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Culture and Thought**

Ecology



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Passages

In following contemporaneous European trends, Israeli Art shows a growing interest in cross-cultural passages, figuring ethnic, racial and gender-based conflicts. Three exhibitions held recently in Israel focus on such passages embedded in local settings. The paper demonstrates how these passages evasively change their forms through play-like acts of performance, in which the artist transcends the boundaries of his/her existence while transforming themselves into an "other". The placing of the self as a political body, or else going through constant change, challenges distinctions which are grounded in essentialism. These acts of passing go beyond the presentation of the other as a fully-fledged product, appearing as an "aggregate of characteristic dispositions". Formulating the acts of passing as the extension of the artist's private self enables a new insight to the character of social constructions, their consolidation and their *modus operandi*.

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Prussia and the Latin East: Commonalities and Differences in the Actions of the Teutonic Military Order

The Paper examines the *Modus Operandi* – both militarily and administratively – of the Teutonic Military Order during the thirteenth century within the Christian sphere of influence: The Latin East at the Mediterranean basin and in the Baltic region, in Prussia and Livonia in North Eastern Europe. During the thirteenth century, the crusaders fought the Muslims but had not attempted to convert them "en masse"; nor did they try to actually annihilate the Muslim enemy. Unlike their congenial and moderate mode of operation in the Latin East, their *modus operandi* in the Baltic arena was characterized by an entirely different approach. Since 1230 they had fought the pagan tribes in the region. It had been a ruthless religious campaign where the Teutonic Knights did not stop until they had actually expelled the heathens out of Prussia by the end of the thirteenth century. It thus seems that the Teutons had conducted themselves differently in the different arenas, the Latin East and the Baltic countries. The reason for this dissimilarity may lie in the geographical distances, the cultural differences between the warring populations and even the different settings of the battle fields.

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The Age of High Velocities and the History of Humanist Education: Humanity on its Way to self Destruction or the Happy Nomadism of the Eternal Improviser?

The article addresses the telos of Europe. Within the framework of Diasporic philosophy it points to the meaning of the European telos as a deconstruction of transcendence/holiness/mystery and the appearance of the quasi-nomad in a Godless world ruled by meaninglessness. It does so while referring to the following historical categories: 1. the history of the invention of God and the history of killing God; the deconstruction/exile of the killer of God and the abandonment of human's responsibility for transcendence/emancipation/redemption. 2. The history of Diasporic life towards "home-returning"/redemption within low speed and slow changes in all dimensions and levels of human existence; the constructing of the Garden of Eden on earth and the transforming of the "home-returning" into a humanistic-oriented self-deification within ever growing speeds and changes in all dimensions of life; the deconstruction of Europe's telos and the humanistic educational project in light of the exile of the killer of God, the entrance into the pleasure machine of the post metaphysical moment which is ruled by hyper-speed and the triumph of immanent Thanatos over the quest for transcendent Eros.

The deconstruction of transcendence/holiness/mystery and the appearance of the quasi-nomad in a Godless world ruled by meaninglessness, however, do not produce only a problematic "home-returning" to thingness and nothingness. Rather, there are still open possibilities for hope and for human's transcendence, edification and love. In face of the actual potential for human's destruction of all life on earth, the Diasporic philosophy carries important educational fruits. These must be seriously addressed against the coalition of fundamentalism, postcolonialism, and the acceleration of speed, all encourage the very impossibility of responsibility and reflection.

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Abstracts

Ecology

In Search of the Environmental Movement, or is the Ecological Movement a Modern Myth?

Recent research in environmental history, interacting with political trends, has challenged conventional understandings of environmentalism. The paper traces a number of these challenges, including the rise of the Environmental Justice Movement, the divergent ideas of Eastern German environmentalists, and growing doubts about the significance of 1970 as a turning point. The paper examines recent developments in research of the Nazi era and how they change our understanding of environmentalism. The paper calls for a focus on international research, for more attention to material interests, for a dispassionate view on environmental passions and for closer attention to the distinct rationales of environmental policy and environmental movements.

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Nature Protection in Germany – From Cultural Mission to Applied Ecology and Back?

By the 1970s, the scientifically founded protection of species, biotopes and natural resources had replaced the culturally oriented conservation of nature in Germany. Landscape was no longer protected as a cultural heritage for its beauty, individual character or in the sense of "Heimat", as it was in the nineteenth century. Instead, it became a material object and an "ecosystem." The paper discusses this transition from a critical perspective; it argues for a return to a culturally oriented conservation of nature. For this purpose the paper discusses the manifold cultural meanings of

nature, while confronting the possible integration of a new concept of "Heimat" into nature conservation, free of any racist and nationalist ideology.

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From Lunar Landscapes to a Vision of a new Lake District

Fiercely debated since the reunification of Germany, the reclamation and design of the open-cast mining landscape in eastern Germany, long considered destroyed, continues to attract political and cultural attention. This paper focuses on the culturally formed perception, interpretation and symbolism regarding the open-cast mining landscape in the Bitterfeld region and in Lower Lusatia. Following a discussion of some central aspects of the cultural idea of landscape, the paper demonstrates how the criticism of the reclamation, triggered by a novel view of the brown fields, fueled the discussion of landscape models following the reunification of Germany. The paper further shows that an appreciation of the industrial vestiges and relics led to the integration of these industrial leftovers into novel cultural understanding of landscapes, enriched by new architectural landmarks. This combination demonstrates the broadening of the traditional idea of landscape in the context of the ongoing postindustrial discourse.

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The Creation of God: Interpretation of the Book of Genesis

The paper is a speculative philosophical attempt to "listen" to the Holy Scriptures, accompanied at times by various interpretive options, but not succumbing to the explanations that these interpretations offer. In aiming in particular at searching for the ecological meaning of the holy text, the paper argues that the Myth of creation should be regarded as a story of God's desire to introduce order into chaos through distinguishing. God is unable to control natural reality directly, but rather through agents such as the sun, the moon, the animals, and Man. These are the agents of God's domination over nature, of the newly created objects. It is they who control nature, Earth-land, which is seemingly in perpetual motion back towards chaos, since this is the womb of creation, reminiscent of the primordial state of fusion between mother and child.

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