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SPECIAL ISSUE: MEASURING THE WORLD

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**Taking the Measure of National Greatness: Georg Brandes’
Condemnation of German Imperialism**

In numerous public speeches and essays published around the turn of the 20th century, the Danish intellectual Georg Brandes (1842–1927) criticized Germany’s imperialistic behavior, in particular its oppressive treatment of the Danish minority in Slesvig-Holstein, as incompatible with true national greatness. In Brandes’s view, many of the same traits and actions that bolstered Germany’s national pride and international might violated human rights and compromised human dignity, thus diminishing Germany’s moral and cultural stature. Grounded in the traditions of bourgeois liberalism, Brandes’s brand of cosmopolitan nationalism privileges the “universal” conception of the nation as a civic union in which the rights of heterogeneous ethnic groups must be protected by the state to which they belong, regardless of that state’s dominant linguistic and ethnic identity. His defense of oppressed minority groups against the economic and military might of German imperialism exemplifies his privileging of the universal over the national. (JKA)

Peter Goßens

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Das Wetterleuchten der Weltliteratur. Eine Debatte um 1900

Georg Brandes's essay „Weltliteratur," which appeared in the *Litterarische Echo* in 1899, marks the beginning of a debate lasting until World War I about the relationship of world literature and *Heimatsdichtung*. The debate culminated in the conflicts of its two most prominent representatives, the Jewish literary scholar Richard M. Meyer and the nationalist literary historian Adolf Bartels. The two had their first encounter in 1900 over their respective histories of German literature, as Bartels launched a relentless antisemitic campaign against Meyer's work. When they both published their histories of world literature in 1913, the debate was revived. Bartels rejected any form of cosmopolitan world literature discourse put forth by Meyer. For Bartels, instead, the question of the "Wesen des Volkstums" was the true essence of literary studies. With this work, he stands, on the one hand, in the tradition of antisemitic thinking reminiscent of Ernst Moritz Arndt and, on the other hand, appears as an early cultivator of the kind of nationalist racial and cultural policy that would culminate in the crimes of National Socialism. (PG; in German)

Karolina May-Chu

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Measuring the Borderland in Sabrina Janesch's *Katzenberge* (2010)

This contribution considers the role that borders and borderlands play in 'measuring the world.' I argue that the increased awareness of the inherent tensions of borders and border spaces and their shifting constellations have produced a border poetics. Border poetics is a particular narrative and cultural practice that moves borders to the center of the narrative and turns actual topographic and geopolitical border sites into a staging ground for more universally oriented figurative and literal border crossings. The analysis of *Katzenberge* highlights how 'world,' when measured from the perspective of the borderland, is made visible as a network of flexible and highly mobile constellations of affiliation and belonging between variously conceived boundaries. Because of the simultaneous engagement with universal and particular border experiences, and its commitment to flexible trans-border connections, border poetics can be understood as an idiom of the cosmopolitan imagination within the context of a "critical cosmopolitanism" (Delanty). (KM-C)

Daniel Purdy

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China Circulating in Early Modern German Print Media

This paper argues broadly that China was an important concern at early modern German courts because East Asia constituted a region into which German electors hoped to expand their own political power. Their ventures were only sometimes successful, leading thus to a cycle of political engagement with and detachment from East Asia. Within the publishing world, information about China was constrained by the limited access Europeans had to the Middle Kingdom. Even though Jesuit missionaries provided the most scholarly accounts of the Chinese elite, their reports and translations did not satisfy the growing demand

for writing about China; thus early modern publishers repeated many of the same narratives and descriptions of China in ever-new reformulations of familiar texts. This article examines the on-again, off-again media cycle of early modern representations of China. (DP)

Randall Halle

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German Visual Culture: From National to European Style

This article focuses ostensibly on the moving image. It starts with a discussion of cinema six years before its invention. In doing so we step back from the projected moving image and consider its emergence in precisely the larger visual field dominated by the transition from universalist to national style. From there the article goes on to consider 1) the way that an attention to national style has affected cinema and shaped (German) film studies; 2) how the national style that culminated in New German Cinema has given way to a transnational European style undoing stable signifiers of German culture, with the ‘German images’ of the 1970s giving way in the 1990s to ‘images of Germany’ or even a more general ‘images made in Germany’; and 3) how the digital revolution in the 21st century has ruptured the frame of the silver screen and freed the moving image to stream through new formats and in new places and in which furthermore the changes wrought by digital reproducibility have resulted in what we can identify as a culture industry 2.0. (RH)

Katherine M. Robiadek

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World versus Worldview: Heidegger’s Thinking on Art as a Critique of German Historicism

This article suggests that Heidegger’s thinking about art is an integral part of his overall philosophical project critiquing dominant metaphysical views in the Germany of his time. Heidegger’s understanding of the work that art does assumes a central role in his project at a critical moment in German intellectual life when critiques of historicism were strengthening. Heidegger engages such critiques through pointing out connections between German historicism and modern metaphysics. My contribution is to detail some of what is at stake in Heidegger’s thinking about art as it connects to his critique of historicism on ontological grounds, specifically in the opposition of his understanding of a “world” created through art to the historicist “worldview.” Ultimately, I argue that the mode of thinking Heidegger associates with art is necessary for the ontological transformation needed for understanding human existence as the basis of history (instead of any metaphysical ideals, such as historicist progress). (KR)

Lisa Yager

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Linguistic Borderlands: Exploring the Role of Language in Colonialist and Nationalist Ideologies Exemplified in Uwe Timm’s *Morenga*

This essay explores the link between language and power through the definition of political and personal borders exemplified in Uwe Timm’s novel *Mor-*

enga, which depicts the Nama rebellion in German Southwest Africa. I investigate how the ideologies and atmosphere of this time are depicted with regard to the historical role of language in the German Colonial period, both in the submission and subjugation of the African language and dominance of the German language, and its role in the suppression of the native Nama and Herero people. I also explore the ways in which language is repeatedly part of a failed learning process in the novel, demonstrated by the inability to achieve intercultural understanding and its result in the creation of “new” pidgin languages. Furthermore, I investigate the use of bureaucratic language to convey an authoritative presence, as it is used in historical and pseudo-historical documents and focalization through various figures and media throughout the novel. (LY)

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