

CONSUMING FICTIONS: COMMODIFICATION AND THE GERMAN NOVEL 1775-1815

Matt Erlin, Spring 2007

DESCRIPTION

This course considers the evolution of the late eighteenth-century German novel against the backdrop of the vibrant consumer culture taking shape in the period. Recent scholarship has identified eighteenth century Europe as the site of a “consumer revolution,” a revolution that is inseparable from spread of literacy and the dramatic expansion of the book market in the period and that is crucial for understanding the origins of our own postmodern, consumption-driven society. After a review of this scholarship and of the heated eighteenth-century European debates about luxury, fashion, and the “reading epidemic” (*Lesewut*), we will apply the insights we have gained in analyses of four major period novels: Campe, *Robinson der Jüngere* (1779/80); Moritz, *Anton Reiser* (1785-90); Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802); and Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (1809). Specific topics will include reading as a form of luxury consumption, the artwork as commodity, the emergence of the idea of mass culture as “feminine,” and the role of discretionary consumption in the construction of the (modern) self. The limited number of primary texts means that we will also have time to read a selection of more general secondary literature on each of the novels under consideration.

COURSE INFO:

Course Number: L21 German 524 01

Class: M 1:30-4:00,

Telephone: 935-4005

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Office: 423 Ridgley

Office Hours: TBA

TEXTS:

J. H. Campe, *Robinson der Jüngere*

Karl Philipp Moritz, *Anton Reiser. Ein psychologischer Roman*

Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*

J. W. Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*

Don Slater, *Consumer Culture & Modernity*

Additional texts are available in a reader, to be purchased from Kinkos in Mallinckrodt, and on e-res.

ASSIGNMENTS/GRADING

Presentation/Handout	10%
Participation	10%
Two Reaction Papers (2-3 pages)	20%

Option I: Final Paper (10-15 pages) 60%

Option II: Two 5-page Papers 30% each

Option III: 5-page paper, model syllabus 30% each

PRESENTATION TOPICS

Historical Overview I (1740-1786)

Schriftsteller und literarischer Markt

Campe/*Robinson der Jüngere*

Kinderliteratur

Robinsonaden

Moritz/*Anton Reiser*

Emile

Historical Overview II (1786-1815)

Novalis/ *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*

Goethe/*Die Wahlverwandtschaften*

Attitudes and Living Pictures

Consuming Fictions: Commodification and the German Novel, 1775-1815

[e] = e-res; [r] = reader

1/22 Introduction to the Course (ca. 55 pp.)

Readings:

Abrams, "New Historicism" (182-90) [e]

Woodmansee/Osteen, "Taking Account of the New Economic Criticism" (3-50) [e]

1/29 Consumer Culture (ca. 130 pp.)

Readings:

Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity*, Ch. 1-3, 5, 6

2/5 Luxury (ca. 81 pp.)

Readings:

Berg and Eger, "Introduction"; "The Rise and Fall of the Luxury Debates" (1-27) [e]

Rousseau, *Second Discourse* (3-29) [e]

Krünitz, "Luxury," *Oekonomische Encyclopädie* (1-16) [r]

Bertuch, "Einleitung," *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* (22-33) [r]

Presentation: Historical Overview I (1740-1786)

2/12 Reading to Consume (ca. 133 pp.)

Readings:

J. R. G. Beyer, "Über das Bücherlesen, in so fern es zum Luxus unsrer Zeiten gehört" (185-216) [r]

J. A. Bergk, from *Die Kunst, Bücher zu lesen* (60-72; 406-16) [r]

von König, "Lesesucht und Lesewut" (89-112) [e]

Purdy, "Introduction"; "Fashion Journals"; "Reading to Consume" (vii-xv;1-50) [e]

Presentation: Schriftsteller und literarischer Markt

2/19 J. H. Campe, *Robinson der Jüngere* (ca. 233 pp.)

Readings:

Campe, *Über Empfindsamkeit und Empfinderei in pädagogischer Hinsicht* (3-56) [r]

Campe, *Robinson der Jüngere* (Vorbericht, 1-161)

Zantop, "Fathers and Sons: Donnerstag and Freitag, Campe and Krusoe" (102-120) [e]

Presentation: Campe/*Robinson der Jüngere*

2/26 J. H. Campe, *Robinson der Jüngere* (ca. 241 pp.)

Readings:

Campe, *Robinson der Jüngere* (162-347)

Koller, "Erziehung zur Arbeit als Disziplinierung der Phantasie" (40-76) [e]

Erlin, "Book Fetish: J. H. Campe and the Commodification of Literature" (355-76) [e]

Presentation: Kinderliteratur/Robinsonaden

3/5 Karl Philipp Moritz, *Anton Reiser* (ca. 258 pp.)

Readings:

Moritz, *Anton Reiser* (3-237)

Müller, “Die Erziehung der Gefühle im 18. Jahrhundert” (5-20) [e]

Martens, “Zur Einschätzung von Romanen und Theater in Moritz’ *A. Reiser*” (101-09) [e]

Presentation: Karl Philipp Moritz/*Anton Reiser*

3/19 Moritz, *Anton Reiser* (ca. 272 pp.)

Readings

Moritz, *Anton Reiser* (237-499)

Hegel, “The Police and the Corporation” (145-55) [e]

Presentation: Rousseau in Germany

3/26 Moritz, *Aesthetic Theory* (ca. 79 pp.)

Readings

Moritz, “Versuch einer Vereinigung aller schönen Künste und Wissenschaften unter dem Begriff des in sich selbst Vollendeten” (943-49) [r]

Schlettwein, “Von der sittlichen Ordnung” (383-434) [r]

Woodmansee, “The Interests of Disinterestedness” (11-33) [e]

Presentation: Historical Overview (1786-1815)

4/2 Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (ca. 165 pp.)

Readings:

Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (7-151)

Stadler, “Novalis: *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*” (141-62) [e]

Presentation: Novalis/*Heinrich von Ofterdingen*

4/9 Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (ca. 82 pp.)

Readings:

Novalis, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (152-75)

Zielkowski, “The Mine: Image of the Soul” (19-63) [e]

Erlin, “Products of the Imagination” (468-83) [e]

4/16 Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (ca. 161 pp.)

Readings:

Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (3-125)

Vaget, “Ein reicher Baron. Zum sozialgeschichtlichen Gehalt der *Wahlverwandtschaften*” (123-61) [e]

Presentation: Goethe/*Die Wahlverwandtschaften*

4/23 Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (ca. 161 pp.)

Readings:

Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (126-261)

Wellbery, “Die Wahlverwandtschaften” (291-317) [e]

Presentation: Attitudes and Living Pictures (*tableaux vivants*)

4/30 Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (ca. 69 pp.)

Readings

Wurst, “The Stimulation of Nature: Travel, Resorts, Spas and Gardens” (239-293) [e]

Schneider, “Wahllandschaften” (285-300) [e]

Schedule

1/22

1/29

Reaction papers:

1)

2)

2/5

Presentation: Historical Overview I (1740-1786) _____

Reaction papers:

1)

2)

2/12

Presentation: Schriftsteller und literarischer Markt _____

Reaction papers:

1)

2)

2/19

Presentation: *Campe/Robinson der Jüngere* _____

Reaction papers:

1)

2)

2/26

Presentation I: Kinderliteratur _____

Presentation II: Robinsonaden _____

Reaction papers:

1)

2)

3/5

Presentation: Karl Philipp Moritz/*Anton Reiser* _____

Reaction papers:

1)

2)

3/19

Presentation: Rousseau in Germany _____

Reaction papers:

1)

2)

3/26

Presentation: Historical Overview II (1786-1815) _____

Reaction papers:

1) 2)

4/2 **Presentation:** Novalis/*Heinrich von Ofterdingen* _____

Reaction papers:

1) 2)

4/9 **Reaction papers:**

1) 2)

4/16 **Presentation:** Goethe/*Die Wahlverwandtschaften* _____

Reaction papers:

1) 2)

4/23 **Reaction papers:**

1) 2)

4/30 **Presentation:** Attitudes and Living Pictures (*tableux vivants*) _____

Reaction papers:

1) 2)