

WiG Women in German

Newsletter – Spring 2011 – Issue 117

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Book Reviews
And
Fascinating Clicks

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~ ~ ~ ~ About WiG ~ ~ ~ ~

The **Coalition of Women in German** is an allied organization of the MLA. Students, teachers, and all others interested in feminism and German studies are welcome! Membership information is available on the Internet at: <http://womeningerman.roundtablelive.org/>

Mission Statement of the Coalition of Women in German

Women in German (WiG) provides a democratic forum for all people interested in feminist approaches to German literature and culture or in the intersection of gender with other categories of analysis such as sexuality, class, race, and ethnicity. Through its annual conference, panels at national professional meetings, and the publication of the *Women in German Yearbook*, the organization promotes feminist scholarship of outstanding quality. Women in German is committed to making school and college curricula inclusive and seeks to create bridges, cross boundaries, nurture aspirations, and challenge assumptions while exercising critical self-awareness. Women in German is dedicated to eradicating discrimination in the classroom and in the teaching profession at all levels.

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~ ~ ~ About the WiG Newsletter ~ ~ ~

The *WiG Newsletter*, published online three times a year, contains information about the organization, announcements of upcoming conferences, plans for conferences, news from abroad, personal news about members, conference reports, a bibliography, reviews of online resources, book reviews, and selected items culled from the WiG-L list. Reviews and other materials from past issues of the *WiG Newsletter* are available on the Women in German Website, www.womeningerman.org

Subscription: The *WiG Newsletter* is automatically part of WiG membership. All issues are e-publications and each new issue is available on a password-protected area of the Women in German website. Members receive notification by email (which includes access information and passwords) when a new issue is out.

Submissions: Students, teachers, and all others interested in feminism and German studies are encouraged to submit relevant material to the *WiG Newsletter*. Please email your submission to the appropriate section editor (see list below). General questions should be addressed to the co-editors.

Submission Deadlines: for the Winter (January) issue, December 15; for the Spring (March) issue, February 15; for the Summer (June) issue, May 30.

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Note: Rachel Freudenburg and Maria Stehle are the co-editors for the *WiG Newsletter*. **Do not** send them texts or materials which should be sent to a section editor as listed above.

~~~~ Dear Readers! ~~~~

What a long semester it has been!!! Since we're all overtaxed, I'll keep this brief.

It is our great pleasure to publish WiG Book Reviews, edited by our new book review editor, Alexandra Merley Hill.

This issue also includes our "Fascinating Clicks" column and a letter from Hester Baer, our recently elected vice president.

The International news are now available on the Women in German website.

Hang on Wiggies, summer is almost here. In Boston, we've been promised temperatures above 60 degrees Fahrenheit. I do hope there's some substance to those words. If the weather stays hostile, I'll just have to get my inspiration from WiG!

Rachel Freudenburg, Boston College  
Maria Stehle, University of Tennessee Knoxville  
[newsletter@womeningerman.org](mailto:newsletter@womeningerman.org)

~~ Letter from the Vice President ~~

Dear Wiggies,

I would like to express my thanks to you for electing me the new vice president and president-elect of Women in German. I am very much looking forward to working with Barbara Kosta and the Steering Committee in serving WiG over the next four years.

I attended my first WiG conference exactly twenty years ago this fall, in 1991, when I was still an undergraduate. Since then, WiG has continuously provided a stimulating space of intellectual engagement and mentorship, which has sustained me through every phase of my career. In my role as vp/president-elect, I will strive above all to maintain this core function of WiG: providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and for mentorship of students and colleagues.

I look forward to seeing many of you in the fall at our next conference in Michigan. In the meantime, I encourage you to contact me ([hbaer@ou.edu](mailto:hbaer@ou.edu)) with thoughts, ideas, and suggestions about what I can do to best represent you, to promote WiG, and to represent our organization, German Studies, and feminist scholarship in the larger profession.

With best wishes to all for the coming year,

Hester Baer  
University of Oklahoma  
WiG Vice President, 2011-2012

~ ~ ~ Book Reviews ~ ~ ~

**Tatlock, Lynne. ed. *Publishing Culture and the “Reading Nation”*: German Book History in the Long Nineteenth Century. Rochester, NY: Camden, 2010. 312 pp. ISBN: 9781571134028 hardcover, \$75.00.**

**Reviewed for Women in German by Daniela Richter**

Lynne Tatlock’s collection of essays on developments in nineteenth-century German publishing history is a wonderful addition to a field straddling both literary and historical scholarship. In her introduction Tatlock uses Darnton’s notion of the “communication circuit” to introduce a scholarly perspective which views the book at the nexus of various artistic, social and economic networks (2). The time span covered by the individual essays ranges from the late eighteenth century to the Weimar Republic. Within this time period, Tatlock sees a general trend towards a democratization of literature, with print genres ranging from paperbacks to art books becoming accessible and affordable for all social classes.

The first section of the book features essays that address the notion of distinction inherent in the reading and ownership of books. Matt Erlin’s essay on luxury editions looks not only at the material aspects of these publications, but at the change in public sentiment which made the purchase of these editions desirable for the middle classes, a social class priding itself on its adherence to frugality and practicality. Karin Wurst’s essay on the role of the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* in the development of German gardening culture demonstrates the way in which the journal merged the discourses of practicality and luxury as well as economic considerations in its propagation of gardening. Kit Belgum’s essay on the development of the Brockhaus encyclopedia between 1820 and the 1880s, argues that the Brockhaus emerged not only as a repository of up-to-date knowledge in this time period, but also as a participant in the German national project. Blending a universal and national approach to the various topics, publisher Friedrich Arnold Brockhaus shifted the focus away from merely collecting established knowledge towards featuring recent developments and discoveries such as Schliemann’s excavations. Lynne Tatlock’s essay at the end of this section harkens back to the first essay by focusing on the issue of product design. Tatlock looks at the collected editions of E. Marlitt’s, W. Heimbürg’s and E. Werner’s novels as an effort to bring these works from the 1860s and 1870s closer to a readership at the turn of the century. Tatlock points here towards the books’ cover design as mirrors of current art styles as well as towards the illustrations which featured character depictions in current fashion styles. In a textual analysis of these works, Tatlock demonstrates that all three authors create a “sentimental transhistorical domesticity” (142), which granted women a firmly established and respected place within the political upheavals of the German nation.

The second section considers the role gender played in the publication of young adult literature. In her essay, Jennifer Drake Askey presents us with the historical novels by Brigitte Augusti as part of an overarching offering of historical fiction commissioned separately for boys and girls by the publisher Ferdinand Hirt & Sohn in the 1880s. Modeled on the historical works of Gustav

Freytag, Augusti's five novels present adolescent girls with German history as national history told from an affective, emotional standpoint. Depicting middle-class female characters in domestic settings offered young women the opportunity to insert themselves into their nation's history. Jana Mikota focuses on readers in higher girls' schools at the end of the nineteenth century. Mikota reveals the status of the girls' school readers as being largely outside the control of governmental commissions until the early 1900s in contrast to the readers used in gymnasia at the time. Tracing the selections of reading material of two readers through various editions, Mikota comes to the conclusion that the publishers of the girls' readers were free to include contemporary literature to a larger degree, thereby playing an important role in canon formation.

The essays in the following section provide a fascinating behind-the-scenes look into the relationship of two eminent authors with their respective publishers, Heinrich Heine and Julius Campe, and Frank Wedekind and Albert Langen. Jeffrey Sammons embeds and almost buries his analysis of Heine's and Campe's rocky relationship within a larger criticism of current Heine scholarship, which in his eyes falsifies the facts of Heine's life in order to appropriate him "as an ally of our own purposes and convictions" (224). In his essay Sammons instead describes Heine as largely unconcerned with and even ignorant of the business as well as political aspects of his publications. In Mary Paddock's essay on Wedekind and the *Simplicissimus*-publisher Albert Langen, it is Langen, who, unconcerned with the consequences of censorship, endangers Wedekind's work as a dramatist, a work Wedekind saw as more important than his satirical writings for *Simplicissimus*.

The final section in this book addresses the book industry's as well as the writers' coming to terms with the book as mass-produced consumer good as well as the emblem of German intellectual culture. Katrin Völkner thus draws attention to the *Blaue Bücher* series of Karl Robert Langewiesche, which she presents as walking the line between affordable consumer good and sophisticated and intellectually demanding reading material. Langewiesche succeeded in making philosophical, historical and theoretical works accessible to a wide readership without losing its claim to being representative of the "Bildungsbürgertum-" tradition of reading up, the continuous self-education through reading. Ulrich Bach follows a similar line of argument in his presentation of collector and publisher Eduard Fuchs and his art book editions based on his own private art collections and his collection of cartoonist art. The latter in particular is read by Bach as an interesting overlap between high art and popular culture. Theodore Rippey follows a different route in his essay on Tucholsky's novel *Schloss Gripsholm*. Rippey presents a close reading of the text which in his view re-enacts the publishing industry's pressures on the writer to produce marketable entertainment literature and the critical writer's coming to terms with his own artistic vision as well as these external pressures.

This collection of essays provides a rich, multi-faceted view of the publishing world as well as the authors' and the readers' worlds in the long nineteenth century. It is suitable both as an introduction to the topic of German publishing culture as well as an immensely valuable addition for scholars already familiar with the field.

Daniela Richter, *Central Michigan University*

**Kafka, Franz. *Josephine the Singer or The Nation of the Mice*. Trans. Karin Doerr and Barbara Galli, with Gary Evans. Canadian Jewish Studies Chapbook Ser. 4. Montreal: Hungry I, 2010. 46 pp. ISBN: 9780889474710 chapbook, \$12.95.**

**Reviewed for Women in German by Angelika Bammer**

This little book is a thing of beauty. A slender chapbook (the fourth in the Hungry I Books Chapbook Series published by the Concordia Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies) that slips easily into a purse or pocket, it is a book you want to hold and look at. The textured cover—burgundy and black with elegant white lettering—has the feel of vellum, and the heavy buff paper of the inside pages remind me of a time when books were treasured and cherished objects. Perhaps appropriately, then, this pocket-sized book is not just beautiful, but expensive: \$12.95 Canadian dollars. Page for page, a rather hefty price for a single short story (22 pages), a brief interpretive essay (15 pages plus notes), no bibliography, one curious image, and a page with information about the text's producers: Karin Doerr, one of the two main translators and the author of the afterword, an essay on "Franz Kafka's Last Story, 'Josephine the Singer or The Nation of the Mice,' Under the Cloud of Antisemitism"; Barbara Galli, her co-translator; and Gary Evans, who also contributed to the translation.

So why would we buy or recommend this book? Why should we read it or consider teaching it? Apart from the practical and aesthetic benefits already mentioned, we can adduce two obvious reasons: (1) because it gives us a "New Translation" (as the title page heralds it) of Kafka's 1924 story, "Josefine, die Sangerin oder Das Volk der Mause"; (2) because it combines Kafka's story with an insightful interpretive essay. For the purposes of this review, I will address them each in turn.

The translation first. The obvious question here is: What does *a*—and, in particular, *this*—new translation add to the already existing translations of "Josefine"? Is this one better than or distinctly different from the others—or simply "New"? This question is particularly pertinent in light of the fact that two other new translations of Kafka's stories, including "Josephine," had just recently appeared (Michael Hofmann's translation was published by Penguin Classics in 2007 and Stanley Corngold's by W.W. Norton appeared that same year). Perhaps most to the point of this review, does this translation add a dimension to or highlight an aspect of Kafka's text that makes it particularly meaningful to feminist readers? This chapbook edition provides no answers to these questions by way of commentary on the translation. If we want to assess its relative merits, we have to do the work of comparison ourselves. In this regard, given the variety of choices—do I pick Hofmann's or Corngold's or the classic version by Willa and Edwin Muir or this most recent one by Doerr and Galli?—I would have appreciated some scholarly discussion, however brief, of the perspectives that informed the translators' choices. Were any of them feminist and, if so, how did they shape the resulting text? For example, Doerr's "Josephine" (like Hofmann's) produces an anthropomorphic whistling, while Corngold's issues a distinctly rodent-like squeak. Does this difference have gender implications? Without any commentary, it is hard to tell.

The second criterion for assessing the value of this book is the combination of Kafka's story and Doerr's accompanying essay. Does the essay illuminate the story in a way that lets us see it

differently? And, most pertinent for WiG, does it do so in a way that lets us see Kafka's text from a feminist or gender studies perspective? Doerr makes clear from the outset that she is approaching Kafka's story primarily from the perspective of modern Jewish history and antisemitism: "the Jewish history of persecution echoes throughout Kafka's story" (35). In the process, she relies heavily on Sander Gilman's 1995 study of *Franz Kafka, the Jewish Patient* (11 of the 55 endnotes refer to Gilman). By contrast, references to feminist work are noticeably absent. I counted two, both from the mid-1980s: an article by Ruth Gross in *Germanic Review* and an essay by Evelyn Torton Beck in a volume on *Kafka's Contextuality*. From the perspective of the book's publisher and the readership at which it aims, this is not a failing. For this book (which is not available through standard distribution networks like Amazon.com, but has to be ordered directly from the publisher), is part of the Concordia Institute's program to provide "a bridge between the academic study of Canadian Jewry and the community in which it serves." Feminist perspectives or issues of gender are not a necessary dimension of such a program, and it is ungenerous to fault a book for not doing what it never set out to do in the first place. And yet, for a review specifically geared toward Women in German readers, I would be remiss not to mention this particular absence. Important feminist work has been done on modern Jewish history and the history of anti-Semitism. Recent feminist scholarship has begun to address some of the links between animal studies and gender/sexuality studies, links that would be relevant in a discussion of Kafka's work in general and this story in particular (see, for example, the work of Carol Adams, Donna Haraway, or our own WiG member, Alice Kuzniar). Doerr misses the opportunity to explore some of these connections. Indeed, even as the intersection between Josephine's gender and ethnic identities is abundantly evident in Kafka's text, Doerr's essay hardly touches on its possible implications.

Nevertheless, its undeveloped feminist analysis notwithstanding, this text has evident potential for classroom use. In the context of the recent re-release of Veit Harlan's Nazi film "classic," *Jud Süß*, with its depiction of Jews as rodent vermin, and Art Spiegelman's equally classic post-Holocaust memoir, *Maus*, students would surely be intrigued by this pre-Holocaust, pre-Nazi depiction of a nation of mice that, as Doerr convincingly argues, represents the Jews of Kafka's time. And in light of the genocidal antisemitism that was to crush European Jewry within a matter of two decades after Kafka's death, we can forgive Doerr (and Galli and Evans) for losing sight of the importance of gender.

Angelika Bammer, *Emory University*

**Rogowski, Christian, ed. *The Many Faces of Weimar Cinema: Rediscovering Germany's Filmic Legacy*. Rochester, New York: Camden, 2010. 354 pp. ISBN: 9781571134295 hardcover, \$85.00.**

### **Reviewed for Women in German by Sabine von Mering**

The discussion following the Friday night panel at the 2010 WiG conference in Augusta, Michigan focused on the need for WiG to foreground intersectionality and reaffirm its commitment to a leftist politics devoted to the promotion of social justice and human rights. If Christian Rogowski's edited volume (lying on a table in the back of the room) could have joined

the discussion, it would have pointed to itself as a perfect model. Focused on the rich body of lesser known films from the Weimar era, the book employs a variety of theoretical frameworks (from Edward Said's orientalism to Laura Mulvey's carnivalesque to the recent spatial turn in German cultural studies) to take and encourage a fresh look at the period, enabled in part by the rediscovery of prints and documents since the end of the cold war. The study also aims to broaden, and to some extent correct, the critical landscape still dominated by Siegfried Kracauer's and Lotte Eisner's postwar assessments that narrowed Weimar cinema to the few expressionist films taught in most cinema courses today. Instead, the authors highlight "the tremendous diversity and variety of filmic productions of the period" (2-3) that were first and foremost commercial cinema aimed at a mass audience, and encourage those who teach German film to revise their syllabi. The appended filmography with information about the films' availability will likely find many grateful users. Dedicated to the groundbreaking work by Eric Rentschler and Anton Kaes, and inspired by their annual film seminars, the eighteen articles (representing a "who's who" of WiG members writing on German cinema), although not all foregrounding explorations of women and gender, advance feminist concerns in the multiple intersections of race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, as well as with interdisciplinary engagement of history, sociology, science, psychology, and medicine.

Although the films that are here brought out of obscurity are not made by women (in his introduction Rogowski himself deplores the omission of Lotte Reiniger's work), their popularity with female audiences and their often radically critical stance on sexual politics provide ample ground for feminist investigations. Another key to the reevaluation is the realization that a majority of the important practitioners were "of German-Jewish or Austro-Hungarian-Jewish descent" (6). Instead of adopting Kracauer's and Eisner's reading of the period as foreshadowing what was to come, the authors highlight the rich history of Jewish-themed films in the period (Cynthia Walk, for example, looks at Jewish-Gentile romance in E.A. Dupont's *Das alte Gesetz* (1923)), and the preoccupation with the post-traumatic stress resulting from the loss of over 10 million lives in WWI (from Barbara Hales' investigation of war neuroses in Robert Reinert's *Nerven* (1919) to Nancy P. Nenno's study of Victor Trivas' *Niemandsland* (1931)).

Organized chronologically and enriched by 61 beautiful illustrations, the book begins with Jill Suzanne Smith's reassessment of Richard Oswald's *Aufklärungsfilme*. Smith's study reveals how closely intertwined the struggle for personal and sexual freedom was with the democratization process. Hers is one of the articles that foreground the exploration of women's experience, but her conclusion also points to the larger picture: "The vilification of the war neurotic, both in the medical discourse and in the films of the period, was indicative of Germany's overall inability to accept defeat" (44). Richard W. McCormick's assessment of Ernst Lubitsch's oriental fantasy *Sumurun* (1920) also foregrounds feminist critique, arguing that the freedom of 'escapist' fantasies actually permits a "carnavalesque disruption of authority" (80).

What Anjeana Hans concludes from her reading of Robert Wiene's *Orlacs Hände* (1924) could be applied to many of the films under discussion: "Perhaps the true element of horror in the film lies in the fact that this rather far-fetched story, with its somewhat implausible plot, actually reenacts a common experience of men in Germany after the First World War" (104). Indeed a focus on masculinity links many of the articles. Elisabeth Otto reads the popularity of the period's main star, Conrad Veidt as a response to the crisis in masculinity brought about by

WWI, which “revealed manliness as a form of masquerade” (138) and resulted in the “loss of belief in an essential manhood” (138).

Another staple of the traditional concept of Weimar cinema, the vamp, is deconstructed in two articles: Valerie Weinstein explores aggressive female sexuality in Henrik Galeen’s *Alraune* (1927) and Mihaela Petrescu shows how the famous ‘vamps’ portrayed by Brigitte Helm and Marlene Dietrich are unmasked in three popular comedies of the time which mock and demythologize the femme fatale and unmask it as a problematic media creation (300). Despite the authors’ deferential “*pace* Kracauer,” the book does portray Weimar Germany as an explosive mix of strong opposing social forces—at once brutally homophobic, anti-Semitic, and misogynist, and at the same time infused with revolutionary new ideas about manhood, Jewishness, internationalization (as in Veronika Fuechtner’s study of *Prem Sanyas/Die Leuchte Asiens/The Light of Asia* (1925) as a Bollywood-precursor) and women’s sexual agency. Theodor F. Rippey’s account of Wilhelm Prager’s *Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit* eerily foreshadows not only the establishment of the Nazis’ “Kraft durch Freude” movement, but also Leni Riefenstahl’s preoccupation with the “healthy” national body in her *Olympia* films.

What Rogowski says in his own article about Wilhelm Dieterle’s *Geschlecht in Fesseln* (1928) holds true for many of the films: through a shrewd combination of political message and popular appeal the films manage to combine social critique with commercial success: “despite [their] potentially controversial subject matter, [they] speak to the viewers’ emotions” (215). The films discussed here clearly warrant another look. Throughout the volume, the scholars’ excitement about exploring this hitherto uncharted territory is palpable and infectious. The balance of theoretical scaffolding and ambitious story-telling make the articles in this volume perfectly suited for undergraduates and should find ample use in film classes. Indeed the volume should inspire more classes on the early years of German cinema. As we will likely see an abundance of centennial celebrations and explorations of the Weimar era in the years ahead, this volume will prove to be a very helpful guide.

Sabine von Mering, *Brandeis University*

**Mattson, Michelle. *Mapping Morality in Postwar German Women’s Fiction: Christa Wolf, Ingeborg Drewitz, and Grete Weil*. Rochester, NY: Camden, 2010. 212 pp. ISBN: 9781571134431 hardcover, \$75.00.**

**Reviewed for Women in German by Lynn Marie Kutch**

In the monograph *Mapping Morality in Postwar German Women’s Fiction: Christa Wolf, Ingeborg Drewitz, and Grete Weil*, Michelle Mattson builds her study of the three authors on the concept that certain moments in history “seem to demand” moral reflection (185). In analyzing selected literary pieces at the point where they confront historic occurrences, she directs her critical attention to questions of moral responsibility as represented in the primary works. If this might sound like a study that scholars have already undertaken, especially in the case of Wolf, Mattson develops the original approach of examining women’s individual ethical responsibility in historical and familial contexts. Performing, yet expressly moving beyond close readings of

the primary texts, Mattson also integrates the work of chief theorists on memory (Huysen, Halbwachs), feminist ethics (Urban Walker), and an ethics of care (Gilligan). Early on, Mattson introduces two primary guiding questions that lend a logical organization to her combination of literary close reading and theoretical interpretation: how individuals view themselves in relation to their historical present, and how they explore personal responsibilities to family and friends (4). Throughout the text, Mattson presents a series of visually compelling terms that help the reader develop concrete reference points for abstract theoretical principles. She introduces one such innovative term when she describes the use of literature as a “moral laboratory,” or a controlled space in which individuals plot their place in history and “negotiate and understand their ethical responsibilities, both as individuals and members of social collectives” (5-6). In order to explain this complex interaction even more clearly, Mattson also imaginatively applies the word “imbrication,” usually used to describe a geometrical pattern in which objects overlap, to describe multiple intersecting layers that place individuals in history as well as situate them in private relationships. Working with texts replete with “potentially inconsequential figures who wouldn’t have a place” in larger historical master narratives (64), she superimposes her complex theoretical device to illustrate and point out connections among women, history, and moral responsibility, and commonalities among the three authors.

In processing her guiding questions as they relate to each of the authors, she also anticipates and adeptly responds to possible complications, such as the rationale for combining these three largely different authors. In very clear terms and with a consistent research procedure, she not only maintains, but demonstrates that all three, though in disparate ways, insist on “drawing connections between Germany’s pre-war and Nazi past and the socio-political realities of postwar Germany” (3). Moreover, she approaches her discussion of each author at the intersection of memory and feminist ethics, and thoroughly evaluates each author’s literary tools and the ways they work to emphasize the place that their female figures occupy. The primary text examples illustrate these complex interactions, and the way Mattson frames and explains them brings the overall aim of her book into clear focus. When she illuminates Drewitz’s technique of inserting disconnected strings of headlines telling of remote world events alongside narrative histories of individuals and families trying to understand their relationship to those reported events, the reader gains an intimate sense of the proximity of the individual to her history (78, 80). Like Drewitz, Wolf also endeavors in her work to bring the past closer to the present (103), but concentrates, according to Mattson, on the collective nature of memory and “reintroducing a society to its history” (96). With meticulously chosen examples, Mattson, as in the Drewitz chapter, provides a concrete and tangible explanation of her complex system of theory and literary analysis. Speaking about “textual proximity” in *Kindheitsmuster*, she offers the example of a character placing the daily newspaper alongside her morning coffee (134). With this contrast between a banal day-to-day act and the headlines that a reader takes in but then hides away, Mattson illustrates the theoretical question of the responsibility individuals have to act beyond their breakfast tables.

Mattson’s inclusion of Weil’s work provides to the study an additional facet of the female writer who critiques her “membership” in both German society and Jewish culture. Here Mattson uses Weil’s *Meine Schwester Antigone* not necessarily to answer questions of the individual’s role in society or the ability to analyze the relationship between “action, inaction and guilt,” but to analyze Weil’s attempts to respond to those questions with her literary tools. In order to illustrate

Weil's abstract question, Mattson centralizes *Antigone's* fundamental dilemma: refusing to become complicit in injustice (167). This is just one of many examples that Mattson uses to emphasize the connections she makes between literature and the moral principles that define feminist ethics. Most importantly and perhaps most originally, Mattson draws connections between the contributions of feminist scholars that undergird the book's theoretical framework and the dilemmas that Weil's characters face as Holocaust survivors.

This volume makes a valuable contribution to a number of different areas of study, including women's studies, history, women's literature, Holocaust studies, and studies of an ethics of care. Mattson's choice of primary texts and her analytical approach unite all of these fields by linking them to the central questions of the individual's, and especially the woman's, responsibility to herself, to her collective histories, and to her family. Drewitz's narrative method that Mattson describes as moving in concentric circles "toward her characters' immediate lives and local spaces from more remote times and places" (187) mirrors Mattson's own method of using a set of abstract theoretical principles to launch her analysis, and then closing in on everyday experiences and local spaces. The image of concentric circles also communicates to Mattson's readers that the authors at hand operate on distinctive thematic and temporal levels, not only interrogating the past, but also considering the relationship to their present, which contains a female accountability to their families. She underlines with her close readings and inventive application of theoretical material that literary characters, readers, theorists, and her own readers never necessarily receive satisfactory answers to these questions, but rather obtain an index of terms and approaches to move toward a feminist and gendered understanding of them.

Lynn Marie Kutch, *Kutztown University of Pennsylvania*

**Brisson, Ulrike and Bernard Schweizer. *Not So Innocent Abroad: The Politics of Travel and Travel Writing*. Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2009. 225 pp. ISBN: 9781443812979 hardcover, \$59.99.**

**Reviewed for Women in German by Beth Ann Muellner**

Brisson's and Schweizer's focus gives emphasis to the inherent nature of politics in travel writing, admittedly not a first association with the genre. Agreeing that travelers are embedded within political structures the minute they encounter the foreign, Brisson seeks "naked" (versus veiled) politics in travel writing: "studying 'acts of leaders and governments, mobilizations of national and international sentiments, transformations of partisan institutions' with a particular focus on the 'dissemination of overtly political rhetoric,' as well as with the 'writer's confrontations with immediate apparitions of the state'" (1). Thus, the potential for encounters of a political nature are as diverse as authors' motivations for travel, and so Brisson calls for a "more flexible, dialectical model of the politics of travel [in order to] tease out the complex ideological and socio-political transactions that attend the act of journeying" (5). Unfortunately, the flexibility called for in this WiGie co-editor's introduction is cut short in the first essay by her collaborator, Bernard Schweizer.

Schweizer clearly posits the political in opposition to the personal without any reference to the feminist contention that the personal *is* political. Political travel writing is the ability to critique from a western, privileged stance, hegemonic power structures that harm the social, ecological, or cultural make-up of a particular country, as well as the ability to consider one's own complicity in that destruction. "Well-rounded travel writing" for Schweizer offers "a glimpse of the socio-cultural life" and "a good dose of exploration and adventure" (21). In his analysis of three anthologies, *The Best American Travel Writing 2006*; *The Best Travel Writing 2006*; *The Best Female Travel Writing 2006*, Schweizer concludes that the majority of essays have no interest in politics whatsoever, but are primarily concerned with "escape, self-fulfillment, and recreation" (19). Still, Schweizer singles women authors out as even more apolitical, their focus on "personal healing, self-discovery, and spiritual rebirth [...] merely instrumentaliz[ing] foreign places for narcissistic purposes" (27-28). While he briefly considers that the overall apolitical stance might be due to an editorial recognition of "socially conditioned gender expectations" (28), Schweizer overlooks the possibility that women authors may distrust or be skeptical of patriarchal power structures to begin with, and so to engage with them is just as useless for them as their personal soul-searching is for Schweizer. Nor does he ponder, as Judith Warner argues in the recent New York Times Magazine article, "Fear (Again) of Flying," that this turn inward, for better or for worse, represents a new narrative of women's liberation (Jan. 9, 2011). Finally, Schweizer's choice to compare the writing of market-driven "Best of" authors in an anthology with the more political travel writing of well-known writers from an earlier time and place such as Graham Green or Rebecca West seems unfair. Schweizer ignores the historical development of the apolitical stance he sees in (American) travel writing, a deficiency that recurs throughout the volume.

Maureen Mulligan's analysis of Gertrude Bell, Freya Stark, and Ella Maillart reinforces the perception that earlier twentieth-century women travelers were more politically savvy and aware than their contemporary counterparts. With a few rare exceptions, political awareness completely disappears in much of the travel writing done by women since roughly the 1980s, which Mulligan partially measures, like Schweizer, with an anthology (*Amazonian: The Penguin Book of Women's New Travel Writing 1998*). Again, comparing the work of career travelers like Bell or Stark with recent writing in the anthologies seems unfair, although Mulligan's essay confirms that the meaning of travel and travel writing are shifting. The educational experience of the Grand Tour of the eighteenth-century has been hijacked by what she calls "tough travel" or "anti-tourism" travel that is more focused on overcoming obstacles, akin to television's reality shows, like *Survivor*. Gabi Kathöfer's essay on German emigration to Brazil, Tsai-Yeh Wang's article on British women radicals visiting France in the aftermath the Revolution, and Florence Widmer-Schnyder's essay on Swiss travel narratives during the French Revolution remind the reader of how historical changes play a role in shaping politics and travel.

In general, while Brisson's broad definitions in the introduction attempt to draw together the complexity of approaches to the political that unfold in this volume, as a whole, a stronger overview of how travel and political writing have shifted over time and in tandem with one another would have drawn the essays together more successfully. With five of the eight chapters focusing almost exclusively on the complex politics inherent in women's travel writing of the early twentieth century (with some authors, like Stark, mentioned repeatedly), Schweizer's damning first chapter is misplaced. A simple re-ordering of the essays would have given a better

sense of how things have changed over time, beginning with the eighteenth century rather than ending with it, for example. Furthermore, the complexities of identity, place, space, and time might have been fleshed out more in the introduction. Grounding the essays in a discussion of what is particular to the almost exclusively English and American identities of the travel writers might have broadened the understanding of the politics they discussed (or avoided), as would have the consideration of more non-English travel writers (aside from Torres). For example, Mulligan's essay misses the fact that Maillart's companion is not "her friend Christina" (125), but a pseudonym for the German-Swiss writer Annemarie Schwarzenbach, whose travel writing is known for its complex mixture of the personal, political, and aesthetic. Maillart's turn to the personal more likely came about due to the intense journey she undertook with Schwarzenbach, about which both women wrote extensively and that served as the basis for a recent film (*Journey to Kafiristan* 2001). Overall, the volume suggests a scholarly fascination with the fact that women travel authors did indeed discuss politics, and to a greater degree and depth than expected. In this sense then, the volume corrects the perception that women travel writers were/are apolitical, although the editors do not claim such a focus. The eight individual chapters are well written and thought provoking and may be useful for students, scholars, and instructors alike.

Beth Ann Muellner, *College of Wooster*

**Figge, Susan G. and Jenifer K. Ward, eds. *Reworking the German Past: Adaptations in Film, the Arts, and Popular Culture*. Rochester, NY: Camden, 2010. 281 pp. ISBN: 9781571134448 hardcover, \$75.00.**

#### **Reviewed for Women in German by Julie Klassen**

The editors define the project of this excellent anthology as "re-mediation," that is, "the act of reworking a story in a different medium with an eye toward calibrating it for its new historical moment and audience" (10). They acknowledge their theoretical grounding in recent adaptation studies, prefacing their introduction with a foreword by Linda Hutcheon (*Theory of Adaptation*, 2006), who addresses the implications of adaptation theory for German cultural examples. They stress that their goal of interrogating the formal and (sometimes thereby) thematic changes wrought by such reworkings is not so much to judge the adaptation's relation to its source ("fidelity criticism") as to illuminate what the new product reveals about the act of retelling the past itself: what is consciously or unconsciously revealed or concealed about its relationship to the original text (and its era), what it reveals about the conditions of the new context, and how the particular shift(s) in medium can create new meaning. In addition to the significance cinematic re-mediation has within the context of the Nazi era and the Holocaust, the range of topics in this collection demonstrates the merit of casting a wider net to include other kinds of media combinations and time periods, thereby indicating how these remakings expand further the possibilities for interrogating the German past.

Indicative of the predominance of film in recent adaptation studies is the number of essays dealing with cinematic reworkings. Cary Nathenson explores how the film *Die Degenhardts* (1944) revises for Nazi culture the trope of the defeated family patriarch known from the

Weimar era film, *Der letzte Mann* (1924); he demonstrates how the later film strives to erase the anxieties about male authority generated in the Weimar era and reasserts the community of the family. Richard C. Figge examines three cinematic versions of Kästner's *Emil und die Detektiven* as reflections of their respective social and cultural conditions and values and the changing physical and political landscape of Berlin. He articulates how each version figures in this seventy-year-old history of efforts to convey Kästner's "pedagogical exhortation." Susan G. Figge and Jennifer K. Ward analyze the cinematic retelling of three postwar novels (by Heinrich Böll, Anna Seghers, and Jurek Becker) about the Nazi era and its legacy, focusing on the agenda and new narrative truths articulated cinematically in each filmmaker's response to the respective novel. Given the significance of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* for these three adaptations, the editors also stress the political, emotional, and historical stakes for memory work's effort in "[g]etting it right" (98, 100). Mareike Herrmann examines Doris Dörrie's 1998 film *Bin ich schön* as a cinematic adaptation of two of Dörrie's own short story collections that essentially reconfigures characters' lives and fates. Herrmann compares and contrasts the resulting constellation with Schnitzler's *Reigen* to illuminate issues of German identity and community in an increasingly transnational world. Maria Euchner examines how Gotz Friedrich's 1981 operatic film adaptation of the Elektra story creates a complex remediation of Sophocles' play, Hugo von Hofmannsthal's drama, and Richard Strauß's opera. By comparing the elements included and omitted from each text and examining the aural and visual synergism of the new opera, Euchner also addresses the seminal issues of forgetting and remembering, in the context of the recent German past as well as in the historical scope of the myth's (re)telling.

Adaptation theory also proves its value for non-cinematic examples. Rachel Epp Buller's essay on photomontage in the Weimar era introduces works by Marianne Brandt and Alice Lex that employed artistic techniques popularized by the Berlin Dadaists to expand the reach of photography. Buller demonstrates how each artist arranges images assembled from previously printed photos and/or her own work to critique political and social controls in Weimar society. Sunka Simon raises serious questions about Manfred Krug's and Ulrich Tukur's reappropriations of *Schlager* from the Weimar and Nazi era that in essence attempt to recreate a German heritage collection from a tainted canon of popular music. She elucidates how the claim to a certain "originary musical innocence" in fact masks but also invokes the intertextual connections associated with the music's original escapist function. Irene Lazda contrasts the reframing of everyday experience in the GDR presented by two new museums founded since the *Wende*, the Haus der Geschichte in Lutherstadt Wittenberg and the DDR Museum Berlin. She examines how in its presentation of familiar objects each institution frames the political and emotional implications of the GDR past and thereby addresses the nostalgic memory of the GDR.

Two adaptations within the written medium involve more complicated kinds of re-mediation. Thomas Sebastian delineates the many psychological, political, and textual layers in Cordelia Edvarson's memoir, *Burned Child Seeks the Fire*, which "enters into a posthumous dialog" with the writings of her mother, Elisabeth Langgässer, who had already appropriated details of Edvarson's time in Auschwitz. He portrays Edvarson's attempt to reclaim her own voice through her version of the Demeter myth. Elizabeth Baer takes on the similarly difficult issues of adaptation arising from claims regarding W.G. Sebald's alleged misappropriation in his novel *Austerlitz* (2001) of Susi Bechhöfer's story, a German Jew who escaped to England on a *Kindertransport* in 1939. Besides skillfully tracking the actual chronology and oblique use of

Sebald's alleged borrowings, Baer redirects debates about whether, by whom, and how the Holocaust could or should be represented, upholding *Austerlitz* as an example of "the power and purpose of literature to re-engender the imagination and to perform an act of apology and restoration" (196).

The consistently high quality of scholarship and overall readability of these essays testify to the expertise of the individual scholars and the effectiveness of the editors' work. The editor's vision is also evident in the useful index and the comprehensive compendium of works cited. The interconnections among the individual essays also strengthen the whole endeavor as a significant contribution to adaptation theory for German Studies. This volume is itself a model remediation of the anthology genre, demonstrating how a collaborative approach embracing a common theoretical basis enhances commitment to exacting standards of scholarship.

Julie Klassen, *Carleton College*

## ~~ Fascinating Clicks ~~

Jennifer Askey, Kansas State University  
March 1, 2011  
Tech Tip

My university is lucky to have a dedicated administrator for national and international scholarships. He advertises Truman, Goldwater, Rhodes, Marshall, DAAD, and Fulbright scholarships and awards and then works with students on their applications and serves as the point person for the campus selection process. Between Jim and an active cohort of German professors, our students have easy access to plenty of information about scholarships, internships, and research awards to Germany. Even so, I found that directing students to the DAAD webinar page gave them immediate answers to many of their questions.

A brief description from the DAAD website: <http://www.daad.org/?p=webinars>

*Join DAAD staff and guest panelists for one of the specialized webinars ... to hear more about DAAD grants and funded internship programs for undergraduates, graduate students and faculty. These online information sessions are targeted at faculty and administrators who advise on study and research abroad, as well as students and scholars interested in applying for DAAD funding themselves.*

There are videos on the site of past webinars that address funding for undergraduate research and travel, as well as graduate student, post-doc and faculty research awards. In addition to watching past video presentations, visitors to the site can sign up for a “live” webinar. During these, all participants share a chat room of sorts and a user can type in individualized questions and have them addressed by the DAAD staff member conducting the information session.

These are a good resource for students and helpful for faculty members—both as student advisors and applicants for DAAD research grants!

~ ~ ~ Announcement ~ ~ ~

**Women in German seeks a second Web Editor for a three-year term**

Responsibilities of the Web Editor include, but are not limited to, the following: creating, maintaining, updating the WiG website; assisting with the administration of the WiG membership service, Wild Apricot, as necessary; and creating and administering online polls.

Web Editors must be members of Women in German. Possible areas of knowledge and experience might include, e.g., CSS, HTML, web programming, and graphic editing as well as software like Dreamweaver, FTP applications, Flash, Acrobat, etc.

Applicants with nominal institutional support are welcomed. This could include, e.g., campus IT support, student-worker assistance, etc.

Please send a brief application letter to the Web Editor, Kyle Frackman, at [webeditor\[at\]womeningerman.org](mailto:webeditor[at]womeningerman.org). Review of applications will continue until a second Web Editor has been selected. Include information about your experience with technology and web design as well as links to websites you have created, if available. Ideally, the new web editor will be able to confer with the continuing web editor at this year's WiG conference.

# ~~~ Zantop Endowment Campaign ~~~

## Zantop Travel Endowment Fundraising a Success!

It is our great pleasure to announce that, as of December 31, 2010, we have met and in fact surpassed our fundraising goal for the Zantop Travel Endowment.

Since September, we have collected \$6,900 in donations to the Zantop fund. That brings us to \$26,900 collected since the fundraiser began in 2008.

Contributions are still coming in, so the final total will be somewhat higher. We will publish an update in due time. Meanwhile, let's congratulate ourselves on this achievement – which is all the more gratifying because it happened prior to the ten-year anniversary of the tragic event that took Susanne and Half Zantop from us.

Thank you to everyone who contributed during the three-year fundraising period to make the Zantop Travel Endowment Campaign a success!

-- Is Women in German a great organization or what?!

Happy New Year!

Jeanette Clausen, Fundraising Coordinator  
Julie Klassen, Liaison to Donor  
Waltraud Maierhofer, Treasurer  
Barbara Kosta, WiG President  
Hester Baer, WiG Vice President

P.S. The pledge form is attached for anyone who still wishes to make a contribution. Remember that gifts to WIG are tax-deductible. :-)

Questions? Contact the fundraising coordinator, Jeanette Clausen ([jxclausen@ualr.edu](mailto:jxclausen@ualr.edu)).

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**Pledge Form, Zantop Travel Endowment Campaign**

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