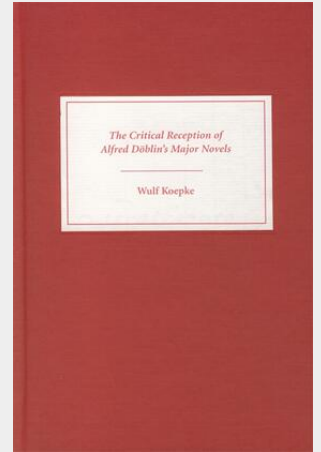


Koepke

## The Critical Reception of Alfred Döblin's Major Novels

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The first thorough study in English of the reception of Döblin's novels, written by one of the foremost Döblin scholars. Alfred Döblin (1878-1957) is one of the major German writers of the twentieth century. His experimental, ever-changing, avant-garde style kept both readers and critics off guard, and although he won the acclaim of critics and had a clear impact on German writers after the Second World War (Günter Grass called him "my teacher"), he is still largely unknown to the reading public, and under-researched by literary scholars. He was a prolific writer, with thirteen novels alongside a great many other shorter fiction works and non-fiction writings to his credit, and yet, paradoxically, he is known to a larger public as the author of only one book, the 1929 novel Berlin Alexanderplatz, which sold more copies in the first weeks of publication than all his previous novels combined. Berlin Alexanderplatz is known for its depiction of the criminal underground of Berlin and a montage and stream-of-consciousness technique comparable to James Joyce's Ulysses; it became one of the best-known big-city novels of the century and has remained Döblin's one enduring popular success. Döblin was forced into exile in 1933, and the works he wrote in exile were neglected by critics for decades. Now epic works like Amazonas, November 1918, and Hamlet, Oder die lange Nacht nimmt ein Ende are finding a fairer critical evaluation. Wulf Koepke tackles the paradox of Döblin the leading but neglected avant-gardist by analysis of contemporary and later criticism, both journalistic and academic, always taking into account the historical context in which it appeared. Wulf Koepke is Professor Emeritus at Texas A&M University.



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