with Villy Sørensen), and chief editor at the publishing house Gyldendal (1984-91). Rifbjerg has been awarded the grand prize of the Danish Academy (1966), The Nordic Council's Literature Prize (1970), and the Swedish Academy Nordic Prize (1999). |
| Since the late 1950s, Klaus Rifbjerg has been a dominant figure of literary modernism in Denmark. His productivity is legendary (his bibliography includes more than 200 titles) and encompasses many genres: novels, short stories, poetry, drama (including film and TV), revue, travelogue, memoirs, children’s books, essays, and journalism. His style varies from complex and difficult modernist poetry to immediately intelligible realism. Not merely an author, Ribjerg was also editor of the literary magazine *Vindrosen* (1959-63, with Villy Sørensen), and chief editor at the publishing house Gyldendal (1984-91). Rifbjerg has been awarded the grand prize of the Danish Academy (1966), The Nordic Council's Literature Prize (1970), and the Swedish Academy Nordic Prize (1999).  Klaus Rifbjerg made his debut as a poet with *Under vejr med mig selv* (1956), a humorous collection of concise observations and impressions from his childhood. His first novel, *Den kroniske uskyld* (1958), was the turning point in his early career. Stylistically and thematically the book was influenced by J. D. Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye* (1951). Through his masterly description of the transition from childhood/adolescence to adulthood, Rifbjerg gave voice to the youth of his time. On its publication, *Den kroniske uskyld* provoked the general public by using common language and challenging sexual taboos. Today it is acknowledged as a modern classic. Rifbjerg’s next prose work, *Og andre historier* (1964),a collection of 23 short stories, was narratively more experimental (e.g. through shifts of perspective and unreliable narrators).  Rifbjerg established himself as a leading modernist poet with the publication of *Konfrontation* (1960). Applying a vast vocabulary and a daring syntax, Rifbjerg in this work lets his poetic persona ‘confront’ modern reality in an unbiased way. The cycle even inspired a wave of ‘confrontation poetry’ (*konfrontationspoesie*) in Danish literature. *Camouflage* (1961), a 92-page prose poem without punctuation, continued on the experimental path. This difficult text invites the reader to return to preconscious stages of development and the ‘pure’ perceptions of childhood.  Main themes in Rifbjerg’s works are the different phases of human life (including his personal past, explicitly in *Amagerdigte* [1965]), the journey, and the collapse of the ‘normality’ of bourgeois life and its social roles. His works and artistic interests are influenced by his early association with ‘culture radicalism’, a current which included criticism of religion, criticism of traditional bourgeois moral (and sexual) values, and pacifism. Judging from his recent books of essays (*Dag efter dag* [2011]; *Januar +* [2012]), many of these themes are still important to Rifbjerg. Selected WorksPoetry Under vejr med mig selv. En utidig selvbiografi (1956)  Konfrontation (1960)  Camouflage: et digt (1961)  Amagerdigte (1964)  Bjerget i himlen (1991)  Stederne (2011) Novels Den kroniske uskyld (1958)  Operaelskeren (1966)  Anna (jeg) Anna (1969)  Vejen af hvilken (1975) Short Stories Og andre historier (1964) Essays Facitlisten: en gammel snyders papirer (1995)  Dag efter Dag (2011)  Januar + (2012) Radio Interviews Radio interview, October 19th 2008 http://www.dr.dk/P1/Besoegstid/Udsendelser/2008/10/09132544.htm  *Portræt af en gammel snyder - Klaus Rifbjerg* – Part I-III  Part I: http://www.dr.dk/bonanza/search.htm?needle=rifbjerg&type=all&limit=120&assetId=58450  Part II: http://www.dr.dk/bonanza/search.htm?needle=rifbjerg&type=all&limit=120&assetId=58451  Part III: http://www.dr.dk/bonanza/search.htm?needle=rifbjerg&type=all&limit=120&assetId=58452 Translations *Selected poems*, translated by Nadia Christensen & Alexander Taylor. Willimantic: Curbstone Press (1984)  *Witness to the Future,* translated by Steven T. Murray (1987)  *War,* translated by Steven T. Murray & Tiina Nunnally (1995) |
| Further reading:  Klaus Rifbjerg reads from his poetry collection *Ens liv består af steder*:  (Information) |