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**Review of Arbeit und Müßiggang in der Romantik. Claudia Lillge, Thorsten Unger, and Björn Weyand, eds. Paderborn: Fink, 2017. 494 pp.**

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**Review of Arbeit und Müßiggang in der Romantik. Claudia Lillge, Thorsten Unger, and Björn Weyand, eds. Paderborn: Fink, 2017. 494 pp.**

**Abstract**

Work has long served as the object of literary, philosophical, and artistic reflection. Its alternatives are also well represented, particularly in German Romanticism. Caspar David Friedrich's *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* (1818) offers a celebrated example of the latter, and features prominently on the cover of *Arbeit und Müßiggang in der Romantik*. Above the fog and in view of the wanderer, we also see *Barge Haulers on the Volga* (1870–73) by the Russian realist Ilya Repin. Because explicit depictions of work are largely absent in German Romantic painting, this striking image of manual labor was selected to counter Friedrich's iconic image (11–12). The workers, in tattered clothes and wearing blank expressions, contrast sharply with the well-dressed observer transposed to witness the men (and boy) yoked to a heavy vessel. *Barge Haulers on the Volga* clearly depicts work, but to what extent does *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* represent idleness, leisure, or perhaps another form of work? The twenty-eight essays in this volume demonstrate that the questions surrounding work and its other depend on circumstance and perspective.

**Disciplines**

Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Art and Architecture | German Linguistics | German Literature | Painting | Theory and Criticism

**Comments**

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*Arbeit und Müßiggang in der Romantik* ed. by Claudia  
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William H. Carter

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Handbuches auf keine Weise schmälern. Ohne Zweifel wird es für die Lenzforschung auf lange Zeit *das* unverzichtbare Standardwerk bleiben.

Chapman University

Walter Tschacher

Claudia Lillge, Thorsten Unger, and Björn Weyand, eds. **Arbeit und Müßiggang in der Romantik**. Paderborn: Fink, 2017. 494 pp.

Work has long served as the object of literary, philosophical, and artistic reflection. Its alternatives are also well represented, particularly in German Romanticism. Caspar David Friedrich's *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* (1818) offers a celebrated example of the latter, and features prominently on the cover of *Arbeit und Müßiggang in der Romantik*. Above the fog and in view of the wanderer, we also see *Barge Haulers on the Volga* (1870–73) by the Russian realist Ilya Repin. Because explicit depictions of work are largely absent in German Romantic painting, this striking image of manual labor was selected to counter Friedrich's iconic image (11–12). The workers, in tattered clothes and wearing blank expressions, contrast sharply with the well-dressed observer transposed to witness the men (and boy) yoked to a heavy vessel. *Barge Haulers on the Volga* clearly depicts work, but to what extent does *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* represent idleness, leisure, or perhaps another form of work? The twenty-eight essays in this volume demonstrate that the questions surrounding work and its other depend on circumstance and perspective.

The volume begins with a helpful introduction, which addresses work and idleness in Romantic painting, the contemporaneous understanding of key concepts, and a preview of the contributions. While the essays generally concentrate on works from the period, a few authors venture beyond the era but with due regard to the context. The collection is divided into five main sections. The first addresses various forms of *Arbeit* in Novalis (Franz-Jozef Deiters), Hölderlin (Sabine Doering), Chamisso (Christiane Weller), Heine (Dale Adams), and Büchner (Elke Brüns). The second shifts the focus to *Muß* and the related matters of *Faulheit* and *Fleiß* in Friedrich Schlegel's *Idylle über den Müßiggang* (Heide Volkening), Klingemann's *Nachtwachen. Von Bonaventura* (Mario Bosincu), Hölderlin's *Hyperion* (Leonhard Fuest), the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden* (Boris Roman Gibhardt), and Heine's *Briefe aus Berlin* and *Lutezia* (Robert Krause). The third section is dedicated to the arts and expands the scope of the volume; yet it remains heavily focused on literary texts with analyses of handcraft in Goethe and Heine (Michael Bies), the role of work and art in Klingemann's *Nachtwachen* (Tomasz Waszak), reflections on work and writing in Jean Paul (Monika Schmitz-Emans), and the work of poetry in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (James Hodgkinson). The final essay here is the exception. It examines the work of art and the art of work in Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Claudia Hillebrandt and Tom Kindt).

The fourth section approaches work, idleness, and leisure through the lens of time and space. Klaus Vieweg draws on Hegel and Nietzsche to argue that the workday is sublimated on Sunday. Claudia Lillge explores the *Mittagsruhe* in Wordsworth, Eichendorff, and the French realist Courbet, whose paintings capture daytime naps and a few at work. Eichendorff returns in Fred Lönker's examination of time in *Abnung und Gegenwart* and *Aus dem Leben eines Taugnickts*.

The final essays in this section address city spaces (Uwe Hentschel), different facets of work in the forest (Erhard Schütz), multidimensional space in *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (Martin Jörg Schäfer), and an exploration of *Kabnfahrten* in Fouqué, Brentano, and Heine (Simon Bunke). Bunke's reading mentions Goethe's *Auf dem See* but, surprisingly, not the deadly boating accident in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. The final section of the collection focuses on literary figures and their historical, social, and political contexts. Ursula Regener reads Eichendorff's work in light of his official duties and Adam Müller's political-economic theory. Patricia Czeizor examines work as obsession in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Das Fräulein von Scuderi*, and Lydia Mühlbach analyzes the work of women in the Grimms' *Schneewittchen* and its adaptations. The final two essays provide close readings of Wilhelm Hauff's *Das kalte Herz* (Volker Mergenthaler) and Heine's *Florentinische Nächte*, respectively.

The volume concludes fittingly with an essay by Björn Weyand that brings us back to the twenty-first century. Friedrich's *Wanderer* returns—this time adorning the business magazine *Capital*—exemplifying how work and its alternatives fall along a dynamic spectrum. Carmen Losmann's documentary *Work Hard Play Hard* (2011) provides further evidence of the reframing or rebranding of work as its other, particularly in the service of multinational corporations. Overall, this handsome and weighty tome has much to offer scholars of Romanticism as well as those interested in representations of work, idleness, and leisure. Goethe, I should note, is also well represented throughout this superb collection of insightful essays.

Iowa State University

William H. Carter

Asko Nivala. **The Romantic Idea of the Golden Age in Friedrich Schlegel's Philosophy of History.** New York: Routledge, 2017. viii + 273 pp.

Friedrich Schlegel is commonly identified as a writer, philosopher, and literary theorist. Though much of his work focused on Greek and Latin classics, Schlegel thought of himself as a historian, engaged in what he characterized as *Kulturgeschichte* (though admittedly not in the modern sense of the term). Inspired by Hesiod and the book of Genesis, many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century models of history followed a triadic pattern, positing a problematic present as a fallen or undesirable age, between an idyllic primitive Golden Age in the past, and the possibility of a utopian Golden Age in the future. Asko Nivala challenges the commonly held reading that Schlegel and the Romantics believed that a Golden Age had any basis in history. He further proposes to complicate the view that Romanticism be understood in terms of a nostalgic yearning for such a lost Golden Age. Rather it is a fluid trope that allowed Schlegel to critique the cultural present. Schlegel's "Romanticism" here refers to the historical period in German cultural history at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, intertwined with the final stages of the Enlightenment. Its early proponents include the Schlegel brothers, Novalis, Tieck, Schleiermacher, Dorothea Veit and Caroline Schlegel.

This book focuses on Schlegel's early writings, literary fragments, and letters until his conservative turn and conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1808. Nivala, a cultural historian and postdoctoral researcher at the University of Turku, Finland, teases out and drills down into Schlegel's complex and shifting treatment of the conception of a Golden Age, proposing to reconstruct his philoso-