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Times Out

In contemporary novels the notion of 'time out' (sabbatical, break, respite from work) is treated in multifaceted ways. Their starting point lies in neocapitalist concepts of subjectivity which allow subjects to take a 'time out' in order to self-optimize and be rendered more adaptable to the demands of modern economical regimes of the flexible *homo oeconomicus*: a social practice which admits circumscribed (quasi?)ludic spaces and times with some potential for self-exploration and self-fashioning and a playful loosening from the constraints of everyday automatisms.

In looking at three contemporary novels in which the protagonists take a 'time out', my paper looks at the ways in which fiction explores processes of ludic expansions of self. It can be shown that they not only present a whole range of types of play (from children's games to ritual) but also reveal the risks of loss of self, of vertigo and of expenditure/ "Verausgabung". They thus question utilitarian notions of 'time out' as a technique of subjectivisation that can unproblematically be channelled back into productive societal norms.

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Buchpublikationen (Auswahl): *Differenzen. Essays zu Weiblichkeit und Kultur*, Dülmen 1994; Hg. *Kein Land in Sicht. Heimat – weiblich?*, München 1997; Hg. *Trauer tragen – Trauer zeigen. Inszenierungen der Geschlechter*, München 1999; Mithg. *Umordnungen der Dinge* Königstein 2000; Mithg. *Sammeln – Ausstellen – Wegwerfen*, Königstein 2001; Mithg. *Dinge. Medien der Aneignung – Grenzen der Verfügung*, Königstein 2002; *'Giftige' Gaben. Über Tauschprozesse in der Literatur*, München 2008, Mithg. *Kulturen der Arbeit*, München 2011; Mithg. *Schemata und Praktiken* München 2012. Zahlreiche Aufsätze u.a. in den Bereichen Gender Studies und Cultural Studies und zu kulturellen Dingpraktiken.