



Reproducing Enlightenment: Paradoxes in the Life of the Body Politic: Literature and Philosophy around 1800 (Interdisciplinary German Cultural Studies)

Diana K. Reese

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Written at the crossroads of aesthetics and politics, *Reproducing Enlightenment: Paradoxes of the Body Politic* interrogates the abstraction of the bearer of rights in Enlightenment thought by exploring contradictions between reproductive labor and political representation in the ideal of democratic citizenship. Drawing parallels between new definitions of biological form in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and his popular writings on Enlightenment, Reese's study reveals connections between naturalist inquiry and the political category of self-evidence around the turn of the 19th century. Pursuing this connection into Weimar-Classical era aesthetics, Reese's scholarship sets the backdrop against which she proposes to read the formal literary innovations of Mary Shelley and Heinrich von Kleist. The careful comparison of textual compositions by Shelley and Kleist shows how these two authors refuse organicist metaphor and excavate the paradoxes of Enlightenment attempts to theorize the equality of a disembodied subject. *Reproducing Enlightenment* traces two anti-classical poetics that arc beyond the concept of juridical and biological self-evidence to touch the dialectics and dilemmas of recognition at the foundation of social being.

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