

Roche (whose bestselling *Feuchtgebiete* was admittedly published in 2008, a bit after the timeframe of *Into the Groove*), but it could also have included a more consistent discussion of masculinity. Hurley acknowledges that rock-centric writers like Matthias Politycki are “masculinist” (119) but fails to explain why techno-centric writers like Rainald Goetz are not.

Whereas East German and female writers are marginalized in the study, immigrant writers and hip hop discourse are completely absent. This is astounding, since major hip hop prose, like Feridun Zaimoğlu’s *Kanak Sprak* and *Koppstoff*, was published at the height of *Popliteratur*. The inherent whiteness of the concept as used by Hurley becomes apparent when the African American history of techno is downplayed; it is even more obvious when the voices of *Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund* are ignored despite the fact that second- and third-generation immigrants became increasingly vocal in post-reunification Germany. The framework of the study might explain why there is no discussion of poetry and why important figures like Rocko Schamoni and Heinz Strunk are only mentioned in passing, as is pop music that borrows from literature (like that of the *Hamburger Schule*), but the absence of hip hop fiction is deplorable.

This is not to say that *Into the Groove* is without merit. The book is well-researched and successfully situates *Popliteratur* in the context of word-and-music studies. It is a serious study of a phenomenon that has not received enough attention, at least in English-language scholarship. Hurley firmly establishes fruitful connections between literary studies and popular music studies and provides a nuanced discussion of post-1960s and post-reunification national identity in Germany. In many ways, the marginalization of women, *Ostdeutsche*, and immigrants in the book merely reflects the oppression these groups still face in contemporary German society. This would have been important for Hurley to make more explicit—and to show more sustained ways in which resistance against this oppression has taken shape.

Finally, it is commendable that the book provides English translations and the original German for most quotations in-text (with the exception, strangely enough, of quotes from German philosopher Theodor W. Adorno, which are only presented in English). Unfortunately, a few errors revealing a non-native speaker have made it into the book (for example, the grammatically incorrect “Sklassen der Automat,” 26). This is an issue that should have been fixed at the copy-editing stage.

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—Ulrich Adelt

### **W.G. Sebald’s Hybrid Poetics: Literature as Historiography.**

By Lynn L. Wolff. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2014. xii + 297 pages. \$126.00.

Lynn Wolff defines a new hybrid discourse of “literature as historiography” in *W.G. Sebald’s Poetics* that critiques traditional forms of historiography and seeks to demonstrate “literature’s privileged position for exploring, preserving, and understanding the past” (248). She aims to develop a deeper understanding of Sebald’s use of language as such, undertaking almost an archaeological endeavor to excavate the epistemological, aesthetic, and ethical dimensions in Sebald’s works. Wolff divides her study into an introductory chapter that asks how Sebald can function as the paradigm-

matic example for capturing (historical) experiences and different layers of the real in linguistic form, followed by six main chapters and a brief summarizing conclusion.

In the first chapter, Wolff establishes her thesis of how literature as historiography functions as an interdiscursive form of writing and how Sebald's texts are mainly concerned with the procedures of human access to the past, instead of analyzing the existence of the past. She shows precisely how Sebald's prose combines the "potentiality of fiction with direct references to an extra-textual reality" (48). Although Wolff's book can also be read as a close reading of Sebald's *Austerlitz*, the interpretation of Sebald's last novel is woven through the whole text; all following chapters refer to a wide range of Sebald's fiction, poetry, essays, and scholarly texts. In the second chapter, with an emphasis on *Logis in einem Landhaus und Luftkrieg und Literatur*, Wolff demonstrates Sebald's constant "blend of representation and reflection" (94), seeing his fiction and scholarly studies as part of the same literary-historiographical project. The third chapter focuses on Sebald's use of photographs in the context of observations by Roland Barthes and Georges Didi-Huberman, among others. Wolff explores how Holocaust representation can avoid reiterating stereotypes, and how literature in collaboration with other media allows one to imagine the unimaginable. Sebald's language and its blurring of extra-textual reality and fiction can be seen as paradigmatic for the merging of seeing, remembering, and imagining as central processes in the effort to understand and engage with the past.

The fourth chapter, entitled "Chronology and Coincidence in the Narrative Cosmos," is especially convincing. Here, Wolff examines the temporal and spatial structures of Sebald's writing and how they create a simultaneity between past, present, and future. For example, in *Austerlitz*, "the permeability or absence of border between past and present makes it possible for Austerlitz and his [dead] mother to coexist in both time and space" (163). This reveals—as explored in the fifth chapter, "Witness and Testimony in Literary Memory"—how literature and imagination can cause empathetic investments in the reader, which allow him or her to "witness the formation of literary knowledge of the past" (194). Sebald initiates a process of performing the act of remembering as a rewriting of memory in his characters as well as in the reader. The past is never simply imitated, a straight-forward model of representing the past in a referential way; instead, it becomes—in Sebald's own term—a process of "restitution." In her last chapter "Translation as Metaphor and Conservative Innovation," Wolff analyzes some intricate details of English (and selected French) translations of Sebald's work, examining the author's own involvement in the editing of these translations, as well as other intertextual co-presences in Sebald's work.

The strength of Wolff's book is her use of the tensions between literature/history, history/memory, and past/present to create a precise, well-researched, and convincing picture of Sebald's project of working through the German past and the challenges of representing and remembering the Holocaust, in particular. Her close readings guide the reader through Sebald's language and its many ethical, representational, cognitive, aesthetic, and narrative challenges by employing a variety of approaches and theoretical frames as diverse as narratology, semiotics, visual studies, historiographical theory, memory studies, intertextuality, and discourse theory. In the last 15 years, Sebald scholarship has become its own field, making it very challenging to navigate among an ever-growing number of interpretations of Sebald's texts. Wolff's biggest achievement is that she finds her own tone, which makes her book

particularly accessible to a wider audience. Whereas Sebald scholars and Sebald lovers will find a considerable number of interesting and original ideas for interpreting the specifics of Sebald's texts and writing process, and his published and unpublished works, Wolff's book can also function as a guide for advanced undergraduate students, graduate students, and other readers of Sebald's aesthetic and historiographic project as a whole. It is a must-read for scholars interested in the relationship of literature and history due to Wolff's insights in the overlap of history, memory, and imagination, and in the spatial and temporal co-presences Sebald is able to create.

Yet Wolff restricts her theoretical discussion of the relationship between literature and history to certain canonic positions by Hayden White, Roland Barthes, and Frank Ankersmit, instead of the many nuanced analyses that have emerged from these positions. Her final plea for the superiority of literature is therefore a bit too predictable. One would have wished for more discussion of advanced representational or experimental forms in documentary genres to see whether historiography, museums, or documentary films can learn from Sebald's border-crossing between fictional and historical worlds. How, for example, does Saul Friedländer's *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939–1945* (2007) relate to Sebald's poetics? Is it really simply inferior?

At the end of the first chapter, Wolff mentions authors comparable to Sebald who pursued similar projects, such as Alexander Kluge, Walter Kempowski, Marcel Beyer, Uwe Timm, and Edgar Hilsenrath. Unfortunately, she never returns to her stated goal of “[developing] a genealogy of authors concerned not only with Germany's recent past but also with the form in which this past can most appropriately be recounted” (47). The focus on Sebald's oeuvre comes at the price of not providing an answer to the question whether Sebald's writing is a prototype of a new kind of literary historiography that has surpassed traditional debates of the historical novel, or a unique idiosyncratic form of writing that stands for itself. What comparable forms of literature with extra-textual relevance have been produced in the last forty years, and how can Sebald's indirect writing about the Holocaust translate to other historical events, traumas, and memory projects? Wolff offers some ideas about how her investigation of the representational complexity of Sebald's poetics could be applied to other representational challenges, such as how the multiplicity of ways in which one can read the photographs from Abu Ghraib—guided by her insights in Sebald's use of photographs in text—indicates new questions of documentation, deception, imagination, and memory (149). Yet she does not offer perspectives for any other hybrid literature besides Sebald's. Admittedly, pursuing these questions might have overlapped the monograph.

Lynn Wolff provides a formidable analysis of W.G. Sebald's literary writing techniques, and *W.G. Sebald's Hybrid Poetics* maps in convincing fashion the imaginative avenues to extra-textual reality and to the creation of memory that literature can open.

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—Stephan Jaeger

### **Antikenkonfigurationen in der deutschsprachigen Lyrik nach 1990.**

*Von Aniela Knoblich. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2014. xi + 382 Seiten. €99,95.*

This study is a timely complement to stocktaking reports by B. Seidensticker (2002) or St. Elit (2010) concerning the reception of classical literature as it examines ref-