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ARTICLES

Johannes D. Kaminski

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The Euphemistic Gaze: Observing Destruction Through Goethe's Eyes

Since the end of the *Goethezeit* and the advent of large-scale destruction of the biosphere, the way we observe nature has changed. While it holds true that the emphatic gaze at nature has become something of an anachronism, the synchronization of esthetics and science has not lost relevance. In *Briefe aus der Schweiz: Zweite Abteilung*, Goethe achieves this balance by anxiously keeping his subjective impression in check while pointing out the particularly 'pure' feeling it elicits. Later, in the *Farbenlehre*, the author means to extend this eudaimonological concern to his readership while simultaneously establishing a rigid division between right and wrong perceptions. The colorblind and the melancholic are met with particular suspicion, since they threaten the entire project. Furthermore, as the quest for an untroubled mindset is imperative, the *Campagne in Frankreich* 1792 shows how natural observation can be exercised even in war-torn surroundings. Eventually, marching soldiers and even the shelling of Verdun become mere objects of optical study. This euphemistic gaze connects Goethe's natural observation with contemporary attitudes towards the destruction of the biosphere, as exemplified by the photography of Daniel Beltrá. (JDK)

Kai-Uwe Werbeck

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Beyond Weimar Expressionism and *Agfacolor*: Literary Representations of Rubble Space in Heinrich Böll's *Der Engel schwieg*

This article queries the representation of rubble space in Heinrich Böll's posthumously published novel *Der Engel schwieg*, written from 1949 to 1950. Taking

a critical look at Germany's rubble years, the novel at first evokes the expressionist tableaux that also dominated the contemporaneous rubble films. As the narrative progresses, however, the literary text abandons the surreal chiaroscuro landscapes in favor of a more differentiated image of the destruction, a reconfiguration that scholarship on Böll has overlooked so far. Neither a mere add-on to rubble film nor a late contribution to high modernism's "filmic" writing, *Der Engel schwieg* is rather highly invested in the literary appropriation of a traditionally visual image—the rubble—as a means to reframe the nation's postwar narrative after fascism. In the interplay between form and content, I argue, we find a forceful challenge of postwar Germany's founding myth of the *Stunde Null*, the convenient belief that the end of the Third Reich also meant a clear-cut break from the nation's fascist past. The reconfigurations of the rubble that occur throughout the novel give form to the historical continuities, conflicting perspectives, and competing ideologies that—as far as Böll was concerned—still permeated Germany after National Socialism. (KUW)

Jan Uelzmann

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Bonn, World City: Explaining the FRG's Provisional Capital through Government-Commissioned Documentaries during the Adenauer Years

This essay examines two documentaries on Bonn produced by the Deutsche Wochenschau that the Federal government commissioned during the Adenauer period (1949–63), to make the argument that they portray Bonn as having all the necessary features to compete with any "permanent" capital of the Western world, in spite of its status as provisional capital. In organizing their narratives, both films embrace Bonn's inherent contradiction between a provincial setting and the international capital duties in such a way as to use it to demarcate the capital's provisionality, thereby deflecting wide-spread public criticism of Bonn as capital due to financial and political considerations. In their thematic alignment, the films thus reflect the complexity of the sociopolitical founding discourses attached to the installment of the FRG on one of the central fault lines of the Cold War, the repercussions of which can be traced all through Adenauer's chancellorship. Bonn emerges from the films as the dynamic capital of a new Germany after 1945, which, led by Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer as its central architect, took a confident and forward-looking role in world politics. (JU)

Gabriele Eckart

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"An Unconditional Kleistian": A Note to Barbara Honigmann's *Bilder von A.*

This study examines the German writer and painter Barbara Honigmann's complex relationship to the works of Heinrich von Kleist. During the last decade, Honigmann has become renowned for novels in which she describes her experience of crossing borders—geographically (from the GDR to France in 1984), linguistically (from German to French), and religiously (converting to Judaism after having been an ardent Marxist). As she explains in her narrative

Bilder von A. (2011), reading, rereading, staging Kleist, and painting a portrait of the writer played an important role in the process of negotiating her identity during the years in the GDR and afterwards, in France. (GE)

Ela Gezen

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May Ayim und der Blues

May Ayim is one of the best-known representatives of both the Black German movement and Black German literature. Her individual and collaborative works helped to shape collective modes of Black German identity, making visible and affirming ties to the Black diaspora. This paper examines the intersections of music—specifically, the blues—and literature in Ayim’s poetry, focusing in particular on *blues in schwarz weiss* (1995). Here Ayim references the African oral tradition not only through her inclusion of Adinkra symbols, but also through a blues aesthetic that manifests itself in scat-like interjections, rhythmic breaks and patterns, and repetitions. In addition to these formal aspects, her blues aesthetic also relies on the West African tradition of “Nommo”—the naming process. Ayim’s poetry follows this tradition by incorporating her personal experiences, addressing pressing socio-political issues, and by constructing and presenting a self-determined Black German subject as member of a larger community, within and beyond Germany. Her essayistic and poetic works stand in dialogical relationship with each other, and serve as a forum to publicly discuss discrimination and marginalization as universal problems. As with the Blues, this essay argues, Ayim’s poetry presents socio-political problems as resolvable by formulating a “we” capable of action. (EG; in German)

REVIEW ARTICLE

Armin Schäfer

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Kein „Frieden mit dem ‚schönen Schein‘“. Ausgewählte Problemstellungen in neuen Beiträgen zur Goethe-Forschung

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