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Contents

ARTICLES

S.E. Jackson

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Feminism, Science, and Politics of Infanticide in Wilhelmine Germany

This essay examines how public figures in the German women's movements and modern sciences in the early twentieth century cultivated political authority through discourses and legal practices related to infanticide. Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, views had shifted from considering the *Kindsmörderin* a monstrous criminal to situating infanticide as a complex legal, sociological, and scientific concern. Around 1900 public discourse on the crime expanded to encompass evolving socio-cultural expectations for modern women, connecting it to the so-called *Frauenfrage*, and feminists took active interest in the subject. This article argues that, in combination, the cultural-historical importance of the figure, the ambivalent moral status of the *Kindsmörderin* and the affective impact of the crime itself, and the crime's *Privilegierung* in the criminal code, made infanticide a potential point of access for emerging political agents to influence public opinion and policy in the newly formed German nation. (SEJ)

April A. Eisman

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Symbolic Erasures and Populist Discontent: The Post-War Rebuilding of Historic Dresden

This article looks at the post-war rebuilding of Dresden's historic *Altstadt* (Old City) as a case study in the elision of East German cultural achievements in Germany today. Beginning with the destruction of the city at the end of World War II, an event that is deeply embedded in the psyche of native Dresdners and that sets the stage for the city's subsequent reconstruction, this article focuses

on the rebuilding of the Zwinger and the Semper Opera House, which, unlike the Frauenkirche, were done by East Germans themselves and completed in a context of material hardship. The article then shows how this past has been elided since unification and how this striking elision is linked to contemporary dissatisfaction in the East that has contributed to right-wing populist groups like Pegida and the AfD. (AAE)

Helga Schreckenberger

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“Dort, wo die Logik versagt”—The Role of Coincidence in Dimitré Dinev’s *Engelszungen* (2003)

Dimitré Dinev’s novel *Engelszungen* presents a subversive variation of the traditional coincidence plot, which brings together characters with a prior connection seemingly by chance and under remarkable circumstances. Dinev functionalizes both the coincidence plot’s ability to generate suspense and its promise to offer insights into deeper systems underlying life. By linking his protagonists’ lives through a number of striking coincidences, the author keeps the readers wondering about the meaning and outcome of their impending encounter. However, he subverts the traditional coincidence plot’s assertion of causality as explanatory system. In *Engelszungen*’s narrative world, the coincidences are ultimately attributed to chance and randomness, undermining readers’ belief in causal explanations as well as challenging a deterministic world view that understands certain events as unavoidable. (HS)

Robert Britten

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“Blick und Gebärde”: Embodied Perception in *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*

This article reassesses the claim by Rainer Maria Rilke’s protagonist Malte that he is “learning to see”, a statement often understood to distinguish between an acquired, artistic gaze and supposedly superficial ordinary perception. Challenging this interpretation, it expands on scholarship that has shifted attention away from vision, proposing that Malte’s experience is best understood not simply as multimodal, but as grounded in acts of embodied world-engagement. Against the backdrop of recent enactivist theorizing in the philosophy of perception the article demonstrates that rich experiences, mundane or strange, are not the prerogative of the artist, instead relying on the same embodied capacities that underlie ordinary life. While Malte struggles with the relationship between perceptual experience and language, the novel itself is a testimony to the power of literary description to make such experience salient: not through a recreation of a specifically poetic gaze, but through closely-paid attention to the perceptual acts that bring it about. (RB)

Hanne Janssens

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Ein Wanderer in ökologisch zerrütteten Vorstellungswelten. Konfiguration eines vernetzten Mensch-Seins in W.G. Sebalds *Die Ringe des Saturn*

This article focuses on the configuration of a connected humanity in W.G. Sebald’s *The Rings of Saturn*. Although Sebald’s ecological landscapes show-

case human-inflicted damage to the environment, the development of the terrain proceeds of its own accord. These evolutions, which are both anthropogenic and autopoietic, demonstrate the agency of human and non-human actors alike, thus destabilizing the traditional distinction between the active human subject and its passive material surroundings. In a typical anthropogenic search for meaning, the narrator sets out on a journey and explores the interconnectedness of the human and the non-human, the natural and the cultural. However, immersion in his surroundings does not lead to a contingent understanding of such connectedness. The process of writing allows the narrator to restructure places and experiences. He assembles his notes in the hope of gaining an overview of their complexity. (HJ, in German)

J. Brandon Pelcher

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Environmental Kitsch: Commodity-Ecology in Jenny Erpenbeck's "Tand"

The impact of commodities on the human experience of nature has largely been confined to their production or their disposal. In closely reading Jenny Erpenbeck's short story "Tand," this article seeks to theorize the role that commodity consumption plays in such experiences. Adapting and extending Timothy Morton's concept of ecomimesis, this article reads the impact of consumption on bodily experience and commodification on experienced nature. Not merely the placement of commodities between subject and object, this dual effect overcomes both human-commodity and commodity-nature dichotomies. This ultimately transforms an experience of nature into the symbiotic processes of consumption of a socio-capitalist construction called "Nature" that poses as nature. With "Tand" as a particularly constructive example, this article works toward the establishment of an ecocriticism of commodity consumption (JBP)

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