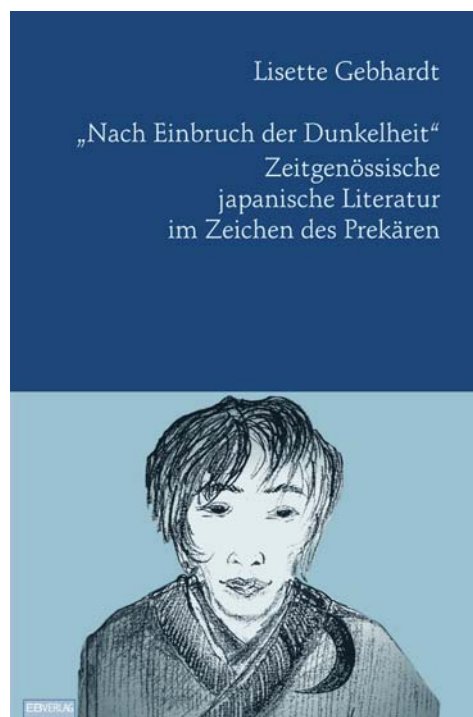




"After Dark: Contemporary *Japanese* Literature in a *Precarious Era* - How *Japanese* Authors Write on the New Poverty"



Lisette Gebhardt's study on precarity literature

In her study '**After Dark: Precarity Contemporary Japanese Literature**' (EB Verlag, Berlin, June 2010) Lisette Gebhardt, Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Frankfurt, addresses the timely topic of **new poverty** in so called rich countries. At the moment Japan experiences a disappearance of its middle class comparable to Germany. The deregulation of the labor market leads to a worsening of working conditions, which fosters uncertainty and anxiety about the future. Young people in Japan, who anticipate declining living standards and gloomy prospects of the future, consider themselves as a '**lost generation**' and behave increasingly demotivated.

Gebhardt's study concentrates on the Japanese discourse on the loss of social status and on a **new social hardship in literary works**. Young Japanese authors almost unexceptionally articulate a deep discontentedness looming inside Japanese society. Simultaneously they are concerned with a somehow disturbingly maniac pursuit of happiness and salvation within their constructed menacing globalized society. This **analysis of Japan's precarity literature** and its protagonists of Internet café refugees, low-wage workers, and other social outsiders shows astonishing parallels to Western criticism of the primacy of capitalism.

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