

# M

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### ARTICLES

**Elena Stramaglia**

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**“Es gibt keine Universalgeschichte”: Heiner Müller’s *Der Auftrag* as Critique of Cold War Revolutionary Theory**

The article analyzes Heiner Müller’s play *Der Auftrag* (1979) as a critique of GDR ‘solidarity’ interventions in decolonizing countries during the 1970s. In the 18<sup>th</sup>-century narrative of three emissaries exporting the French Revolution to colonial Jamaica, Müller inscribes a critique of Cold War neoimperialisms and particularly of the Eastern Bloc’s ambiguous ideological program of ‘exporting the revolution.’ This discourse is framed within a broader problematizing of the European revolutionary tradition and the assimilatory tendencies inherent in its universalism, entailing also a self-problematizing of the socialist intellectual’s position vis-à-vis the emerging ‘Third World revolution.’ The analysis highlights how Müller construes this critique by means of a textual interaction with several politico-literary models pertaining to the European tradition. Finally, it shows how Müller draws from postcolonial literature and theory in parallel as he gestures towards a potential cultural and political alternative model. (ES)

**Jann Duri Bantli und Ansgar Mohnkern**

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**Ungeheuer. Zur Unlesbarkeit von Stiftern *Aus dem bairischen Walde heute***

Adalbert Stifter tells stories about snow. Particularly his posthumously published novella *Aus dem bairischen Walde* makes visible how Stifter holds this element of snow against a domestic world of dwelling in order to cope with the monstrosity (“das Ungeheure“) of snow and to transform it into the experience of the sublime. Under the conditions of climate change today, however,

a new concept of monstrosity becomes immanently apparent, as Stifter's representation of snowy landscapes appears to become increasingly unreadable. For today, in the age of climate change, the experience of what Stifter calls "das Ungeheure" paradoxically finds its cause not in an abundant presence of snow, but in its increasing historical absence. This paper demonstrates how this shift has significant consequences for the concept of "das Ungeheure" itself. (JDB/AM; in German)

### **Meryem Deniz**

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#### **Jean Paul's Acoustic Romanticism and Aeolian Soundscapes in *Vorschule der Ästhetik* and *Titan***

Drawing on Sound Studies, this article explores Jean Paul's acoustic Romanticism, emphasizing the Aeolian harp and tracing the history of its sound in his texts. In *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804), Jean Paul uses the harp's acoustic qualities to differentiate his poetics from that of others. A single elastic string's ability to play multiple tones simultaneously in the wind transforms his perception of the capacity of imagination from one of unison (*Einklang*) to harmony (*Zusammenklang*). By interpreting timbre as a medium-specific and emotional quality of sound, this article explores eco-poetic affordances of Aeolian tone, illustrating that the specific feeling evoked within the reader by Romantic prose sets it apart from Goethe's plastic style. Testing Jean Paul's conception of harmony against the backdrop of acoustic environments in the novel *Titan* (1800–1803), I show how Aeolian harp assumes material agency in the plot, evoking ecological and cosmic awareness in the characters. (MD)

### **Lukas Hoffman**

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#### **Love of Things: Reconsidering Adorno's Criticism of Rilke**

Literary scholars often pair Rainer Maria Rilke, long recognized as a philosopher's poet, with different philosophical schools to emphasize novel aspects of his poetics. This paper seeks to highlight the ethical dimensions of Rilke's thing poetry, proposing that the critical philosophy of Theodor Adorno shares structural affinities with Rilke's poetics. This proposition stands in contrast to a large body of scholarship that positions Rilke's aesthetics alongside phenomenologists such as Husserl or Heidegger. Reading Adorno against the grain of his own critique of Rilke, this paper suggests that Rilke's thing poems explore how alienated subjects can ethically relate to their surroundings. The minimal ethics of Rilke's thing poetry ultimately cultivates a critical love of things as a response to the alienation of the modern world. (LH)

### **James Bade**

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#### **Drifting towards Disaster? Fontane's Ambivalent Portrayal of Stralau Landscapes in His Literary Works**

Stralau was a favorite destination for Berliners in the nineteenth century. Best known for the beauty of its surroundings, it was also notorious for the drunken revelry of its fishing carnival. Consequently, in Fontane, Stralau is associated

with a remarkable ambivalence of emotions: it highlights the passionate involvement of characters, while also evoking connotations of danger and disaster. A. R. Robinson’s description of the protagonists in *L’Adultera* as being caught in a “drift towards disaster” off Stralau neatly encapsulates the situation in subsequent novels. In *Die Poggenpuhls*, however, Fontane goes much further. For her painting of the Great Flood for her uncle’s church, Sophie takes as her inspiration the view of Lake Rummelsburg from Stralau Station. Sophie’s artistic characterization of the diluvian catastrophe expresses her hope that a better world is to follow, reflecting Fontane’s utopian ideals in *Quitt* and *Der Stechlin*. (JB)

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