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*Intersektionalität. Von der Antidiskriminierung zur befreiten Gesellschaft?* by Christopher Sweetapple, Heinz-Jürgen Voß, and Salih Alexander Wolter (review)

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anthology is “to rethink the past of German culture in service of a reconfigured present and in hopes of a more inclusive future” (2), this would be an avenue worth exploring. It might be helpful to define what the anthology means by “Germanness” from the outset. The anthology’s implicit association of diasporic Germanness with whiteness also undermines and seems out of sync with important conversations going on within contemporary Germany today.

Excerpts from this anthology would work well for an upper-level undergraduate- or graduate-level course on German visual culture, gender studies, or the transnational.

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*Intersektionalität. Von der Antidiskriminierung zur befreiten Gesellschaft?* By Christopher Sweetapple, Heinz-Jürgen Voß, and Salih Alexander Wolter. Stuttgart: Schmetterling, 2020. Pp. 91. Paper €12.00. ISBN 978-3896571670.

Quoting Kimberlé Crenshaw’s keynote address at the 2016 Women of The World Festival, the authors of this book define intersectionality as “how structures make certain identities the consequence of, and the vehicle for, vulnerability” (Crenshaw 2016). Though mainstream discourse has latched onto identity, Crenshaw’s “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex” (1989) underscored the *structures* that interlock to create and ultimately (dis)empower identities. The mistaken reduction of intersectionality to identity politics, the authors argue, has drawn censure from the right and left alike. They hope that intersectionality, once clarified, can link the range of activism on the left, a project they consider critically urgent in this moment of ascendant fascisms.

The authors contextualize intersectionality through the work of Patricia Hill Collins, Jasbir Puar, and Leslie McCall, as well as the Combahee River Collective and Afro-German organizing. The central focus is a study, led by Heinz-Jürgen Voß, examining sexual health and violence resources in Germany. The project *Intersektionalität für sexualwissenschaftliche Fragestellungen* was funded by the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung at the Merseburg University of Applied Sciences. The study’s aim was to expose “Leerstellen in der bisherigen Beratungs- und Präventionslandschaft zu sexualisierter Gewalt und in der Sexuellen Bildung” (26). By interviewing staff at counseling centers, initiatives, and organizations, and eliciting their reflections on intersectionality, the team sought to analyze “wie rassistische Gewalt und sexualisierte Gewalt miteinander verschränkt sind” (26).

The authors are attentive to the ways that sexual health and violence are constructed in varying discourses, focusing on the definition from the World Health Organization, which situates sexual health within overall bodily autonomy and well-being (30). Yet, as the authors argue, this definition ignores the origins of normative

sexuality in European colonialism and the formation of racial stereotypes, which persist in the behaviors and teaching materials of many institutions consulted in the study. Moreover, disparities in overall health occur along class and racial lines as a result of inadequate provision of healthcare and unequal distribution of physically demanding labor. Sexual health, then, is inextricable from colonial histories, racism, class, and citizenship status.

On the basis of their interviews, the authors underscore the need for all initiatives organizing around sexual health and violence to become “rassismussensibel- und selbstverständlich auch trans\* und inter\*sensibel” (69). To this end, they demand new pedagogical materials, more diverse administrative staff with multiple cultural proficiencies and identities, and most of all, the formation of heterogeneous teams continually engaging in intersectional reflection (68–70).

A cycle of unequal funding obstructs such change by privileging organizations with mostly white, cisgender staff. Such groups elude the “heterogenen Anforderungen und Betroffenheiten” of more intersectionally organized groups, and thus have time and relative stability with which to appeal to funding bodies (68). These funders, in turn, prefer “klare, einfache, getrennte” projects, as one respondent remarked (67). The cycle accelerates as groups led by those in privileged social positions secure longer-term funding, while intersectional groups compete for precarious, piecemeal contracts.

The book’s conclusion builds on the respondents’ critique of these inequities and divisions. It links the divisiveness of cyclical underfunding to an overall fragmentation of left-oriented movements, which, as noted above, motivates the authors’ focus upon intersectionality. Improved counseling and support, they argue, would empower individuals and ultimately help them unite to achieve Antonio Gramsci’s vision of “Dominanz für linke und emanzipatorische Positionen” (79).

By citing Gramsci as a model for imagining how “Menschen [sich] der Herrschaftsverhältnisse, in denen sie leben, bewusst werden,” the authors might have had occasion to return to Crenshaw’s reading of Gramsci in her article from 1988 on “Race, Reform, and Retrenchment” (83). Consensus, Crenshaw argued, is only one part of Gramsci’s dialectic of domination; he also posited an underrecognized theory of *coercion*. Coercion, rather than consensus, describes the domination experienced by racialized others, who, she argues, should not be presented as consenting to their oppression. Proceeding from Crenshaw’s reclaiming of Gramscian coercion, it would be important to acknowledge that the metric of becoming conscious may not apply equally in all contexts, as some may already possess a consciousness that is not heard by the dominating.

This book is a helpful resource for students and researchers working on racist, sexual, and gender-based oppression in Germany. Its concluding list of recommended readings is a thorough guide to the literature on intersectionality, with an emphasis

on German-speaking contexts. A strength of this book is its commitment to intersectionality as praxis. Two recent texts that examine the co-optation of intersectionality, including its academic institutionalization, are Iyiola Solanke's "Wo sind in Europa die Schwarzen Professorinnen?" (2019) and Jennifer C. Nash's *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality* (2019).

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