Odermatt's adaptation frequently misses the point. Precisely through their failure, they highlight these main contours of Tabori's work.

One of the most interesting and theoretically challenging chapters in *Open Wounds* is by Klaus van den Berg, who interprets Tabori through the lens of Walter Benjamin's notion of *Bildraum. Bildraum* literally means image space, but in Benjamin's theorization, it refers to a mode of cognition born of modernity's shocks. Van den Berg argues that Benjamin's concept overlaps with Tabori's image of himself as a *Spielmacher* (play maker), a soccer term that suggests he did not so much direct actors as create *Spielraum* for them—room in which to play. This *Spielraum/Bildraum* becomes the setting for what van den Berg terms "performance illuminations," flashes of understanding and revolutionary experience that conjoin "physical, psychological, and historical space" (69). This setting aims to establish "a visual passage between past and present and makes ideas legible on stage" (70). Van den Berg then applies this critical model to Tabori's two productions of *The Merchant of Venice*, which he reads as responses to the Holocaust. We learn that, before Munich authorities vetoed the idea, Tabori even wanted his 1978 production of the play to be performed in Dachau in a staging whereby audience members and actors would be bussed together to the camp. These productions demonstrate how Tabori "advanced from modern director in the mimetic theater to a unique playmaker orchestrating the unfolding of memory and experience" (71).

Open Wounds has a few of the vices typical of edited scholarly collections, such as repetition of themes and minor inconsistencies. For instance, Tabori's Kafka-inspired 1977 play *Hungerkünstler*, for which his cast prepared through a medically supervised fast for forty days, is translated in three different ways, as *The Fasting Artists*, *The Hunger Artists*, and *The Hunger Artist.* But these are not worth dwelling on because the book certainly has far more virtues. Foremost among them is its concision and clarity. In just 200 pages, the pieces of this scholarly mosaic construct a vivid picture of George Tabori's many identities and the theoretical underpinnings of his theater. The introduction and ten essays, all scrupulously footnoted, typically number between 15 and 20 pages. This economy of prose makes them pedagogically useful for Holocaust studies, German studies, and theater courses, where George Tabori might yet receive the credit he is due.

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doi:10.3368/m.115.1.133

Transatlantische Transformationsprozesse im „Black Atlantic". Hubert Fichte und postkoloniale literarische Konzepte aus Brasilien und Kuba im Diskurs.
Von Isabelle Leitloff. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2021. 445 Seiten. €40.00 gebunden oder eBook.

Hubert Fichte remains a minor author in the German literary canon, despite recurring scholarly efforts to highlight his work as relevant to contemporary humanistic fields such as postcolonial or queer studies. In particular, Fichte's poetic anthropology of the 1970s and 80s has received more attention in recent years, most notably through

Anselm Franke and Diederich Diederichsen's international exhibition "Love and Ethnology" (2017–19). However, the contradictions embedded in his work and frequent charges of a Eurocentric exoticist perspective complicate Fichte's case to an extent that prevents him from becoming a central figure for ethically committed and emancipatory oriented scholarship.

Isabelle Leitloff's monograph intends to change that by resituating Fichte's work in a transnational context and to put his work in dialogue with authors from Latin America, where most of his ethnographic work was carried out. Leitloff's premise is that through a multiperspectival approach Fichte's work can contribute to a transcultural discourse on race, gender, and processes of postcolonial identity formation. Specific to the cultural location of the "Black Atlantic" is that it generates hybrid identities that can be traced in the work of Latin-American writers where they are expressed in a "polyphonous" and "pluricentric" aesthetic.

Surprisingly, given the prominent notion of the "Black Atlantic" in the title of the book, Leitloff does not engage with Paul Gilroy in any substantive way, but instead chooses Homi K. Bhabha (hybridity), Leo Kreutzer (double gaze), and Fernando Ortiz (transculturation) as her main interlocutors to theorize this intercultural space. On an interdisciplinary level, Leitloff stresses the need for a reciprocal interrelation between German and Romance studies to dissociate the authors in question from their national and colonial literary paradigms. Instead of literary traditions, these writers respond to what Leitloff calls "processes of transatlantic transformation," which can be understood through a reciprocal reading, in the process of which Fichte's work sheds light on the Latin American authors selected and vice versa.

The first five chapters are devoted to introducing these broad questions and concerns; here, Leitloff surveys and summarizes her theoretical apparatus in a somewhat digressive way that often lacks argumentative focus. The overarching theme in these chapters—and the book as a whole—is a broad charge against what Leitloff identifies as binary or dualist thinking. At times, she refers to this presumed mode of thinking as "thinking as usual" or "conventional thinking," without specifying further what these conventions are. In contrast, notions of transition and Bhabha's "in-betweenness" are stressed as ways to escape these fateful binaries. In the context of Fichte, it would have been worthwhile to provide examples of these modes of binary thinking, since he explicitly polemicized against some of them in his work. Notable examples could be identified in structuralism (signifier–signified), existentialism (being and nothingness), psychoanalysis (conscious–unconscious), Marxism (class struggle), or postcolonialism (metropolis–periphery). In fact, the entire discourse of intersectional analysis to which the author expresses her commitment throughout her book is unimaginable without these "conventional" ways of thinking. Rather than creating a straw-man called "binary thinking" that reduces large areas of critical theory to a "thinking as usual," Leitloff's critique of what seems to be more adequately framed as cultural essentialism would have benefitted from more sustained engagement with these modes of thought. Fichte's ideas of sensitivity and queering (*Verschwulung*) are developed on the basis of and explicitly against this very European tradition of critical theory.

Leitloff complements and interrelates her postcolonial discourse with surveys in Latin-American literature, focusing at length on selected works of Lydia Cabrera, Nancy Morejón, Georgina Herrera, Beatriz Moreira Costa, and others. To this re-

viewer, who is otherwise rather uninformed about these writers and their literary traditions, the extensive attention paid to Cuban culture and literature is surprising, given that among the many Latin-American countries in which Fichte pursued his idiosyncratic research and wrote most of his ethnologically inspired work, Cuba is not to be found. While the centrality of Cuban culture might not be entirely justified here, Leitloff's focus on Brazil, where Fichte spent extensive periods of time, makes the most sense. The hybrid culture of African American syncretism in Brazil and the Caribbean was what interested Fichte most, but his work largely omits both African and Latin-American writers who share this interest. As Leitloff shows, these female writers have long engaged with the themes that Fichte comes to entertain as a voyeuristic outsider in the 1970s. This is the important new direction in which Leitloff aims to guide Fichte scholarship: integrating his work into existing intercultural postcolonial discourses without downplaying the objectifying white Western gaze that—however self-reflexive—characterizes his work. In her close readings of Latin-American poetry, though, Leitloff remains largely on an explicatory level of textual interpretation that aims to identify the themes of race and gender. Her comparative readings lack an analytical engagement on a formal level that would reveal congruences between Fichte's ambitious postcolonial "ethno-poetry" and the Latin-American literary tradition. Instead of a critical analysis informed by literary theory or anthropology, many of the selected readings are interpreted in the context of the above-mentioned cultural theories of a double or triple gaze; this work is often based on her own interviews with contemporary authors, from which Leitloff quotes extensively.

Apart from a brief section in Chapter Four, Fichte's work really only comes into Leitloff's focus in Chapter Eight, well over 250 pages into the book. Here, the author tries to align Fichte with her understanding of an intercultural aesthetic that subverts all possible binaries. Precisely because of the contradictions inherent in Fichte's work, what Leitloff calls a deconstruction of binaries (and Franke and Diederichsen a colonial dialectic) turns this chapter into the most insightful of the book. As Leitloff shows and Fichte's work reveals, what is at stake is not an ambiguous in-between position that defies definition, but a thinking through contradictions that characterizes Fichte's novel *Explosion*, the exemplary text from his unfinished novel cycle *The History of Sensitivity.* This epic project it is not an attempt to arrive at the soft-skill level of intercultural competency and cultural sensitivity, but instead a formal and structural reflection of a violent historical process whose utopian synthesis lies in the telos of a totally queered world. In this chapter, Leitloff productively explores Fichte's subversive writing strategies, which reveal a distinctly modernist poetic structure when compared to the Cuban writers discussed in Chapter Seven.

The formal contrast of Fichte's transgressive poetic to that of the Brazilian author Beatrice Moreira Costa, whose short stories also heavily engage mythical themes from the Yoruba tradition, also becomes apparent in the final chapter: where Fichte's texts move between the incommensurable layers of transatlantic syncretism, Costa's stories condense the hybrid influences into the kind of coherent narrative structure that Fichte had always rejected.

Leitloff emphasizes throughout the need to look at intercultural literature from various interdisciplinary angles in order to move past the dichotomy of self and other that often shapes the discourse. In Fichte's case in particular it is the dialectic of self-

writing and the projection of a cultural other that has shaped scholarship. However, Leitloff does not engage in substance with Hartmut Böhme's monograph on Fichte (1992) and does not even mention David Simo's seminal book on interculturality and aesthetic experience (1993), which would certainly have enriched her study. In particular the relation between aesthetic experience and Fichte's emphatic concepts of knowledge and research represents a crucial dimension that is neglected here.

Apart from Fichte scholars, for whom this book will be valuable, Leitloff's monograph remains of interest for those scholars seeking to bridge the linguistic boundaries that often limit philological research, such as those between German, Brazilian, or Cuban literature, whose respective audiences remain largely divided. This is an important ambition not just for the field of literary studies, but cultural studies at large. In her dissertation, Leitloff fulfills this ambition in part, while mapping out a territory for future scholars to venture into.

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doi:10.3368/m.115.1.135

***Weiße* Normalität. Perspektiven einer postkolonialen Literaturdidaktik.** *Von Magdalena Kißling. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2020. 432 pages. €45,00 gebunden oder eBook.*

In *Weiße Normalität*, Magdalena Kißling seeks to make explicit the power of language to injure and marginalize through literary and educational discourses of representation and instruction. This undertaking is carried out through careful analysis of three well-known works (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, Theodore Fontane's *Effi Briest*, and Wolfgang Koeppen's *Tauben im Gras*) against the backdrop of their didacticization. Kißling's thorough and thoughtful monograph, which comprises nine individual chapters in three main sections, supplies the reader with the insights needed to embark on a reflective praxis of instruction and literary criticism within a critical-race framework. Extensively researched, the monograph provides many details for instructors and literary critics alike. In this review, I will first discuss the merits of this volume. I conclude with a focus on elements the author may consider in future work concerning the delicate nature of racism and exclusion.

In the first four chapters, Kißling outlines the study's theoretical constraints and methodological components. The author begins by investigating how canonical understandings of German literary works contribute to inflections of racism through collective and modulated reverberations. Kißling's enunciations of *white*ness (in italicizing *white* where it refers to ethnicity, I follow Kißling's own practice in the volume, including its title, which is also currently how I independently demonstrate the markedness of *white*ness in my own writing) and Eurocentrism as inextricably linked denounce the application of a Eurocentric lens to constructions of normalcy. The writer auscultates how racism and literature coalesce in the canonical body of German literature. Detecting colonial continuities, Kißling examines conceptions of authorship and representation in such realms. While Chapters One and Two highlight the markedness of *white*ness in literature, Chapter Three situates the study as more broadly located within an ambience of ambivalence that highlights language's potential to harm while also attempting to avoid the risk of denial commonly associated with the