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Minority Discourses in Germany since 1990 ed. by Ela Gezen
et al. (review)

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Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies, Volume 61, Number 4,
November 2025, pp. 371-374 (Review)

Published by University of Toronto Press



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of his ongoing influence. At the same time, a few telling asides hint at topics that remain largely no-go areas for this volume: Singer notes in passing the dearth of female figures among those whose biographies Sebald recounts (98), Schütte mentions the “striking absence of female authors” in Sebald’s literary criticism (210), and Wolff argues that there is scope for further studies of gender and sexuality in Sebald (281). Singer raises questions about the ethics of appropriation (99), Schauss grapples with Sebald’s problematic use of the word *Neiger* (293), and Schütte himself makes passing reference to Sebald’s political incorrectness. All of these asides suggest that there are still opportunities to explore these potentially difficult questions in more substantive detail.

That said, it is a very useful starting point for anyone seeking guidance through Sebald’s labyrinthine texts while offering plentiful rewards to the expert as well. Notwithstanding the frequent typos, it is readable and user-friendly, and it contains a helpful introductory apparatus, including a parallel bibliography of Sebald’s works in German and English, and a chronology of the author’s life. A strange fact buried in the chronology is that Sebald’s family Labrador was called Jodok. The only other time I have encountered this name is in the title of the novel *Auszug und Heimkehr des Jodok Fink*—a *Heimatroman* by none other than Johannes Freumbichler, the grandfather of Thomas Bernhard. Even Sebald’s dog, it seems, was intertextual.

Ela Gezen, Priscilla Layne, and Jonathan Skolnik,
editors. *Minority Discourses in Germany
since 1990*

Berghahn Books, 2022. 294 pp. US\$145.00 (Hardback).
ISBN 978-1-80073-427-2.

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This co-edited volume, which emerged from a 2017 conference and was published in the Spektrum series of the German Studies Association, set out to address the “experiences of a disconnect in the field of German Studies between scholars who focus on different minoritized groups” (2). With the aim to develop a dialogue across disciplines and to work coherently “toward an understanding of Germanness as plural, culturally diverse, and multilingual” (4), the contributions of the collection focus on aesthetic interventions into discourses on memory, immigration, and racism by Black German, Turkish German, and Jewish German writers.

By exploring the intersections and divergences of their experiences and situating them in opposition to the continued postunification projection of an ethnocentric culturalist understanding of identity and “white” Germanness, the volume seeks to further contribute to the existing and growing body of

scholarship on minority discourses and their counter-discursive strategies. At the same time, researching minority discourses may put German studies scholars as privileged academics at risk of reinforcing a binary opposition, resulting in “othering.” However, the minoritized groups in this collection are represented by academics who are positioned both inside and outside their topic on the basis of their experiences or awareness of the inherent asymmetrical power relations, which lead them to a reframing of minority discourses as cultural critique.

By contextualizing the volume’s ten chapters historically and methodologically to provide a better understanding of the contributors’ expansion on previous research, a brief but insightful outline of the scholarly histories of the three subdisciplines (Black German, Turkish German, and Jewish German studies) and their approaches has been added to the introduction. In this outline, the section on the interdisciplinary field of “Turkish German Studies” (by Ela Gezen) points to critical examinations of Turkish German texts and their representation of various cultural, national, ethnic, and historical encounters and intersections. The emphasis on an increasing scholarly engagement with both the Turkish and the German archive draws attention to a non-traditional understanding of the archive as a site of cultural production, interaction, processes of transformation, and an overall “multidirectionality of exchange” (11), including Black German and German Jewish communities. The segment “Black German Studies” (by Priscilla Layne) provides accounts on Black German movements and historical studies about Black German history by Black German authors, ranging from German colonialism to the postwar era. Recent scholarly investigations of Black German literature, theatre, film, and hip-hop suggest that in spite of a continued “othering” of Blackness as contradictory to Germanness in public discourses, Black Germans are increasingly creating a decolonized space in their works “that is no longer exclusionary and tied explicitly to whiteness” (16) in collaboration with other minoritized groups. The section “German Jewish Studies” (by Jonathan Skolnik) starts out with an account of diverse positions among scholars of German Jewish culture in discussing its complex positionality by partially falling back on the binary structure of Jews as a minority in a non-Jewish majority culture. Whereas past studies stressed a continued centrality of Holocaust memory in response to German unification, more recent studies are focusing on post-Holocaust German Jewish writing of the third generation as a literature of migration by exploring Holocaust memory and identity questions in a cosmopolitan and global context instead.

After the opening essay, “Refugee-Migrant-Immigrant,” by the German Jewish writer and activist Esther Dischereit, whose interdisciplinary work cuts across genres, the subsequent chapters advance comparative and intersectional approaches to minority studies in a German context from multi-ethnic perspectives. Although the innovative and in-depth analyses in each chapter can be read independently of the rest of the volume, the first three contributions, on works by Emine Sevgi Özdamar (Kristin Dickinson), Feridun Zaimoglu (Joshua Shelly), and Elizabeth Blonzen (Olivia Landry), intersect in their dialogic approach to the Turkish, Jewish, and German cultural archive and postmigrant theatre of Blackness.

The next chapter (by Britta Kallin) highlights further intersectional approaches of counter-discursive strategies by the three German comedians Oliver Polak, Dave Davis, and Serdar Somuncu. These comedians question the German national narrative of a homogeneous identity from various perspectives. Yet all three foreground a transcultural dialogue to provide opportunities for a future social transformation. Their call for a national discourse that is not primarily based on Holocaust memory culture but rather on Germany's growing multi-ethnic diversity is taken up again in the next segment. The contribution by Nick Block focuses on a shift in discourse to include disparate victim groups, resulting "in a layering of memorialization" (154). This kind of commemoration established a timely dialogue and intersection between historically victimized communities of different religions and time periods whose own voices about the creation process of their memorials, however, were mainly ignored, as in the case of Jewish victims (included are illustrations of *Stolpersteine*, which show "German victimhood alongside Jewish victimhood"; 152).

The focus on Germany's controversial national identity politics and discussion of a diversification of the public memory discourse is expanded to a discussion of Europe's contradictory identity politics in the subsequent chapter. Here Berna Gueneli discusses new presentations of Europe's heterogeneity in Turkish German and Afro-German films. The following chapter (by Maya Caspari) complements the previous contributions by returning to debates about cultural memory and the nation as a symbolic archive of selective remembering in the literary reading of Katja Petrowskaja's *Vielleicht Esther*. Caspari argues that the Russian Jewish German novelist uses a narrative strategy of "subjunctive remembering" (216) by resisting binary-based understandings of past and present in favour of playing with past and present contingencies and possibilities for political interventions. The next contribution (by Evan Torner) takes up both Germany's contemporary identity politics and white Eurocentrism by exploring two works of the Afrofuturist Sharon Dodua Otoo and her paradigm of posthumanism as a "critique of modern subjecthood" (228), which objectifies and excludes certain subjects. The final essay (by Leslie Adelson) correlates again with the volume's focus on creating a dialogue ("perhaps even a triologue between the different minoritized groups"; 23) by comparing the narratological concept of futurity in two works of the Turkish German author Özdamar and the Black German writer Michael Götting. Both experiment with a radical break of time as a temporal structure by providing a transcultural poetics of migration and race as "narrative forms of future-making" (249), involving "social time travel" (249) in twenty-first-century Europe.

Although some of the chapters do not aim per se at a dialogue among different minoritized groups, all contributions advance a non-traditional understanding of the archive as a site of transcultural interaction and new forms of intersectional collaborations. The analyses mirror a multifaceted, multilingual, and interrelated cultural production within an increasingly culturally diverse German, European, and global context. They thus underscore the need for a reconceptualized *Germanistik* and a deracialized, pluralistic understanding of

Germanness beyond a “categorical identity determination” (234) that tends to label minoritized writers in primarily ethnic terms. Even though the editors did not intend to be comprehensive in their discussion of minority discourses or interdisciplinary approaches but were hoping instead to set “the tone for future directions” (23), this well-conceptualized and carefully prepared volume (including a comprehensive index of both subjects and proper names) can serve as an excellent resource for students and scholars of German studies. New scholarship could further the cross-disciplinary dialogue by including both other minoritized groups and scholars from diverse disciplines, such as history, sociology, political science, and anthropology.

Sunka Simon. *German Crime Dramas from Network Television to Netflix*

London: Bloomsbury, 2023. 360 pp. US\$132.96 (Hardback).
ISBN 978-150-136-872-1.

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Sunka Simon’s book *German Crime Dramas from Network Television to Netflix* presents a thorough examination of the evolution of German crime dramas, particularly in the context of their reception in the United States. The book begins with a brief discussion of *Deutschland 83–89*, the first German series aired on a US network, and uses this as a springboard to explore the growing interest in German series in recent years, especially through platforms like Netflix. Simon’s perspective as a “German-American academic viewer” (21) informs her analysis, as Netflix has become a central access point for German series in the United States.

The primary aim of the book is not to provide a grand narrative of postwar German television history but to analyze how specific crime dramas construct, represent, and reflect their situatedness during different eras—network, cable and satellite, and streaming. Simon emphasizes the importance of understanding the confluence of regional, national, and global intertextual and paratextual concepts, and how these elements manifest in the formal language of both genre and medium. The book also posits the existence of continuities between the network and Netflix eras, particularly in the crime genre, and discusses the localization, nationality, and transnationality of German crime dramas.

The methodology employed in the book focuses heavily on textual analysis, treating individual television series as significant media texts rather than considering the broader context of their production and reception. While this approach allows for detailed examinations of specific series, it also limits the analysis by not fully addressing the economic and industrial factors that shape the German television landscape. A stronger perspective from media industry studies would have been fruitful in understanding the complexities of the German TV market,