

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and original ideas for interpreting the specifics of Sebald's texts and writing process, and his published and unpublished works, Wolff's book can also function as a guide for advanced undergraduate students, graduate students, and other readers of Sebald's aesthetic and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 œuvre 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 overlaid 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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### **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-

erences to antiquity in four contemporary poets whose thematic proclivities justify systematic analysis. Comparable research has focused more exclusively on individual figures (e.g., G. Paul on B. Köhler, 2013) or dealt with the sublime (Th. Hoffmann 2006). In exploring very distinct modes of these “Antikenbezüge” (341), Aniela Knoblich’s revised dissertation puts the emphasis on the poets’ appropriation or what G. Genette regarded as an act of creative “transformation” (18) of such sources. As “fragments” and “palimpsests,” the extant relics inspire poets to equate them with mnemonic remnants of experience or to create textual analogues.

The publication comprises reflections on (I) the historical trend; (II) poetic imagery for corrupted sources; (III) a study of translation concepts; nuanced analyses of (IV) patterns of versification and (V) geo-cultural settings as themes; and (VI) a critical discussion of the poets’ self-fashioning. Durs Grünbein, Thomas Kling, and Raoul Schrott take center stage in three chapters; Barbara Köhler enters the discussion only briefly in Chapters Two and Five. Knoblich organizes her discussions around several polar opposites. For example, the poets’ adaptations of classical poems/plays are introduced by reminding the reader of the cleavage between transformative and reconstructive renderings as advocated by E. Staiger and W. Schadewaldt (71–72). In her exquisitely nuanced examination, Knoblich points out sharp differences between Kling’s liberal “Revitalisierung” (77, 107) and Grünbein’s measured “Wiedergabe” (125, 122), which includes corny jokes and “Missgriffe” (123). Furthermore, Köhler transforms the original through a foregrounding of love, while Schrott’s reconstruction disappoints because of lewd insinuations. These poets’ defense of classical poetry gains purchase through their rereading of Sappho, Homer, Ovid, Catullus, Juvenal, and Seneca as originators whose bluntness (or gender-blindness) had been underappreciated and ignored, due to eulogized or bowdlerized versions advocated by philologists. In many respects, Grünbein turns out to be the prototype of a successful reconciliation of craftsmanship and cerebral exploration of themes. Identifying himself with deracinated modernists as “Mittelsmänner” (254), this poet can easily bridge the gulf between antiquity and modernity by adopting a stoic attitude and allowing a “holprig” hexameter (145). By contrast, experimenters such as Kling or Köhler have shown an open disregard for metrical convention, thus underscoring the differences between Grünbein’s “Formstrenge” (135) and their “Sorglosigkeit” (160) in dealing with prosody. Schrott earns Knoblich’s disapprobation for falling prey to inconsistent explanations and a peculiar “Metrensimulation” (193). Ultimately, with the exception of Grünbein, optical arrangements preponderate, thus leaving us with the impression that claims regarding a general re-endorsement of classical meter would be hard to substantiate.

With regard to geo-cultural settings, this study includes a solid account of how the modern metropolis or the hotel has figured as catalyst for re-imagining cultural ties to ancient topoi. In deploying metaphors such as “Erinnerungsraum” (198), Knoblich reminds her audience of the special significance given to textual and mnemonic spaces that are being traversed with great ease by cosmopolitan subjects. Close readings of selected poems suggest that Kling sought to turn New York into a bucolic landscape (235) while Schrott chose Winkelmann’s death in Trieste to signal the termination of his untruthful “Antikenauffassung” (268). Symbolic value is also attributed to Grünbein’s “Exilgedichte,” which stage a European’s return from L.A. to the Old World. In Knoblich’s persuasive analysis, the poet imagines his own “Dichterweihe” (208) in encounters with Juvenal as his “Widergänger” (sic, 208); it is in

Imperial Rome, rather than modern California, that this revenant will discover the “Seelenverwandschaft” (208) needed for his transhistorical bonding.

In the last section, the author proceeds to the poets’ emblems and masks that conceal the speaker’s inner self. Since a “Gestus des Wettstreitens” (210) prevails among the poets, Genette’s text-oriented model is less applicable. Instead, H. Bloom’s scenario of the poets’ anxiety-provoking battle with their precursors (28–32) seems more relevant for illuminating the authors’ “Abgrenzung” (338) or “Profilierung” (321). In clear alignment with the current trend of treating authorial self-stylization as performance rather than an expression of lyrical subjectivity, Knoblich proposes to consider “Dichterbilder” not only as a means to transcend biographical readings but also as a way of revitalizing prestigious though antiquated roles. By identifying the poet’s “Dichterweihe” (208) in essays and poems, she can avoid relapsing into discussions of authorial intent and highlight the ironic dimension of entering a dialogue across time and space. Knoblich makes a case (272) for retaining auratically charged terms such as the *poeta doctus* (126) or *poeta vates* (310), though she is aware of the poets’ and scholars’ own consternation (325). The typology seems most meaningful in relation to poems where it is sometimes evoked as nostalgic reminder of the admiration paid to erudition and wild enthusiasm in bygone eras. Self-educated poets such as Grünbein feel uneasy about the “Aura des Hochmuts” (323) being associated with such anachronistic labels, which have nevertheless gained wide currency in characterizations of mantic or bookish archetypes (335). Readers may conclude from the evidence provided here that the four poets are more inclined to celebrate the origins or “Erfindung der Poesie” (4)—such as the Roman satire (216), the love poem (120), or the “Lehrgedicht” (171)—than the public intellectual. The author perceives “Zeitdiagnose” (in M. Fuhrmann’s interpretation, 143) as too limiting and sides instead with “Erfahrung” (207); but if “Identitätsfindung” (267) is favored, it certainly lacks a reflection on identity politics through which facile identifications with Catullus or Juvenal could be addressed. Knoblich gives an idea of this vexing dehistoricization by critiquing the exposition of durable poetic forms as “anthropologische Konstante” (185); specifically, she takes issue with Schrott’s eternal triad of “Wein, Weib, Gesang” (312) or Grünbein’s self-portrayal as timeless émigré or “Dichterphilosoph” (253). While the latter acknowledges the “grob Sexistische” (215) in Juvenal, the former adopts a cavalier attitude vis-à-vis his Latin sources.

Paradoxically, none of the poets has challenged the basic assumptions about the beginnings of modern poetry in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (222). Like Baudelaire (254), today’s poets remain painters of modern life in the city, but they more readily endorse the symbolic value attached to recurrent themes. The “Rollengedicht” (258) is best suited to conceal the split between modernism/modernization by facilitating the transition from present-day Germany to ancient Rome. Winckelmann’s Apollinian ideals (264) are therefore rejected to gain sight of a more barbaric past. In Schrott’s or Kling’s view, the candid evocations of eros, violence, and death are needed to fend off the dread of a sanitized antiquity. By contrast, Köhler locates the problem not in philological censure but rather in the “männliche Traditionslinie” (334) that has obstructed a “feministische Lesart” (340) or “weibliche Perspektive” (341). Knoblich detects the signs of an ancient “Maskulinisierung” (89) both in Catullus’ love poems and in Schrott’s bumptious revelations about his interest in their frivolous elements (116).

The concrete examples given here are persuasive. Yet readers may occasionally disagree with certain generalizations—such as the assertion that rhyme was considered “obsolet” in post-1945 poetry (141). Moreover, the claim regarding a “classical turn” (7–9) in the mid-nineties would require qualification; it suggests a major historical change and pervasive trend. In actuality, no more than two poets, Raoul Schrott and Durs Grünbein, have been characterized as trailblazers of that decade whereas many others, with a lower productivity rate and looser attachments to the classics, have revisited pre-modern sources since the late 1970s without causing any shift of perspective. What may have changed is the replacement of mythological allegory by historical concreteness. After all, a peak in the “Antikenrezeption” (V. Riedel) was already noticed in the eighties when it coincided with the end of lyrical immediacy, marked by a “Wiederkehr der Formen” (H. Hartung) and a much-contested “Wiederkehr des Mythos” (F. Raddatz). If ancient models were indeed “omnipräsent” in East Germany (8), one should hasten to add that after the publication of Wolf’s *Kassandra* (1983) the works of Braun, Kunert, Müller, Schütz, or Teschke found their Western equivalent in the literary production of Handke, Ransmayr, Strauss, Fichte, Grond, Jelinek, and others. Such parallels suggest a common post-utopian sentiment that made the spatial metaphor of archeological excavations highly pertinent (38).

Readers will greatly appreciate Aniela Knoblich’s thoroughness in combining individual interpretations with typological concepts that stress the multilayered, rudimentary nature of texts with “Antikenbezüge” as well as the poets’ playful masquerade or agonistic contest. The introductions to key concepts are tethered to a meticulous documentation of sources and nuanced interpretations, all of which will surely reward graduate students as well as scholars who seek to familiarize themselves with the terrain. The author is to be commended for contrasting these four revivalist poetic approaches in a systematic fashion and with striking sophistication. By incorporating the translational and performative aspects of this latest German-Austrian “Antikenmode” (346) the author has in fact broken new ground.

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