


CARANTES NEWSLETTER


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Dear Friends,

Welcome to our September newsletter! As seasons turn and the academic year starts up again, we hope you were all able to take a break, rest, and are now getting back into the swing of things refreshed and energized. After all, in a capitalist world, taking time off is a revolutionary act!


LOGISTICS & NEWS

 Following a suggestion made at our last public meeting as we discussed the importance of increasing the amount of quality public-facing content, we are going to be setting up some **Wikipedia Editing Days!** Is there a Wikipedia page related to Celtic Studies that you find egregiously wrong? Have you been meaning to do something about it, but can't quite fit it into your schedule, or simply don't know how to edit Wikipedia? Let's do it together! For now, just send us your pet peeve pages and we'll send out the date of our first Wikipedia Editing Day in our next newsletter.

 Speaking of which, it should be out **October 15th!** If it's a little late don't worry. The CARANTES team is all PhD students and early career scholars ; we're doing our best, and it'll arrive in your inbox as soon as we can finish it.

 A reminder for those of you in the UK that Aberystwyth University is offering a **PhD opportunity** titled "Discourses of Celticity on the Far-right: Authenticity, Appropriation and Antagonism". The deadline is September 27th, and you can find all the info here:

<https://www.findaphd.com/phds/project/discourses-of-celticity-on-the-far-right-authenticity-appropriation-and-antagonism/?p160266>

 Lastly, a reminder that we are looking to sponsor a **session at IMC Leeds** titled "Celtic Studies, Appropriation and Political Crisis" next year! We're extending our deadline to September 24th. Find our call for papers on our twitter page: @caranteswg !

READINGS & NOTES FROM OUR DISCUSSION

- Tansman, Alan. "Reading Fascism's Form." *Representations* 104, no. 1 (2008): 144-53. <https://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2008.104.1.144>.
- Stewart, Ian. "Celticism, An Intellectual History" paper given on 21/10/21 at the CAWCS in Aberystwyth. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acLvRNR_1kU&t=1088s

In his online lecture, **Ian Stewart** presents us Celticism as a link between Celtic nations and ideas. He introduces important notions such as pan-celticism, identitarianism and tradition paradigm. Celticism is defined through Stewart's argument as a European intellectual and cultural history: scholars from past decades were in constant pursuit of knowledge, producing a tense environment that sometimes gave way to imagination and (re)construction.

The Celts have always been one of the most popular ancestral choices in Europe: cultural and social groups have fought over the claim of Celtic provenance, and this has played a major role in the development of Celtic nations. In the course of our discussion, we made the link between this topic and the increasing emergence of 'popular historians' whose works tend to repeat the same information, or misinformation, in variously ornamented ways. In the course of his lecture, Ian Stewart comes to the conclusion that **Celticism is not about studying the Celts**, but about theorizing their reputation and building an ideologically oriented image of them. Behind all this lies something darker, a national thought and a racial shadow that widely echoes the modern obsession for race and ancestry.

'**Reading Fascism's Form**' by Alan Tansman constitutes a reflection around the shape that fascism takes in written works, which intersects with some of Stewart's points. It focuses on the question of **aesthetics**, taking the writings of twentieth-century Japanese authors Kobayashi Hideo and Yasuda Yojûrô as case studies to illustrate the article's central idea that **form supersedes content** when it comes to fascist literature. Tansman argues that it is the lack of meaning, of actual content, that pushes readers to embrace and be compelled by the aesthetics, to abandon critical thinking.

In the course of our discussion around this article, we were struck by the mention of young boys as the main readers of these authors. Teenagers grappling with the injustice of depersonalisation under capitalism, an injustice that they can't conceptualize, and feelings that they have no outlet for, will turn to aesthetics as the only ontological experience that they can process and that is available to them, thus making them the prime target for radicalization through aesthetics. We also noted how the **tendency to represent war beautifully** can be seen rather extensively in our field, for example in the Death of Cú Chulainn at the end of the *Táin Bo Cuailgne*, as represented by Irish nationalists. We can also see this phenomenon with the well-known *männerbund*, or war-band, often presented as a historical space of male bonding to be regretted today.

Together with Ian Stewart's lecture, this opens a realm of discussion regarding how representations of war, manhood and Celts are handled even within academia, and our responsibility in reaching beyond the aesthetic, into the emotional and historical reality of the texts we study, as well as being intentional with the words we use in our analysis in order to offer a healthier environment to discuss these topics and not fall prey to the allure of **vibes**, a fascist's most powerful tool.

Further questions to consider might be: how do recent popular "historians" and self-proclaimed science communicators build these alluring aesthetic representations? What are the most common ones? What are the most susceptible to ideological appropriation? **Are vibes the sole purview of fascists?** Or is there a way that we can use them to our own advantage, as antifascist scholars?

For now, that is all from us here at the Carantes Steering Committee. Please feel free to contact us if you have any reactions, thoughts or concerns, or if you would rather not get any more emails.

Until next time, keep well and safe,
And thank you for doing this work with us,
Your friends at

CARANTESWG@PROTON.ME
@CARANTESWG ON TWITTER



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