



**Peter Huchel: A Literary Life in 20th-Century  
Germany (Britische und Irische Studien zur  
deutschen Sprache und Literatur / British and  
Irish Studies in German Language and Literature)**

*Stephen Parker*

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# Peter Huchel: A Literary Life in 20th-Century Germany (Britische und Irische Studien zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur / British and Irish Studies in German Language and Literature)

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The present study is the first full-length literary biography in any language devoted to Peter Huchel (1903-81), the German poet, radio author and editor of *Sinn und Form*. It draws upon a very substantial body of fresh archival material, much of it accessible only since 1989, and upon testimonies, including those of his first wife and their daughter. The study traces the course of Huchel's well-nigh unique progression through 20th-century German literary life, from the Weimar to the Federal Republic via the Third Reich, the Berlin of the years 1945-49 and the GDR. There, his legendary editorship of *Sinn und Form* in the 1950s lent him a unique mediating position between writers from East and West, until the journal's 'all-German' approach was deemed antagonistic to SED policy. For all the *cause célèbre* of Huchel's conflict with the SED, key elements of his career have hitherto been obscured by the spell of silence that the charismatic Huchel cast over much of his life and by a historiography uncertain in the evaluation of the development of German culture within the two dictatorships. A fresh appreciation of Huchel's achievements emerges from the detailed examination of his life and work in relation to the notoriously volatile social and historical conditions of his age.

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