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Gervinus to the Middle of the Nineteenth Century -- From the Middle of the Nineteenth Century to Scherer (1883) -- The End of the Nineteenth Century and the Beginning of the Twentieth Century -- Titles, Periodization, and the Literary Canon -- The Most Successful Histories of German Literature and Translations into Other Languages -- Foreign Histories of German Literature: French -- Foreign Histories of German Literature: English Language Areas (UK, USA) -- Foreign Histories of German Literature: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland -- An Overview -- Conclusion -- Bibliography -- Index

Sommario/riassunto

Batts analyses the kinds of predisposition, or bias, displayed by the authors of these works, and accounts for the persistence of certain biases over a long period of time. Histories of German literature published in other western European countries, Britain, and North America are also evaluated to determine to what extent, if any, a particular (i.e., non-German) attitude towards German literature is characteristic of a given country. The recognition of personal, religious, national, and other biases is important since the stereotypical image of the people of a given country is strongly influenced by the manner in which their literature is portrayed. Batts concludes that the history of German literature as it developed in the nineteenth century has doubly distorted history. The selection of works for inclusion in the histories on subjective grounds of "quality" conceals the fact that other, "inferior," works may in their time have had a far greater impact. As well, the authors of the histories fail to discuss those works from the past that are still being read.
