

*F*OCUS  
ON GERMAN STUDIES

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BOOK REVIEWS

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MAXIM BILLER. *Liebe heute*. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2007. 197 pp. € 18,90.

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**N**ie zuvor begegnet uns Liebe zur gleichen Zeit äußerst einfach und kompliziert wie in Maxim Billers Kurzgeschichtensammlung *Liebe heute*. Einfach – denn Liebe in Billers Kurzgeschichten entsteht und existiert fast ohne jeglichen Grund. Kompliziert – da sie in zahlreichen Gestalten zum Ausdruck kommt und keinen Regeln der Logik und Vernunft folgt.

In 27 Skizzen gelingt es Biller, einen vielumfassenden Einblick in das allgegenwärtig faszinierende Phänomen der Liebe in einer modernen Welt zu schaffen. Man trifft in *Liebe heute* auf erfolgreiche, meistens unglückliche Frauen und Männer, die ständig versuchen miteinander auszukommen, und trotz allem ohne Erfolg und meistens voller Enttäuschung von einander Abschied nehmen. Oft wird dieser Abschied schon am Anfang der Beziehungen antizipiert, während die Beziehungen eher als Generalprobe für die endgültige Trennung erscheinen. Was aus Billers Geschichten aber am häufigsten hervorgeht, ist die Unfähigkeit der Partner sich gegenseitig zu verstehen, ihre Gefühle offen auszudrücken, und letztendlich miteinander glücklich zu sein. *Liebe heute* könnte fast mit einer einzigen Formel bezeichnet werden: „eine Liebesgeschichte [...] von einer Frau, die nicht kann, obwohl sie will, und von einem Mann, der will, obwohl die Frau nicht kann“ (47). Darüber hinaus nehmen Billers Liebhaber freiwillig entweder die Rolle des Opfers oder des Täters ein, und tauschen diese Rollen ständig untereinander aus. Häufig ist es aber auch der verpasste Augenblick, an dem die Liebe scheitert – wie Biller dies in „Lieber Arthur“ pointiert ausdrückt: „Zuerst wollte ich nicht, dann wollte sie nicht“ (104), aber die Problematik liegt vor allem im Zustand des dauernden Missverstehens begründet. Dies wird in „80 Zentimeter schlechte Laune“ wohl am besten dargestellt: „Sie war in Itai verliebt, aber er nicht in sie. Er wußte, daß er nicht in sie verliebt war, aber sie wußte es nicht. . . .“ (124).

*Liebe heute* bietet auch zugleich einen Einblick in den multikulturellen und globalisierten Alltag der heutigen Welt. Biller wählt fast ausschließlich urbanes Milieu für seine Liebesgeschichten. Seine Mini-Dramen spielen in mehreren Städten Europas, aber auch Israel und die USA werden zur Kulisse. Die moderne Großstadt eignet sich besonders als Schauplatz, vor allem deshalb, weil sie als der

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Ursprungsort von zahlreichen Problemen – Entfremdung, Mangel an Kommunikation und dem sogenannten Cocooning – des zeitgenössischen Menschen gilt. Wie in seinen Romanen, kommen bei Biller vor allem Plätze vor, die mit seiner eigenen Biographie und seinem kulturellen Hintergrund verbunden sind – Prag, Berlin und Tel Aviv. Dementsprechend sind auch mehrere Charaktere deutsch- oder europäisch-jüdischer Herkunft.

Auch wenn bei Billers Helden – oder vielmehr Anti-Helden – von keiner tiefen Charakterisierung die Rede sein kann, was ebenso auf ein Spezifikum dieser Gattung hinweist, sind die Situationen voller Konflikte und ausgesprochen vielschichtig. Manche Kurzgeschichten, wie zum Beispiel „Der Brief von Oz“ und „Die Selbstmörder“ weisen sogar auf eine zweisträngige Struktur hin. Zeitlich linear gestaltete Kurzgeschichten kommen eher selten bei Biller vor, da er oft und gerne den Rückblick als erzählendes Stilmittel einsetzt. In mehreren Geschichten wird das private Leben sogar mit aktuellen politischen Ereignissen, sowie dem Krieg im Irak, dem Konflikt in Palästina und Israel, verbunden und konfrontiert. Daher finden wir in *Liebe heute* Anschläge in Tel Aviv, Vergewaltigungsoffer aus dem Balkankrieg oder Fernsehausschnitte, die über den Irak-Krieg berichten.

Die in der zeitgenössischen Literatur viel diskutierte Auseinandersetzung mit der deutschen NS-Vergangenheit und vor allem das Leben der Juden im heutigen Deutschland werden von Biller als deutsch-jüdischem Autor absichtlich nicht gemieden. In seinen Geschichten kommen die Schwierigkeiten des gemeinsamen Lebens und die Vorurteile vor, die noch immer auf beiden Seiten des kulturellen Spektrums vorhanden sind. Eine Art Verbot sogar wird in der Kurzgeschichte „Mein Name war Singer“ ausgedrückt: „Juden sollten nicht das Glück bei den Nichtjuden suchen“ (43); aber in *Liebe heute* gibt es auch Nichtjuden, die konvertieren, wie das in „Melody“ der Fall ist. Mehrmals ist der Erzähler selbst Autor, und zwar „ein moderner jüdischer Schriftsteller, der Deutsch schreibt“ (43). Der Leser erkennt in diesem fiktiven Schriftsteller, dem Ich-Erzähler häufig Biller selbst oder findet Anspielungen auf seine Werke. In „Ziggy Stardust“ redet der Erzähler von einem Buch, das „sofort wieder verboten wurde“ (84). Wenn auch die Thematik dieses fiktiven Buches völlig anders ist als in Billers verbotenen Roman *Esra* sind die Parallelen zwischen Fiktion und Biografie schwer zu übersehen. Die Kurzgeschichte „Avivas Rücken“ mit der Vater-Tochter-Beziehung erinnert wiederum eindeutig an Billers Roman *Die Tochter*.

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Letztendlich scheint Biller sich mit seinen kargen und manchmal sogar eliptischen Sätzen – trotz komplexer Situationen, die uns aus seinen Romanen bekannt sind – als erfolgreicher Kurzgeschichtenautor zu etablieren. Seine Geschichten sind die mannigfaltige Darstellung der Liebe aus der Sicht eines Autors, der das moderne multikulturelle Milieu mit all seinen Vorteilen und Schwierigkeiten nicht übersieht, sondern es bewusst in seine kurzen Erzählungen fesselnd integriert.

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ROLAND BORGARDS: *Poetik des Schmerzes: Physiologie und Literatur von Brockes bis Büchner*. München, Wilhelm Fink: 2007. 501pp. €59

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Situated at the crossroads of biology and culture, pain has been a fascinating if elusive theme of a series of investigations, to which this incisive and illuminating cultural history of the eighteenth century proves to be a worthy addition. Borgards's study integrates a broad range of material into an ambitious and complex argument that impresses through both its extensive scope and the depth of its analysis. Reintroducing pain into the cultural history of the eighteenth century, the book illustrates convincingly how pain evolved from a mere external disturbance in the mechanistic body to not only one of its key vital processes, but also to the originating point of all life and the productive foundation of all human culture by the end of the century. Throughout the work, the author seeks the structuring principles of an order of knowledge in the Foucauldian vein, arguing for poietic moves in natural science and a furthering of knowledge within literature. Yet no matter how sophisticated his book's greater framework may be, Borgards remains safely, perhaps all too safely, within the themes and methods of Foucauldian investigation throughout the study. The book's real strength therefore lies not as much in its master narrative as in its insightful and at times thoroughly witty interpretations of individual works.

The book's sound architectonics greatly advances its intricate argument. A detailed analysis of Albrecht Haller's famous lecture *Abhandlung über die reizbaren und empfindlichen Teile des menschlichen Leibes* commences the series of deft and dense readings. Situated in the first section of the book, this reading lays out in an exemplary fashion the benefits of the book's theme and method that are discussed in the

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adjacent introductory chapters. Borgards reads Haller's text as an intermediary step between two epistemological paradigms of pain: while moving within the ideas and structures of the Classical representation logic, Haller revolutionizes physiological inquiry within the mechanistic framework by being unrelentingly focused on the production and interpretation of empiric evidence. Haller's experiments are, however, not merely descriptive but productive; the scientific fact of sensible and irritable fibers within the human body are not independent of the context of Haller's experiments. Borgards recovers key poietic moves within the path-breaking text, including its foundational analogy between man and animal, to reveal the productive logic of this experimental system.

The chapters grouped under the heading *Positionen des Schmerzes* focus on the knowledge of pain in the Classical and the modern epistemes. Investigating physiological texts from Descartes to Haller, Borgards shows that all rivaling streams of pre-modern physiology (mechanistic and animistic) relegate pain to a defensive, marginal position and are therefore able to deliver a full description of the human body without assigning it a constitutive function. Pain's functionalization in this vein is naturally not restricted to early eighteenth-century natural philosophy but remains palpable across disciplines. Borgards's skillful reading of Brockes's lyric cycle, *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott*, brings to light a physico-theological relativization of pain—localizable both in its themes and its formal features. In stark contrast to the pre-modern episteme stands the new understanding of pain as exemplified by a reading of Goethe's *Prometheus*. Instead of a chronological order, in Goethe's work there is a dynamic mediation of past and future through the present moment: pain, in contrast to the Baroque understanding, is not a transitional point to the transcendental realm but rather a means of separation between the heavens and the earth; pain redoubles inasmuch as it is both at the originating point of culture as well as the product of cultural performances; and, finally, Prometheus's concrete physical pain is his primary ground for identification with humans. The narrative productivity of this new knowledge of pain is demonstrated in Brentano's *Godwi*: simultaneously referencing and furthering contemporary knowledge of pain, the novel's point of origin turns out to be (physiological) pain (a kick into a table leg and a painting by Tischbein), and its story and characters are products of the oral and written communication of pain.

The next section of the book, *Zeichen, Versuche, Geschichte*, contains what Borgards humbly terms "a possible history of pain" in the eighteenth century with special attention to the semiotics of pain. Simultaneous with anthropological appreciation of pain is, after all, a

destabilization of the pain sign, an alteration of greatest consequence to language. Casting his interpretive net even wider, Borgards elaborates the transformation of knowledge established by the book's earlier sections by adding yet another discipline--jurisprudence--to the book's already stupendous erudition. Although the study continues to be interspersed with summaries and recapitulations of the argument to help the reader along its course, it is also accompanied by self-reflective moves and at times pursues so many lines of argument at once that it is easy to lose sight of just how these details fit together. Moving step by step along the lines of knowledge transformation, the first part of this section is dedicated to the Classical representation logic of pain. The next stage, *Experimentallogik* of pain, traces the disappearance of the reliability and transparency of the pain sign in the Classical era, seen as part and parcel of a broader transformation within communication history. In a surprising move, Borgards turns to unfold this process in a skillful reading of Lessing's *Miß Sara Sampson*, omitting altogether a key aesthetic debate of the time of which Lessing was a participant: Laokoon. The final, third step in Borgards's possible history is the *Fiktionslogik des Schmerzes*, a set of chapters focusing on multidisciplinary debates toward the end of the eighteenth century concerning justifications of torture, the painfulness of decapitation, and the practice of capital punishment. In a particularly striking chapter, *Das Wissen vom Enthauptungsschmerz*, Borgards demonstrates persuasively how a black hole in medical knowledge, or as he terms it, a "radikales Nicht-Wissen," becomes a fecund point for fiction. The final chapters, *Über eine Wissensgeschichte des Schmerzes vom späten 17. bis zum frühen 19. Jahrhundert und wie sie sich in Büchners Lenz Situiert lässt*, offer an elegant supplementary conclusion to this wide-ranging, detailed, and enormously dense investigation, motioning as they do toward several components of a history of pain that could fruitfully be pursued.

This cultural history of pain is part of the most sophisticated and vibrant stream of culture studies initiated by Joseph Vogl and will undoubtedly be of considerable worth to both historians and literary scholars of the eighteenth century. Borgards's work complements existing scholarship by focusing on literature as a productive realm and delivers an intellectually ambitious, thoroughly convincing, and illuminating addition to this particular branch of cultural studies. Dense but enlightening, Borgards's study delivers novel and inspiring interpretations of both canonical and lesser-known works in literature and physiology.

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MARION E. P. DE RAS. *Body, Femininity, and Nationalism: Girls in the German Youth Movement 1900-1934*. New York: Routledge, 2008. 243 pp. \$125.00.

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Marion E. P. de Ras's study, a revised and translated version of her dissertation *Körper, Eros und weibliche Kultur* (1988), attempts to address a gap in the scholarly discourse surrounding the free German youth movement in the first third of the twentieth century by documenting girls' participation in, as well as their separation from, youth organizations between 1900 and 1934. While the lives of women and their role in the Third Reich have been explored in such works as Claudia Koonz's *Mothers in the Fatherland* (1986) and Anna Maria Sigmund's *Die Frauen der Nazis* (2005), only limited attention has been paid to girls' participation in youth organizations and how girls conceived of their role in the formation and development of the German nation at the turn of the century.

In order to construct a detailed image of young women's influence over the development of the German youth movement, de Ras examines an extensive amount of previously unexplored primary material including official correspondence between youth organizations, minutes from annual organization meetings, and the personal journals, diaries, and letters of group members. In her investigation into the role of girls in the free German youth movement, de Ras focuses her attention on the following organizations: the Alt Wandervogel (AWV), the EV Wandervogel, the Deutsche Freischar, the Deutscher Mädchen Wanderbund (DMWB), the Jung Wandervogel (JWV), the female settlements at Schwarzerden and Loheland, and lastly the Jungnationaler Bund (Junabu). The author limits her study to the years leading up to National Socialism in an attempt to answer the question whether and to what extent the formation of a girl's youth movement carried "pre-fascist tendencies" (12).

Addressing the absence of scholarship concerning girls in the free German youth movement, de Ras dedicates Chapters One through Three to exploring the social, political, and historical discourses that informed the emergence and direction of the youth organizations. In her first chapter de Ras cites the birth of the Wandervogel movement as a reaction against Wilhelmenian Germany; furthermore, she argues that the evolution of the organization is inextricably bound with the industrialization of the modern state, the bourgeois women's movement,

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and lastly the growing distinction between culture versus civilization and community versus society.

The first two chapters dissect the role of gender, sexuality, and the body in the structure and policies of the youth organizations. De Ras documents and deconstructs the theories often employed by social theorists and male Wandervogel members to reinforce the gender hierarchy and to limit, and even to exclude, the participation of girls and young women in the youth movement—what de Ras dubs the “girls’ question.” However, the advent of World War I and the subsequent departure of men to the front created the opportunity for women to rise within the organizations and to prove their capabilities as leaders. Nevertheless, this increased visibility and responsibility of women in the youth movement was short-lived as men returned from war and resumed their positions of power within the organizations, which lead the “girls’ question” to be raised and debated once again. More than any other factor, de Ras cites WWI as pivotal in the creation of opportunities for young women to assert themselves in the youth movement. The disapproval expressed by newly-returned male Wandervogel members led to an increased desire among many young women to form autonomous girls’ organizations, including the establishment of female communities and a “female culture,” which found expression in the literary works and figures by female authors such as Lely Kempin and Gertrud Prellwitz.

Inherent to the discussions about the fate of mixed-gender or same-sex youth organizations was a focus on the body. In Chapter Three de Ras offers insight into the emerging body culture, its philosophers, and its impact on the practices and ideas of the individual youth groups. The growing emphasis on the “natural” body, an extension of the original motivation of the Wandervogel to return to Nature and the outdoors, celebrated the training and refinement of the human form through rigorous movements and was not limited to the boys’ organizations. Young women also turned to activities such as gymnastics (*Turnen*) and rhythmic dance, practiced nudism (*Freikörperkultur*), and supported clothing reforms that allowed the body to move more freely and naturally. De Ras’s analysis draws a clear parallel between the cult of the natural, “pure” body in the youth movement to the rise of more menacing issues of “racial hygiene” and anti-Semitism within several of the youth organizations during the rise of National Socialism.

The final four chapters are dedicated to in-depth descriptions of the individual youth organizations and serve as a roadmap for the

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numerous coalitions of and splintering off from groups based almost exclusively on the “girls’ question.” De Ras isolates an ambiguous model of femininity that emerges from the formation of the various female groups and which incorporated what were considered to be seemingly conflicting characteristics of strength and passivity at that time. Rather than borrowing models from the bourgeois women’s movement, de Ras argues that girls from these organizations combined attributes embodied by imposing mythic figures such as Brunhilde and Germania, contemporary images of the modern, independent woman, and the conservative image of the nurturing mother, in order to construct this new model of femininity. It is this ambiguity and combination of traditionally masculine and feminine characteristics that de Ras views as contributing to the conflict surrounding girls’ participation in the youth movement. Indeed, de Ras cites the issue of gender as the driving force behind the continuation of the youth movement (189) and the schisms that led to the formation of autonomous female youth organizations.

De Ras’s analysis reveals that the youth groups under consideration in this study can be categorized as neither radical nor revolutionary; on the contrary, she argues that regardless of whether the girls’ organizations identified themselves either with leftist or right-wing ideologies, they tended to uphold and even reinforce the prevailing conservative image of femininity as inherently bound to Nature, motherhood, and the private sphere. As to the question of whether the girls in the youth movement were “forerunners to Nazism” and possessed pre-fascist tendencies, de Ras concludes that despite general claims to political independence, the final wave of the girls’ movement (1928-1934) marked a departure from the first two waves (1905-1918 and 1918-1928) by demonstrating a more politically active group of “radical nationalist girls’ leagues” (187) who were engaged in discussion about issues of nationalism and anti-Semitism.

Though at times de Ras’s argument is obscured by misplaced punctuation, repetition of words, and almost word-for-word repetition of statements, despite these distractions her study presents new and very valuable insight into girls’ participation in the youth movement and their construction of a “girls’ culture” in the first three decades of the twentieth century; furthermore, her project contributes to a better understanding of how young women’s participation in the youth movement later influenced women’s role in the construction of German nationalism under the National Socialists.

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GEORG DÖRR. *Muttermythos und Herrschaftsmythos: Zur Dialektik der Aufklärung um die Jahrhundertwende bei den Kosmikern, Stefan George und in der Frankfurter Schule*. Würzburg, Germany: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007. 380 pp. €48,80.

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This book explores the joint reception of Johann Jakob Bachofen and Friedrich Nietzsche in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a reception characterized, according to the author, by a dialectic between the titular *Muttermythos* and *Herrschaftsmythos*. Put another way, Georg Dörr's study charts the vagaries of the conceptual pair Dionysian/Apollonian in the wake of Nietzsche and Bachofen. Dörr first lays out the configuration Bachofen-Nietzsche, which inaugurates the myth of an antique matriarchate brought to heel by a principle of domination, then traces the tangled reception of this constellation through thinkers on both the reactionary side of the spectrum (in particular Ludwig Klages, Alfred Schuler, Stefan George and Ludwig Derleth) and on the Marxist side (the Frankfurt School, and Walter Benjamin). It is precisely this ideological range that Dörr wants to explain: why could the reactionary neo-paganism of the turn of the century, the Marxist critics of the 30s and 40s, and modern-day feminism all draw on the same strange philosopheme?

It was Bachofen who first introduced the idea of an original matriarchate in his 1861 book on *Das Mutterrecht*. Dörr is interested only in those thinkers who attempt to combine Bachofen's narrative with the Nietzschean critique of culture (rather than, say the nineteenth-century reception of Bachofen independent of Nietzsche, such as Engels, for example), basically grafting Bachofen's terminology onto the historical narrative of the "Socratic" transition from Dionysian to Apollonian laid out in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* (Bachofen draws on the same pair of concepts, but to different ends). Dörr acknowledges immediately that this is of course a flagrant misreading of Nietzsche, and that Bachofen's archeology of the matriarchate in no way celebrates the original "Dionysian" feminine rule whose existence it postulates. Nevertheless, when Karl Wolfskehl first introduced Ludwig Klages to Bachofen's work, and when Klages eventually inspired Benjamin's reading, the premises were decidedly post-Nietzschean.

Somewhat puzzlingly, Dörr presents the *Kosmiker's* legacy in the Frankfurt School before actually delving into the *Kosmikerkreis* itself. The reason for this seems to lie in the fact that with Wolfskehl's circle two

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new aspects entered into the reception of Bachofen and Nietzsche: homoeroticism and community. The latter was if anything absolutized in the George-circle's Maximin-cult, which Dörr, much like the Thomas Karlauf's recent biography of George, construes as a response to the challenges posed by the *Kosmiker*-program. However, whereas the *Kosmikerkreis* (in particular Klages) undertook to rescue the Dionysian from Apollinian encroachment, the Maximin-cult revolved around a male eroticism founded on the supercession or domination of the Dionysian. According to Dörr, the repression of the maternal that animates this *Herrschaftsmythos* is of one piece with the political utopia of the *circle* or *order*, an emphatically homoerotic category somewhere between the family and the community.

Like much recent scholarship on George, Dörr is exceptionally adept at cutting through generations of (self-)mystification on the part of George and his disciples, and manages to contextualize the different stages of his work quite effectively. And unlike Manfred Frank's *Gott im Exil*, for example, Dörr's book is attuned to the nuances that distinguish the mysticism of the cosmos and the inner-wordly transcendence of the George-circle—in other words the fact that George's homoerotic *Bund* was explicitly conceived as an Apollonian figure (was, to use Dörr's terminology, a thing of *Herrschaftsmythos*)—which sheds an interesting light on the homoerotic politics of the early nationalists in Germany.

Dörr's book suffers from a problem common to many German books that begin life as (barely) adapted dissertations or *Habilitationsschriften*: a sprawling encyclopedism, where stringent argumentation is called for, and an inability to let go of a tangent simply because it distracts from the matter at hand. As a result, the narrative and argumentative thrusts wane at several vital junctures, as the author pauses to address questions like whether the *Kosmiker* are proto-fascists – interesting and important, to be sure, but not necessary in the general flow of the argument. The book is also relentless in including (often without laying out in any detail) scholarly arguments around the George-circle or the *Kosmiker*, which are little more than a *Literaturüberblick* cunningly interspersed into the main text, and which prove quite intrusive. Particularly distracting is the book's organizational system – labeling a section “8.4.3” may once have been quite helpful in guiding Dörr's *Doktorvater* through the text, but as the reader of a book one expects, well, a book, not a spreadsheet.

Thankfully, however, even if the book's argument and organization betray its origins as a German *Habilitationsschrift*, it must have been an exceptionally well-written one. Dörr's style is extremely

readable throughout, and the previously mentioned tangents are much less distracting than they could have been, thanks to the author's engaging and lucid prose. The two methodological introductions keep the readers oriented in the dizzying and shifting terrain. Dörr quotes extensively but judiciously and is exemplary in contextualizing the texts he addresses. The sections on Benjamin's reception of the constellation Klages-George show Dörr very familiar with current scholarship on the origins of the Frankfurt School, and he teases out this strange trajectory with great clarity.

Overall, there is little to criticize about Dörr's excellent study, short of a few cosmetic organizational issues. This book is a welcome addition to the intellectual history of the sexual and national politics of fin-de-siècle avant-gardes. Although it is published in a series dedicated to *Literaturwissenschaft*, Dörr's book addresses mainly questions of intellectual history – his readings of George, for instance, do not go particularly far beyond, for instance, Karlauf's recent biography of the poet. But George's historical position is of course interesting enough – as Manfred Riedel made clear last year in his *Das geheime Deutschland*. In the English-speaking world in particular, where the *Kosmikerkreis* remains still rather underexplored (short of a few passages in Robert Norton's *Secret Germany*), Dörr's book constitutes a much-needed addition to the scholarly literature. Researchers interested in the Frankfurt School, too, should find Dörr's book a boon, since it traces an interesting lineage (from Klages via Benjamin to Adorno and Horkheimer), that emphasizes the often underacknowledged fact that mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Marxism drew on a range of conservative thinkers, adapting them for their own purposes.

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GABRIELE DÜRBECK. *Stereotype Paradiese: Ozeanismus in der deutschen Südseeliteratur 1815-1914*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2007. 388 pp. € 76.00.

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As much as *Stereotype Paradiese* is about the South Sea literature written by various journalists, scientists, artists, and novelists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, its greater focus concerns the representation and interpretation of foreign cultures. The book's aim is to expand the analytical framework of scholars such as Edward W. Said regarding Orientalism and the understanding of foreign

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cultures and “otherness” in general. While Dürbeck agrees with Said’s analysis that literary portrayals of non-Western societies tend to be, historically, simply photo-negatives of Western cultures and characteristics, Dürbeck believes this assessment is too narrow for the topic of “Ozeanismus” and the German colonial experience with the South Sea Islands. Dürbeck’s aim is not so much a critique of colonial power as it is a historical reconstruction of how the “other” of the South Seas was understood. Her examination of the function of the various stereotypes draws, in contrast to Said, from the non-canonical literary portrayals of the non-Western South Sea peoples, and specifically from those within the German context. The purpose of the various representations of the South Sea cannot be fully explained in terms of a general pro-colonial, Western or national motivation as is presented by Said. Rather the production of German stereotypes of the “other” contains many ambivalent and contradictory motivations, which need to be understood if we are to have an accurate assessment of the German colonial experience.

The book is organized around the South Sea stereotypes found in the literary genres of travel reports, memoirs, magazines, newspapers, and popular adventure novels. Regarding the island peoples, Dürbeck examines two predominant myths or stereotypes, which recur in these various literary forms: the image of the noble and ignoble savage. Both of these images or myths remain constant throughout this period of exploration and discovery (1815-1914), yet their functions and roles change. In contrast to the existing, but still-growing, scholarship on German South Sea colonialism, Dürbeck argues that the use of stereotypes did not change based on a natural trajectory of the social, economic and political development of the young German nation, nor was there a single philosophy (i.e. colonial interpretations of Darwinism) which spawned the European branding of the South Sea peoples. Certainly the emergence of the Wilhelminian Empire influenced the stereotypes of the South Sea cultures and motivated the relations of Germany with the islands, but Dürbeck contends that the stereotypes cannot be fixed to definite phases of Germany’s history, as Bernd Thum and Elizabeth Lawn-Thum (‘Kulture Programme’ und ‘Kulturthemen’) maintain. Ambivalence defined the various uses of the stereotypes of South Sea peoples. This ambivalence indicates a method of understanding the “other,” which was chiefly Eurocentric, but it was a Eurcentricity which varied with the different social groups who came in contact with the South Sea cultures

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The two main paradigms emerging in the literature on the South Sea cultures are Rousseauian beliefs in an earthly paradise and various forms of Darwinian utilitarianism. Both paradigms appear through the Enlightenment-driven cause to educate the middle-class German public in terms of morality and anthropology, as well as amuse and entertain a popular readership. The result of these two motivating philosophies was often a contradictory portrayal of the South Sea peoples. The “savages” could be understood simultaneously as noble and ignoble, civilized and uncivilized depending on the author and the social group which the author represented. Positive attributes of hospitality, friendliness, physical strength and beauty could be quickly juxtaposed with reminders that the South Sea peoples were uncivilized, immoral, head-hunters, cannibals, and polygamists if such a portrayal served the interests of the reporter better. The romanticized portrayals of the virtuous, noble savage stem from the Rousseauian critique of Western civilization and the search for a more primitive, natural existence. The travel reports and memoirs, discussed in the first two sections of the book, of men such as Adelbert von Chamisso (1781-1838) engaged the middle-class German with exotic portrayals of the Hawaiian Islands or Tahiti. Chamisso’s accounts of his experiences in the South Seas leads the reader to hope for a recovery of a kind of Edenic Golden Age and the natural morality so obviously inherent in the European-friendly natives. Appealing to the ideals of a universal and egalitarian Humanism, Chamisso was a proponent of a mutually beneficial relationship between the South Sea cultures and Europeans.

The same stereotypes of an exotic paradise changed its function in the later half of the nineteenth century as German nationalism developed alongside German colonialism and economic expansion. Writers such as Karl Sempers began to portray the South Seas not in terms of the Rousseauian hopes for an alternative to artificial European civilization, but in terms of Darwinian justifications for German involvement in the primitive, underdeveloped islands. No sooner were the natives praised for their exotic qualities and natural virtues than their lifestyles were criticized as immoral, decadent and in need of European intervention and civilization. The natives were often seen as biologically and technologically inferior. Such a view justified the civilizing, progressive presence of the German colonizers, missionaries, and cultural reformers.

The sort of oscillation that occurs between the stereotypes of the South Sea peoples as exotic, children of nature, and the more hostile portrayals of the various peoples as cannibals and head-hunters

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characterized by superstition and human-sacrifice rituals was also typical in the magazines and journals of the time period, which Dürbeck addresses in the third section of her study. *Globus: Illustrierte Zeitschrift für Länder und Völkerkunde* (1862-1910) was a journal which included not only articles but drawings and photographs of the South Sea Islands and their inhabitants. Not unlike *National Geographic* in style, *Globus* had, among other German journals and magazines, an almost unswerving dedication to promoting German colonization in the South Seas, in addition to the standard commitment to educating as well as entertaining the growing middle-class public. Again, favoring German colonialism, the violent characteristics of the “unedlen Wilden” were at times sympathetically attributed to the harsh colonial practices of the French and the British. Germany attempted to compete with Great Britain and France not only economically, but morally as well by offering a “Kolonialismus mit menschlichem Antlitz” (217). Thus, *Globus* featured various reports examining the degree to which different peoples could be reformed, civilized and assimilated into European culture.

The sea-adventure novels from the time period, the last literary genre which Dürbeck examines, exhibited similar portrayals of the South Sea peoples as both noble savages and ignoble savages, and to a certain degree novelists like Friedrich Gerstäcker were more aware of the stereotypes as limited, even faulty representations of the South Sea natives. In his novel *Tahiti* (1854), Gerstäcker provides a criticism of the French and English missionary movements and colonial practices seeking to suppress the indigenous cultural traditions. *Tahiti* is in part a plea for the allowance of the native cultures to flourish, while simultaneously harkening back to Rousseauian ideals of the island paradise as an alternative for Western civilization. This sort of ironic portrayal of the South Seas as a refuge for Europeans and simultaneously as a place needing freedom from European influence embodies the trends in the literature of this time period without attempting to reconcile the inherent contradictions. In acknowledging the ambivalence of the South Sea stereotypes, Gerstäcker was one of the few who attempted deal with the foreign cultures in a self-questioning manner.

Dürbeck’s in-depth look at German literature concerning South Sea colonization and exploration, and the function of the various stereotypes used to portray those “other” cultures, brings to light popular German texts which have largely been ignored in the postcolonial discourse. Such a look at these non-canonical works as well

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as the function of these colonial images places a sociological emphasis on the literary scholarship for this time period. Rather than thematically summarizing the travel texts, adventure novels, and scientific journals in terms of a general critique of colonial powers and a deconstruction of the Western influence on the South Sea cultures, Dürbeck probes deeper into the fabric of the German mindset and motives which inspired such portrayals of the noble and ignoble savage. She is concerned with the historical reconstruction of German perceptions of the South Sea “other” within this hundred-year period. Such attention given to the growing area of “Ozeanismus” research will not only provide new perspectives for examining the canonical, German colonial literature, but Dürbeck’s focus on the sociological and historical underpinnings of the texts and images should expand and refine the discourse concerning Western interactions with Oriental and other non-Western cultures, and provide a broader critical framework for understanding intercultural relations in the future.

*Wes Jackson, University of Cincinnati*

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JULIA FRANCK. *Die Mittagsfrau*. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2007. 430 pp. € 19,90.

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**H**ow can a mother abandon her child? This is the central question in Julia Franck’s new novel, *Die Mittagsfrau*, for which she was awarded the Deutscher Buchpreis in October 2007. The novel opens with a prolog, narrated by young Peter. Scared of bombs and haunted by a ghostly hand that might be hiding under the bed, Peter clings to his mother, who is his only constant, his only protection in this strange childhood. The more intensely Peter clings, the more persistently his mother avoids his grasp. When they reach the train station in Pasewalk, with the intent to make their way to Berlin, Peter’s mother tells him to wait for her. She will be right back, she will get train tickets and maybe find food. In a heartbreaking glimpse into Peter’s consciousness, he explains: “er wollte seiner Mutter suchen helfen, überhaupt helfen wollte er ihr, er öffnete den Mund, aber sie duldeten keinen Widerspruch, sie drehte sich um und tauchte in der Menschenmenge unter” (27). Peter loses sight of her and waits patiently with his suitcase for her to return.

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The body of the novel tells, in three sections, the story of Helene. Growing up in the Lausitz with her beloved sister Martha and their friend Leontine, Helene suffers the injustice of having been born fiercely smart in an age of limited—but increasing—opportunities for women. She must struggle against her family's dependence on her, especially after her father dies from wounds suffered in the First World War. She must dodge the sharp and bitter words flung at her by her mother, who never recovers from losing four sons. Instead, Helene's mother recedes into the shadows of her room and rejects—sometimes violently—those who love her and would be loved by her. When the death of her father and the affection of an eccentric aunt enable Helene and Martha to move to Berlin, they embark on a period of decadence and indulgence. This section of the novel is aptly titled “Kein schönerer Augenblick als dieser.” And, as the title promises, Helene's life quickly devolves into tragedy after this high point. When her fiancé Carl dies in a traffic accident, Helene begins to withdraw from life. Each subsequent blow—her separation from her sister, the need to repress her Jewish identity, and her marriage to an abusive Nazi-supporter—causes Helene to retreat further into the shadows of silence. By the end of the novel, even if the reader can not forgive Helene's choice to abandon Peter, the reader can understand why she felt the need to do it.

Franck's lyrical prose at once renders the beautiful all the more exquisite, and the ugly all the more painful. Although *Die Mittagsfrau*, Franck's fifth major publication and fourth novel, is set in time for the most part before 1945, its language is timeless. As with her previous publications, Franck's writing style allows the reader the sensory experience of the time and place; that is, the reader learns not only what is happening and why, but how the birds sang, what the wind smelled like, how the fish dinner tasted. The third person narration maintains sufficient distance from Helene's thoughts while allowing the reader to associate with her experience the events. Thus, just as Helene does, the reader comes to know how Martha smells, feels, and tastes. For Franck, intimacy is the experience of physical closeness, and this rendering of sensory detail—often sensual details—connect all of Franck's works, which range from contemporary narratives to historical fiction.

Similar to her previous novel, *Lagerfeuer*, the starting point for this novel was an event in Franck's own family history. Her father, like young Peter of the novel, was abandoned by his mother at a train station, shortly after the end of World War II. Franck's father died while she was still a teenager, and she was not able to locate her paternal grandmother before she, too, had passed away. Thus the novel is an

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attempt to fill in gaps, to explain the inexplicable, to imagine what could drive a young mother to this unnatural act.

At the same time, Franck's novel forces the reader to question his or her own assumptions about motherhood. In this way, she engages with the contemporary debates surrounding the role of mothers in German society. Thanks in part to Eva Herman's *Das Eva-Prinzip—Für eine neue Weiblichkeit* (2006), which intentionally references the Nazi period as one that valued mothers' role in society, there is a new wave of publications that centers on how to make mothering a more feasible option for young German women. Related to this is the flurry of media attention devoted to the declining birth rate in Germany, fueling the perennial concern that the Germans are a dying breed. While *Die Mittagsfrau* is certainly not to be understood as a manifesto, or even a feminist rejection of motherhood, it does undermine the assumption that women are naturally maternal. Helene does not want to have children—even with her lover Carl—and finds that she has no instinctual connection to her son. She takes care of Peter and ensures that he survives the Second World War. It can be argued that her decisions to leave him was motivated by her recognition of her own inability to care for him properly, as Helene ultimately understands that she can not provide the warmth or the closeness that a child needs from its mother.

Franck is the third recipient of the prize, after Katharina Hacker in 2006 for *Die Habenichtse* and Arno Geiger in 2005 for *Es geht uns gut*. This is not the first of Franck's long list of accolades, and it will certainly not be the last.

*Alexandra Merley Hill, University of Massachusetts Amherst*

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ANNE FUCHS, J. J. LONG, eds. *W.G. Sebald and the Writing of History*. Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 2007. 224 pp. €29,80.

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**W**riting about history has long been established as one of the principal themes in scholarship on W.G. Sebald. The juxtaposition of memory as a subjective perspective on the past and official history as the outcome of a formalized discourse about past events features as a subtext in numerous interpretations and critical reviews on Sebald's works. His texts indeed call out for such approaches, concerning themselves not only with remainders and relics

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from previous times, but also constantly paying attention to writing and images as media for the representation of them. The writing of history in its many facets has evolved as an almost omnipresent topos in Sebald scholarship, especially since it opens up intriguing intersections with other disciplines such as Trauma, Holocaust, and Memory Studies. The challenge that this essay collection faces is not—unlike that of many anthologies—how to find common ground among too vast a variety of themes and approaches, but how to discover new insights on an all too common ground, a discursive field that has long been located, measured, and described. It does not come as a surprise that the editors Fuchs and Long formulate the objective of their collection in a rather vague fashion when they claim to contribute “to a more differentiated picture of Sebald’s metanarrative” (9). As indeterminate as this may initially appear, it in fact characterizes very well the strategy that renders the contributions into more than just mandatory readings for Sebald scholars. The essays succeed in differentiating and elaborating established loci of Sebald scholarship and manage to expand those issues into unforeseen depth and breadth. The table of content highlights key terms which by now form a set of phrases familiar to almost any publication on Sebald—“witness”, “melancholia”, “histories”, “representations of nature”, “intertextuality”, “photography”—and J.J. Long’s well-informed and thorough synopsis of Sebald scholarship identifies these terms indeed as the main paradigms of interpretation. The novelty that this essay collection offers lies precisely in the redefinition and reevaluation of these familiar terms.

Naturally, some authors make more compelling new arguments than others. J.J. Long’s contribution about what he labels as “Miniature Histories” and Russel Kilbourn’s essay about history, intertextuality, and subjectivity in Sebald’s *Rings of Saturn* provide excellent examples for the opening of new perspectives in a known field. Long provides close readings of passages from Sebald’s works that describe miniature historical scenes in the form of model trains or little figurines. By calling attention to the logic of this peripheral detail, he is able to identify it as poetic strategy that serves as equally benevolent and skeptical reflection on nostalgia. Long focusses on the literally objectified presence of the past, and can thus launch an intriguing critical analysis of Sebald’s narrative technique. Unlike Long, Kilbourn moves right into one of the most central controversies among Sebald scholars when he re-examines the categorization of Sebald as a modern or post-modern author. He argues that the narrator in *Rings of Saturn* is “an avatar of a post-modern(ist) subjectivity” (139), grounding his argument in what he

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identifies as “historioscopic intersection of memory and visibility” (146). Kilbourn fully recognizes the significance of Sebald's modernist themes such as death, mourning, and memory, yet insists on the relevancy of a visually conceptualized notion of temporality that moves beyond the framework of modernism.

In general, most of the essays gravitate around Sebald's *Rings of Saturn* and *Natural History of Destruction* since these works concern themselves most prominently with questions of historiography and the construction of collective memory. Hans-Walter Schmidt-Hannisa, Mary Cosgrove, and Anne Fuchs all conclude that Sebald's work criticizes the objectification and subsequent exploitation of nature as practiced in a rationalized world view since early Capitalism, and thereby address some of the still open questions about Sebald as eco-critical author. Schmidt-Hannisa demonstrates that Sebald's attempts to overcome anthropocentrism and discrimination in favor of one species follow the reasoning of Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectics of Enlightenment*. Even though Sebald's animalistic themes play such an important role for his argument, Schmidt-Hannisa unfortunately makes no reference to Eric Santner's intriguing interpretation in *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (University of Chicago Press, 2006). Cosgrove fuses in her argument two strands of interpretation together, the use of melancholy in Sebald's work and the expression of environmentalist concerns. She understands melancholia as poetic means for “transcending the individual subject” (92), and argues that this state of temporal suspension serves to contrast the cyclic temporality of nature with the notion of history as struggle between stagnation and progress as Capitalism has imposed it onto nature. Fuchs' interpretation of the Sebaldian concept of nature is less politically biased in that she explains the environmentalist agenda as part of his indebtedness to Adalbert Stifter. She offers an intriguing close reading of two ekphrastic descriptions, one referring to a Rembrandt painting portraying an anatomy lesson and the other to a landscape painting by Ruisdael. Fuchs can thus position Sebald's eco-criticism within the framework of skepticism towards the modern scientific understanding of nature as an “objectified and experimentally accessible world” (127).

Michael Niehaus, Maya Barzilai, and Helen Finch approach Sebald's concept of history through specific intertextual references. Niehaus demonstrates how the mutual dependence of natural history and eschatological *Heilsgeschichte* in Sebald relates to, but also differs from, Walter Benjamin's model since unlike Benjamin suggested in his concept of the allegory, Sebald's texts explicitly evade “the *immersion* of

the narrator in the monuments of destruction and decay” (56, emphasis in the text). Barzilai contrasts Sebald's motif of the spectator of a shipwreck with Hegel's use of this philosophically established metaphor, and she arrives at the apparent conclusion that Sebald's melancholic suspension differs substantially from the Hegelian concept of dialectical progress in history. By pointing out intertextual references to works by Peter Handke, Finch suggests describing Sebald's prose as “metaphysical poetics” (180) which promises “a return to an ahistorical place of subjective origin” (197).

Jan Ceuppens and Carolin Duttlinger both concern themselves with the status visual representations have in Sebald's concept of history. Ceuppens argues that narrating history in Sebald occurs along two narrative modes, the wide-angle panoramic overview and the close-up detail view. Duttlinger reevaluates the use of photography in *Natural History of Destruction*, by moving away from the frequently formulated criticism that this text integrates images as mere illustration. She argues that the implementation of photographs intentionally avoids having historical or aesthetic value in order to draw attention to the ways in which these images have been utilized over the history of their reception.

Overall, this anthology not only offers an extensive bibliography and a useful research overview, but most of the essays succeed in providing excellent new perspectives on some of the well-established questions in Sebald scholarship. The editors J.J. Long and Anne Fuchs demonstrate with their anthology that research on W.G. Sebald has moved to a new phase. After the initial enthusiastic reception of his work and subsequent canonization, the challenge is now to diversify and differentiate the array of established research topics.

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SANDER L. GILMAN. *Multiculturalism and the Jews*. New York: Routledge, 2006. 293 pp. \$24.95.

**W**ladimir Kaminer gilt seit seinem Bestseller *Russendisko*, einer Sammlung Miniaturen über das Leben in Berlin, als der „Vorzeige-Russe“ Deutschlands, der dem Land durch die Brille des Immigranten den Spiegel vorhält, aber gleichzeitig mit allerlei skurriler Anekdoten zu unterhalten weiss. Portraits in Zeitungen und

Zeitschriften beschreiben Kaminer regelmässig als russische Stimme, typischen Russen oder „Putins Mann in Deutschland.“<sup>41</sup> Dass er aber nicht nur eine russische, sondern auch eine jüdische Stimme ist, wird regelmässig ausgeblendet. Kein Wunder: Auch in *Russendisko* erzählt er nur anfänglich, wie er aufgrund seines Jüdischseins in die DDR immigrieren durfte. Hat der Leser die Abenteuer Kaminers rundum Berlins Prenzlauer Berg durchgestanden, wird es ihm vielleicht ähnlich gehen wie der Rezensentin, die ihn bisher leichtfertig auf seine russische Herkunft reduziert hat.

Diesem Umstand zum Trotz – oder in diesem Fall gerade deswegen – widmet Sander L. Gilman in *Multiculturalism and the Jews* Kaminers literarischem Schaffen eine längere Passage: Gilman zeichnet nach, wie jüdische Einwanderer aus der Sowjetunion in Deutschland nicht nur eine neue Heimat, sondern auch zum Judentum fanden. Dieselben, die sich in der UdSSR darum bemüht hatten, in ihren Papieren nicht als Juden geführt zu werden, kämpften angesichts einer Ausreisemöglichkeit darum, ihre jüdische Identität offiziell wiederzuerlangen.

Dies ist freilich nur eines von zahlreichen Beispielen Gilmans, anhand derer der Autor erläutert, wie sich Juden mit der Kultur der Mehrheit arrangiert haben. Mit seiner Sammlung von Vorträgen, die Gilman anlässlich seiner Gastprofessur an der Universität von Oxford gehalten hat, spannt er einen Zeitbogen von der Aufklärung bis heute und verfolgt das Schicksal der jüdischen Diaspora sowohl in Europa als auch in den USA. Im Zentrum seines Interesses steht dabei die Frage, wie viel eine Minderheit von ihrer Kultur aufgeben muss, um sich in eine Gesellschaft eingliedern zu können – wie viel sie zu bewahren hat, um ihre Identität nicht preiszugeben. Dabei schreibt er zugleich die Erfolgsgeschichte der jüdischen Diaspora, die aus ihrer gesellschaftlichen Isolation ausbrechen konnte, nach Ende des zweiten Weltkriegs zur weissen Bevölkerungsschicht gezählt wurde und sich in fast allen Bereichen der sogenannten Hochkultur etablieren konnte. „Weiss“ wird man indes nicht aufgrund eigener Bestrebungen, sondern dank veränderter Wahrnehmung der Mehrheit: Gilman zufolge betrachtet man „Jude“ nicht länger als eine religiöse oder ethnische, sondern als kulturelle Identität. Zugleich ist die jüdische Minderheit vor allem in den USA zur Projektionsfläche für andere Minderheiten geworden, die sich in zahlreichen literarischen Werken spiegelt. Ob sich nun in Gish Jens *Mona in the Promised Land* ein Mädchen chinesischer Herkunft vornimmt, Jüdin zu werden, oder in Achmat Dangors *Kafka's Curse* ein Schwarzer sich als Jude ausgibt, um als Weisser leben zu

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können – bei Gilman wird der Jude zufolge zur Nagelprobe für multikulturellen Welten.

Und vielleicht kann die Erfahrung der jüdischen Diaspora auch als Beispiel dienen für die muslimische Gemeinschaft im Westen, so zumindest die Hoffnung Gilmans. Schliesslich teile man die Ausgangssituation, als religiöse Minderheit sich in einer säkularen Gesellschaft zurechtzufinden, die im Grunde genommen noch immer auf christlichen Ideen beruht.

Eine Rezension kann zwangsweise nur einige Schlaglichter auf das besprochene Werk werfen, was hier besonders schwer wiegen muss, da sich *Multiculturalism and the Jews* aus dem Lebenswerk des Experten für Fragen der jüdischen Identität nährt, aber auch von der Bewandtheit des Autoren in der Medizingeschichte zeugt. So profitiert der Leser gleichermaßen von den profunden Kenntnissen des Kafka-Biographen wie von den Einsichten aus *The Jew's Body*, worin der Medizinhistoriker pseudowissenschaftliche Vorurteile über den jüdischen Körper seziert und uns mit der Nasenkorrektur als Assimilierungsmassnahme bekannt macht. Dabei konzentriert sich Gilman nicht allein auf die Erfahrungen amerikanischer Juden, sondern führt uns als Germanist in die deutschsprachige jüdische Literatur von heute ein, wobei er sich auch auf populäre Werke wie Wladimir Kaminers Berliner Geschichten einlässt.

Diese Themenvielfalt von *Multiculturalism and the Jews* macht zugleich den Reiz und den Nachteil des Werkes aus: Man fühlte sich phasenweise stark gefordert, sich zuerst mit einem Vergleich zwischen der muslimischen Gemeinschaft und der jüdischen Diaspora auseinandersetzen zu müssen, abschliessend Reflexionen über das Klischee vom „schlauem Juden“ zu verfolgen und dazwischen die literarische Landschaft von Kafka bis Kaminer zu erkunden. Das Buch ist jedoch eine Einladung zu weiterer Lektüre, eine wahrhafte *tour d'horizon* mit zahlreichen Perspektivenwechseln, nicht ohne hin und wieder zu provozieren. Nicht zuletzt fühlt man sich am Ende von Gilmans Buch motiviert, die Gedankenwelt des Autors zu durchforsten und sich auf die Themen dieses intellektuellen Tausendsassas einzulassen.

*Claudia F. Brühwiler, Universität St. Gallen*

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<sup>1</sup> Judith Lembke, „Wladimir Kaminer. Der Geschichtenerzähler,“ *FAZ* 5 March 2007, 29 May 2008 <<http://www.faz.net/s/homepage.html>>.

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HANDKE, PETER. *Kali. Eine Vorwintergeschichte*. Suhrkamp, 2007. 162pp. €16,80.

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Since launching his literary career in 1966 with the stinging novel *The Hornets* and the scandalous play *Offending the Audience and Self-accusation*, Peter Handke has not missed a chance to shine a light on the sore spots of Austrian society. His outspoken criticism on the restrictive, conservative, and often discriminatory social, political, and cultural policies in his homeland have earned him his place among Austria's most prominent and controversial critics, where he is mentioned in the same breath as Thomas Bernhard, Elfriede Jelinek, and Peter Turrini. Handke's latest offering, *Kali*, a novella, sets its sights on all the usual suspects: looming environmental catastrophe, the current crisis of multiculturalism, gender relations, media and technology saturation of personal life and the public sphere, social estrangement, and the responsibility to the past.

Curiously, however, Handke's familiar critical tone is absent in *Kali*, replaced predominantly by sentimental and trivial narration that is both eerie and disjointed. The author remains unclear on how to effectively deal with growing interpersonal apathy and alienated societies. Handke's ambiguity is reflected in his peculiar mélange of genres that combines elements from the philosophical, erotic, dream, and science-fiction novel, and Biblical allegories. His semi-fantastic novella is set just before the beginning of winter, and follows a nameless heroine as she journeys back to her home town. She travels from the heart of Europe to a desolate salt mining town called Kali, or alternatively *Toter Winkel* ("Blind Spot").

We are not told much about the heroine. She is half human, half transcendent, and her journey vacillates between reality and fantasy. In the course of the novella, it gradually emerges that Handke wants us to recognize the heroine as an embodiment of repressed historical memory and the inability of the collective to fully overcome its past crimes. Handke's characters are unfailingly plagued with fear and crippled by doubt: they are aware of the widespread injustice around them, but are impotent to confront it; their personal and social relationships are stale and suspicious; they distrust their lovers, despise their neighbors, and fear their government. The result is a cruelly anonymous world, marked by indifference and distress.

Handke is closer to his element when he interrogates the social order with his trademark bitterness, sarcasm, and acumen. In the

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novella's finest moments, Handke wonders out loud about the prevalence of paranoia, and the widespread, oblivious apathy towards those subliminal forms of violence that characterize the affluent cityscapes of Europe: human trafficking, economic and sexual exploitation, the rise of barriers and walls, and environmental destruction. According to Handke, the modern metropolises of Western Europe are a battleground where a modern, "subtle" warfare, has been raging: silent and undeclared one, and for that reason more gruesome than the battlefields of the past. The subtlety of this war alludes to the existence of two parallel societies within these cities and the silent hostility between the well-to-do natives and the immigrants:

Bei der zunehmenden Zahl der Vermißten: wer wird denn dich, und den, und die da eigens vermissen?...Ein Wunder eigentlich, daß so viele von uns am Abend zurück nachhause finden, nicht wahr?... Ein Wunder eigentlich, wie wenige es sind, die Tag für Tag verloren gehen, nicht wahr? ...Besser ein erklärter Krieg als all die unerklärten, nicht wahr?... Besser ein aufgeschlitzten Bauch als so eine Nacht, nicht wahr? (24)

But such moments of critical precision are unfortunately overshadowed by homiletic tedium and sentimentality. Handke stresses the semi-divine status of the protagonist with suspicious insistence. She, alone, is not scared to venture out into the night to look for the missing people. She is fearless and eternal—a consoler, a lover, a singer, and a reader to a humanity that has lost its humaneness. Her story is not merely about finding Kali's most recently gone missing child, it is ultimately about the recovery of human closeness, trust, and responsibility. But the divine dimension of her quest keeps the novella in a state of dream uncertainty and intangibility.

Handke portrays modernity as an unconscious calamity that destroys the ability of people to relate to each other, both on a personal and a public level. The nameless protagonist is no exception—she is disconnected and estranged from her surroundings. She has not visited her eccentric mother, a faded, once-upon-a-time film actress, for over twenty years and her love-life is a string of casual encounters. But in Kali's utopian community she reconnects with humanity. Kali is a unique place that is inhabited by survivors of the Third World War, which Handke assures the reader has been raging on undeclared for quite some time, and is all the more evil for it. The survivors have lost

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their strength for living while they fought for their very survival and now simply wander confused, praying. Kali is also a sailing destination for many emigrants who look for work in the local salt mines. This makes the place a peculiar mixture of languages, spices, and people who manage to overcome their differences in the pits of the tunnels and come to an intimate understanding of one another, albeit a preliminarily one.

Handke's utopian vision is a patchwork of mawkish clichés: a world without the uproar of war, without abandonment, without nightmares, without the fear of death nor life, without getting lost, and without fatherlands and mother tongues, without possessions except joy (142). This revelation culminates in a communal meal, a bizarre Last Supper scene in which the town's elderly priestess delivers a feverish laudation on human bravery. Handke's expectations of the ability of human beings to transform their behavior overnight is unrealistic and naïve. It also stands in glaring contrast to a world he perceives as indifferent, loveless, cruel, and self-destructive. His strong conviction that humanity can unequivocally rehabilitate itself from its violent and reckless ways weakens his critical stance on social apathy and discrimination.

An optimistic Handke is, regrettably, a strange and unconvincing creature. There are some salvageable moments, in which Handke does what he does best—dissect our social failings with a deft hand—but these too are soon overpowered by melodrama, and are not enough to admit this work to the company of its predecessors, which have risen to the status of moral compasses for our troubled times.

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CHRISTOPH HEIN. *Frau Paula Trousseau*. Frankfurt a. Main: Suhrkamp, 2007. 537 pp. €22,80.

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Readers familiar with Christoph Hein's work have come to expect a penetrating, insightful portrait of life in the former German Democratic Republic. His latest offering, *Frau Paula Trousseau*, does not disappoint. As in his other works, Hein focuses here on the poignancy of everyday existence in the GDR without obscuring the personal effect of politics or lapsing into *Ostalgie*. *Frau Paula Trousseau* is sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes humorous as it reveals not only the

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failings of “real existing socialism” in the GDR, but also the unpleasant consequences of German reunification through one woman’s biography.

One of those tragic consequences is revealed at the novel’s outset. Paula Trousseau, a middle-aged, East German illustrator whose career has collapsed, commits suicide while on vacation in rural France. Along with her drastic, monochromatic paintings, Paula has left behind a long manuscript, which forms the rest of Hein’s novel, and which, we discover, is a kind of autobiography tracing Paula’s life from her entrance into art school in the 1960s to shortly before her death in the year 2000. Over the course of that story, which is interrupted from time to time by a third-person narrator filling in details from Paula’s austere childhood, the reader comes to understand what makes Paula the person she is, and what brings her to her suicide.

Paula reveals herself as a woman who is determined to follow her own path, but whose relationships and chosen career ultimately founder in the wake of forces beyond her control. Confronting oppressive paternalism, stifling aesthetic narrow-mindedness, and eventually the collapse of the East German art and publishing worlds following reunification, Paula takes in hand the only thing remaining in her control—the timing of her own death. Paula’s suicide is an act asserting her self-determination.

But the impetus of Paula’s yearning for autonomy is aesthetic and relational, not political. Paula does not long for escape from the GDR. Even when she surreptitiously travels to Yugoslavia—then off-limits to East Germans—she is merely on holiday. It is not until after the travel restrictions are officially lifted for GDR citizens that Paula manages to visit art museums abroad and notice the terrible personal price that she had to pay for, as she puts it, the “Riss durch diese Welt” (516). Hein’s portrayal of a life that is deeply affected by political machinations, even as the protagonist herself remains largely oblivious them, is particularly successful.

In order to achieve this Hein employs the same narrative strategy that he used in his first major work *Der fremde Freund / Drachenblut*, (Aufbau Verlag / Luchterhand, 1982). Paula’s tale entices its audience to read between the lines. One gets the sense that while Paula thoroughly explains her choices, she is either hiding, or does not know, the real reasons behind them. One of Hein’s most successful choices is to present his readers with a narrator who thoroughly and believably defends her every move and yet provides enough information to undermine her explanations. It becomes increasingly clear that Paula is a sympathetic, engaging, and yet deeply disturbed figure. This is starkest in

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Paula's conversations with the overbearing men in her life, along with her reactions to their disapproval. What she reports as unfair criticism often turns out to be more accurate than she is willing to admit. In one passage, for example, she spats with an older painter whose rejection of female artists certainly sounds sexist, and yet his remark that artists like Paula need art because they cannot otherwise process their feelings rings true in Paula's case. "Sie brauchen das Malen," he observes, "weil sie sich sonst umbringen würden" (351). Paula frames the encounter in such a way as to highlight her opponent's unfairness, and yet her own future actions prove him right. When she can no longer support herself by painting, she ends her life.

There are, unfortunately, elements of Hein's style that do not work as well. Paula's autobiography is composed in a simple, perhaps even simplistic, writing style in keeping with the premise that these are the words of a woman whose calling is art rather than literature. However, it is surprising how little attention Paula as an artist turns to her surroundings and the descriptions thereof. Instead, Hein's literary masterstrokes come in the sparkling banter Paula exchanges with her friends. Character development also leaves something to be desired. Many of Hein's male characters are simply too absurdly cruel to be believable. As a result, all of Paula's sexual relationships (both with men and with women) are a bit cartoon-like. They are presented as unwilling seductions—as the result of Paula's inherent desirability rather than a latent desire. The result is that her affairs, above all those with other women, seem unmotivated. In particular, the progression to sex in Paula's relationships with Sibylle and Kathi seems almost like a male fantasy rather than a result of character development. One might also ask whether this is a rose-tinted version of the GDR, since it is hard to believe Paula's seeming oblivion when it comes to political machinations. As a member of intellectual circles, which history tells us were particularly scrutinized by the state, Paula's assertions that she is indifferent towards and ignorant of politics seem incredible.

On the whole, however, Hein does not gloss over the consequences of living in a police state. When, for example, a professor at Paula's art school steals off to Bavaria, there are concrete political consequences for his colleagues. Similarly, a student who is discovered with a volume of Picasso prints is sent to a factory for a year "damit ihm die Arbeiterklasse seine Dekadenz austreibt" (250). Perhaps most insightfully, Hein points out the dissonance between public and private spheres in the GDR. Paula observes that she was surprised to find that her professors and classmates spoke in exactly the same ironic tone

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about the “Paradies” of East Germany (248). She was naïve enough, she explains, to assume that the professors actually believed what they said in class (228).

Hein does not ignore the problems of living in the East German system. To the contrary, Hein offers a work that, like his recent *Landnahme* (Suhkamp, 2004), telescopes past the surface politics of the regime to focus on the relationships of ordinary people. In returning to the narrative strategies that first propelled him to success with *Der fremde Freund / Drachenblut*, Hein has once again created an absorbing story that also challenges its audience to read carefully. Despite its stylistic difficulties, *Frau Paula Trousseau* remains among Hein’s best work.

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DAVID A. JACKSON, Hrsg. *Theodor Storm – Ernst Storm. Briefwechsel. Kritische Ausgabe*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2007. 449 pp. € 69,80.

Seit 1969 veröffentlicht der Erich Schmidt Verlag die Korrespondenz Theodor Storms in zuverlässig edierten und kommentierten Kritischen Ausgaben. Die Storm-Forschung hat diesem Projekt zentrale Anstöße zu verdanken – vor allem die Briefwechsel mit anderen Autoren wie Paul Heyse, Eduard Mörike und Gottfried Keller stellen für Germanisten eine unschätzbare Primärquelle dar. Nun wird diese Reihe um eine Ausgabe ergänzt, die alle bis heute bekannten und verfügbaren Briefe, Postkarten und Telegramme versammelt, die zwischen Theodor Storm (1817-1888), einem der führenden Vertreter des poetischen Realismus, und seinem mittleren Sohn Ernst (1851-1913) gewechselt wurden. Die meisten dieser Dokumente sind im Archiv der Theodor-Storm-Gesellschaft einsehbar und werden hier erstmals veröffentlicht.

Die Kollektion bietet bemerkenswerte Einsichten in das Seelenleben des norddeutschen Lyrikers und Novellisten, dem die tägliche Korrespondenz mit zunehmendem Alter eine Therapie gegen Einsamkeit und intellektuelle Langeweile war. Während etwa der Schriftverkehr mit Gottfried Keller Auskunft über die poetologischen Positionen der Briefpartner gibt, überwiegt in der Korrespondenz mit Ernst das Private. Theodor Storm tritt hier als ein für das ausgehende 19. Jahrhundert charakteristischer deutscher Bildungsbürger auf – und es ist gerade diese sozialpsychologische Perspektive, die dem von David

A. Jackson edierten und konnotierten Briefwechsel besondere Relevanz verleiht. Faszinierend sind die Dokumente angesichts der Spannung von Idealisierung und Enttäuschung, die das Vater-Sohn-Verhältnis prägte – eine Konstellation, die auch immer wieder Einlass in das literarische Werk Storms fand.

Wie Jackson in seiner überaus gelungenen Einführung darlegt, konzipierte Theodor Storm die Briefe an seine Söhne als erzieherisches Projekt: Anstatt sich als autoritärer Patriarch zu präsentieren, strebte er einen offenen Austausch von Gefühlen und Gedanken, Sorgen und Hoffnungen an. Die Briefe an Ernst zeigen allerdings, wie problematisch dieses Vorhaben war, da es den Sohn mit einer Rolle versah, die dieser unmöglich ausfüllen konnte. Der grübelnde Melancholiker schwankte jahrelang zwischen unterschiedlichen Karriereoptionen, bevor er sich für einen Posten als preußischer Amtsrichter entschied – zu diesem Zeitpunkt hatte er sich nach ausuferndem Studium bereits verschuldet und mit der 17-jährigen Marie ein Mädchen aus ärmlichem Hause geheiratet. Theodors Lebensprojekt, den Sohn zu einem erfolgreichen Bildungsbürger zu formen, war permanent gefährdet.

In seinen Briefen an Ernst bewegt sich Theodor Storm zwischen liebevoller Zuneigung und wütender Autorität. Der Sorge um das Wohl des Adressaten folgen gern praktische Ratschläge, noch häufiger allerdings Ermahnungen und schroffe Verurteilungen. „Ich muß es wohl im Leben nicht verstanden haben, mir die Liebe oder doch die Achtung meiner Kinder zu erwerben“, schreibt Theodor am 4. März 1881 in einer für ihn typischen Tendenz zum Pauschalurteil (207). Zeigt sich Ernst wiederholt stärker dem Feiern als dem Studieren zugeneigt, so warnt ihn Theodor, durch aufmerksame Freunde der Familie von den Ausschweifungen in Kenntnis gesetzt, sein Verhalten stelle eine Belastung für den väterlichen „Gemüthsfrieden“ dar (236). Im höchsten Grade problematisch ist Theodors Neigung, Ernsts Verfehlungen im Kontext einer Familienkrise zu verorten: In seinem Brief vom 13. August 1879 klagt er zunächst über „das Gepräge eines Säufers“, das dem ältesten Sohn Hans anhafte, erörtert dann die eigene finanzielle Situation, angesichts derer ihm „mitunter die Angst an die Kehle steigt“, und kommt schließlich auf eine studentische Feierlichkeit im dänischen Apenrade zu sprechen, die Ernst in Husum „wieder ein Kopfschütteln“ eingetragen habe. Hoffentlich, so Storms Mitteilung, sei das nun die letzte Episode dieser Art, damit er, den Lebenswandel des Sohnes betreffend, endlich „aus der Angst komme“. Ernsts wiederholte „studentische Trunkenheit“, die einmal sogar in ein Disziplinarverfahren mündet, erinnert den Vater zweifellos an Hans' fatalen Alkoholismus. In

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der Angst, die „Kneipereien“ könnten Ernst ebenfalls die angestrebte berufliche Laufbahn kosten, appelliert Theodor an die „bürgerliche Ehre“ des Sohnes: „Wie Du mit Deinem innern Stolz u. Deinem Selbstgefühl immer wieder in diese Dinge zurückfallen kannst, ist mir unbegreiflich“ (241). In selbstgerechter Manier stilisiert sich Theodor an anderer Stelle zum Gegenbild der in finanziellen Angelegenheiten wenig zuverlässigen Söhne, indem er brieflich verkündet, „fleißig wie eine Biene“ seinen Tätigkeiten nachzugehen, „um unser kleines Familienvermögen vor zu großen Löchern zu schützen“ (145).

Unverkennbar manifestiert sich in Theodors Kritik die Reaktion eines enttäuschten Idealisten: Schließlich betrachtete er Ernst – nachdem weder Hans noch Karl, der jüngste Sohn, den väterlichen Ansprüchen hatten genügen können – als sein Alter Ego, als den Stammhalter der traditionsreichen Familie. Zugleich verbirgt sich hinter dem Tadel Theodors wohl auch die Sorge, Ernst könne den immer wieder auftretenden Depressionen vollends anheim fallen; der grübelnde Sohn sah sich selbst bereits als „Todeskandidat“. Die Vorstellung, Ernst zu verlieren, veranlasste den Vater zu einem emphatischen Bekenntnis: „Denn, mein Junge, ich wüßte nicht, wie ich weiterleben sollte, wenn Du fort wärst; Du – vielleicht von allen Menschen Du allein – würdest alle, auch die letzte Lebensfreude mit hinwegnehmen“ (153). Auch in diesem Ausdruck der Angst offenbart sich Hans' Schicksal – der stets mitzulesende Subtext des Briefwechsels –, das Theodor „mit peinigendem Kummer“ (276) verfolgte, positiv zu beeinflussen suchte und doch für erblich bedingt erklärte: „Was kann er für diese unglücklichen Anlagen, deren schlummernde Existenz sich schon in seiner Kindheit zeigte?“ (183) Schließlich gelangte Theodor zu der Einsicht, am Scheitern des Sohnes, der „die schreckliche Erbschuld der Familie“ trage (419), nicht unschuldig zu sein: „Aber meine Hand war ja zu schwach es zu ändern“ (276).

In vielen Briefen klammern sich Theodors Gedanken an bevorstehende Besuche bei Ernst, die als „Lichtpunkte“ und idyllische Einschnitte in einer ansonsten schwierigen Zeit beschrieben werden: „In den Ferien Du zu uns, außer den Ferien ich zu Dir; irgend eine Arbeit in der Mappe, woran ich Vormittags arbeite, Nachmittags besprechen wir Amtsgerichtliches irgendwelcher Art, Abends lesen wir – etwa Grillparzer, der doch sehr lesenswerth ist“ (179). Häufig fungierte Ernst auch als kommunikative Schnittstelle zwischen den Brüdern und dem Vater, der ihm auftrag, an Hans zu schreiben, „damit das Gefühl des Familienzusammenhangs in ihm gestärkt werde“ (235). Etwaige Nachlässigkeiten duldeten Theodor nicht. Als Ernst es einmal



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zweieinhalb Monate lang versäumte, Hans eine Antwort auf dessen Brief zu schreiben, warf der Vater ihm Versagen vor und empfahl: „Besser Dich!“ (280)

Wie Ernst auf die Ansprüche und Schuldzuweisungen seines Vaters reagierte, erfährt der Leser des im übrigen außerordentlich aufschlussreichen Bandes kaum, da nur wenige seiner Antwortbriefe erhalten sind. Erhellend ist daher ein Seitenblick auf den Briefwechsel mit dem Bruder Karl; aus dieser Korrespondenz geht hervor, dass Ernst sich den Wünschen des Vaters zwar häufig fügte, seiner ständigen Moralpredigten aber wohl überdrüssig wurde. Letzteres gilt vor allem für das Wintersemester 1872/73, das Ernst im Husumer Familienhaus verlebte, da sich Theodor „nach gründlicher Revision meiner Kasseverhältnisse“ außerstande sah, alle drei Söhne auswärts zu finanzieren: „Da Du nun der Einzigste bist der bei ernstem Willen und unter meiner Beihülfe seine Studien auch zu Hause treiben kann, so musst Du nach Hause kommen.“

Im Jahre 1880 wurde Storm aus gesundheitlichen Gründen frühzeitig aus dem Justizdienst entlassen und zog von Husum nach Hademarschen, wo er in seiner Altersvilla zwar in idyllischer Umgebung, aber doch fernab intellektueller Zirkel lebte. Die folgenden Jahre waren von einer Krise schriftstellerischer Produktivität gekennzeichnet, deren finanzielle Konsequenzen in den Briefen immer wieder thematisiert werden. Dass die Suche nach neuem Novellenstoff, den der Autor an Herbst- und Winterabenden „beim warmen Ofen“ (219) auszubilden hoffte, öfter als früher ins Stocken geriet, hatte Auswirkungen auf die Haushaltskasse, die Storm allerdings durch die Neuauflage und den Wiederabdruck älterer Arbeiten zu kompensieren wusste. Während das „ewige Kranksein“ (276) die Schreibprojekte regelmäßig durchkreuzte und somit zweifellos zur Schreibkrise beitrug, sind deren grundlegende Ursachen doch eher in einer wiederkehrenden Schreibblockade zu sehen. So heißt es in einem Brief vom 25. Januar 1882: „Jetzt sitz’ ich denn wieder an meiner Novelle [*Hans und Heinz Kirch*], aber ich muß meinen ganzen Willen dazu thun, um auch nur langsam weiter zu kommen, es kommt mir nicht mehr so entgegen wie wohl einst; dennoch wird es mit Fleiß u. der erworbenen Altersweisheit hoffentlich nicht so übel ausfallen“ (228). Nach der Fertigstellung von *Hans und Heinz Kirch* im März 1882 dauerte es Monate, bis Storm ein neues Projekt begann, denn „trotz täglichen Sinnen und Suchens“ war es ihm unmöglich, einen neuen Stoff zu finden: „Erst wenn ich den habe, kann ich mich wieder der Gegenwart erfreuen“ (236). Dieser Teufelskreis aus Blockade und innerer Notwendigkeit zur künstlerischen Produktion

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verfolgte Storm noch bis zu seinem berühmtesten Werk, der Novelle *Der Schimmelreiter*, deren Entstehung im Jahre 1886 von den inzwischen bekannten Schwierigkeiten begleitet wurde.

Die knapp über 200 Briefe, deren Mehrzahl hier erstmals abgedruckt wird, bieten einen packenden Einblick in ein von persönlichen wie beruflichen Ängsten und Komplexen geprägtes Schriftstellerleben. In dem fast 130-seitigen Kommentarteil am Ende des Bandes werden die Briefe aufs sorgfältigste erläutert. David A. Jackson erweist sich als vorbildlicher Herausgeber: Er hat selbst randständige Informationen recherchiert und beeindruckt mit zahlreichen Verweisen auf andernorts veröffentlichte Schriftstücke. Somit wird der Briefwechsel zu einem intimen Archiv, das nicht nur den biographisch interessierten Leser anspricht. Vielmehr kann das prekäre Vater-Sohn-Verhältnis, wie es die Briefe so facettenreich dokumentieren, auch als äußerst fruchtbarer Hintergrund für die Erforschung von Novellen wie *Carsten Curator* dienen. Die thematischen Parallelen sind jedenfalls zu eklatant, als dass die Literaturwissenschaft die autobiographische Spur in Theodor Storms Werk ignorieren dürfte.

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DANIEL KEHLMANN. *Diese sehr ernsten Scherze. Poetikvorlesungen*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007. 44 pp. € 9,80.

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Schon der Titel – ein Zitat Goethes über *Faust II* – der jüngsten Veröffentlichung Daniel Kehlmanns zeigt, dass mit ihm als einem Autor zu rechnen ist, dessen literarischen Texte sich an den ganz großen Vorbildern messen lassen. Wie Henning Bobzin zutreffend im *KLJG* konstatiert, hat jeder, der sich mit dem Werk Kehlmanns beschäftigt, mit zweierlei Voraussetzungen sich auseinander zu setzen: Mit dessen Ruf als literarischem Wunderkind (in der guten alten deutschen Geniertradition) und dem enormen Erfolg seines 2005 erschienenen Romans *Die Vermessung der Welt*. Auch wenn sich die vorherigen literarischen Werke Kehlmanns (Jahrgang 1975) relativ gut verkauften und durchweg gut besprochen wurden, erschien der enorme Erfolg des historischen Romans, der auf den Lebensgeschichten des Naturwissenschaftlers Alexander von Humboldt und des Mathematikers Carl Friedrich Gauß basiert, doch als eine große Überraschung. In Deutschland wird der Erfolg des Romans und die damit einhergehende

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gestiegene internationale Reputation deutscher Gegenwartsliteratur mit ungläubigem Erstaunen und oftmals mit einem gewissen Rechtfertigungs- und Erklärungszwang wahrgenommen. Diesem Zwang oder vielmehr Bedürfnis scheint auch der Autor selbst zu erliegen: Nach seinem Bestseller hat er zwei nichtfiktionale Werke veröffentlicht um Einblicke in seine schriftstellerische Arbeit und die eigene Lektüre gewähren und zugleich den Erfolgsroman und dessen Voraussetzung und Entstehung erläutern. In der Essaysammlung *Wo ist Carlos Montúfar? Über Bücher* (2005), geht Kehlmann im titelgebenden Essay ausführlich auf das Verhältnis von Fiktion und historischem Wahrheitsgehalt im Roman ein. Das zweite Werk ist aus der Reihe „Göttinger Sudelblätter“ erschienenen Poetikvorlesungen, die Daniel Kehlmann am 8. und 9. November in der Aula der Göttinger Universität hielt. Darin widmet er sich in einem ersten Teil dem „seltsame[n] Beruf“ des Schriftstellers (6), sowie der Gattung entsprechend der Darstellung eigener poetologischer Vorstellungen – allerdings in ungewöhnlicher Form. Den Hauptteil bildet die Erläuterung des für das Verständnis seiner Werke unerlässliche Konzept des Magischen Realismus'. Der zweite Teil ist ausschließlich der Eigendeutung des Romans *Die Vermessung der Welt* gewidmet. Daher die Aufnahme einer längeren Passage aus dem Essay *Wo ist Carlos Montúfar?*, in dem Kehlmann „ein für alle allemal das Verhältnis von Erfindung und Wahrheit“ im Roman beschreibt (35).

An den Anfang der Poetikvorlesungen stellt Kehlmann die ebenso überraschende wie erfreulich unpräzise Exemplifizierung der eigenen Unwissenheit in poetischen Fragen: „Ich habe keine Ahnung“ (5). Überhaupt könne kein Schriftsteller letztendlich allgemeingültige Antworten zum Wesen der Dichtung geben, auch wenn die literarische Öffentlichkeit in Deutschland dies suggeriere und geradezu einfordere. Dies ist ein Hauptmotiv der Rede, die Kritik am deutschen Literaturbetrieb, der den Schriftsteller geradezu „in die Rolle des selbstbewußten Auskunftgebers“ (5) dränge. In Deutschland herrsche eine auf der Welt in dieser Form einzigartige, subventionierte Kulturmaschinerie vor, in der mehr Preise und Stipendien vergeben werden als das Jahr Tage hat und Schriftsteller sich auf zum Teil mehrmonatige Vorlesungstourneen zu begeben haben. Dies ermögliche – so im ironischen Tonfall der gegenwärtig in New York lebende und an einem gemeinsamen Projekt mit dem Schriftsteller und Germanisten Jonathan Frazer arbeitende Kehlmann – „am anderen Ende der Welt vor einem erlesenen Publikum aus Düsseldorfern, Hannoveranern und Hamburgern seine Dichtung zum Vortrag zu bringen“ (13). Da man Gefahr laufe, die daraus resultierende „fragende Instanz“ zu

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„internalisieren“ und „plötzlich mit sich selbst beim Zähneputzen oder Schuhezubinden im Interviewton“ zu sprechen (6), inszeniert er seinen Vortrag - den deutschen Kulturbetrieb persiflierend - als Selbstgespräch oder Selbstinterview. Dass dies nicht frei von Komik und auch Selbstironie ist, zeigt nicht zuletzt die Antwort auf die (eigene) Frage danach, *warum* er den überhaupt schreibe, etwa „[n]ur aus Geldgier und Geltungssucht?“. „Ich würde die Reihenfolge umdrehen.“ (23).

Überaus faszinierend in ihrer sprachlichen Brillanz und intellektuellen Schärfe und Innovation sind Kehlmanns ernsthaftere Ausführungen im ersten Teil zum „Handwerk des Schreibens“. So habe er etwa von seinem ausgewiesenen Vorbild Nabokov gelernt, dass „Prosa mit Sätzen zu tun [hat], erzählende Prosa aber immer auch mit Bildern.“ Es gehe in der erzählenden Prosa, die immer eine eigene kohärente Wirklichkeit zu entwerfen habe darum, „diese Bilder zu visualisieren.“ (11) Die Stimmigkeit und Richtigkeit der Details sei für die Plausibilität und Authentizität der literarischen Fiktion entscheidend, sei auch nur ein Fehler vorhanden, breche gleichsam die gesamte Erzählung zusammen. In der Tat ist Kehlmann ein ebenso gewissenhafter und versierter wie plastischer Erzähler, sein bildhaft anschaulicher Erzählstil dürfte ein Grund für seinen Erfolg, zumindest für die Lobeshymnen des Feuilletons sein. Hubert Spiegel etwa erkennt in einer Besprechung in der *FAZ* in der *Vermessung der Welt* einen „handwerklich nahezu perfekten Roman“, meldet aber scharfsichtig wenn auch etwas kryptisch Bedenken an ob dieser formalen Perfektion: „Kehlmann, mit einem Wort, hat seine Sache im Griff. Darin liegt sein Können, aber bislang auch dessen Grenze. Es fehlt, bei allen Vorzügen, etwas an diesem Buch, das sich so schwer benennen läßt: Das Ungebärdige, Unvernünftige, Überflüssige, Überschießende, Widerständige, Widersprüchliche, Maßlos-Menschliche großer Kunst.“ Daniel Kehlmann selbst weist in Interviews wiederholt kokett bedauernd auf seine preussische Disziplin beim Schreiben hin und ist sich offensichtlich den Gefahren eines allzu routinierten, lediglich formal ansprechenden Erzählens bewusst: „Ich hatte gemeint, gute Literatur müsse bloß formal perfekt sein. [...] Aber natürlich reicht das nicht. Es muß immer ... nun ja, ein Element existentieller Wahrheit geben, eine Berührung mit den Grundtatsachen unseres Daseins. Sie muß etwas über uns als Menschen sagen und über mich als Menschen, als den Schreibenden.“ (12). Tatsächlich imponiert in der gesamten Rede die rhetorische Qualität der Ausführungen Kehlmanns, teilweise bleibt die inhaltliche Qualität derselben hinter der stilistischen Güte zurück. Eine ebenso stilistisch wie logisch überzeugende Absage erteilt

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Kehlmann der gegenwärtig florierenden biographischen Erzählweise. Der Autor stecke „nicht in der Geschichte, er steckt in der Atmosphäre, im Tonfall der Erzählstimme, in der inneren Haltung zu dem von ihm Wiedergegebenen, die doch immer und überall durchscheint. Aber eben hier muß es eine Berührung geben mit dem, was ihn wirklich betrifft und angeht“ (13).

Das, was Kehlmann wirklich in seinen „erkenntnistheoretischen Vexierbildern“ (Andreas Nentwich), als die wie Henning Bobzin konstatiert Kehlmanns Werke anzusehen sind, betrifft, ist die Konfrontation einer „deutschen Wirklichkeit“ mit einer literarischen Wirklichkeit, die nicht die „Regeln der Syntax“ sondern „die der Wirklichkeit“ bricht. Nirgendwo sonst sei im Allgemeinen „die Literatur“ und „das Lebensgefühl so fest verankert in gutbürgerlich unzerstörbarer Wirklichkeit“, in Deutschland träume man „in Planquadraten“ (15). Kehlmanns Werk rührt daher in ihrem Spiel mit Wahrnehmungskontingenzen und Brüchen in der Wirklichkeit an den „existentiellen“ nicht den „physischen Wirklichkeiten unseres Daseins“ (14), sein wichtigster Bezugspunkt ist hierbei der lateinamerikanische Magische Realismus von Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez bis Alejo Capentier und Roberto Bolano. Diese „größte literarische Revolution der zweiten Hälfte des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts“ (14) sei – und damit hat Kehlmann in seiner Kritik vollkommen Recht – in Deutschland schändlich ignoriert worden und weitestgehend folgenlos geblieben. Kehlmann weist auf die für ihn schmerzhafteste Erfahrung hin, dass gerade die professionelle Literaturkritik – im Unterschied zu seiner Grossmutter und zu seinem Onkel – dieses „Spiel mit Wirklichkeit, das Brechen von Wirklichkeit“ (16) in seinen eigenen Texten größtenteils übersieht und offensichtlich nicht versteht. Das ist, ebenso wie die Behauptung, dass „in der deutschen Nachkriegsliteratur ein paar Dinge grundlegend schiefgegangen sind“ (21), eine gleichfalls mutige wie überzeugend dargebrachte These.

Eine noch genauere Ausführung dieser Thesen wäre jedoch wünschenswert gewesen zuungunsten des zweiten Teils, der der Deutung der *Vermessung der Welt* gewidmet ist und im Vergleich zum ersten Teil in der stilistischen wie inhaltlichen Qualität deutlich abfällt. Auch wenn sich Kehlmann an mehr als einer Stelle der Problematik der Aufschlüsselung des eigenen Werkes selbst bewusst wird – an einer Stelle etwa bricht er die Selbstinterpretation mit den Worten „Das wird mir zuviel, zu germanistisch“ (34) ab, entsteht ein gewisser Überdruß bei der Lektüre von Kehlmanns Eigeninterpretationen. Letztlich sollte er – seinen literarischen Fähigkeiten vertrauend – seine Texte für sich

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selbst sprechen lassen. Wenn auch seine in der Deutung des Romans gewonnenen, eher allgemeingültiger gehaltenen Ausführungen zur deutschen Klassik sowie zum Wesen der künstlerischen Satire, die „immer [...] die Konfrontation eines Tons mit jener Wirklichkeit, die zu verschleiern er erfunden wurde“ (38) darstelle, verbleibt letztlich der Eindruck einer allzu routinierten und teils besserwisserischen Deutung des eigenen Werkes. Und das hat Daniel Kehlmann wahrlich nicht nötig, da seine literarischen Texte den Vergleich mit den Vorbildern durchaus standhalten.

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ASTRID KÖHLER. *Brückenschläge: DDR-Autoren vor und nach der Wiedervereinigung*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007. 255 pp. € 29,90.

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Astrid Köhler's *Brückenschläge* represents an important contribution to the study of East German writers and the understanding of the relationship between the (socialist) state and author in the production of literature. Following impulses from, amongst others, Wolfgang Emmerich towards a new approach to GDR literature focusing on the aesthetic quality of texts, rather than exclusively on their political message, Köhler successfully analyses thematic, stylistic and narrative links between the pre- and post-*Wende* works of seven East German authors: Christa Wolf, Klaus Schlesinger, Ulrich Plenzdorf, Irina Liebmann, Christoph Hein, Angela Krauß and Kerstin Hensel. Köhler's work offers an interesting perspective on these authors and works and builds on recent analyses of individual writers. The book will be of interest to scholars of both GDR and contemporary literature.

Before the fall of the Berlin wall, the works of critical GDR writers were, in both East and West Germany, frequently reduced to their critical perspective on the socialist state and read as reflections of or protests against the prevailing social and political circumstances. This in turn led to the accusation that critical GDR writers benefited from an "Ostbonus," a relative overvaluing of their literary production as a reaction to their political position. Köhler notes that the *Wende* has since frequently been cited as a caesura in the literary production of East German writers, with critics considering that such GDR authors had lost their themes, their readers and their literary voice (12). However, Köhler contends that, at least since the middle of the 1990s, these authors have rediscovered their aesthetic style and developed it further,

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and that their new works represent continuities, rather than breaks with earlier texts (12). Köhler argues against the reading of these works exclusively as *Wendeliteratur*, a reading, which, once again, reduces authors to their political commentary and fails to acknowledge the intertextual links with earlier works and with the works of other writers (14).

Köhler's approach is based on textual analysis of selected works of the individual writers and the identification of recurring themes, narrative strategies, characters and motifs. The book is divided into seven sections, each focusing on a different author. For each writer, Köhler identifies key preoccupations, which run through their entire oeuvre. In the conclusion, she convincingly brings together the works of all of these individuals under the themes of "Auseinandersetzung mit Geschichte" and of the question of the relationship between the individual and society (215). Köhler argues that this intertextuality suggests a GDR literary culture defined not by politics, but by "innerliterarische Verknüpfung" (215).

Köhler's textual analysis is well written and persuasive and her identification of continuities in the works of her primary authors is productive. The reading of pre-*Wende* works beyond their reflection on and criticism of the socialist state and society is an important contribution to our understanding of these texts and to the nature of literary production in the GDR, which cannot be viewed as a simplistic reaction to or protest against political directives. Readings that focus solely on the texts as reactions to cultural-political events privilege the view of the writing of literature as a political act and fail to encompass the complexity of such works. Through her analysis of intertextuality in the oeuvre of these authors and links, not only with other GDR writers, but also with, amongst others, Bachmann, Goethe, Kafka and Thomas Mann, Köhler also adds to discussion of the specific contribution of East German writers to German literature as a whole.

An issue implicit in Köhler's analysis, one that perhaps deserves more attention, is that of reception and the underlying reasons behind the way in which a work is read. Previous readings of these works have been determined by political circumstance, be it the Cold War or German Unification; Köhler's analysis demonstrates that a different approach to these texts is now possible and it is a testament to the durability of these works that they appeal beyond the time of their production. However, neither should a political interpretation of critical GDR works be completely sidelined. Christa Wolf's *Kassandra* and *Was bleibt*, for example, are not *only* commentaries on repression in the GDR, but neither can this aspect be overlooked, as it, in turn, represents an important part of the literary aim of her work. The frequent revisiting of

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the GDR in the post-*Wende* texts of these writers indicates that their relationship with the socialist state and regime is still an important focus. Moreover, the events of the *Wende* did have an impact on the literary production of individual authors, in that new themes are frequently layered onto the old: Uncertainty, loss, turning away from utopia and the entry into capitalism are recurrent issues in the post-1990 works of East German writers. Köhler does point towards these political aspects and thematic changes in her analysis (particularly of Krauß), but they are not examined in detail. Furthermore, there is a tension between her exploration of these works beyond their critique of the GDR and her selection of authors on the basis of their relationship to the GDR regime: These writers were the “Unbequemten” and almost all of them had experience of literary censorship in the GDR (15). These issues do not, however, detract from the significance of Köhler’s argument and her work adds a further dimension to our understanding both of the specific authors and selected texts and of the relationship between politics and art.

*Sara Jones, University of Nottingham*

ALAN MARCUS & DIETRICH NEUMAN, eds. *Visualizing the City*. London & New York: Routledge, 2008. 247 pp. \$45.50.

*Visualizing the City* stems from the eponymous international conference held in June 2005 at the University of Manchester, chaired by Alan Marcus. Both the disciplinary range and varied themes covered in the volume’s essays reflect the remarkable variety of the papers presented at that conference. The admitted goal of the volume is intentionally broad: “unpick interwoven city fabrics, whether in Beirut or Paris, Berlin or Rio de Janeiro, London or New York, in an effort to discover how they equate with one another in their intertextual configurations” (title page). The volume is organized in four sections: images of urban spaces, remembering and reinventing cities through their past, reframing and reshaping contemporary cities, and the “city remixed” – possible insights into the city of the twenty-first century.

Giuliana Bruno, author of *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (Verso, 2002), establishes the tone with an essay on the haptic, the sensory interaction between bodies and space. Taking a cue from Le Corbusier’s claim that “architecture and film are the only two arts of our time,” Bruno revisits her book’s compelling points about



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the intimate connections between cinema, travel, and architecture. Maite Conde visits early twentieth century Rio de Janeiro and discovers a flourishing Brazilian cinema. Some of the most compelling points of the essay revolve around the role of European immigrants in Brazil and the ways in which their connections to European filmmakers brought worldly “vistas” into Rio’s movie theaters. The cinematic journey in Rio’s movie theaters was shaped by concrete national aspirations and patterns of social identification. Sabine Hake investigates the photographic representation of architect Erich Mendelsohn’s Mossehaus (1922) to find that the medium of photography played an important role in mediating between spatial imaginations and social desires, indirectly echoing Beatriz Colomina’s equation of modern architecture with mass media.

The second section starts with an excellent essay by Alan Marcus on the film *Beautiful Dachau* and the manner in which this film allows the layered presences of the city’s past erupt in the present. The presence of a violent urban past in film is also the subject of Lina Khatib’s essay on Beirut in Lebanese cinema. A potentially productive comparison could be drawn to the memorialization of the Second World War in socialist realist cinema, which tied the narratives of countless cities – from Warsaw to Stalingrad – to the death and devastation of war. The potential for more comparative analyses here is high. Dietrich Neumann also revisits his earlier *Architecture of the Night: The Illuminated Building* (Prestel, 2002), now integrating *Tribute in Light*, the 2002 temporary light memorial to the World Trade Center, into a rich history of the illumination of architecture at night.

The section on contemporary cities includes Stephanie Hamelryk Donald writing on disasters and apocalyptic visions in American popular film, François Penz exploring iconic French films and the way in which they have shaped and continue to shape understandings of Paris, and Robert Tavernor writing about “The London Plan,” a local agency that utilizes film and documentation to protect urban vistas and views from new developments in the British capital. The final section attempts to go underneath the skin of the city, as it were: Scott Burnham discovers the “remixed city” in the street art of major Western cities; David Michalski uncovers a distinct visual language employed by municipal agencies and corporations; and Jill Stoner concludes with her own fantasies about the future city.

The volume brings insights from the vast and growing literature on the cinematic city, which has flourished in recent years. Even when not necessarily complementing one another, the essays mostly rely on

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visions of dynamic cities and impermanence. These cities are packed with haunting images and references, iconographies from the past, but also newly emerging languages and desires. The precise relationship between the various media, however, remains to be explored further.

An astonishing aspect of much of the existing scholarship on the city—whether the cinematic city or not—is the deep tension between an interdisciplinary interest that seeks universal modes of analyses and the fact that much of this scholarship remains hostage to the “Western” city. This volume goes beyond the latter, and benefits from doing so. Even if one privileges the formal analysis of the city as a sequence of films or frames over materiality and the urban political economy, which may be arguable, it has become critical to expand urban studies into still unexplored and neglected territories. In recent years, for instance, a solid Eastern European cinema has continued to develop (Romanian, Albanian), and it has often reframed the socialist city. This emerging body of work, astonishing in its quality, remains to be explored.

*Elidor Mëhilli, Princeton University*

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RÜDIGER SAFRANSKI. *Romantik. Eine deutsche Affäre*. München: Hanser, 2007. 415 pp. € 24,90.

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Nothing seems more appealing than to write a book on German Romanticism. It is one of the few truly suspenseful and mysterious episodes in Germany’s cultural history that brought forth myriads of creatively unorthodox thinkers and theoreticians, fantasy-ridden story tellers, and suicidal madmen and madwomen. It was a period that dared broach topics still avidly avoided at the time: the darkness of the soul, the unfathomable reaches of the human psyche, the spirituality of free love and the conundrums of the cosmos – just to name a few. It is thus a period that has held not only the author of this review in thrall but also many lovers of German literature. The appealing aspects of Romanticism are, by the same token, also very appalling and daunting. He who wants to write a satisfactory history of German Romanticism must bear with a motley collection of writers and thinkers who often had things in common, yet were just as often in opposition with one another. Safranski has taken on this elephantine task and, more importantly, has succeeded.

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The book starts out with Herder's cultural writings – the theoretical roots of Romanticism – which not only enkindled the poor souls of Storm and Stress but also fertilized Romanticism. Safranski prefaces the story of Romanticism's important schools and circles (Jena, Berlin and Heidelberg) with one chapter on Goethe and Schiller. It is well known that the Jena Romantics found Goethe's writings tremendously influential and admirable. What comes as a surprise, though, is to what extent the Romantics were inspired by Goethe's great antipodean. Safranski quotes Schiller's *Ästhetische Briefe*: "um es endlich auf einmal herauszusagen, der Mensch spielt nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Worts Mensch ist, und er ist nur da ganz Mensch, wo er spielt" (43). Out of this culture of intellectual playfulness, Safranski develops a fascinating panorama of Romantic thinking as a result of a mental versatility that opens up new modes of thinking and new realms of thought. He then goes on to proceeds to the chief representatives of Romanticism: the Schlegel brothers, Novalis, Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher, Tieck, Eichendorff, von Arnim, Brentano, E. T. A. Hoffmann. One of the most sensitive and beautiful chapters is dedicated to Novalis, who, according to Safranski, is probably the truest of all Romantics. Safranski, however, avoids isolating these Romantics. He embeds them in a web of multi-perspectival thinking. The reader learns to understand these thinkers through the lens of their time and the counter-culture against which they were fighting. The book is admirable as it is a rich fount of knowledge. Safranski also explains the very complex and abstruse theories of Romantic philosophers in a clear manner, always juxtaposing them with each other or delineating their achievements in proximity to Immanuel Kant. This is not an easy undertaking. Everyone who has immersed him- or herself into the maelstrom of Romantic theory knows about its many conflicting claims. The Romantics sought to overcome the barriers of academic disciplines as they propagated a Romantic universe in which everything was immersed in or interconnected with one holistic meta-entity. Safranski does justice to this concept as he tries to do the same on a scholarly level, regarding Romanticism in the context of philosophy, culture, history, politics, and science.

As the book is subtitled "a German affair," it surprises the reader with the legacy of Romanticism, the brain child(ren) that the Romantics fathered and that lived on during the next century. In fact, Safranski spends only half of the book, some 200 pages, on the Romantics proper. The equally impressive second half of the book then shows how mightily the subcurrent of Romantic thinking kept suffusing

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German culture. We learn about the *Vormärz*, Nietzsche, various representatives of the avant-garde (George, Hofmannsthal, Rilke), Thomas Mann, Max Weber, and Adorno. Safranski dedicates one chapter to how Nazi culture harked back to Romanticism. The work concludes with the influence of Romanticism on the 1968 student revolution. Although many parallels between the Romantics and their posterity are gems of insight, one cannot suppress the feeling that this argument can – at times – be overstated, that not every later movement makes extensive use of Romanticism. True, some abstracted ideals of Romanticism have always resurfaced in modern times but they do not necessarily have a lot in common with the original Romantics.

Honestly, the book does not contain anything of truly substantial novelty that hasn't been mentioned before somewhere in the wide scholarship on Romanticism. Safranski's accomplishment is the virtuosity with which he summarizes a whole intricate and complex epoch and how he links that overview to one century of post-Romanticism. Great summaries tend to leave out details as they cannot supply an in-depth view. Safranski falls victim to that when he overlooks the roles of women in Romanticism. There were many unique female figures in this movement who not only served as muses for the men around them but produced very noteworthy works of literature and art. Also, the majority of the book's first part focuses on the Jena Romantics. Although Jena provided rich theoretical underpinning for the movement, the Heidelberg Romantic School is a bit neglected.

Safranski does not write yet another scholarly treatise on the Romantic era but a cultural compendium that extends its reaches of wisdom into the 1970s. He narrates with ease and linguistic brilliance. His prose is lucid and succinct and thankfully avoids unnecessarily cumbersome verbiage. The book is well worth the read even for those who do not work in the field of German literature but in neighboring disciplines.

*Wolfgang Lüchel, University of Cincinnati*

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RICHARD E. SCHADE and DIETER EVIN Eds. *Practicing Progress: The Promise and Limitations of Enlightenment*. Festschrift for John A. McCarthy. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007. 234 pp. \$70.00.

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**P***racticing Progress: The Promise and Limitations of Enlightenment* is one of the most recent publications dealing with the German Enlightenment. As the title suggests, the volume mainly addresses the promise and limitations of the Enlightenment as seen from the twenty-first century. The focus of the volume is based on the age's dual manifestation as a cultural era and as a mode of discourse. Published by Rodopi, the book has been released in the series "Internationale Forschungen zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft," however is mainly written in English with the exception of one essay. Richard E. Schade (University of Cincinnati) and Dieter Sevin (Vanderbilt University) have compiled a collection of essays in honor of John A. McCarthy on the occasion of his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. Since McCarthy is a prominent scholar in the field of German literature who is affiliated with the Lessing Society, it stands to reason that the *Festschrift* is settled in the field of German Enlightenment study and research. The volume aims at teaching scholars and students, and brings into account various modern approaches to broaden the reader's knowledge of, and to ease the access to, a broad topic like Enlightenment studies.

Structured chronologically, the collection touches upon several topics dealing with the Enlightenment era. Among those directions are Wolfgang Albrecht's essay "Bestimmung(en) des Menschen. Zu einem Zentralhema des Aufklärungsdiskurses und einigen seiner Facetten im Umkreis Lessings," witch beliefs in "From Evil Eye to Poetic Eye: Witch Belief and Physiognomy in the Age of Enlightenment" by Susanne Kord, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Così fan tutte* explored in Laurie Johnson's "Enlightenment According to Don Alfonso: Perilous Progress in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*," as well as "Casanova's Radical Enlightenment" which is explored by Carl Niekerk. A new approach is brought up in Richard T. Gray's "Economic Value-Theory and Literary Culture in Late-Eighteenth Century Germany: The Debate over Physiocracy," Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *Faust* is at the center of "The Errors of Our Ways: The Relation of Literature to Culture in Goethe's

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*Faust.*” Thomas P. Saine discusses the plight of German churchmen in America in the eighteenth century in “Von London und Hannover verlassen: Germans in America in the Eighteenth Century,” while Herbert Rowland contributes an essay on Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s work (“*Laocoon*, *Nathan the Wise*, and the Contexts of Their Critical Reception in Nineteenth-Century American Reviews”). Robert C. Holub’s essay “Dialectic of the Biological Enlightenment: Nietzsche, Degeneration, and Eugenics” sheds a new light on the whole of Enlightenment thinking, whereas “Humanity and Its Limits: Hannah Arendt Reads Lessing” by Liliane Weissberg throws a glance backwards from the perspective of the 1959 Lessing Prize winner and political philosopher Hannah Arendt. Frank Trommler’s essay “The Use of Brecht’s Enlightenment: Revisiting the 1960s in Germany” defines Bertolt Brecht’s enlightenment and explores the manner in which it was instrumentalized during the 1968 revots in Germany. The final contribution of the volume is “Advancing Enlightenment Toward Ultimate Victory: A Recent Review of Friedrich Nicolaï” written by Horst S. Daemmerich. This short summary shows that certain directions are followed, each of which gives a reading of the Enlightenment period from a different perspective. However, the task to review a collection of essays like this poses a problem. One cannot chose two or three of those various approaches in order to go into discussion with the volume’s content and value since not all of the fourteen contributions can be reviewed at once, and therefore it is not possible to pay tribute to all scholarly essays although they deserve it. Without highlighting single essays, it can be said that inherently the quality of the volumes shows in the authors who contributed and the diversity of topics in the papers adds to the necessary variety in the field.

Richard E. Schade’s overview must be recommended warmly to every scholar interested in this book. Schade not only gives a well-structured introduction to the volume, but also offers an outline explaining the aim of the book “[tracing] a never-ending process of communicative action” or, as he cites McCarthy himself, the volume aims to suggest: “Auf Aufklärung zurückgehen heißt allerdings fortschreiten” (19). Whether interested in a particular essay or all essays contained in the collection, one will find a carefully written summary of all articles in Schade’s introduction which enables the reader to get an exceptionally good sense of what the volume is about and which articles might be of special interest for the particular reader.

All in all, *Practicing Progress - The Promise and Limitations of Enlightenment* acts as a well-rounded summary of all directions into which

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the Enlightenment spreads, its influences on all kinds of social spheres, and a variety of interpretative approaches which are very interesting and definitely make the book recommended reading for all scholars interested in literature, culture and social structures of the German Enlightenment.

Laura Feil, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz

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STEPHEN K. SCHINDLER & LUTZ KOEPNICK, eds. *The Cosmopolitan Screen. German Cinema and the Global Imaginary, 1945 to the Present*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007. 320pp. \$26.95

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Stephan K. Schindler and Lutz Koepinick's *The Cosmopolitan Screen. German Cinema and the Global Imaginary, 1945 to the Present*, is a collection of fifteen essays that investigate the trans-cultural influences that have ironically rendered Germany's national film industry into a global enterprise. Whereas contemporary film criticism often cites Fatih Akin's Golden Bear at the 2004 Berlinale as a watershed moment for a new type of German film, Schindler and Koepnick show that Akin's embrace of cultural hybridity and a fluid definition of national identity has antecedents that may be traced through the industry's attempt to negotiate the manifold political and traumatic ruptures that arose in the shadow of National Socialism.

The text is comprised of four parts that follow a loose chronology from the end of the Second World War to the present. Although the collection adheres to this sequential model, the sections are arranged thematically. The first, "Postwar German Cinema Reconsidered: Far from Home," consists of four chapters that loosely engage with the freedoms and limitations imposed by movement in post-war German film. In "Convertible Provincialism: Heimat and Mobility in the 1950s," Johannes Von Moltke deconstructs the ostensibly timeless *Heimatfilme* by showing how automobiles connect urban and rural spaces, reminding the spectator of the tumultuous *Großstadt* even while watching the bucolic *Heimat*. Similarly, Sabine Hake analyzes "retroprimitivism" within the oft-disparaged 1950's revue film in "Colorful Worlds: The West German Revue Film of the 1950s." Hake argues that revue-films brought pre-modern ethnic Americans, in the tradition of Josephine Baker, into German cinemas in order for the spectator to safely probe the boundaries of their own modern identity.

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Two chapters that examine movements between film industries compliment these analyses of movement within film. “Gained in Translation. Exile Cinema and the Case of Billy Wilder,” focuses on Wilder’s transient life as a Hollywood director and exiled auteur. The author notes that Wilder’s ability to negotiate cultures from the perspective of the Other imbues his films with a transgressive playfulness that contributes to their popularity, while simultaneously concealing Wilder’s deep-rooted disavowal of Germany and the Holocaust. Joseph Loewenstein and Lynne Tatlock analyze the geographic displacement of cultural capital that occurs during the ontological “twinning” of a cinematic remake. They read Disney’s two versions of *The Parent Trap* (1961, 1998) as filmic appropriations of Josef von Baky’s *Das Doppelte Lüttchen* (1950) that co-opt a German narrative for an international audience. The authors show that the “local” German specificity that guided the locations of von Baky’s film are ultimately replaced by the Never-Never Land setting of Disney’s imaginary world.

The book’s second section, “Reworking the National,” focuses on the rejuvenating project of the New German Cinema. It is well known that scholarship typically focuses on the New German Cinema’s compulsive returns to post-war German crises of historiography. Refreshingly, the authors in this section approach New German Cinema in dialogue with international issues in order to show how the project considered topics other than Germany’s troubled past.

In “The Mourning of Labor,” John E. Davidson argues that German films sometimes covertly code critiques of the international exploitation of workers in their syntactic arrangement of scenes. His reading of *Deutschland im Herbst* is particularly astute, illuminating the “impossibility of fulfillment in the public or private sphere as conceived in the bourgeois division of labor” by focusing on the impossibility of fashioning a coherent narrative out of the film’s disparate, auteur-driven syntagma (107). “Drums Along the Amazon” maintains this focus on international exploitation. Friedberg and Hall interrogate the soundtrack of Herzog’s *Fitzcarraldo* in order to deconstruct the New German Cinema’s ostensible opposition to the hegemonic structures of Western cultural imperialism. Herzog’s use of African festival drums to signify the danger of South American natives is analyzed in order to critique the hollowness of his anti-colonialist rhetoric and his insensitivity to the non-European cultures he films.

The final two chapters engage New German Cinema less directly. In “Somebody’s Garbage” Carol Flynn closely reads the symbolic function of trash in Dorris Dörrie’s *Happy Birthday, Türke!* to

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show how rubbish is often metaphorically aligned with racist depictions of minorities. She argues that Dörrie inverts this oft-used paradigm with a Turkish protagonist who slips between identities as a resourceful private detective, and German antagonists who appear “dirty” with corruption. Hester Baer, meanwhile, paraphrases Kracauer’s *From Caligari to Hitler* to highlight the overlaps between feminist film theory and theories of a national cinema in “From Riefenstahl to Riemann.” Baer argues that the nebulous *Frauenfilm* contributes to the anachronistic idea of national cinema by overwriting many of the fissures that occur in times of turmoil with “ambivalent” stances towards divisive gender issues. By correcting transgressive women, *Frauenfilme* re-establish normative behavior patterns for the nation at large.

The book’s third section, “Afterimages of the Holocaust: A German Affair?”, investigates German treatment of the Holocaust in film after 1960, and whether this treatment unfavorably contrasts with international approaches to the criminal legacy of National Socialism. Hanno Loewy argues that it does in “Judgment in the Twilight. German and American Courtroom Dramas and the Holocaust.” Loewy posits that the courtroom drama is approached differently in America than in Germany. American incarnations of the genre stay true to the “rules of discourse” that govern a court by foregrounding individual responsibility and the consequences of criminal actions. German courtroom dramas, conversely, overwrite individual guilt with tragicomic narratives that distract from the perpetrator’s deeds. Stephan Schindler’s “Displaced Images. The Holocaust in German Film” compliments this essay in many ways. Whereas Loew claims that German courtroom dramas elide German guilt by foregoing judgments against war criminals, Schindler argues that a more sinister lacuna in German cinema exists: “...German films—have disembodied the Jews, reduced them to historical but empty signs without reference, signs that continue to characterize German films as specifically German” (204). The final chapter of this group differs from these two investigations of guilt, but nonetheless offers a very insightful approach to a hurdle German film attempted to negotiate during and after National Socialism. Joseph Vilsmaier’s biopic *Marlene* (2000) addresses Marlene Dietrich’s ambivalent reception in Germany after the war. Eric Rentschler argues that Vilsmaier’s film, which is widely regarded as a failure, does not succeed because it continues unsuccessful attempts made during National Socialism to “tame” Dietrich for Germany through a sentimental description of her “return” to her Heimat.

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Whereas the third section concerns itself primarily with German film's problematic engagement with Fascism or the Holocaust, the fourth section asks whether new media and small market experimentation may potentially dismantle the restrictive boundaries of national identity altogether. This is a productive counterpoint to the previous section in that it implies new media alienates the spectator from its collective past, potentially altering its relationship to national guilt and depictions of historical traumas. Gertrud Koch argues that aesthetic choices by two successful directors contribute to this concept in "Catholic Pictorialism. Religion as Style in the Films of Lars von Trier and Tom Tykwer." The Catholicism Koch cites does not refer to religion or religious symbols, but the structural emphasis on *conversion*, in which dissolves and switches between different filmic material create an autonomous spectacle that sutures the spectator into a specifically non-national, global world of images.

The three following chapters emphasize both the disenchantment and dissonance of life in a global society. In "The Politics of Contempt and the Ecology of Images," Fatima Naqvi argues that Michael Haneke's appraisal of mass society in *Code inconnu* presents "western European life as an atomistic aggregation" (237). The author argues convincingly that Haneke's reliance on fragmentary editing and non-obtrusive shots provides a non-critical "chronicle" of life that has no conception of national borders. Rather, the story simply moves indifferently from one conflict to another, with little hope of cohesion and constant expressions of universal contempt. In "Addressing the Global in Recent Nonfiction Film Production," Nora Alter uses Hartmut Bitomsky's ironic documentary of American B52 bombers and Harun Farocki's use of CCTV surveillance videos as examples of non-institutional critiques of the structures of globalized capitalism. The abstract presentation of uncalculated images and the representation of mass produced weapons both provide examples of films that evoke the conditions of alienation and violence that are intrinsic to modern society. The collection's final chapter is one of its most intriguing. In "The New Media Artist and the Matrix. Telemediation and the Virtual World of Bjorn Melhus," Alice Kuzniar observes that Melhus often inserts himself into digital art productions as iconic American cinematic figures or inane consumers of televised shopping networks. As Melhus clones himself digitally, he underscores the tensions between the "real" and the "cyber" individual, while exploring the "locale" of modern technology as a limbic space driven by self absorption. Differentiation is

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not performed on a national level, but rather in the thin space that separates the viewer from the image on their computer screen.

The breadth of approaches that are contained within this book refuse easy classification because its chapters continually open up new paths of inquiry even as they work within the parameters of this study. The book's final section offers obviously fertile ground for investigating new medial shifts and film, but the articles that re-evaluate the canon are most rewarding. Von Moltke's reappraisal of the *Heimatfilm*, as well as Friedberg and Hall's explication of *Fitzcarraldo* provide two excellent examples of this. The unique diversity of the research and the editors' canny selection of contributions that both compliment and challenge each other make this book extremely useful to anyone researching and studying cinematic output in Germany from 1945 to the present.

*Dayton Henderson, University of California Berkeley*

STUART TABERNER. *Contemporary German Fiction – Writing in the Berlin Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 264 pp. £ 50.00.

Die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit literarischen Gegenwartstexten gilt gemeinhin als kontrovers und heikel. Zuerst wird sie von den Feuilletons dominiert, dann von den Forschern an den Universitäten. Parallel zu dem Mitte der Neunziger Jahre verstärkenden Interesse an junger, deutschsprachiger Gegenwartsliteratur konnte man im Bereich der Literaturwissenschaft vermehrt Tendenzen ausmachen sich mit aktuellen Texten zu beschäftigen. Zeitnah zu den literarischen Publikationen selbst wurde, um ein Beispiel zu nennen, eine Reihe helllichtiger Analysen und Monografien zur Pop-Literatur des ausgehenden Jahrzehnts publiziert. Doch hauptsächlich haben sich anglo-amerikanischer Forscher zum Ziel gesetzt die deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur zu hinterfragen. Das Interesse gilt zudem Berlin nach dem Mauerfall – einem Schnittpunkt zwischen sowohl politischer als auch kultureller Geschichte und Gegenwart.

Dreizehn Aufsätze in einem Sammelband – herausgegeben von dem an der University of Leeds lehrenden Stuart Taberner – beleuchten Tendenzen aus verschiedensten Perspektiven, die das literarische Jetzt der Berliner Republik thematisieren. Im Blickpunkt stehen die Literaturdebatte und der Literaturmarkt der Neunziger, literarische west- als auch ostdeutsche Perspektiven, Reflektionen der Generation um

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1968, Darstellungsweisen der nationalistischen Vergangenheit sowie Identitätsbildung bei Autoren mit türkischen und jüdischen Migrationshintergrund. Viele der diskutierten Autoren, wie Günther Grass, Martin Walser, Uwe Timm und Marcel Beyer sowie Christa Wolf, Judith Hermann und Emine Sevgi Özdamar sind auf dem Spielfeld der interdisziplinären Germanistik-Forschung längst bekannt. Was kann also Neues präsentiert werden, was die Forschung nicht schon weiß?

Taberners Anthologie glänzt vielmehr in der Zusammenfassung alter Thesen als in der Präsentation von neuer Forschung. Denn jeder einzelne Aufsatz gibt dem Leser einen eher allgemeinen Überblick von dem zu analysierenden Thema. Bis auf eine Ausnahme: Brigid Haines Aufsatz diskutiert den Einfluss vornehmlich osteuropäischer Autorinnen auf die Berliner Literaturszene. Während türkisch-deutsche sowie deutsch-jüdische Autoren in dem Mittelpunkt der germanistischen Forschung über Gegenwartsliteratur geraten sind, werden Schriftsteller aus den Ostblock-Staaten, in denen historisch bedeutsame deutschsprachige Gemeinden existieren, zu Unrecht wissenschaftlich vernachlässigt. Sie untersucht Schriftstellerinnen, deren Werke mit Rumänien, der Tschechischen Republik und Ungarn in Verbindung stehen. Ihr Fokus liegt bei vier Romanen: Libuše Moníková's Verklärte Nacht (1996), Herta Müllers Herztier (1994), Zsuzsa Bánk's Der Schwimmer (2002) und Terézia Moras Alle Tage (2004). Diese Autorinnen – im Vergleich zu anderen Autoren mit Migrationshintergrund, so argumentiert sie, suchen auch nach einer deutschen Identität. Durch ihr deutsches Schriftstellertum schildern die Werke der Autorinnen die Geschichte des Ostblocks und dessen Untergang so anmutig und mitfühlend und versuchen das Trauma der Hinterbliebenen, literarisch aufzuarbeiten.

Abschließend fällt auf, dass alle Kapitel gemeinsam hervorheben, dass sich die gegenwärtige deutsche Literatur in der Berliner Republik in einem Deutschland widerspiegelt, dass sich modern, facettenreich und vielstimmig zeigt. Einerseits versucht die uns vorgestellte Literatur ihre eigene Identität zu bewahren, sich unter globalen Einflüssen durchzusetzen und in einer Informationsflut nicht versinken, die eine Vorstellung von deutscher Philosophie, Kultur und Intellekt zerstört und nationale Grenzen auflöst. Andererseits orientiert sich diese Literatur auch an essentiell Deutsches: die immer wiederkehrende Thematisierung der nationalistischen Vergangenheit, der Generationenkonflikt, oder einfach die Frage nach einer gesamtdeutschen Identität im gegenwärtigen globalen Kontext. Sicherlich ist wissenschaftliches Forschen an neuen, gerade erst publizierten Texten sehr aufregend. Dennoch kann man nicht vorhersehen, welcher Text die Zukunft bestimmt und sich im Kanon

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der deutschen Literatur durchsetzt. Stuart Taberner zeigt allerdings auf, dass die herausgearbeiteten Themen in dem Sammelband an den Kanon anknüpfen und es daher schwerfällt, es sich wieder wegzudenken.

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BIRGIT TAUTZ. *Reading and Seeing Ethnic Differences in the Enlightenment*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 248 pp. \$69.95.

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With *Reading and Seeing Ethnic Differences in the Enlightenment*, Birgit Tautz makes an important intervention in the productive intersection between German and ethnic studies. Her study traces a genealogy of ethnic differentiations around Hegel's formulations of the self-other constellation while examining two concurrent, yet vastly different modes of perceiving and representing non-European Others. Against the backdrop of discourse analysis, Tautz takes a careful look at the works of Hegel, Leibniz, Wolff, Kant, and Schiller and identifies a crucial break in the German understanding of African and Chinese cultures. In the eighteenth century, the perception and representation of Others split into (at least) two bodies of world cultures and complicated the imperial conception of non-Europeans; homogeneous images of exotic peoples were replaced by divergent imageries of otherness. Whereas Chinese civilization was highly valued as an Eastern manifestation of Enlightenment philosophy, European universalism, and reading/texture, Africa connoted non-European particularism as well as seeing/color. *Reading and Seeing Ethnic Differences in the Enlightenment* offers a compelling study of ethnic differentiations in Enlightenment Germany.

Entitled "Hegel at the Limits of Discourse," the first chapter maps out Tautz's methodological framework. Focusing on Hegel's Berlin lectures on the philosophy of history between 1821 and 1831, her reading sheds light on two conceptual disparities, which seemingly remained separate from one another. For German eyes, so Tautz argues, "read" (China) or "saw" (Africa), but they did not perform both at the same time. In Hegel's paradigm, Chinese society was associated with texture, and the reading subject drew logical inferences about China's relation to Europe; Africa, however, existed in a prehistoric realm of bodies and marked the physicality of blackness. Those two authorial constructs were then projected onto the materiality of the African's black body or the Chinese' book:

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Whereas reading signals the integration of difference, which I call texture, seeing incites the awareness of difference that is color. Texture refers to efforts to integrate ethnic differences into an Enlightenment notion of universalism, whereas color stands for differences perceived as irreducible and thus challenging claims of universality (4).

Tautz considers the location of such different, as well as differentiating, practices of perception and representation a “profound epistemological shift” in the production of ethnic differences in eighteenth-century German culture (25).

Since Tautz’s introductory remarks offer an informative chapter summary, I will refrain from offering another repetition of her arguments. Suffice it to say that the six chapters examine the universality of Chinese culture and writing, Chinese culture *as* writing, as Leibniz, Christian Wolff, and Peter Camper, Kant, Herder, and contemporary travelogue writers perceived and represented them to be. In what follows, then, I shall highlight aspects of Tautz’s scholarship that will invite a community of scholars to explore further German encounters with the “non-West” for various reasons.

In the second chapter, for example, Tautz explains in detail what she means by “translating” early-Enlightenment philosophy into universalism. An imperialist translation of Jesuit missionaries’ work of translations of Chinese culture and language (think of Friedrich Kittler’s “Republic of Scholars” or Pascale Casanova’s “Republic of Letters” in slightly different contexts), Leibniz’s texts transformed China into a symbol of peace and order. Leibniz’s writing conceived of Chinese books as the materiality of something originary, universal and undistorted by human hands and tongues. Chinese characters constituted a transparent and universal language still faithful to the natural order (54). In the third chapter, “Reading Sovereign Subjectivity via China,” the author points to the works of the so-called Tierfurt Circle—“Chinese Morals Teachers” including Seckendorff—who used Asian thought, Chinese principles, and Confucian teachings as a means of criticizing the shortcoming of Enlightenment ideals. Tautz argues that their writing employed Asian metaphors to strengthen European ethicality, morality, and political awareness. Chapter four, titled “Detailed Ethnicity: Perception and Gender in Travel Accounts,” is a survey of eighteenth-century travel accounts that allows contemporary writers to adapt the existing construction of ethnic differences to their own individualistic experiences. The female figure, for instance, served as a central site/sight of observing seemingly unambiguous ethnic differences (between the good white woman and the bad sexual black

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woman). The next chapter, “Aesthetics of Blackness,” examines “Fiasco” as a means of interrogating Schiller’s aesthetic theory in a deeply racialized context. And in the last chapter, entitled “Reading History, Seeing Selves,” Tautz attempts to elucidate the eighteenth century as an epistemological foundation for criticizing modernity. Her reading focuses on the difference between Kant and Herder’s writings on anthropology and aesthetics, race and nation. What Tautz’s careful readings illustrate, then, is the mechanism of textual productions (in competition with travel experiences) and cultural translations (in collaboration with missionary reports) inherent in the heterogeneous writing of non-European cultures and languages in the eighteenth century. They offer an instructive framework for navigating through a great body of African and Chinese particularities in German philosophy.

The significance of *Reading and Seeing Ethnic Differences in the Enlightenment* does not stem from enriching our understanding of eighteenth-century German perceptions and representations of two non-European cultures only. Nor does it simply claim its importance by offering an educational reading that complements Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore’s *The German Invention of Race*, Susanne Zantop’s *Colonial Fantasies*, Karl S. Guthke’s *Die Erfindung der Welt*, and Russell Berman’s *Enlightenment or Empire*, all of which investigate the paradox of Enlightenment philosophies in building political empires, drawing cultural boundaries, and transcending epistemic territories. I understand Tautz’ contributions in two principal ways: first, in tracing a German *Sonderweg* in Leibniz’s universalization of Chinese writing—a general task that Berman has encouraged for quite some time now; and second, in multiplying the ways in which Germans perceived and represented non-Europeans in the eighteenth-century.<sup>1</sup> Those two accomplishments, I believe, help us locate postcolonial studies more firmly within German studies and create new lines of communication with non-German postcolonial scholars whose work also relies on Kant and Hegel. The book is valuable in uncovering a “German” tradition of splitting Theory’s epistemic violence into two discriminations against non-European Others.

David D. Kim, Harvard University

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<sup>1</sup> Russell A. Berman, “German Colonialism: Another *Sonderweg*?” *European Studies Journal* 16 (2): 25-36.

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KEVIN VENNEMANN. *Mara Kogoj*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2007. 217 pp. € 16,80.

“D a schmeißt einer mit der braunen Wurst nach der Speckseite Bachmannpreis.”<sup>1</sup> Such was the eloquent initial response of jury member Karl Corino when Kevin Vennemann read an excerpt from his then-unfinished second novel, *Mara Kogoj*, in the competition for the renowned Bachmann Prize in 2006. Vennemann tackles the historical taboos of this specifically Austrian and generally National Socialist history – including its continuities into the present – with particular explicitness. It seems as though this demur against his explicitness stands in direct opposition to the majority of interpretations that led to the belated success of his first novel.

After sitting on the shelves more or less unnoticed for several months, *Nabe Jedenev*, Vennemann’s 2005 debut novel, was widely celebrated by German feuilletons and literary critics as a book representing a new generation of young German authors “für die sich mit dem Thema deutsche Schuld keine Versteifungen, aber womöglich auch wenig Verpflichtungen verbinden.”<sup>2</sup> And indeed, the narrative mode in which Vennemann tells the story of the persecution and murder of a Jewish family does certainly not rule out this reading. The unconventional protagonist “We” remains name- and faceless; the family’s Jewishness and the specific historical contextualization of their tormentors’ anti-Semitism are only subtly hinted at; and both the ultimate pogrom and its titular setting are fictional. While it still requires a somewhat tendentious approach on the part of a reader to effectively detach this story from its concrete historical premise altogether, it is true that Vennemann’s narrative method of illustrating the pertinence of these events for the present does not foreclose the possibility of generalization.

Both in terms of content and style, it is noticeable that Vennemann was very aware of these problems when writing his second novel. Most of all, *Mara Kogoj* is a literary text which bears evidence of the exhaustive research that has gone into it. In contrast to his first novel,



Vennemann has chosen two central motifs around which the mainly discursive development of the text is concentrated, which both represent actual events in Austrian history. The first is the burning of the Persman farm in Carinthia, which served as a base for Slovenian partisans in the Second World War, and the murder of its civilian inhabitants by a company of Austrian SS- and police troopers. The second is the annual convention at the “Heimkehrergedenkstätte” on the Ulrichsberg at Klagenfurt, which has served as a gathering point for former SS volunteers and other admirers of National Socialist remembrance since the 1950s. Both these events are at the center of the interview which constitutes the whole of the novel. Two fictional Slovenian psychologists, Mara Kogoj and Tone Lebonja, interview the radically right-wing Austrian journalist Ludwig Pflügler. The latter character, in turn, is a recreation of an actual historical person as well as a typified mouthpiece for the contemporary anti-Slovenian resentment and revisionism of a shockingly large number of the general population of Carinthia.

Vennemann has designed this interview as a contest of rival discourses. In aesthetic terms, this entails the modelling of a poetic language which impressively mirrors this constant state of contestation. The largely elliptical sentences are made up of a montage of several discursive materials, seamlessly mixing fictional flashbacks and actual documentary elements with passages which almost qualify as streams of consciousness. All of this is, however, by no means an arbitrary “Diskursmischmasch”, as another juror at Klagenfurt complained, but highly orchestrated in more ways than one. The design of the diverging voices represented by the three characters follows an almost musical pattern, which, supported by Vennemann’s unorthodox usage of syntax and even punctuation, almost makes this prose text appear like a libretto. The language is highly rhythmic and this rhythm is directly interconnected with the discursive hierarchies established at the content level.

It is the treatment of these hierarchies which ultimately sets Vennemann’s second novel apart from his first. So long as Lebonja, who is initially the main interviewer, fights to remain neutral and detached from the ideological fragments reproduced by Pflügler, the latter retains an almost absolute control of the conversation. The neutral act of questioning, which refuses to adopt a position of its own, is no match for the virulent eloquence with which Pflügler represents the collective resentments of German and Austrian nationalism, racism and anti-Semitism. It is only at the very end that this hierarchy changes. Only when Mara Kogoj finally decides to take a stand by no longer accepting the Pflügler’s discursive dominance, when she refuses to play this game

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of neutrality and instead posits her own truth, one which no longer makes itself the object of revisionist arguments, does Pflügler's control of her and Lebonja collapse. Vennemann represents this change not only by a simple trick in the *mise-en-scène*, Kogoj turning her chair away from Pflügler while she speaks her monologue, but also on the level of language, with Pflügler's remaining comments being reduced to empty shells of discursive stereotypes.

In doing so, Vennemann takes up an explicit philosophical and aesthetic opposition to relativist interpretations of his first novel and the dangers they pose. He thereby avoids a classically realist literary treatment of history – a growing trend in German literature – that avoids a clear identification of victims and perpetrators at all cost. Rather, *Mara Kogoj*, both the novel and its eponymous character, follow a clearly materialist concept and critique of ideology that has rightfully been compared to Thomas Bernhard's indefatigable anti-Nationalist “Nestbeschmutzungen” and which, ultimately, pays a striking homage to that famous double quote of Rosa Luxemburg's: “Wie Lasalle sagte, ist und bleibt die revolutionärste Tat, ‘immer das laut zu sagen, was ist’”.

*Guido Schenkel, University of British Columbia*

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### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> “Kontroversielle Jury-Meinungen,” *Bachmannpreis*, Österreichischer Rundfunk, 29 May 2008 <<http://bachmannpreis.orf.at/bachmannpreis/texte/stories/117774/>>.

<sup>2</sup> Georg Dietz, “Die schönste traurige Geschichte,” *Die Zeit Online* 12 January 2006, 29 May 2008 <<http://www.zeit.de/2006/03/L-Vennemann?page=all>>.

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MARTIN WALSER. *Das geschundene Tier. Neununddreißig Balladen*. Mit Zeichnungen von Alissa Walser. Reinbek: Rowohlt Verlag, 2007. 90 pp. € 16,90.

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**Z**u ihrem 80. Geburtstag haben zwei der wichtigsten und berühmtesten deutschen Schriftsteller je eine Gedichtssammlung veröffentlichen lassen. Während Günter Grass mit dem luxuriös ausgestatteten *Dummer August* die Reaktionen auf das international bekannt gewordene *FAZ*-Interview vom 12. August 2006, in dem der Literaturnobelpreisträger im Bezug auf das Erinnerungsbuch *Beim Häuten der Zwiebel* zum ersten Mal nach mehr als sechzig Jahren über

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seine Mitgliedschaft in der Waffen-SS sprach, zu bewältigen scheint, präsentiert Martin Walser in *Das geschundene Tier* höchstintime, schmerzvolle Verse, die – so der Verleger – „zum Persönlichsten“ gehören, was der Autor bisher vorgelegt hat.

Sicherlich ist die Suche nach der sprühenden Ironie, die Walsers Prosawerke sonst charakterisiert, in diesem Band vergeblich. Seine 39 delikaten und schwermütigen Gedichte nennt er „Balladen“, obwohl es sich eher um knappe Vier- bis Achtzeiler handelt, die einen partiellen Einblick in den komplexen Gemüts- und Seelenzustand eines Menschen anbieten, der als sensibler Künstler und *praeceptor Germaniae* die deutsche Zeitgeschichte über Jahrzehnte nicht nur verfolgt und begleitet sondern auch in kritischer Wachheit kommentiert hat. Hier sind also keine längeren Heldenlieder oder Schauergeschichten zu finden, die lyrische, dramatische und epische Elemente vereinen, sondern kurze, sprachlich kondensierte, mit einem gewissen elegischen Ton und meistens in freiem Vers verfasste kleine Juwelle über Schmerz, Folter, Leere, Falschheit und Feindseeligkeit.

Es kann natürlich kein Zufall sein, dass die Abfassung der in diesem eleganten Büchlein enthaltenen Gedichte 1998 begonnen hat – nach der scharfen intellektuellen und politischen Debatte, die durch die am 11. Oktober jenes Jahres in der Frankfurter Paulskirche gehaltene Rede anlässlich der Verleihung des Friedenspreises des deutschen Buchhandels ausgelöst wurde. Damals warf unter anderen Ignatz Bubis, der damalige Zentralvorsitzende der Juden in Deutschland, dem ausgezeichneten Schriftsteller eine gefährliche Schlussstrichmentalität vor, weil er sich gegen eine politische oder moralische Instrumentalisierung der Shoa aussprach: „Auschwitz eignet sich nicht dafür, Drohroutine zu werden, jederzeit einsetzbares Einschüchterungsmittel oder Moralkеule oder auch nur Pflichtübung“. Vier Jahre später, nach der Erscheinung des kontroversen und ästhetisch weniger gelungenen Romans *Tod eines Kritikers*, in dem eine der Hauptfiguren frappierende Ähnlichkeiten mit Marcel Reich-Ranicki zeigt, wurde Walser vorgehalten, sich bei seiner Attacke auf den jüdischen Literaturkritiker antisemitischer Klischees bedient zu haben.

Sein Sich-Unverstanden-Fühlen scheint der Schriftsteller an mehreren Stellen dieses ersten Gedichtbandes zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Schon auf den ersten Seiten denunziert das lyrische Ich: „Alles fälschen heißt, alles verbessern. [...] Wem nur die Wahrheit / einfällt, der schweige. Und schämen soll er sich“ (2). Und weiter: „Umlaute lieb ich und das heiße Zischen / des Verschwiegenen. Lieber in Scherben /

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baden als in der Wahrheit. Gesteihen macht hässlich. / Gierig schlürf ich aus dem leeren Glas Schaum“ (4).

Die von der Frau erfundene (!) Lüge, „von allen Künsten die schönste“ (10), „das einzige, / was den Menschen vom Tier unterscheidet“ (25), wird so zum Kernthema der ganzen Balladensammlung. Die Wahrheit splittert im Geständnis unter Folter auf, in Falschheit, in quälende Erinnerungen und sogar in eine Art Selbstzensur: „Meister / im sittlichen Hochsprung wollte ich sein / und kau meine Zunge jetzt wie ein Depp / und ball meine Fäuste vor Dummheit“ (31). Das Schweigen stellt sich parallel als Sprachkrise sowie Sprachlosigkeit dar. Man spürt das Bedürfnis des fragilen lyrischen Ichs, die alltägliche Erfahrung des Schmerzens und des Leidens in Worte zu fassen, aber gleichzeitig erlebt das Subjekt so zu sagen eine Lähmung der Zunge, die „zitternd [...] in ihrem Bett“ liegt (19), und ihm das Sprechen verhindert: „Mir wächst keine Blume im Mund“ (33).

Den Versuch, die eigene Sprachskepsis bewältigend zu dichten, lässt Walser in manchen lakonischen Versen gewaltig aufsteigen: „Mein Gefieder liebt den Teer. [...] Meine / Stimme schneidet Botschaften dir ins steinerne / Herz. Am liebsten wäre ich das Ufer / eines Meers, das keinen Namen hat“ (8). Das poetische Subjekt will „namenlos baden im Namenlosmeer“ und singt „das Liebeslied ohne Worte“ (34). Der Beruf und die Aufgabe des Dichters ist die Züchtung und Zähmung der wilden griechischen Rächergöttinnen, der Erinnyen, doch für das riskante Unterfangen des Schreibens wird er elend „mit Asche und Parfüm“ (5) bezahlt. Man mag hier im Flüsterton ein latentes Gefühl schweren Selbstmitleides spüren, als ob der Schmerz, den das verletzte Ich besingt, irgendwie mit der Verwundbarkeit des modernen Schriftstellers im Allgemeinen und gleichzeitig mit der besonderen persönlichen Erfahrung Martin Walsers in enger Verbindung stünde. „Heilig ist nur der Schmerz“ (13) teilt er uns resigniert mit; Schmerz ist die „irdische Suppe“ (11), die der Versenkte und Versunkene täglich kocht und verzehrt.

In seinem einsamen Tanz um das geschundene Tier, um die gemarterte Seele des Menschen, wird das melancholische Wort des Dichters von den schlicht versponnenen, expressionistisch verführerischen Ölzeichnungen seiner Tochter Alissa begleitet. Ihre skizzierten Figuren und ihre schwebenden, schwungvollen, sich erhebenden und senkenden Linien sind Metaphern für Kampf, Sinnsuche, innere Zerbrechlichkeit, Erschütterung, Niederlage. Doch der universelle und individuelle Schmerz, der in dieser Balladensammlung in seiner finsternen Grammatik dekliniert wird,

scheint am Ende einem bleich hellen Lichtstrahl von Hoffnung Raum zu gewähren: Das lyrische Ich schluckt seinen Schrei, weiß seinen Namen wieder und trägt „den Mond im Geweih“ (39).

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WILLI WINKLER. *Die Geschichte der RAF*. Berlin: Rowohlt Verlag, 2007. 527 pp. € 22,90.

Eine Frau geht herum auf dem Dachboden deutscher Geschichten. Es ist Ulrike Meinhof, die auch über 30 Jahre nach ihrem Tod noch immer in der Gegenwart präsent ist. Mit ihr die Geschichte der Roten Armee Fraktion (RAF), die „zu Ende, aber noch lange nicht vorbei“ ist (20). Mit diesem treffenden Bild beginnt der Journalist Willi Winkler seine ausführliche Darstellung der bekanntesten Spielart des westdeutschen Terrorismus, die er selbstbewusst *Die Geschichte der RAF* genannt hat. Auf über 500 Seiten zeichnet Winkler die Entwicklungen der 1950er-Jahre bis zur Gegenwart nach und entwirft so nicht nur einen Überblick der Geschichte der RAF von der „ersten“ bis zur „dritten Generation“, sondern bietet ganz nebenbei auch faszinierende Einblicke in die Alltagskultur der westdeutschen Nachkriegsgesellschaft.

Im Vergleich zu anderen Überblicksdarstellungen des westdeutschen Terrorismus, wie Stefan Austs Standardwerk *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex* oder Butz Peters reißerischer Kriminalgeschichte *Tödlicher Irrtum. Die Geschichte der RAF*, besitzt Winklers Studie sicherlich den Vorzug, sowohl den gesamten Aktionszeitraum der RAF als auch deren Entstehungsgeschichte ausführlich abzudecken. Gerade der Vorgeschichte widmet der Journalist verstärkte Aufmerksamkeit. Mit knapp 150 Seiten geht seine Herleitung der Entscheidung, Andreas Baader im Mai 1970 mit Waffengewalt zu befreien, deutlich über eine oberflächliche Kontextualisierung der Ereignisse hinaus. Unter der Überschrift „Wie Gewalt entsteht“ behandelt Winkler so nicht nur die Ermordung Benno Ohnesorgs während einer Anti-Schah-Demonstration am 2. Juni 1967 in West-Berlin, sondern befasst sich auch ausführlich mit dem Phänomen des wachsenden Gewaltpotentials in der durchaus heterogenen Studentenbewegung.

Mit dem politischen Aktivist Rudi Dutschke, den Schriftstellern Peter Schneider und Hans Magnus Enzensberger oder dem Kommune I Initiator Dieter Kunzelmann lässt Winkler Akteure

aus unterschiedlichen Bereichen des politischen Engagements zu Wort kommen. Seine Fokussierung auf Stimmen von Intellektuellen und Schriftsteller/innen entspricht dem Zeitgeist einer geradezu lese- und schreibwütigen Generation und macht die Geschichtsdarstellung auch für Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaftler/innen zu einer interessanten Lektüre. Darüber hinaus bereichert Winkler das Spektrum mit seinen fundierten Kenntnissen über Pop und Populärkultur; Marcuse steht neben den Rolling Stones, das 1965 gegründete *Kursbuch* neben *Bonnie and Clyde*. Hinweise auf kultur- und kunsttheoretische Auseinandersetzungen, wie den Surrealismus, und Guy Debords Überlegungen hinsichtlich der *Gesellschaft des Spektakels*, geben Anregungen für weiterführende Lesarten der terroristischen Ereignisse und ihrer künstlerischen Rezeptionen.

Es sind sicherlich diese kulturtheoretischen Querverweise und gelungenen Zusammenstellungen künstlerischer und intellektueller Positionen aus dem sehr weiten Umfeld der RAF und ihrer Vorgeschichte, die die Qualität des vorliegenden Buches im Vergleich zu anderen RAF-Darstellungen ausmachen. Denn im Hinblick auf die tatsächlichen Ereignisse und ihre Hintergründe hat Winkler nur wenig Neues zu berichten. Er zeichnet die Stationen der „ersten Generation“ von der Kaufhausbrandstiftung in Frankfurt am Main im April 1968 über die Baader-Befreiung im Mai 1970, die militärische Ausbildung der sich neu formierenden Stadtguerilla im Nahen Osten, die sogenannte Maioffensive mit Bombenanschlägen auf öffentliche Einrichtungen und US-Militärstützpunkte in der BRD 1972 bis hin zur Verhaftung der meisten Gruppenmitglieder im Juni des gleichen Jahres detailliert nach. Auch die Neustrukturierung politischer Rhetorik im Zuge der Inhaftierung, die Instrumentalisierung der Topoi der Isolationshaft und sensorischen Deprivation sowie der bewusste Einsatz des eigenen Körpers als letztes Mittel im politischen Kampf werden zuverlässig und einsichtig geschildert.

Doch stützt Winkler sich bei seinen Analysen weniger auf inzwischen zumindest teilweise zugängliches Archivmaterial. Vielmehr vertraut er auf bereits erhältliche Untersuchungen, wie jene von Stefan Aust, Butz Peters und anderen, die er mit Positionspapieren und Briefen der RAF sowie mit Autobiographien einzelner Akteure und Aussagen von Zeitzeugen ergänzt. Damit verfolgt Winkler weitestgehend genau jenen Ansatz, der die Politikerin und Journalistin Jutta Ditfurth dazu motiviert hat, über sechs Jahre in die Archive zurückzukehren, um am Ende eine neue Biographie Ulrike Meinhofs verfassen zu können: „Die meisten Autoren arbeiten oberflächlich, sie schreiben – und das ist

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richtig grauslig – die Legenden, die Geschichten, die Mythen aus einem sogenannten RAF-Klassiker ab,<sup>41</sup> so Ditfurth im Interview. Dass es sich bei diesem „Klassiker“ um Austs *Baader-Meinhof-Komplex* handelt, ist hinlänglich bekannt. Und tatsächlich ist dessen Bedeutung als Grundlagenwerk bei Winkler nicht zu übersehen. Dass Winklers Studie zudem hinter die neuesten, in einem TV-Zweiteiler im Herbst 2007 präsentierten Erkenntnisse Austs hinsichtlich der Existenz von Kommunikations- und Abhöranlagen im siebten Stock der Justizvollzugsanstalt Stuttgart-Stammheim zurückfallen muss, tut der Folgerichtigkeit seines überzeugenden historischen Überblicks dennoch keinen Abbruch und ist letztlich der längeren Produktionszeit des Buchformats im Gegensatz zum journalistischen Artikel geschuldet.

Widmet sich Winkler jenen Ereignissen des Jahres 1977, die als „Deutscher Herbst“ in die bundesdeutsche Geschichtsschreibung eingehen sollten, noch mit recht großer Ausführlichkeit, so findet er für die Zeit zwischen 1977 und 1998 – dem Jahr der offiziellen Auflösung der RAF – noch nicht einmal 100 Seiten. Dass auf knapp 100 Seiten zudem die Fragezeichen dominieren, entspricht jedoch nicht zuletzt den zahlreichen offenen Fragen in den Akten des Bundeskriminalamtes und der zum Teil quälenden Unwissenheit der Angehörigen von Ermordeten. Der Tod Wolfgang Grams auf den Schienen des Bahnhofs in Bad Kleinen im Juni 1993 stellt den (fast) letzten Akt dieser deutschen „Passionsgeschichte“ (9) dar. In diesem Zusammenhang betont Winkler, dass die ungeklärten Todesumstände und der Vorwurf des staatlichen Mordes die politischen Gemüter der unterschiedlichen Lager zwar auch in den 1990er-Jahren noch emotionalisierten. Aber zu einer ähnlichen Wirkung wie bei dem in Folge eines Hungerstreiks 1974 gestorbenen Holger Meins konnte es im inzwischen vereinigten Deutschland nun nicht mehr kommen.

Dennoch macht Winkler unmissverständlich deutlich, dass die Geschichte der RAF zwar vorbei, aber trotzdem nicht vergangen ist. So weist er aus aktuellem Anlass auf die Diskussionen um die Haftentlassungen von Brigitte Mohnhaupt und Christian Klar Anfang des Jahres 2007 hin, in denen sich gezeigt hat, wie stark sich die Reden über den westdeutschen Terrorismus der 1970er- und 1980er-Jahre im Zuge des Aufkommens neuer Formen des globalen Terrorismus mit anderen Diskursen vermischen. In dieser emotional aufgeladenen Stimmung ist es notwendig, auf zuverlässige Geschichtsdarstellungen zurückgreifen zu können, die die Geschichte als heterogene Geschichten divergierender Perspektiven darstellen. Mit seiner präzisen Beschreibung der Geschichte der RAF, ihrer Aktionen sowie zeithistorischen und

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gesellschaftspolitischen Kontexte hat der Journalist Willi Winkler eine sehr gut lesbare Studie vorgelegt. Das von einer Chronologie, einem überblicksartigen Literaturverzeichnis und einem Bildteil ergänzte Buch liefert dabei vielleicht auf den ersten Blick nicht viel Neues. Und doch bietet es einen umfassenden und zuverlässigen Überblick der Geschichte der RAF an, der von intellektuellen und künstlerischen Auseinandersetzungen mit der Gewaltfrage ergänzt wird. Damit macht *Die Geschichte der RAF* letzten Endes auch Angebote für eine neue theoretische Konzeption der Geschichten der Roten Armee Fraktion und ihrer künstlerischen Imaginationen.

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### Note

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<sup>1</sup> Jutta Ditfurth wird im folgenden Artikel zitiert: Arno Luik, „Sie war die große Schwester der 68er,“ *stern* 8 November 2007, 29 May 2008 <<http://www.stern.de/politik/historie/:Ditfurth-%FCber-Meinhof-Sie-Schwester-68er/601916.html>>.

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