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Schällibaum, Oriana. *Wahre Erfindungen. Medialität und Verschränkung in Reisetexten der Gegenwart*

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Wahre Erfindungen examines contemporary German travelogues that draw inspiration from and rework earlier historical travel accounts and expedition reports. The author introduces the concept of the double(d) journey (“doppelte Reise”) as a structural principle, analyzing how contemporary writers make visible the mediality of their texts, or, in other words, how preexisting sources are integrated in, or a foundation for, the new text. Schällibaum considers a corpus of novels that play with the truth claims attached to archival materials and, in doing so, bring to the forefront how all texts, including archival sources and historical documents, are mediated.

Wahre Empfindungen mainly focuses on four German authors – Uwe Timm, Michael Roes, Raoul Schrott, and Felicitas Hoppe (with the notable inclusion of Christoph Ransmayr, Thomas Stangl, and Christof Hamann in the third chapter) – who have produced fictionalized travelogues based on historical material. Such material might include photographs, maps, quoted text, itineraries, and marked or unmarked text snippets. Schällibaum employs a text- and media-analytical approach to explore how these texts reproduce reality and “truth,” and she concludes that the intertwining of archival and fictitious elements lends these texts a complex medial status. Indeed, the author’s central claim is that mediality produces these texts. The contemporary travelogues and fictional travel texts no longer focus solely on narrating a journey. Instead, the authors consciously reflect on the act of travel itself through their commentary on the cited source material.

Schällibaum positions her book within post-colonial and post-modern discourses, emphasizing the dichotomy of fact and fiction in travelogues. Notably, she addresses this opposition without explicitly referencing numerous studies in the field that have already explored this aspect extensively. Although Schällibaum cites Peter Brenner and Ansgar Nünning, she does not incorporate the theoretical contributions of British scholars such as Tom Youngs, Peter Hulme, James Buzard, and Carl Thompson into her analysis. In addition, Jan Born, Mary Baine Campbell, and Barbara Korte have written excellent accounts about the interplay of fact and

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fiction in travelogues. Another notable absence is Debbie Lisle's study of post-colonial travelogues (*The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing*, 2009), which argues that common stereotypes about 'foreignness' continue to shape the experience of modern travel. Consequently, the question as to whether the authors transpose colonial attitudes into their contemporary texts remains unanswered here.

Instead, Schällibaum is more interested in the problems of narration in modern (travel) literature. She wants to investigate the chosen corpus through three lenses: I. intertextuality and what she calls particles of reality (i.e., authentic documents) in the novels; II. the *mise-en-scène* of facts, fiction, and metafiction; and III. the mediality of the travel texts. Her theoretical framework is based on post-modern narrative theory with references to Jean Genette and Linda Hutcheon, and to Dieter Mersch for a grounding in media theory. The theoretical frame reveals Schällibaum's interest in discourses of authenticity in contemporary novels rather than the travel literature genre *per se*.

The chosen corpus falls into four categories: rewriting history, literary ethnology, fictional travelogues, and the authors' personal realities. Chapter 3 – a hefty 90 pages – deals with Uwe Timm's *Morenga* from 1978, Christoph Ransmayr's *Die Schrecken des Eises und der Finsternis* (1984), Thomas Stangl's *Der einzige Ort* (2004), and Christof Hamann's *Usambara* (2007), tracing how each author rewrites history (or authentic and historical documents) in the respective novel. According to Schällibaum, the earlier novels by Timm and Ransmayr can be regarded as historiographical metafiction, since they contemplate the conditions that enable the narration of history. Both Stangl and Hamann, on the other hand, problematize the act of reconstructing history by including literary blank spaces in their narratives.

Two shorter chapters in the middle are dedicated to problematizing historical sources. As Schällibaum shows, Michael Roes' *Leeres Viertel. Rub' Al-Kahli* (1996) irritates the reader by obfuscating which parts of the text are based in reality. Historical sources, the text reveals, are fictional. The fifth chapter analyzes two novels by Raoul Schrott, in which the materiality and mediality of sources are also problematized. Material sources, such as letters and maps, are presented as historically unreliable, and it is not always made clear to the reader where the unreliability originates.

The last chapter interprets several novels by Felicitas Hoppe, an author whose fabulations create versions of reality. Schällibaum argues that Hoppe thematizes the interplay between past and present and points to the precarious nature of materiality. Hoppe's narrators treat the source text with skepticism and are less focused on actual history than on the resonances of history in the present.

Overall, *Wahre Erfindungen* seems less interested in travel literature and is more applicable to literary genres that are based on truth claims (such as autobio-

ographies or memoirs). Schällibaum mainly investigates how contemporary novels expand the dichotomy of fact and fiction beyond a simple hierarchy of fact over fiction to reveal their mediality. These texts, she claims, want to show the conditions of their creation and point readers to a world where this dichotomy collapses and is no longer operational. In other words, they make the condition of their creation visible.

The study concludes with a large bibliography of primary and secondary sources, although it lacks an index that might direct the readers more easily to specific references.

