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*Zur Ästhetik von Aktualität und Serialität in den
Addenda-Stücken Elfriede Jelineks zu Die Kontrakte des
Kaufmanns, Über Tiere, Kein Licht, Die Schutzbefohlenen* by
Bärbel Lücke (review)

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Journal of Austrian Studies, Volume 51, Number 4, Winter 2018, pp. 104-107
(Review)



Published by University of Nebraska Press
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/oas.2018.0070>

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Frost model of *Finsternis* in dialogue with, for instance, recent discussions of aesthetic negativity (such as Christoph Menke's *Sovereignty of Art*, or other rereadings of Theodor Adorno's discussion of the "ideal of blackness"). For a book written in admirably accessible prose, it is somewhat disappointing that *Geburt der Finsternis* sidesteps the question of relevance and restricts its (convincing) argument to a thesis about how *Frost* should be read. However, avid readers of Bernhard in general, or *Frost* in particular, will find much to engage with in the book, since it develops highly original interpretations of several facets of this confounding text—in particular, the interdependent relationships between the characters, which often become backgrounded in theoretical treatments of *Frost*. Knopik excavates a complex of guilt and self-interest in the transcription strategies of the novel's student-narrator. More originally, he reconstructs the bond between the "anarchic" painter Strauch and his scientifically trained brother, arguing that they are connected through the "serapiontic" principle (a concept derived from E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Die Serapionsbrüder*). In this attention to the idiosyncratic constructions of interpersonal relations in *Frost*, Knopik's book can be seen as a further step toward understanding the *social* Bernhard, whose works do not exhaust themselves (as is commonly thought) in misanthropy for its own sake. At 435 pages, the somewhat intimidating length of Knopik's book means that future scholars of *Frost* will most likely use the monograph as a reference work, but even in this capacity, the book should give rise to engaging discussions.

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Bärbel Lücke, *Zur Ästhetik von Aktualität und Serialität in den Addenda-Stücken Elfriede Jelineks zu Die Kontrakte des Kaufmanns, Über Tiere, Kein Licht, Die Schutzbefohlenen*. Vienna: Praesens Verlag, 2017. 345 pp.

The four texts named in the title of this study provide some coordinates within the vast landscape of Jelinek's corpus. *Die Kontrakte des Kaufmanns: Eine Wirtschaftskomödie* (2009) critically engages Austrian and international banking scandals leading up to the global financial crisis. *Über Tiere* (2009), based on telephone transcripts, provides an inside view of a Viennese prostitution ring and its transactions. In *Kein Licht* (2011), Jelinek shifts to the nuclear disaster unleashed by natural catastrophe in Fukushima. Finally, *Die*

Schutzbefohlenen (2013) draws on the plight of refugees in Vienna to critique European policies of asylum and addresses the question of human rights. Economic matters, as Bärbel Lücke points out, are central to each. While Jelinek addresses banking and finance in *Kaufmann* and the “Schattenwirtschaft” in *Über Tiere*, *Kein Licht* takes on corporations and *Die Schutzbefohlenen* “d[ie] verdeckten neoliberalen Wirtschaftskriege” (10). These texts have something else in common. Beginning with *Die Kontrakte des Kaufmanns*, they all have supplemental texts, which can be performed individually, in part or in whole, depending upon the circumstances. The seriality of these pieces is intertwined with their actuality and, more specifically, their economic subject matter. Lücke quotes Jelinek regarding this constellation: “Irgendwie bilden meine Wirtschaftsstücke [. . .] ein verwinkeltes Gebäude, an dem immer weiter gebaut wird. [. . .] So sind meine Stücke oder Stück-Teile über Wirtschaft eine immer weiter fortlaufende Verschriftung der Wirtschaft” (9). *Zur Ästhetik von Aktualität und Serialität* follows Jelinek’s “Verschriftung der Wirtschaft” as it unfolds in the four primary texts and the fourteen additional texts, which constitute a unique and challenging genre for reader and critic alike.

The first eight chapters, following the introduction, are dedicated to *Die Kontrakte des Kaufmanns* and its subsequent texts. Geographically, Jelinek starts in Austria. By the third and fourth installments, she addresses the situation in Greece during 2014 and 2015. The final addition focuses on England prior to the so-called “Brexit” vote. While these texts mark significant shifts in recent economic and financial history, Lücke argues that Jelinek’s “Verschriftung der Wirtschaft” maintains relevance through its form: “Sie will die abstrakte Ökonomie performativ erleben lassen, und zwar im zeitlosen Jetzt des Lese-oder Bühnenerignisses” (107). Lücke transitions to *Über Tiere* and its related texts (Chapters 10 and 11) with a Lacanian analysis of Jelinek’s *Die Kinder der Toten* and Roberto Bolaño’s novel *2666* that concentrates on their apocalyptic elements and the role of violence, particularly against women. *Über Tiere*, like *Kaufmann*, is based on actual events; however, “die Jelinek’schen Theatertexte [sind] alles andere als ein tagesaktueller Kommentar zum politischen Geschehen.” (167). Her writing defies easy distinction between the past, the present, and the future: “das Aktuelle [ist] zugleich das Vergangene und das Vergangene das Aktuelle (und Zukünftige)” (167). This characteristic of Jelinek’s work expresses itself throughout the texts analyzed here.

Catastrophic events return in *Kein Licht* and its related texts (Chapters

12–14). Lücke emphasizes Jelinek's imaginative use of language to question who speaks for the dead following the clash of nature and technology in the era of financial capitalism. The employment of "Sicherheit" in this text both recalls the financial jargon of *Kaufmann* and throws into relief the lack of (nuclear) security following a natural disaster (189–90). Lücke also notes the centrality of bodily reactions in *Kein Licht*, human responses that contrast sharply with dehumanized global financial markets (196, 198). The topic of guilt brings Lücke's reading of *Kein Licht* and its corresponding texts to a fitting conclusion: "bei Jelinek [wird] die Schuld [. . .] sarkastisch bagatellisiert, banalisiert, ridikulisiert; denn in den anonymen Etagen der Konzerne und den staatlichen Institutionen ist sie (beinahe) abgeschafft" (221). The enduring question of guilt and debt (*Schuld/Schulden*) is not lost on Jelinek.

Die Schutzbefohlenen and its related texts (Chapters 15–19) conclude the study and broaden the scope of Jelinek's critique to include neoliberalism and the state. The text speaks through a multitude of voices, which Lücke describes as a "Text-Netz" resembling "das digitale Netz" (224). The question of voice remains central to this series of texts. Following the publication of *Die Schutzbefohlenen* in 2013, Jelinek published an "Appendix" on her website in 2015. Lücke notes that one voice in the text offers a "kritisch-ethische Haltung," which brings some perspective to the stream of images documenting the refugee crisis in Europe at the time (249). In the "Coda," Jelinek revisits the topic of profit and those who value money over human life. The third installment of *Die Schutzbefohlenen*, published in 2015, takes aim at Europe. Here, the voices of the undead return: "Die Gespenster sehen uns, wir die Vermummung. Aber Jelinek lässt sie hören, gibt ihnen Stimme" (288). Lücke's study concludes with the fourth supplement in the series: *Philemon und Baucis* (2016). The text, she writes, "dient der Verschriftlichung der immer drastischer werdenden Abschottung des europäischen Wirtschaftsraums, der EU, gegen die Menschen, die aus den geschundenen Bürgerkriegsländern (Syrien) sowie despotisch regierten und ausgebeuteten Ländern in Afrika und dem Vorderen Orient nach Europa flüchten" (290). In this final text, as in the others, Lücke elucidates Jelinek's many references to classical works, masterpieces of world literature, and less-known texts from various media. Further, she situates Jelinek's writing against a backdrop of theorists and philosophers to help us better understand the deep complexity of her work. *Zur*

Ästhetik von Aktualität und Serialität is an important and timely contribution to Jelinek studies and has much to offer all readers of Jelinek.

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Günter Bischof, ed., *Quiet Invaders Revisited: Biographies of Twentieth Century Immigrants to the United States*. Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2017. 323 pp.

Immigration is a hot-button issue in both the United States and Europe today, but much of the popular rhetoric surrounding the subject lacks historical grounding. Consequently, it is important to have new scholarship examining the immigrant experience. The book *Quiet Invaders Revisited* is exactly that: a deep investigation of the lives of immigrants and the challenges they faced.

This text, an anthology of essays that grew out of a 2015 symposium and were edited by Günter Bischof, is part of a larger series on transatlantic connections, and this volume specifically focuses on the movement of people from Austria to the United States (with a brief mention of Canada). It is divided into three main parts: one on the overall history of this movement, the next on the period immediately after World War I, and the final chapter on the era of the Second World War. Despite all that has changed over those years, Bischof argues that the essays demonstrate some important continuities, in particular the difficulty of assimilation to American culture and the desire of many migrants to return to Austria. This is the central, unifying theme of the text—the idea that no matter how strong the push factors were for Austrian emigrants, there would always be some connection with the country of their birth. This contrasts with earlier scholarship on Austrian migrants, particularly the mid-twentieth-century work of American diplomat E. Wilder Spaulding, who suggested that (German-speaking) Austrians were pulled to the United States rather than pushed and that they quickly blended in with the native-born population. Spaulding's work was published in the midst of the Cold War, which is significant both because Austria was, at that point, a neutral country that embraced the myth that they were Hitler's first victims but also because the United States was conscious of its role as a superpower and, as such, wanted to show a strong, united front. Although 1968, the year