



Harry & Helen Gray
Humanities Program Series
Volume 13

THE CULTURAL AFTER-LIFE
OF EAST GERMANY:
NEW TRANSNATIONAL
PERSPECTIVES

Edited by
Leslie A. Adelson
Cornell University

American Institute for Contemporary German Studies
The Johns Hopkins University





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FOREWORD

In its workshops on the demise of East German arts and culture, the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies has focused on the individual artistic genres of literature, visual arts, music, and film. In each case the genre-specific “story” connects the later with the earlier developments between 1945 and 1989 and helps avoid the rather vague and ritualistic invocation of “the” culture of the German Democratic Republic. This approach has not only generated new insights into various artistic communities and their audiences but also sharpened our senses for the inherent problems of aesthetic production both in a closed society and a suddenly opened market economy after 1990. The volumes of the Humanities Series on literature (1997), visual arts (1998), music (2000), and film (2002) have found much interest on the part of an American audience that rarely, if ever, thought of the phenomenon of a specific East German culture.

This volume takes a different approach, reflecting paradigms of transnational perspectives that have their roots in the debates about multiculturalism, postcolonialism and, most recently, the dialectic of global and local interests. Leslie Adelson, by convening the AICGS workshop under the same title, “The Cultural After-Life of East Germany: New Transnational Perspectives,” on May 10, 2002, gave voice to discussions that move beyond the confirmation and documentation of the cultural legacy of the German Democratic Republic. The contributors of this collection by no means dismiss this legacy. They rather apply different discourses that help find a critical language for the analysis of the legal, literary, ethnic, and racial aspects of the society in East Germany before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. These discourses are diverse, methodologically challenging, yet give credence to the notion that research on GDR culture and society is slowly overcoming the danger of ghettoization within the thinking in legacies and their preservation.

In their introduction Leslie Adelson and David Bathrick delineate this agenda with a couple of incisive questions. They leave no doubt that this is only a first step into a broader arena of cultural and social criticism. They also indicate that this arena displays less of the proprietary spirit of inner-German debates, where the reflection of the demise of the GDR is intricately bound up with the rethinking of national identity after unification. As Claudia Breger’s analysis of the debates surrounding the possible reconstruction of the Berlin Schloss shows

in this volume, this rethinking is itself part of an inner-German power game where the emphasis has shifted from reclaiming the history of the GDR—in opposite ways by East and West Germans—to reclaiming the symbolism of national history as a whole. Exploring transnational perspectives cannot be done convincingly without such a look at the sparks that national debates, in this case about the fate of the GDR Palace of the Republic in Berlin, continue to ignite.

In his foray into the imaginary that (East) German poets have conjured of Middle Eastern cultures, Erk Grimm responds to the current geocultural interest with some provocative observations. David Bathrick concentrates on re-reading the once important, yet enigmatic text, *Der andere Planet*, with which Günter Kunert, then a citizen of the GDR, wrote against the ideologically overcharged image of America. How much transnational perspectives need to be located and discussed within the confines of German society and culture themselves is demonstrated by Leslie Adelson. Based on her much acclaimed work on German literature by Turkish writers, Adelson generates new insights into the precarious state of collective memory as she juxtaposes the established dichotomies of German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* with perceptions by Turkish authors as the new insiders. More politically oriented is Peggy Piesche's take on the official transnational agenda of the GDR in comparison with the real situation of minorities and foreigners of different races. Using archival material that has become available since 1990, Piesche examines both patterns of Black immigration to the GDR and the effects of "solidarity treaties" on children born into bi-national families. The material illuminates longer-standing sentiments that might not be restricted to East Germans. Benjamin Robinson shifts to another discourse on the GDR that has only begun to be explored: he opens an inquiry into the concepts of law and normative reason with regard to two of the leading GDR intellectuals, Christa Wolf and Franz Fühmann. Prompted by the forced exile of the dissident singer-poet Wolf Biermann in 1976, against which many GDR writers protested, Wolf and Fühmann engaged in a revealing discussion of these concepts, thus stepping onto a slippery terrain beyond the established aesthetic assertions of the legitimacy of this state.

The American Institute for Contemporary German Studies is grateful to Leslie Adelson for having organized this presentation of new perspectives on GDR culture and edited the revised workshop papers in an exemplary manner. We thank the contributors for their innovative, at times provocative studies of

East German culture and its aftermath and the owners of the visual material for their permission to use it for reproduction.

Frank Trommler
Director, Harry & Helen Gray
Humanities Program

Jackson Janes
Executive Director
AICGS

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A B O U T T H E A U T H O R S

Leslie A. Adelson, Professor of German Studies, Chair, Department of German Studies, Cornell University, 183 Goldwin Smith Hall , Ithaca NY 14853.

David Bathrick, Jacob Gould Schurman Professor of Theatre, Film & Dance, Professor of German Studies, Cornell University, Schwartz Center, 430 College Ave., Ithaca, NY 14850.

Claudia Breger, Assistant Professor of Germanic Studies, Department of Germanic Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1020 E. Kirkwood Ave., Ballantine Hall 669, Bloomington, IN 47405-7103.

Erk Grimm, Assistant Professor, Department of German, Barnard College, 320 Milbank, New York, NY 10027.

Peggy Piesche, Research Fellow, University of Utrecht, Research Center for German Studies, Domplein 24, 3512 JE Utrecht, The Netherlands; Ph.D. candidate, Department of Humanities, University of Paderborn, Warburger Str. 100, 33098 Paderborn, Germany.

Benjamin Robinson, Assistant Professor of German, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115.

INTRODUCTION
THE CULTURAL AFTER-LIFE OF EAST GERMANY:
NEW TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Leslie A. Adelson and David Bathrick

Even amateur photographers recognize the importance of framing. What falls in our field of vision depends in large part on how we frame the picture. The AICGS workshop convened in Washington, D.C., on May 10, 2002, the contributions to which are published here to provide broader access, reflects in part a general need to question the frames and contexts we deploy to think about the critical work that the interdisciplinary field of German Studies entails at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The thematic focus on new transnational contexts for thinking about the cultural after-life of East Germany is prompted by two primary questions, both of which revolve around the pivotal status of 1989 as the beginning of a new marking of time—in Germany and beyond.

In a recent anthology entitled *The Power of Intellectuals in Contemporary Germany*, scholars and writers of international distinction address the many sea changes wrought for Germany in the wake of the demise of the GDR, the unification of the nation, and many ensuing debates about the very meaning of German nationhood in an age of Europeanization and even globalization. As this anthology details, the 1990s saw furious debates waged concurrently about East German dissidents, literary culture, and their vexed relationship to a repressive state, on the one hand, and about the West German obsession with the politics and culture of historical memory, on the other. In his introduction to the volume, the historian Michael Geyer suggests “that we think of these debates and their entwinement of past, present, and the future as rites of passage from one world to another.”¹ On the same page he refers to “the GDR and its culture” as “a past that has a weighty presence.” How does this past with “a weighty presence,” we might ask, inform Germany’s “passage from one world to another”?

But the changes effected by 1989 do not comprise a Germany story alone. Even beyond the obvious changes we associate with Eastern Europe and the former Soviet bloc, we would also have to note the rise

of new social movements and transnational networks around the globe. The latest issue of the journal *Public Culture* is in fact dedicated to the new social “imaginaries” that its contributors see emerging in places such as India, Turkey, Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere. In the assessment of Dilip Gaonkar, whose introductory essay explains the critical etymology of the operative term, these new social movements and the worldviews that attend them respond “to a radically different intellectual and political milieu signaled by the cataclysmic events of 1989 and their aftermath.”² The contributors to this special issue of *Public Culture* are especially concerned with ways in which the post-1989 globalization of financial markets, cultural domains, and communications media is “transforming contemporary societies” around the world and creating new transnational conditions for democratic public spheres and civil society, on the one hand, or “destructive nationalisms and fundamentalisms,” on the other.³

By focusing on “The Cultural After-Life of East Germany,” the workshop held in early May 2002 was intended to stage a loose dialogue between these two historic moments—one narrowly German and one broadly transnational, both signaled by 1989. Its two primary sets of “framing” questions then, to return to the photographic metaphor, are as follows: 1) Does our newly configured understanding of national, international, and transnational relations and cultures today push us to understand the international and transnational dimensions of the GDR itself—or its cultural legacy—differently from before? What have previous approaches to East Germany perhaps failed to grasp because the existing framework for analysis blocked certain factors from view? 2) How is it that newly transnational conditions for thinking about the East German past transform our understanding of a dynamic German present on an international stage? What unfamiliar framing devices allow us to grasp the manifold significance of “the East” for the German future ahead? Individually and collectively, the workshop contributions that this publication makes available to a broader audience point to new directions for thinking about the diverse transnational contexts in which the GDR continues to concern us in the age of globalization. One might say as well that this work represents one of many steps necessary for assessing the future of German area studies after and beyond 1989.

ENDNOTES

¹ Michael Geyer, "Introduction," *The Power of Intellectuals in Contemporary Germany*, ed. Michael Geyer (Chicago/London: U of Chicago P, 2001) 1-24, here p. 2.

² Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, "Toward New Imaginaries: An Introduction," *New Imaginaries*, ed. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar and Benjamin Lee, spec. issue of *Public Culture* 14.1 (2002): 1-19, here p. 1.

³ Gaonkar, "Introduction," 2-3.

**FAR AWAY, AND YET SO CLOSE:
GÜNTER KUNERT'S IMAGE OF AMERICA**

David Bathrick

Let me begin by deconstructing the title of this essay. There is no unified image of America in the works of Günter Kunert. What we have instead are evolving images, all of which have been constantly subject to revision and reconfiguration over the years; fragments that undergo hermeneutical expansion and even mutation. The path from Kunert's first literary confrontations with the phenomenon "America" in the 1940s down to his more recent visits and literary re-visitations has meant for him a constantly renewed flirtation with an object that, by virtue of repeated distancing, was becoming more familiar over time. Thus, my task cannot involve a chronological overview of the role of America in Kunert's work and thought. Rather, I shall focus on a selection of paradigmatic moments in this highly cathected relationship, which for me, as an American, offer a particularly fruitful look at the extraordinarily creative tension found in the face-off between the East German poet and his "other planet" America.

Of central concern in this regard are the following questions: In what ways do his depictions of the United States reveal important traces of his experiences as an East German? How does the evolution of these images represent explicit or implicit dialogues with his own past in the GDR? Focusing on the concerns of this volume, do we sense in such dialogues a struggle on Kunert's part to go beyond the national constraints contained in the ever-reenacted ideological and cultural stand-off between East and West Germany?

The poet's life-long obsession with the United States actually finds its genesis in an early infatuation with American literature. In a famous interview with Walter Höllerer, Kunert identifies Walt Whitman, Carl Sandberg, and Edgar Lee Masters as his true literary "guardians" (Paten), although Johannes R. Becher and Bertolt Brecht had in fact served as the socialist guardians for his earliest literary experiments in the GDR back in the 1950s.¹ In a description of his arrival in New York on the occasion of his first visit to the United States in 1972, Kunert offers the following tribute to the three aforementioned American literati: "If one has once been fortunate enough to receive the gift of poetic inspiration from such

notable guardians and then in addition to that had the privilege of pursuing American literature throughout his life, how can he now not feel a remarkable sense of security and warmth (*eine bemerkenswerte Geborgenheit*)?"² So much for lovely dedications. Even a cursory reading of *Der andere Planet* would suggest that Kunert's mercurial, occasionally outright paranoid discursive responses to the American dream/nightmare could hardly be considered compatible with a notion of warmth and nourishment. But that of course is the beauty of poetic license—and also of the United States as a floating signifier. So far away, and yet so close.

AMERICA IN THE EARLY WORKS OF GÜNTER KUNERT

America as a theme is already the subject of an early poem by Günter Kunert. In 1949 he published a ballad with the title *Lied von einer kleinen Stadt*, (Ballad of a small town) based on a newspaper article about an industrial accident in Pennsylvania.³ At this point, of course, Kunert would never have dreamed that the state of Pennsylvania would one day become a central point of orientation for him in the United States. On the other hand, what he obviously was able to sense about this event was the central significance of the topic of industrial pollution and its tragic consequences for modern society—and this at a time prior to its becoming a major global issue. This concern about the costs and dangers of modernization, this theoretical awareness of a dialectic of the enlightenment, if you will, was a theme that was to become a foregrounded aspect of his lyric poetry. Certainly this was the case for his contributions to the famous lyric debate in the GDR during the early 1960s. And it can also be said to be an important element of his literary engagement with the United States.

In 1959 Kunert published a TV play entitled *Der Kaiser von Hondu*, a satire about American foreign policy in South East Asia, which in its grotesque style is more reminiscent of Dürrenmatt than Bertolt Brecht.⁴ *Der Hai* (The Shark) is the ominous title of a short story published in 1968.⁵ As in many of Brecht's similar works about America, life in the United States is depicted here with grotesque irony as a brutal battle for daily existence. A death warrant, published of all places in the *New York Times*, leads to an attempted lynching in a small town in the Midwest and then to a terrible closure: in a state of utter despair about living

conditions in the United States, the hero, a sailor, attempts to end everything by blowing himself up along with an entire freighter.

Despite the formal brilliance and complexity of the language, these two works offer a decidedly monolithic, ideologically even predictable image of America. By that I do not mean its critique of the foreign policy of the United States, which in *Der Kaiser of Hondu* in interesting ways presciently anticipates later developments leading to this country's disastrous involvement in Vietnam. Nor do I mean Kunert's portrayal in *Der Hai* of the latent fascistoid lynch culture found indeed in areas of smalltown America. What I am concerned with, rather, is the tone of the writing, the absolute absence of any trace of curiosity, questioning or even uncertainty on the part of its poetic voice or narrative strategy. Satire and irony in the service of discursively preordained judgments ultimately preclude any possibility on the part of the reader of discovering something new or unexpected vis-à-vis the object of depiction. Moreover, it is precisely the startling openness, indeed unpredictability, of so much of Kunert's other work that has not only distinguished him from the mainstream of GDR writing, but has also gotten him into trouble with cultural authorities. In short, what Kunert offers us in the best of his later prose and poetry is a systematic deconstruction of ideological prejudgment. An interesting example of a text in which he seems to hover almost eerily between these two extremes—between unpredictability, on the one hand, and a kind of unstated but ever lurking predilection—is his travel book about the United States.

READING KUNERT'S *DER ANDERE PLANET* AS AN ANTI-TRAVELOGUE

The Other Planet: Views of America, which appeared in 1974 in East Germany and a year later in West Germany, tells of Kunert's stay at the University of Texas as a Visiting Associate Professor in the fall quarter of 1972. In addition to his time in Austin, the book also describes several trips through the South and the Southwest as well as various stops in Iowa, Washington, D.C., and New York City on his way back to Germany. The work itself contains a foreword, an epilogue, and forty-two short chapters whose titles contain the names of streets, towns, cities, scenes,

monuments, and other sites of interest. The epilogue entitled “How it was that I almost became an American” tells of Kunert’s great-grandfather, who in the nineteenth century lived for a time in the United States. Here, as so often, Kunert plays through the possibility of what it would have meant to have taken a different path. What would have happened if ... As a *Denkbild*, (thought image), this question signals a tendency found throughout Kunert’s work to open up alternative ways of thinking, living, and being. Some have called it a moment of utopia; others see it as a kind of counter to his irony and reputed pessimism.

That with this book Kunert intended significantly more than just another travelogue becomes apparent already with its opening sentences: “Remembering and writing are identical. In principle. And how does such emerge if not in the highly questionable process of selecting, repressing (*Verdrängung*), evaluating and judging? That, in turn, colors and changes objects—sometimes unrecognizably. Despite our greatest efforts, objectivity does not lie within our power. We are not computers (*Speichergeräte*). Our perceiving eye reveals itself at the very moment of perception to be partially blind, or at least near or far sighted. No matter how hard we try, we will always fail to note certain things, or we register things where there are already given connections in our conscious or unconscious minds”(7).

Here Kunert signals a number of themes that will be important for this work as a whole. For example, viewed philosophically as an epistemological issue, the assertion that “objectivity does not lie within our power” could easily be read as a not so subtle repudiation of the basic principle of scientific certitude lying at the heart of Marxist-Leninism. Moreover, such a remark might seem particularly touchy given that Kunert was writing about official Communism’s arch-rival the United States. What is Kunert really trying to say? And to whom? Knowing that *Der andere Planet* was scheduled to appear in both East and West Germany, the author is surely also aware that he is dealing, almost schizophrenically, with two very different reading publics. Is he trying to provoke the Eastern authorities? Or is he seeking, with the help of his American “guardian angels,” to create for himself a free space where he would not immediately be judged in accordance with one or the other imagined ideological measuring sticks? In keeping with our question

above, is he striving to transcend the ideological either/or of the cultural cold war by refusing to be held accountable at the level of his poetic voice? These and similar questions will be important for our further considerations.

A second aspect, related to the first, has to do with Kunert's emphasis on the visual as vital for writing and remembering. The subtitle *Ansichten von Amerika* (literally "points of viewing America") has clearly a double meaning: On an abstract level, *Ansichten* suggests the reactions of an observer to sensual impressions and carries the meaning of opinion or judgment. Here the word implies an abstraction or secondary reworking of the given or the observed. But just as significant for Kunert is its more literal, visual meaning, which points to the object observed as a purely outer phenomenon. Many of the observations by the narrator in *Der andere Planet* begin with long, detailed descriptions of objects, sightings (Anblicke), behavioral characteristics, events and proceedings that are marked most of all by the fact that they radically withhold judgments about what they see. Much of what is written is offered, at least performatively, as conjecture, as a tentative quasi-scientific remarking of the anthropological or even zoological phenomena of this "other planet." A short visit to a city in New Mexico named *Truth or Consequences* gives us a particularly threatening scene in a restaurant named *Freddy's*. It is threatening precisely because it remains at one level an epistemological nightmare; precisely because the narrator, at least rhetorically, is unable to make sense of what he is confronting.

In the background figures: talking and sometimes looking over at us. At least we think that's what they are doing. And outside an ambulance with rotating red lights drives up; the light is turned off. The driver in a white frock gets out and with him two older, equally white befrosted females (Weiblichkeiten), casually, even intimately greeted by our waitress: hi folks! Here everybody knows everybody; that is the truth and consequences of this mountain nest. Only we are strangers here, and noticeably stranger strangers than elsewhere. Or do we just take ourselves to be so standing in front of this backdrop? (98-9)

Kafkaesque this description? No Kunertesque. The more eerily alienated this scene becomes by virtue of its precisely detailed description, all the more definitively is it made clear to us the extent to which he and his wife just as easily could have simply imagined the extent to which they were ostracized. This radically neutral view as a kind of literary stance provides poetic licence for the narrator/author Kunert to free himself from the demands of the classical touristic *Bildungsbürger* (educated citizen) to provide enlightenment, allowing him instead to inhabit the role of the naive, uncomprehending, but, nevertheless, ironic outsider.

That is one reading of this scene. Another reading by Franz Futterknecht, a West German professor of literature currently living and teaching in the United States, offers quite a different interpretation: “I confess, *Truth or Consequences* as well as *Freddy’s* are unknown to me. Nevertheless I can’t help saying that the experiences that Kunert describes are not the standard ones I had on trips through western countries or the United States. On the other hand, miserable menus, bad food, bad service, unfriendly treatment by local customers, and threats by a police state were very much standard experiences for me in the former GDR.”⁶

To the above, I would add only the following: Were one to read this scene as a typical travelogue, i.e. as an empirical description of what one observed as a traveler in this or that country, one might very well be led to think of similar experiences in the former GDR—particularly if one were a tourist from the Federal Republic or the United States. But considering this passage generically as a piece of literature, rather than just a travel report, then it becomes clear that with Kunert we are not dealing simply with an empirical event or a reliably exact replication of it—but rather with an imaginative transformation of such. Here the narrator is observing certain things *as though* he were coming from another planet, and is thus enabled to make out of the “merely” quotidian something absolutely steeped in the uncanny. It is obviously easier to do this in a “foreign” country, for one is unconstrained by familiarity, free to go anywhere. Where Futterknecht is compelled by Kunert’s fantasies to avail himself of what appears to be a somewhat belabored, if not stereotypical East-West phobia, the text itself would seem to be unfolding a strange kind of dystopic landscape; one that cannot or rather should not

be decoded allegorically as simply the unconscious return of the (GDR) repressed. Most assuredly the GDR is there too: in sublimated form, not simply as raw projection. Kunert's travel book of the United States is not anthropology, nor is it a geography lesson.

Looking back some twenty years later, which was also fifteen years after he had left the GDR, Kunert offered the following comments about his narrative perspective when writing *Der andere Planet*: "I wrote a book about my stay in the United States from the standpoint of pure naiveté and innocence. This would no longer be possible for me today, since it was precisely my lack of knowledge, or relative knowledge, the absence of inhibition which enabled me to write as I did."⁷

Writing without inhibition? From a standpoint of pure innocence and without preconceived notions? Is this even possible? Whether the narrative voice in Kunert's *Der andere Planet* arises from a genuine lack of knowledge or simply staged innocence is ultimately irrelevant. Most likely it is a combination of both. What is clear nevertheless, both through a reading of the text and otherwise confirmed by the author himself, is the extent to which this other planet comes to function as a kind of surface of projection upon which consciously or unconsciously the narrative voice may act out and work through its own contradictory, momentary post-ideological responses to the imperialist other.

Also striking is the manner in which our innocent traveler rather systematically excludes a whole set of themes, experiences and observations from his field of vision. For example, only rarely do we find descriptions of personal contacts with people—the exchanging of ideas or even offhand conversations with individual persons. His focus on detail places even human beings under a microscope. Whether we are dealing with female co-eds at the University of Texas, who “with cat-like screeches happily call out sweet nothings to each other as they flit across the campus” (35) or with an ensemble of young, hardy patriotic men in a television program who “freshly shaved, freshly bathed, gung-ho (*markig*), incredibly pumped up with conviction and totally lacking any kind of inhibition burst forth with their good old songs”(57). Here the girls and boys are organized according to species like exotic animals in a zoological garden. “In a foreign country,” we are told, “whose language one can barely speak, one is forced for purposes of learning to

watch television: frozen before the motley images, ears wide open (sperrangelweit offen), eyes riveted on the lips of these miserable people, the brain strains to understand what these streams of words can possibly mean" (56). Kunert's narrator's feigned lack of English skills contributes to his exaggerated powers of visual and acoustic acuity. In the case of the television program we find the depiction of bigger than life-sized, partly grotesque caricatures of a "normal" Sunday morning television program from the South called "Patriotic Hour." In one sense Kunert's view in this book is always tele-visual, whether sitting in front of the tube or walking down the street.

And what is the deeper significance of this viewing system at the level of political discourse? For the most part, although some have argued against this view, Kunert's microscopically blown up images of the American Way of Life, while hardly flattering, cannot be read as an ideological critique of the United States by a visitor from the East Bloc. On the contrary, in *Der andere Planet* it is precisely the proliferation of contradictory impressions and reactions that leads to an absolute refusal of commitment to clear judgment. The surfeit of images, impressions, conjectures and fantasy observations appears not only ambivalent but also doubly coded. Is he critiquing what he describes, or does this obsessive, concatenating quantification of observation communicate at the very same moment something positive, even affectionate vis-à-vis what he is perceiving? "Contradictions don't only lead to intensification, are not aimed only at creating contrasts," writes Peter Pütz of Kunert's narrative strategy in *Der andere Planet*, "rather they stand for the sliding of one meaning into the other, by no means in terms of a transformation into a predictable opposite, rather in the avoidance of any kind of one-sided or fixed juxtaposition."⁸ As has often been noted, it is precisely here that one sees a clear structural parallel to Walter Benjamin's *Denkbilder*.⁹

Of course one could ask oneself as an American: who is this man from Mars who watches us so weirdly? It is indeed quite strange that in a text full of idiosyncratic impressions and observations, a text that openly boasts about the impossibility of not looking at things subjectively, we are offered an astounding lack of explicit information about the tastes, interests, and even background of this garrulous narrator. On only a few

occasions does he refer to himself obliquely, as “the guest from Berlin” (63) or the “Alladin from central Europe displaced now into the desert” (23). The GDR is mentioned only once when the words “Made in Germany [East]” are found on a label in a jewelry store. Of socialism, East-West conflict, class struggle, imperialism, racism, exploitation, and the like—barely a word. It is perhaps for this reason that one of his critics characterizes his standpoint in *Der andere Planet* as “that of a friendly Marxist,” whatever that means. “His opinions are not only for eastern readers illuminating, but for western ones as well; they have the possibility of looking at America from a very different standpoint.”¹⁰ The American Germanist Jack Zipes, in 1972 himself a decidedly unfriendly Marxist, takes the book to task because Kunert “remains only on the surface offering scarcely anything about the socio-political differences between this planet and the new world; because only rarely does he argue ideologically in the text or attack critically: the image of America remains an abstraction.”¹¹

Once again we are faced with the question, what is Kunert’s real view of the United States? For some he provides sympathetic, even original sketches and images of this country. For others, the images are a cliché (Zipes) because they are not critical enough. Of course, the author himself might well argue that revealing nothing explicitly about his political or ideological views as well as about his geo-political origins in the East Bloc is very much in keeping with his declared strategy at the outset not to set up prematurely too narrow a set of strictures to provide *An-sichten* but not *Ansichten*. Confirmation of this attitude can also be found stylistically in the absence of first person narrative, the hesitancy to generalize or synthesize his impressions as well as the vast amount of unsorted empirical data, which simply saturate the text.

But attitude and predilection in Kunert do indeed emerge in other ways, from the choice of a topic or from his own unique way of viewing things, which Michael Hamburger has characterized in the following way:

What is characteristic about the travel poems and travel prose stems from a complicated relationship between the very dispassionately narrated details, on the one hand, and a subjective, sometimes fantastic, almost always questioning and evaluating way of viewing things

(Anschauungsweise), on the other. This way of viewing things links his travel literature with everything else that he has written... When one keeps in mind that most of his travel poems are city poems and that an uninhabited, natural landscape is almost always depicted as desolate, then this categorization makes sense.¹²

BERLIN AND NEW YORK: AN URBAN WAY OF VIEWING THINGS

The “urban way of viewing things,” which constantly plays with the notion of what is distant, and yet so close, is especially pronounced in the latter part of the book. For example, the chapter entitled “Broadway with Variations” begins with the following three-line poem of sorts: “Constantly reminded of Berlin/ almost a homecoming/ sentimental encounter (*Fortdauerndes Erinnertwerden an Berlin/ Fast eine Heimkehr/ Sentimentale Begegnung*).” Here Kunert stresses what for him are the powerful similarities (*Verwandtschaft*) between lower Manhattan and Kreuzberg. Das Schlesische Tor or Gitschiner Strasse suggest a New York—like community of petit bourgeois storefront life (*Kramladenhaftigkeit*), secondhand shopping, criminality, and social decline. Two things are of interest in this suddenly nostalgic account: First, keeping in mind that it is 1972, the height of cold war *détente*, and remembering also from his other writings and poetry similar literary renderings about neighborhoods in East Berlin, why, we might ask, is Kunert’s Berlin now, in his comparison with New York, located on the other side of the wall in West Berlin? Why no Prenzlauer Berg or Scheunenviertel? Is this the provincial *Ossi* trying to stage himself as a cosmopolitan rising above the quagmire of intra/intermural cold war Berlin?

Also interesting in this and further accounts of New York is both what he does and does not encompass visually. The Bowery of lower East side New York, even more than the present somewhat sanitized post-Giuliani New York, represented in the 1970s a microcosm of teeming humanity: viewed ethnically, an infinite mixture of dress and visage; from a sociological standpoint, a broad span ranging from the homeless and

impoverished to excessive forms of wealth. None of this appears on our poet's screen of vision. In Kunert's Bowery, instead of individuals, we find what he refers to as "a very particular condition of obsolescence" (einen ganz bestimmten Zustand des Vernutztseins). "Sections of the sidewalk, worn down and out of alignment, barely visible letters, names of people long dead or of products no longer bought or sold, stores piled with men's underwear, army surplus flannel, coats, hats, winter jackets, mittens, you name it, exhibits for all eternity in an indefinable business endeavor located somewhere between wholesale and resale"(175). Kunert's description becomes a bit unhinged, expands and mutates into a metaphor for both abundance and decay.

Is this a critique of post-capitalist New York or pure revelry and indulgence in it? Both, of course, and more. But at the core, it seems to me, in contrast to the more clichéd literary touristic renditions of everyday New York, there lies in the form of a Benjaminian *Denkbild* a strong sense for the historical parallels between Berlin and New York. Both cities achieved their status as the epitome of the Metropolis in the 1920s: as show windows of modernization. Both reveal now, fifty years later, their historical traces: hieroglyphs of older layers of culture; a palimpsest in which the forgotten names, commodities, and stories can be read from the present.

It is well known that Kunert's notion of history is one that sees social development as a process of decay. Also familiar are his poetic daydreams, in which Berlin's destiny is compared to other mythological cities that have perished in the course of time: Troy, Babylon, Atlantis. Many of Kunert's writings and poems about Berlin explore traces of this disappearing city. In his 1964 essay entitled "Houses on the Spree," the signs of a "lived life" in Berlin, like New York, are even spoken about by the stones themselves: "The gray cement blocks of buildings, the fresh young pieces of tile on the roofs mean nothing to me, only the ones that are cracked and brittle from experience, the ones that are damaged by being (lädiert vom Dasein), only the ones that are befallen and overgrown by a new or other life reveal what they really are."¹³ In a decaying New York, Kunert discovers Berlin again and gives us at the same time a memorable look at the island Manhattan.

Kunert's historical reading of its hieroglyphs not only uncovers the sign systems of times gone past; but it also suggests something about its future. In a short chapter at the end of the book Kunert describes a Sunday outing to the area between the Brooklyn Bridge and the then construction site of the World Trade Center: "Coming out of the subway you find yourself standing on an empty stage: the streets and the plaza are empty, the streetlights blink, first red, then green, although neither cars nor people are to be seen, an absolute desert, surrounded by the uncanniness of a very special kind of atmosphere" (193). This scene, compared to a vision of the ancient city of Atlantis risen from the deep, leads the narrator to look up at the unfinished Trade Center and to the following daydream: "despite its massive mountain-like architecture, everything here built of course for eternity, the building strikes one nevertheless as fragile, sensitive, in a worrisome way endangered, giving this visitor the momentary impression that he will never see the city again quite like this, if indeed he ever sees it at all. A fragility, a new monumentality will have replaced the ones that came before" (193-4).

The above premonition has nothing in common, of course, with the events of September 11. The violence and destruction portrayed in this text emerge from the long-term processes of urban decay as well as from the ever-recurring efforts to replace the existing with the still more gigantic and monumental. Kunert's part mythological-fantastic, part objective point of view grasps as a founding myth of New York the transitory quality of the urban experience, grasps as well the pathological need to repress at all costs any awareness of it. Precisely his representation of this founding myth, together with the fear it calls forth of one's own historicity, places the observer Kunert, at least in these passages, so far away and yet so close.

Kunert's "urban point of view" in *The Other Planet: Views of America*, at once poetic and empirical, encompasses a vision of time and space that frees him, at least for the moment, to look beyond the confines of the political coordinates from which he comes. As with his colleague, the late Heiner Müller, his quasi-mythological sense of history serves to break with the narrowness of a dialectical materialism, or for that matter an uncritical globalization, rooted in narrow notions of progress at any cost. Whether such a perspective is transnational, anti-national or more

modestly non-national, is difficult to say. What this text does is give us a glimpse of Kunert's way of using the United States not as a utopian alternative, as is sometimes the case with German intellectuals, but as a means for thinking through the possibility of living outside and even beyond. For Kunert, of course, his life after the GDR was to begin a scant six years after his trip to the United States and was to include many more encounters with this "other planet."

ENDNOTES

¹Walter Höllerer, "Meine Väter heissen ganz anders: Kunert stellt vor und gibt Auskunft, *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter* 104 (1987). Here it should be emphasized that Kunert was making this point nine years after having left the GDR. In many of his earlier acknowledgments, Becher and Brecht always figured in the foreground.

²Günter Kunert, *Der andere Planet: Ansichten von Amerika* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau, 1974), 15. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations in this essay are my own.

³Günter Kunert, *Wegschilder und Mauerinschriften* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1950).

⁴Günter Kunert, *Der Kaiser von Hondu* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1959).

⁵Günter Kunert, "Der Hai," in: *Die Beerdigung findet in aller Stille statt* (Munich: Hanser, 1968).

⁶Franz Futterknecht, "Noch einmal: Der andere Planet - Zu Günter Kunerts Ansichten von Amerika," in *Günter Kunert: Beiträge zu seinem Werk*, ed. Manfred Durzak and Hartmut Steinecke (Munich: Hanser, 1992), 245.

⁷Manfred E. Keune and Manfred Durzak, "Es geht seinen ungestörten Gang: Gespräch mit Günter Kunert," in *Kunert-Werkstatt: Materialien und Studien zu Günter Kunerts literarischem Werk*, ed. Manfred Durzak and Manfred Keune (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 1995), 13.

⁸Peter Pütz, "Der andere Planet. Ansichten von Amerika," *Text und Kritik* 109; 58.

⁹See Heinz D. Osterle, "Denkbilder über die USA: Günter Kunerts *Der andere Planet*," in *Basis 7*, ed.. Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977), 37-155 for a thorough analysis of this text in the light of Kunert's "thought images" in relation to Walter Benjamin.

¹⁰Osterle, "Denkbilder," 138

¹¹Jack Zipes, "Die Freiheit trägt Handschellen im Land der Freiheit," in: *Amerika in der deutschen Literatur: Neue Welt – Nordamerika – USA*, ed. Sigrid Bauschinger, Horst Denkler, and Wilfried Malsch (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975), 351.

¹²Michael Hamburger, "Gast in England," in: *Kunert Lesen*, ed.. Michael Krüger (Munich: Hanser, 1979), 147.

¹³Günter Kunert, "Häuser an der Spree," in *Tagträume* (Munich: Hanser, 1964), 147.

**LETTERS ON THE LAW:
FRANZ FÜHMANN'S EMERGENCY CORRESPONDENCE
WITH CHRISTA WOLF**

Benjamin Robinson

A POLEMICAL SUGGESTION FOR GDR STUDIES

A simple suggestion for renewing GDR studies would be to take socialism seriously, both as an individual experience and as a social project. Everything after that is complicated, but complicated in a way that is productive for humanistic studies. Taking socialism seriously as a *social project* means not equating it with a totalitarian fantasy, as do any number of commentators with varying degrees of sophistication. Following Claude Lefort's concept of totalitarianism, some argue that the *reality* of GDR society was anything but total, being a hodgepodge of authorities and hierarchies; nonetheless, the argument continues, the *fantasy* of the socialist project was a totalizing desire for an anti-plural conception of the social good.¹ This "totalitarian" understanding of the socialist fantasy is as heavy-handed as the cold war's "totalitarian" understanding of the socialist reality. It is not a productive route for future GDR studies because it forecloses the recognition that the socialist project was composed of many desires and rational interests. The socialist reality also grappled with diverse problems in the cultural and technical spheres that remain both rationally and emotionally compelling. In this sense, GDR cultural studies will be a richer field if it understands socialism not as a pre-modern fantasy, but as a reference point for thinking about the limits of liberalism and alternate paths to a modernity whose forms might still be negotiated. The tasks the GDR tried to undertake—from non-market industrial organization to simply persisting as a social model different from the globally dominant one—are still relevant ones, and GDR culture's reflection of people's experience with such tasks is worthwhile if competing forms of modernity are to be knowledgeably assessed.

Taking socialism seriously as an individual experience means understanding the reasons why intelligent people remained committed to socialism in the face of, first, overwhelming odds against its success,

and, second, its apparent retreat from liberal gains in the struggle for emancipation. Individual experiences of socialism raise a number of questions about what exactly the socialist commitment was a commitment to and how socialist identity was personally imagined. In GDR cultural studies, the exploration of these questions of reference and commitment gives both distinctiveness and aesthetic richness to GDR cultural objects. Approaches that measure GDR cultural objects with liberal Western standards might indeed find that these objects hold their own in a unified cultural perspective; however, a uniformly modern standard does not allow us to understand a social system that was in some ways radically different from the liberal West or the imaginative means that smart, sensitive, and just people used to represent their commitments to and doubts about such radical alterity. While some argue that the partisan taboos surrounding real socialism have fallen with the wall in keeping with a new global uniformity, I argue that these taboos, shibboleths, principles, differences, and commitments—some meaningless, some productive—were precisely the heart and soul, the risk and reason of socialism.

DIGNITAS—VANITAS

In this essay I touch on one of the sorest points in GDR studies. Why did intellectuals, even dissident intellectuals, remain committed to real socialism in the GDR long after its failure to secure civil and human rights was apparent? Were they brainwashed? Were they hopelessly provincial? I suggest that they had a critical awareness of the paradoxes of legality that allowed them to gamble on socialism's value, a value that needed to be grounded in terms other than those of the liberal rule of law. I look at one very specific example, the author Franz Fühmann (1922-1984), whose correspondence with Christa Wolf fell mainly in the GDR's twilight years between 1976 and 1984. This example takes us into several questions of legal theory. Law is a particularly important topic for assessing the socialist experience, since much of socialism's post mortem has centered on its perceived failure to institute the rule of law in general and certain human rights in particular. More generally, socialist thought has been criticized as having fatally underestimated the importance of legal and normative reason in favor of instrumental economic thought.²

My goal is to open up an inquiry into the different legal imagination at work in socialist culture and also to adumbrate some reference points for Fühmann's critical commitment to socialism.

Why read Fühmann in the first place? He is, after all, difficult, conflicted, intemperate; his message is not clear, and his fame not secure. His checkered biography includes a Jesuit education in Bohemia, youthful enthusiasm for Nazism, voluntary war service, reeducation in a Soviet prisoner of war camp, and an unsparing confrontation with his past. "Because," suggests Christa Wolf by way of an answer, "immersing yourself in Fühmann's books, you'll be encouraged to take yourself seriously."³ This observation comes from an author whose own image, as Hans Kaufmann ascertained in a famous 1973 interview, is based "to a considerable extent on the seriousness with which you discuss questions of moral choice."⁴ But aside from taking oneself seriously, which is a surprising effect of reading, a reader of Fühmann's other writings, his often bitterly irreverent letters to Wolf, is equally bound to take offense at the failure of the state socialist project in the GDR. This combination of indignation at the GDR and a heightened sense of personal dignity is surprising because the letters express the GDR's failure as a conflation of the moral sphere of dignity with the spheres of law and utility, three dimensions of human affairs that the liberal tradition is concerned to keep separate. "The concept of law," Fühmann writes Wolf upon learning of a 1979 revision in the GDR penal code, "has become absurd."⁵ A year later, in May 1980, the absurdity has drawn the entire GDR social reality into apocalypse: "only now do I fully grasp how catastrophic the mood and the crisis of confidence are in this land. And everyone carries on incessantly—it makes me shudder. I often feel as though it were April 1945. I don't know what's going to become of it. Til' then. Be happy. Always, Franz."⁶ This message comes to Wolf in just the right medium for such a bleak communication, a comic postcard. On the card's front is a picture of an empty sidewalk and a shambling fence bearing a poster in *Fraktur* with the sanguine injunction, so typical for a state bizarrely out of touch with its conditions of legitimacy, "no real socialism thinkable without art and culture!"

Before continuing with our serious correspondents, let us consider the message of that postcard image. Reading the slogan against its forlorn

background, one senses little of dignity, but laughs, if one does, in recognition of the contradiction between posit and perception, between solemn message and preposterous messenger.⁷ While the catharsis of laughter might momentarily relieve the contradiction, it also prompts us to notice an underlying difficulty, our main difficulty in this essay, with understanding the modality of such a slogan's claim. In what sense, if any, could this artless maxim have had validity? Was it a practical rule of the sort, "no passport thinkable without valid documentation"? Or was it an empirical observation of socialism's historical experience of oneness with its artistic culture, "no Soviet Union thinkable without Dmitri Shostakovich"? Or was it a moral imperative bearing an obligation to duly constituted socialist authority—"without making art, I fail the promise of socialist sovereignty" or, conversely, "without fostering art, socialism fails its citizens' universal humanity"? The truth of each of these propositions exists in a different way, if it exists at all. Who decrees, who *can* decree, that socialism obligates the production of art or that the production of art legitimates socialist authority? A naturalistic account claims that the truth of a norm, like that of a physical law, is to be discovered in an objective picture of reality, in which case the postcard image is the decisive negation of the slogan: the hypothesis that "socialism is 'a'" confronts the empirical observation that "socialism is 'not a.'" A positive account, by contrast, holds that a norm exists if and only if it has been posited by a recognized power, in which case, the slogan is a valid norm so long as we recognize the meaningfulness of socialism.⁸ Holding this view, we might still laugh, but less at the nonsense of a logical contradiction than at the all too sensible gullibility of a commitment to an emergent structure of authority. We recognize at the same time socialism's ideological vanity and our familiar identification with its good intentions.

Turning back to the reverse side of the card, or reading any of Fühmann's increasingly despairing and eventually gleefully nihilistic letters, one might accept the finality of socialism's collapse and the bankruptcy of its authority, and laugh darkly at its expense, deciding that one is learning nothing of dignity or moral choice, but rather how intelligent people were yoked in the course of the twentieth century to state projects called variously totalitarian, anti-modern, and illiberal,

where practical rules, sociological outcomes, and binding norms were conflated with each other in ways uncondusive to emancipation. And why not read the letters that way, as statements more aesthetically complex than but fundamentally similar to the banal slogans that socialism posited of itself, as in the example on the front of Fühmann's card?⁹ Both seem to qualify as instances of what Hegel called "posited reality," which one-sidedly premises an ideological identity in disregard of the immanent development of historical identity. That historical identity meanwhile has apparently gone off on its own to reject sovereign positing in favor of a liberal modernity based on "legal limitation," where a constitution limits the power of a sovereign or a parliament to posit whatever laws it pleases.¹⁰ From the balanced perspective of legal limitation,¹¹ one reads the letters as the confused response of a sensitive human being to catching himself in the swindle of a society that can reproduce itself only as a structure of force, not one of legitimacy. It is not dignity that one learns of, since the human spirit does not triumph in Fühmann's autobiographical dénouement, but the vanity of repudiating for too long what John Rawls terms "reflective equilibrium," where no one level of one's convictions, whether abstract principle or particular judgment, is viewed as foundational, but all are given due consideration.¹²

In deciding to publish this part of her correspondence, Wolf surely did not intend the kind reading that would justify itself only as an iconic warning against the vanity of commitment. She observes in a 1995 epilogue to the letters that they "are testimonies from a period since viewed as finished history and often treated as though those who acted and wrote during it ... should have presumed the end of the very epoch on whose contradictions they were chafing, as though its end were the secret intuition or even goal of their actions."¹³ The correspondence demonstrates, not a presumption of the end of the socialist system and its state form, but how deeply both practical will and theoretical observation were conditioned by the prognosis of a continued two-system stand-off. "Even those who most clearly confronted the representatives and institutions of the state started from the assumption that the state would last," continues Wolf. "This obvious horizon for thought and action was what sharpened the conflicts on which we labored for years" (161). However violent the *de facto* manifestation of system difference was during the cold war, the

assumption that such difference is not *de jure* wrong is not an unreasonable one. On the contrary, one *has* to assume that the norms and obligations of a system are merely a *fact* of its sovereignty, not rules to be obeyed, if one is to be able—pardon the phrase—“to think outside the box.” Such extra-legal thought, however, cuts two ways. If one sees the rival system’s legality as mere factuality, one is more likely to recognize the contingent factual basis of all legality, including that of one’s own system. Wolf’s assumption that the empirical fact of her state’s existence would carry on into the future elevated cold war sovereignty over universal normative claims as the relevant basis for both her own actions and that of her state. Her commitment to the GDR, as well as the GDR’s military commitment to maintaining its sovereignty, would then find its justification in the emergence of a favorable factual situation, not in a judgment according to existing norms on a present state of facts.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, explaining his refusal to judge the Soviet Union at the outset of the cold war despite the legal travesty of Stalin’s show trials, draws attention to the impossibility of acting with moral or instrumental certainty about what the consequences of one’s actions will be.¹⁴ He notes that “at the level of action, every desire is as good as foresight and, reciprocally, every prognostic is a kind of complicity. A policy therefore cannot be grounded in principle, it must also comprehend the facts of the situation.”¹⁵ Like Wolf, Merleau-Ponty recognizes that accepting the facts of a situation means both complying with its norms and recognizing their contingency as grounds for action. Because any factual situation is open with regard to the future, the choices of GDR citizens—for or against the sovereignty of their state—could have no prior guarantee of vindication, even by such a time-tested system as liberal law. “Since we do not *know* the future,” continues Merleau-Ponty, “we have only, after carefully weighing everything, to push in our own direction. But that reminds us of the gravity of politics; it obliges us, instead of simply forcing our will, to look hard among the facts for the shape they should take.”¹⁶ No precedent is assured of becoming a universal norm and no normalized science can anticipate all precedents. At the same time, sheer force of will, sovereignty, does not trump all normalized science and principle. To put it in terms we will return to later, sovereignty

can be neither sublimated fully into a transparent system nor hypostatized as an essence outside and prior to all systems.

The tension and outrage, “the chafing on contradictions,” in Fühmann’s correspondence can thus be explicated in light of the ambiguity of law and sovereignty in the embattled circumstances of GDR socialism. To give a sense of how Fühmann legitimates his choice of loyalties in terms that extend beyond the apparent logical contradiction, I will consider three of his letters within the framework of the legal state and its conflict with practical reason. Fühmann presumes that his legality as a GDR subject corresponds to his substantive goal of achieving socialist society; it is a premise to whose constant disappointment his letters attest. Although this disappointment entails intense anger at the state, it does not imply a rejection of it, since his obligation to its legality remains valid as long as he can persuade himself that its essence is socialist. His belief in the GDR’s socialism gives meaning to his actions as an internal critic, although it offers no alternate grounds for limiting the state’s coercive forms of legality.¹⁷

To gain theoretical perspective on the dilemma of Fühmann’s system-internal commitment to socialism, I look at the debates in positive law between Hans Kelsen and Carl Schmitt over Article 48 of the Weimar constitution, which granted the president potentially dictatorial power to trump the legislature in a crisis.¹⁸ Legal positivism focuses on the law as it *is*, not how it *should* be. “‘Law as it is’ is called positive law because it is set or posited or given its position by human authority, hence the name ‘Legal Positivism.’”¹⁹ It is the relevant theory here because of our general supposition that there is no legality outside the political fact of sovereignty and also because of the socialist legal supposition that law is only as just or equitable as the factual property relations it codifies. As positivists, Kelsen and Schmitt tried to understand legality and its limits internal to an existing legal system, without recourse to the ideals of natural law that transcend human authority. Kelsen, however, remained committed to a liberal rule of law despite the Weimar Republic’s demise, while Schmitt followed some implications of legal positivism into an increasingly explicit embrace of dictatorship.

Fühmann’s commitment to the “really existing” state is seen, at first, in light of Kelsen’s legal theory in order to understand how such a

commitment might retain an internal normative perspective that is not reducible to merely a fantasy of will (*libido dominandi*).²⁰ The invocation of positive law is, however, fraught with the danger of relativism—for if law is only human authority, how can it serve any purpose other than window dressing for a sovereign will? Whereas for Kelsen sovereignty becomes synonymous with the legal system, for Carl Schmitt “sovereign is he who decides on the legal state of emergency [*Ausnahmezustand*].”²¹ I use the analogy with Weimar’s constitutional failure to press the skeptical question of whether in the emergency that constantly beset the GDR, Fühmann’s perspective ultimately binds him to the dictatorial conclusions of Schmitt, who attributes to state sovereignty a legitimacy more fundamental than that of law. If this is the case, then Fühmann, as a loyal, but critical dissident, might be obligated in a crisis to acquiesce in his factual status as an enemy of the state, an outsider within, giving up on being “part of a dialogic process in which the powers that be might be brought to see the error of *their* ways,” as David Bathrick formulated the sometimes naïve hopes of the loyal dissidents.²² I claim, however, that this is not the case, since Fühmann believes that neither a neutral legal formalism nor a national substance can transcend the articulation of clashing political interests. That is, he accepts neither Kelsen’s Kantian hypostatization of law as the non-contradictory unity of a rationally valid system, nor Schmitt’s Nietzschean view of sovereignty as the substantive power of the homogenous national will. The abjection expressed in his letters cannot therefore be understood as the consistent desserts of his positive choices.

In light of such constitutional quandaries, does the correspondence look more dignified or vain? A liberal theorist’s neutrality is a partisan theorist’s lack of gravitas. Where the existential dignity of decision has been praised by conservatives like Schmitt and Leo Strauss as the crucial element lacking in liberalism, liberals like Kelsen and Rawls find dignity in the infinite respect authority shows for the law.²³ According to Aristotle, dignity is the sense of correspondence between “claims and desserts,” a *uniquique suum* (“to each his due”) that underlies classical justice.²⁴ Vanity, on the other hand, is when one’s claims exceed one’s just desserts. With its comic overreaching, vanity elicits the irony and skepticism that destabilize the complacency of unquestioned dignity. Rather than

reiterating the classical opposition between dignity and vanity, Fühmann exemplifies the comic impossibility—the vanity—of dignity and the serious risk—the dignity—of vanity. Whenever the possibility of systemic alternatives is considered, the proper correspondences between claims and desserts, utopia and dictatorship, and system and sovereignty become as tenuous as they are urgent. In this sense, Fühmann's letters are an attempt to rethink such correspondences in radical jeopardy of any binding standard of judgment.

WHEN ONE COMMITS TO SOCIALISM, TO WHAT IS ONE COMMITTING?

Since my goal is to find some grounds for such a sensitive and intense writer's commitment to socialism, to understand the referential content of its dignity and vanity, we would do well to ask, *to what* was it a commitment? We can try to generate an internal sense of the status of his historical commitment to socialism by jumping *in medias res* into a crisis that provoked deep doubts about that commitment and called forth the correspondence as a way for him to see if any shared sense remained. Infuriated by the exile of Wolf Biermann in November 1976, Fühmann writes to the chair of the Council of Ministers regarding the banishment that, "as a citizen and writer of the German Democratic Republic, I consider it not only my right but also my duty to communicate to you that these measures as well as their modality disturb and unsettle me to the utmost, I can reconcile them with neither the essence nor the dignity, respect and strength of my state. The traces they leave behind scare me, I see growing damage and fear the consequences."²⁵ In this letter, one of an increasing number to GDR officials that he was to share with Wolf, Fühmann expresses himself in a legal and moral idiom, speaking of his right and duty, his obligation. To what, however, does he, as a citizen and writer of the GDR, owe this clearly expressed obligation? Is it to justice, let us even say *socialist* justice, or to the state, the *socialist* state? Or to socialism itself, whatever that is?

The positive legal tradition rests on the tautology that, while the law exists as a unity of positive statute, the state that posits the law is nothing other than the unity of its legislation. It is undecidable whether the state's

sovereignty grounds the law's unity or whether the law's unity grounds the sovereignty of the state. The initial ambiguity in our understanding of what sort of obligation or commitment Fühmann is expressing in his protest derives from this. If it is the case that for a citizen who accepts the law's validity "the violation of a rule is not merely a basis for the prediction that a hostile reaction will follow but a *reason* for hostility,"²⁶ then by appealing to his state as a citizen, Fühmann is declaring the common grounds of his and his state's legal reasoning, that they share in principle a common view of an offense. What disturbs him is an unexpected discrepancy between the law's hostility to a perceived violation and his own lack of hostility. In the gap of this discrepancy, Fühmann is compelled to question the grounds for hostility, for the law's *polemos*. In a normal situation, either the law that was violated needs to be "discovered," and his faith in the unity of the law restored, or the state must concede that it has applied a law in error, and his faith in the dignity of the state restored.²⁷ But Fühmann leaves the door open to a third, abnormal possibility, namely, that should the state find its dignity and strength endangered, such an emergency might legitimize measures beyond existing law. Although his letter rejects this possibility in Biermann's case, asserting in fact the contrary, it implies that the existence of the state—not the discovery of an applicable law on the books—is the important consideration. Legality, while Fühmann asserts that its modality must be upheld, seems secondary to sovereignty, since on the one hand, a substantial threat would theoretically warrant extraordinary measures, and the inappropriate measures that have in fact been taken betray their lack of warrant in damage not to the individual who is their object, but to the state who issued them in such an unfitting manner.

As outspoken as Fühmann's criticism is, we might have grounds to believe that it is symptomatic of an attitude toward legality that contributed to the GDR's inability to legitimate itself in terms compatible with modern emancipatory will. If we criticize Fühmann for being solicitous of his state's welfare before that of the individual citizen, we need to scrutinize the grounds by which individual rights would take precedence over the state. The main presupposition of such a critique is that the state's positive legislation must be subordinate to a constitutional order (the rule of law) with such guarantees as equal protection, due process, and freedom of

will for all citizens.²⁸ As crises in constitutional legality from Cromwell's England and the French Revolution to the revolutions and dictatorships of the twentieth century indicate, however, even constitutional orders that claim to be based on natural, rather than positive, law are faced with a basic contradiction. Namely, the sovereignty by which a state has established that all its constituents are subject equally to the law has itself historically preceded and stood outside the law. Whatever legal principles one holds, on the historical record a state apparently has to be a state before the law can have force. This Hobbesian antinomy was reformulated in the German positivist tradition by Georg Jellineck, becoming known in the unstable years of the Weimar Republic as Jellineck's paradox. "Law," Jellineck wrote in 1880, is "possible only on the condition that a directing and coercive force is present."²⁹ If we provisionally accept that even in a liberal order the state must be at least coeval with the law, then Fühmann's initial efforts to balance his commitment to his state with a commitment to its laws seem reasonable, even if we do not hold to socialism's non-liberal view of law.

From his initial invocation of the state's "dignity, respect and strength," however, Fühmann moves during the course of the following year to an ever-greater sense of the state's failure to correspond to its own essence. Thus, in September 1977 he writes to Wolf that "every dogmatist identifies with socialism and the revolutionary world proletariat, but momentarily disregarding this deadly arrogance: what is it really that this concept covers, do we still have conditions like those when Ludwig Renn joined the KPD—that's what it comes down to. What is revolutionary in this society? Happy affirmation?"³⁰ What is being questioned is no longer the concept of legality internal to a notion of the state, but the GDR itself as the ultimate sanction of legality. For if the GDR's integrity as socialist is being damaged by its own measures—not by the disruptions of heteronomous forces—then one has reason to wonder about the origins of its self-contradictory legislation: as a self-grounding normative system, the GDR has become contradictory. Once one starts to question the state itself, as the practical foundation of normativity, what normative grounds does one have to criticize it? Abandoning the perfection of a closed legal unity, one is left with sovereign acts, each of which, as the empirical fact of its difference from a jeopardized system, is without any possibility of

imminent justification. And this is precisely the revolutionary situation, organized only by the proleptic goals of revolution.

The fateful debates between Hans Kelsen and Carl Schmitt in the revolutionary context of Weimar help us see more concretely what Fühmann's shift in commitments between the two letters does and does not represent. Kelsen subscribed to the view that "'validity' is the specific existence of a norm, an existence different from that of a natural fact, and in particular from that of the fact by which it is created. A norm decrees an *ought*. [...] The *validity* of a norm—i.e., its specific *existence*—consists in that the norm *is to* be observed, and if not observed, then applied."³¹ Kelsen distinguishes between the existence of a norm—which refers only to its validity as a hypothetical sentence consistent with the basic norms constituting the state—and the effectiveness of a norm, its factual observation by a citizen or its application by the state. In other words, the existence of a norm has nothing to do with an empirical claim about something that exists outside the nominal existence of the normative sentence. In his first letter, Fühmann, like Kelsen, is concerned with respecting the integrity of the law as a set of consistent norms compatible with his idea of the state. That is, he is concerned that legal measures not contradict in part or whole the essence of the state that is constituted by them. The problem with Biermann's banishment, then, concerns neither Biermann's factual injury, nor any subjective sympathy with him, but is the strictly normative problem that the measure banishing him cannot be reconciled with the unified logic of the state. Thus, when Fühmann comments that the traces left by the measures frighten him, we can understand what he means by "traces" narrowly. These ghostly traces exist in the modality of normative sentences, not factual injuries, that, because they are not directly derivable from the state's essence, weaken the state's normative coherence. On a less narrow view, however, we can read this reference to traces as the frightening effects of concrete precedents. In this sense, the traces are empirical injuries that imply not a normative ontology of non-contradictory sentences, but a substantive ontology of state development.

In the second letter this particular ontological duality—between a normative ontology of the legal state as an end-in-itself and an instrumental ontology of the state as a means to the end of more perfect

union—has been settled in favor of the state’s instrumental logic. Instead of expressing his shock over the illegality of Biermann’s banishment by questioning whether a state in general has a “right” to suspend legality, Fühmann now questions whether the specific GDR of 1976 still has the right to do so in the name of revolution. After all, the revolutionary “dictatorship of the proletariat” had already been declared over in Krushchev’s 1956 secret speech, when a new era of socialist legality was announced. Likewise, with Erich Honecker’s 1971 assumption of power in the GDR, the radical “construction phase” of GDR socialism was replaced with a more normalized “developed socialist society.”³² This renunciation of revolutionary legitimation, however, produced for Fühmann more contradictions than it resolved. As Biermann’s exile showed, the new state remained a dictatorship, merely one without portfolio, so to speak. Fühmann’s problem appears not to be with dictatorship per se, but whether a dictatorship is guided by arbitrary force or socialist revolutionary logic. What is now at stake is a materialist ontology in which revolutionary essence transcends both legality and the state as the proper end of both.³³ For if the state has no formal right to exile Biermann, then the only justification of its action is the need of the revolution to defend itself, a historical ground that supercedes individual rights, and yet one that the state has forsaken in the name of normalcy.

The consequences of this view draw us from Kelsen’s nominalism to the substantialist position that Schmitt took on positive law. Like Fühmann, Schmitt was concerned with the problem of how the normative relation of laws to each other was connected to the factual existence of the state that posited them. For Schmitt, the really existing state took precedence over formal legality as the decisive source of legitimacy for state measures. Politics is not conceived, as in Kelsen, as an empirical consideration beneath the ontological dignity of law. Rather, the factual, historical relationship of friend to enemy “is always the decisive human grouping, the political entity. If such an entity exists at all, it is always the decisive entity, and it is sovereign.”³⁴ That military-political sovereignty, including the mandate to preserve territory and identity against internal or external disruption, is the source from which normal legality is derived. “The endeavor of a normal state consists above all in assuring total peace within the state and its territory. To create tranquility,

security, and order and thereby establish the normal situation is the prerequisite for legal norms to be valid. Every norm presupposes a normal situation, and no norm can be valid in an entirely abnormal situation.”³⁵ On this basis, Schmitt argued before the German State Court in October 1932 that “under conditions of civil war someone had to make a sovereign decision distinguishing between legal and illegal parties. In the state of emergency, ‘illegal’ meant not merely the lack of correspondence to positive legal norms, but the factual condition of being an enemy of the state.”³⁶

On the model of the Kelsen-Schmitt debate, we might ask whether Fühmann’s shift implied a vision of a socialism that was frighteningly violent. While the GDR illegitimately criminalized Biermann, the problem of the measure’s legitimacy is not seen by Fühmann as one of law, but of the essence of the state. If positive law did not supply a norm that could declare Biermann illegal, and if the external threat of the cold war to the revolutionary construction of socialism was insufficient to make Biermann a factual enemy of the state, then the true emergency of the GDR—the incoherence of its measures—apparently lay within its political grouping. Nullified as the decisive grouping, the GDR’s circle of socialist friends would have to be redrawn in a contest over the legitimate heirs to the socialist concept. By asking Wolf what remains revolutionary about the GDR state, Fühmann implies that only if the state can still be identified with the goals of socialism and the proletariat can its trespasses of legality be justified at the time of his writing, as illegality was in Ludwig Renn’s war years, when the question of the state was wide open and the revolution’s illegality presumed. Is this invocation of revolutionary justification a Schmittian recourse to the primordial substance of the state as people forged by war? On the contrary, the implication of Fühmann’s skepticism is directed not toward a primordial state preceding the law, but toward an emerging revolutionary state that might or might not be in a fatal crisis of socialist identity.³⁷ Its ontological status, unlike that of Schmitt’s preexisting organic national unity, depends on whether its failures of essence are those of emergency (police) or emergence (revolution). The specific problem of legitimacy that Fühmann is expressing is based on reference to the tenuous existence of the revolutionary future in real GDR society. That existence, while it surely

is of the order of “is” rather than “ought,” depends nonetheless on the open question of a future outcome—it describes an emergent rather than static ontology.

EMERGENT IDENTITY AND IDENTIFICATION IN AN EMERGENCY

I want to return to the slogan on Fühmann’s wry postcard, “no real socialism thinkable without art and culture.” In a letter from the end of 1981 to Konrad Wolf, director of the GDR Academy of Arts, Fühmann discusses the emergence history of his failed “Anthology of Young Poets of the GDR.”³⁸ It is a history rare in the degree of its commitment and risk on behalf of critical poets, and its recounting in the letter mirrors the paradoxes of the GDR’s own emergence and emergency. Three themes are central for Fühmann. First, he must explain why the critical and offensive portions of the collection are crucial elements in the articulation of socialism—a mature society, he believes, should be able to reintegrate dissensus into its self-description. Second, though, he must explain that such offensiveness is precisely “what, according to its essence, the function of literature *also* is, not exclusively, but at least *also* is” (121). Literature’s essence lies in its discontent and incompleteness, and its “function” is to disturb the integrating tendencies it *also* fosters. Its essence is *also*-ness, an ambiguity that necessarily exceeds any one system’s tendency to reintegrate its disruptions. The third theme is the most interesting. Fühmann must assure Konrad Wolf that the poets gathered in the anthology “do not form a group”—they are not a faction, a foe, a Schmittian enemy of the state. They came together “in the process of the anthology’s becoming,” yet their emergence does not qualify them for the emergency measure of pre-legal suppression. “These poets do not form a group; the problematic of their works grows out of our life, the torturing and calming aspects of their questions stem from there, from reality, not from some kind of ill will, and it is this, the torturing, which cannot be eliminated from the world by literary-political restrictions, but only by changing social life, which is the indispensable contribution of this anthology” (123). They are not a faction emerging from outside socialism, but a community that emerges from a real emergency within

society. Their emergence then is *exemplary*. It is not rational, it is not a program, it is a point of identification for a possible commitment. Wrestling with his own commitments to socialism, to its existing state identity and (in)discernible potential, Fühmann comes to an insight nowhere more richly illustrated than in the socialist experience. In a social crisis where ambiguity exceeds tendency and the essence of identity is lost, the efforts at self-description by those whose identities have become jeopardized are the grounds of renewal. If no place else than in this calmly plaintive letter, Fühmann demonstrates the validity of the proposition, “no real socialism thinkable without art and culture!”

ENDNOTES

¹ Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986).

² “After the collapse of state socialism and the end of the ‘global civil war,’ the theoretical error of the defeated party is there for all to see: it mistook the socialist project for the design—and violent implementation—of a concrete form of life. If, however, one conceives ‘socialism’ as the set of necessary conditions for emancipated forms of life about which the participants *themselves* must first reach an understanding, then one will recognize that the democratic self-organization of a legal community constitutes the normative core of this project as well.” Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), xli.

³ Christa Wolf, “Für die Franz-Fühmann-Schule,” Wolf and Franz Fühmann, *Monsieur—Wir Finden Uns Wieder: Briefe 1968-1984* (Aufbau: Berlin, 1995), 151-60, 155. Unless otherwise indicated, German quotations have been translated into English by the author [BR].

⁴ Christa Wolf, “Subjektive Authentizität: Gespräch mit Hans Kaufmann,” *Die Dimension des Autors* (Darmstadt/Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1987), 773-805, 802.

⁵ Fühmann to Wolf, 19 July 1979, *Monsieur*, 101. Fühmann is referring to the penal reforms passed in June 1979 as the “Gesetz zur Änderung und Ergänzung straf- und strafverfahrensrechtlicher Bestimmungen und des Gesetzes zur Bekämpfung von Ordnungswidrigkeiten” and affecting §106, §107, §219 and §220 in the “Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik.”

⁶ Fühmann to Wolf, May 15, 1980, *Monsieur*, 109.

⁷ Christian Metz, “Instant Self-Contradiction,” *On Signs*, ed. Marshall Blonsky (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 259-66. For Metz the humor of such apparently self-contradicting statements is in the uncomfortable, partial identification of a subject with contradictory ego ideals.

⁸ Hans Kelsen, “Effectiveness, Validity, Positivity,” *General Theory of Norms*, trans. Michael Hartney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 138-41.

⁹ Slavoj Žižek has claimed that Wolf's novel *The Quest for Christa T.*, "by expressing the subjective complexities, inner doubts and oscillations of the GDR subject, actually provided a realistic literary equivalent of the ideal GDR subject, and was as such much more successful in her task of securing political conformity than the open naïve propagandist fiction depicting ideal subjects sacrificing themselves for the Communist Cause." Slavoj Žižek, "Class Struggle or Postmodernism? Yes, please!" Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London: Verso, 2000), 90-135, 104.

¹⁰ Against J. L. Austin's view of unlimited sovereignty, H. L. A. Hart argues that a constitution limits a sovereign not by imposing sanctions, but by validating only certain powers. "It imposes not legal duties but legal disabilities. 'Limits' here implies not the presence of duty but the absence of legal power." See H.L.A. Hart, *The Concept of Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 68. By contrast to this conception of limited legal power, a GDR jurist commented on the 1968 draft of the GDR constitution: "The constitutional conception turns decisively away from the deceptive bourgeois fiction of a supposedly stateless sphere that is secured by civil rights. The socialist state is the instrument of the workers' power; they do not need to be protected from the power that they themselves have revolutionarily created and that they exercise according to their will and interests." "Grundrechte im DDR-Sozialismus. Der Kommentar eines Juristen zum Entwurf der neuen DDR-Verfassung, 1968," in *DDR-Geschichte in Dokumenten*, ed. Matthias Judt (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1997), 80.

¹¹ This is the tradition of Locke, Montesquieu, and the *Federalist Papers*. For a discussion of some implications of the balance of power [*Gewaltenteilung*] in twentieth-century German thought, see Beatrice Hanssen, *The Critique of Violence* (New York: Routledge, 1999). Marx's critique of the balance of power can be found in his discussion of the Paris Commune, which "was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time ... the judicial functionaries were to be divested of that sham independence which had but served to mask their abject subservency." Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France*, 2nd edition (New York: International, 1988), 57-8.

¹² John Rawls, *Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 48-51; *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 8.

¹³ Wolf, "Nachwort," *Monsieur*, 161.

¹⁴ Though the words "show trials" are indelibly associated with Stalin, they are a feature of many legal proceedings in transitional situations. Most famously, Hannah Arendt characterized Israel's 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann as a show trial more concerned with creating a founding myth for Israeli sovereignty than serving justice for Eichmann. Justification of show trials is also central to John Borneman's arguments about the legality of post-unification Germany's trying of East German border guards. He wants "to stress the public recognition of acts that were by nature already public and to examine how that public recognition contributed to the restoration of dignity." Here the public staging of justice is paramount over the procedural questions of due process. See John Borneman, *Settling Accounts: Violence, Justice, and Accountability in Postsocialist Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 113.

¹⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Humanism and Terror: An Essay on the Communist Problem*, trans. John O'Neill (Boston: Beacon, 1969), xxxv.

¹⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Humanism*, xxxv.

¹⁷ This dilemma of Fühmann's is the same one at the heart of the famous Habermas-Gadamer debate. Gadamer, Habermas believes, "is of the opinion that the hermeneutical elucidation of unintelligible or misunderstood expression must always refer back to a prior consensus which has been reliably worked out in the dialogue of a convergent tradition" (313). In other words, interpretation is internally grounded not by a transcendent truth, but by reference to a *status quo ante* of understanding. Habermas objects that such internalism denies grounds for criticism of anything beside deviations from an "encompassing traditional context." Habermas' solution, however, is a rational-transcendental one that Fühmann's materialism does not allow him. See Habermas, "Hermeneutics and the Social Sciences," *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1985), 293-319.

¹⁸ For historical discussions of Article 48 and the Kelsen and Schmitt debate, see Peter C. Caldwell, *Popular Sovereignty and the Crisis of German Constitutional Law* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), and David Dyzenhaus, *Legality and Legitimacy: Carl Schmitt, Hans Kelsen, and Hermann Heller in Weimar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁹ Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jules L. Coleman, *Philosophy of Law*, rev. ed. (Boulder: Westview, 1990), 19.

²⁰ For readings of GDR writers in terms of irrational fantasies, see Frank Schirmacher, "Dem Druck des härteren strenger Lebens standhalten," *Der deutsch-deutsche Literaturstreit oder "Freunde, es spricht sich schlecht mit gebundener Zunge"*, ed. Karl Deiritz and Hannes Krauss (Hamburg: Luchterhand, 1991), 127-36; Julia Hell, *Post-Fascist Fantasies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Raina Zimmering, *Mythen in der Politik der DDR* (Opladen: Lesse+Budrich, 2000).

²¹ Hans Kelsen, *Das Problem der Souveränität und die Theorie des Völkerrechts* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1920), 12-3. Carl Schmitt, *Politische Theologie: Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*, 2nd edition (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 1932), 11.

²² David Bathrick, *The Powers of Speech* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 234.

²³ See Leo Strauss, "Notes on Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*," in Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, ed. G. Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). For a criticism, see Robert Howse, "From Legitimacy to Dictatorship—and Back Again: Leo Strauss's Critique of the Anti-Liberalism of Carl Schmitt," *Law as Politics: Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, ed. David Dyzenhaus (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 56-91.

²⁴ For a high-minded man his "claims correspond to his desserts, whereas the others exceed or fall short." Thus "a vain man exceeds his own desserts but does not exceed the high-minded." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Ostwald (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 94. Roman dignity, according to H. Drexler, is the result of the respect shown one by one's generally recognized achievements. H. Drexler, "Dignitas," *Das Staatsdenken der Römer*, ed. R. Klein (Darmstadt: 1966) 232. For

Cicero, justice gives each his dignity (*uniquique suum*) in both the utilitarian sense (*communis utilitas*) of public recognition (*tribuere*) and the natural sense of truth (*veritas*) and observation. Cicero, *On Invention*, 2.51.160.

²⁵ Fühmann to Willi Stoph, Chair of the Council of Ministers of the GDR, November 16, 1976, *Monsieur*, 19.

²⁶ Hart, *The Concept of Law*, 88. Hart is the most influential positivist legal philosopher in the Anglo-American legal tradition; his work explicitly shares many features of Kelsen's, who influenced Hart deeply.

²⁷ The process of discovery is the part of a trial in which it is determined whether a law exists to cover the alleged crime, and if so, which law it is.

²⁸ Kant's "Universal Principle of Right" is: "Every action which by itself or by its maxim enables the freedom of each individual's will to co-exist with the freedom of everyone else in accordance with a universal law is *right*." "The Metaphysics of Morals," *Kant's Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 131-75, 133.

²⁹ Caldwell, *Popular Sovereignty*, 42. Jacques Derrida's analysis of "The Force of Law" likewise assumes that force is analytically contained in the concept of the law. See Derrida, "The Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority'," *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, ed. Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld and David Gray Carlson (New York: Routledge, 1992), 3-67, 6. Hans Kelsen, as we see, strongly contests this view by distinguishing sharply between law's mode of existence as "validity," versus its empirical "effectiveness."

³⁰ Fühmann to Wolf, September 4, 1977, *Monsieur*, 38.

³¹ Hans Kelsen, Ch. 1, §§V-VI, *General Theory of Norms*, 2-3.

³² The most important document of legal policy from the "construction phase" of GDR society is Walter Ulbricht's verdict from the Babelsberg conference of April 1958. "It is not yet clear to some of our comrade jurists that as party members they must accomplish their scholarly work as comrades struggling consciously for the construction of socialism. [...] The resolutions of the party create the basis of state and legal theory. They issue in an unbroken chain of total social development, which is the exclusive fundament upon which the development of state power and thus our state and legal system can be worked out." Walter Ulbricht, "Die Staatslehre des Marxismus-Leninismus und ihre Anwendung in Deutschland," *DDR-Geschichte in Dokumenten*, 79. For the reaction of Kurt Hager, the Politburo member responsible for culture and ideology, to Krushchev's speech and for his role in developing the new party program (1976) on the basis of the "developed socialist society," see his *Erinnerungen* (Leipzig: Faber & Faber, 1996), 208-11; 335-7. Unlike the Soviet Union, the GDR did not fully renounce the notion of a dictatorship of the proletariat. Hager, like Fühmann, situates his development of the new, post-construction program in the light of the Biermann affair (337-9).

³³ Kelsen objects to Marxist legal theory because it understands law as an expression of social relations (i.e., *de facto* relations of power in the register of "is") rather than as a system of norms (a unified set of "oughts"). "The question as to whether the law is a system of norms or an aggregate of social relationships plays a decisive role in the

legal theory which in the Soviet Union has been developed on the basis of orthodox Marxism.” Hans Kelsen, *The Communist Theory of Law* (New York: Praeger, 1955), vii.

³⁴ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1976), 38.

³⁵ Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 46.

³⁶ Caldwell, *Crisis of German Constitutional Law*, 171.

³⁷ John P. McCormick points out that for Schmitt, the goal of an emergency or “commissarial” dictatorship is understood as the *status quo ante*. “The functionally authoritarian quality of dictatorship is temporally bound and has as its sole aim the restoration of the previously standing legal order.” McCormick, “The Dilemmas of Dictatorship: Carl Schmitt and Constitutional Emergency Powers,” *Law as Politics*, 216-51, 219. While Schmitt moves in *Political Theology* to a more sovereign and unlimited notion of dictatorship, he nonetheless insists that the sovereign must still serve the nation as a primordial and homogeneous myth.

³⁸ Fühmann to Konrad Wolf, December 28, 1981, *Monsieur*, 119-25.

**BLACK AND GERMAN?
EAST GERMAN ADOLESCENTS BEFORE 1989:
A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF A
“NON-EXISTENT ISSUE” IN THE GDR**

Peggy Piesche

INTRODUCTION

“After the fact, the GDR grows more and more different. For some it disappeared without a sound—others can’t hear anything but the post-GDR sound. All this takes place against the background of the West being mercilessly demystified. From the last escape route or the eternal enemy that gave life meaning, the West mutated into the sheer never-ending drudgery of everyday life. In the battle for supremacy in commemoration, from which supremacy in the interpretation of history is supposed to follow, unprotected facts, irritations, and material are important.”¹ In his review of *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR* by Ehrhart Neubert, Lutz Rathenow examines the possibility of a “non-biased view” that would derive from “unfalsified recollection of the GDR.” Since the breakdown of the GDR, many attempts of this kind have been made. Post-GDR historiography in particular focuses on the inefficient economic system, which resulted in the insufficient output of GDR society, ecological problems, and/or the totalitarian surveillance of the population. Lutz Rathenow’s scepticism regarding the possibility of non-biased views suggests that the GDR cannot be understood from its end, but only from its beginning.

Over the last decade, scholarly studies concerned with ethnic minorities in the GDR have been rare. Ethnic minorities in the Federal Republic, however, have been the object of study for some time now. Aesthetic works of marginalized groups have been analyzed with an emphasis on linguistic innovations and intertextuality, especially in reference to hybrid cultures and canon formation. Additionally, the potential exclusionary effects of social conditions have been analyzed, and “self”-“other” relations in a multicultural Germany have been evaluated.² It can be said that research on minorities and sometimes even multiculturalism, on the one hand, and research on the GDR, on the

other, have developed as two mutually exclusive niches.³ This essay challenges this mutually exclusive model of analysis by focusing on an aspect of GDR history and culture that has been largely ignored by scholarship. A Black German minority began to emerge in the GDR in the early 1960s. This transpired against the background of GDR policies regarding migration and foreigners, and Black Germans in the GDR were strongly affected by crucial tensions between the ideal claims and lived effects of these policies. The analysis presented here will therefore illuminate both social histories and cultural discourses informing this nexus.

Those rare yet important works dealing with foreigners in the GDR and their “complex reality” (Runge) warrant mention here. In her study entitled *Ausland DDR: Fremdenhass*, Irene Runge provides the first survey of a multi-ethnic problematic in the GDR – including the naming of such a problematic.⁴ Building on Runge’s findings, Sabine Kriechhammer-Yagmur and Brigitte Proß-Klapproth edited a volume that examines the practical application of GDR-*Ausländerpolitik* and its legal bases in a study called *West Meets East*.⁵ In 1993 an extensive collection of interviews depicted the personal experiences of contract workers and fellow German citizens in the publication *Schwarz-Weiße Zeiten: AusländerInnen in Ostdeutschland vor und nach der Wende. Erfahrungen der Vertragsarbeiter aus Mosambik*.⁶ In an article titled “Historische Untersuchungen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in den neuen Bundesländern,” Patrice Poutrus, Jan Behrends, and Dennis Kuck issued an urgent call in 2000 for intensive discussion of the failed politics of integration in the GDR and their ramifications for post-*Wende* Germany.⁷ This necessary discussion has yet to take place.

“Historische Untersuchungen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in den neuen Bundesländern” examines the question of foreigners in the GDR in particular and its consequences. Beyond this, the position of Black Germans who experienced their social and cultural socialization in the GDR would be important to evaluate, especially with regard to the attribution and reception of the “other” in the GDR. In a poll of Black Germans from the GDR undertaken in 1995, this group’s socialization process was examined for the first time with special attention to those born between 1961 to 1970. Jeanette Sumalgy discusses the position of

Black German adolescents in the GDR against the background of the country's school system and the bi-national family situation.⁸ According to this study, the adolescents in question did not receive any positive support from their social environment during crucial periods of their personal development and identity formation. Combined with this lack of support, the fact that their identity was often ascribed to these adolescents from the outside in especially insistent ways proved to be a significant deficit in their search for personal identity.

In the relatively homogenous and closed society of the GDR, Blacks were presumed to be exotic, foreign, and different—patterns of attribution similar to those found in other countries. To be associated with such attributes in the GDR meant also to be regarded as part of “another” society, definitely not as part of the GDR proper, but as a foreigner whose stay is limited. Black children and adolescents who were citizens of the GDR, however, had a special position in GDR society. They spoke German, had German names, and usually lived in white German families and shared everyday German life. The black color of their skin made them special, while the context of their lives seemed to attest to successful integration. Yet a look at the fathers' situations—in the beginning only Black men were allowed into the country, a point to which I shall return—demonstrates that the socialism of difference, as I call it, with all its racist stereotypes, had a great impact on both majority and minority cultures. These effects then shaped the lives of children in significant ways.

A novel such as Kathrin Schmidt's *Die Gunnar-Lennefsen-Expedition* appeared as recently as 1998. In it the author focuses on a GDR family to show the entire spectrum of problems associated with guest workers in the GDR. A long and somewhat ironic quotation from the novel reveals key features of the text.

[...] a little fear of the black-white kid's future [...]. For a few years now there have been significant numbers of people of different color even in W. They came here from Cuba to learn various trades [...]. From Algeria, in order to coil hoses in the municipal rubber plant. And there were Vietnamese women in the laundry, which before that had lost almost all its employees when an amnesty had released

workers from the district's prison. In schools children were soon encouraged to be very frightened of foreigners, especially of dark men from Algeria, who shopped in Intershops and stalked blond women, if the teacher was to be believed. And who didn't! In fact, it was the Algerian men who dared to enter the local women, leaving little brown children behind in growing numbers, finally attracting the attention of the citizens of W. The Cubans drank a lot [...], but kept to themselves, at least so it seemed, while the Vietnamese women were never seen performing everyday chores by city residents. Nobody even knew where they lived. Once the Algerian workers in the car plant went on strike [...]. This outraged the populace, [...], so that one day the dark workers began to pack their bags and were replaced by a better-tamed group.⁹

Schmidt develops a creepily pleasant picture of the GDR of the 1970s and subsequently describes a female awakening, the gift of a history to a yet unborn child. Most of the fictional living conditions in the novel can be traced in official documents as well. This is remarkable enough, and I shall say more about the strike that is mentioned in the subsequent sections. Of key interest here is that the language of the novel continually reverts to the racist patterns of attribution mentioned above. The widespread use of the term "black-white" is itself underwritten by a hegemonic view of hybridity.

BRUDERHILFE AND SOLIDARITÄTSABKOMMEN **(THE SOLIDARITY CONVENTION)**

Under the auspices of solidarity conventions between the GDR and the so-called "young nation states," only men came to the GDR at first in order to work or study there, beginning with the late 1950s.¹⁰ Whether one came as a student or as an aide to the GDR economy depended on the ideological status of the country of origin. If the country of origin had—after having gained independence in the course of the cold war—

decided to lean towards a Western market-based economy, chances of being admitted to study in the GDR (mostly in medicine or engineering) were very good. This was because the education of the future intelligentsia had to be paid for in foreign currency (meaning U.S. dollars). Countries that saw themselves as part of the socialist bloc did not have to pay for education; often they would not have been able to do so in any case. The GDR bore all related costs for workers from socialist countries, which could be used for propaganda purposes as an expression of solidarity. Citizens of other socialist countries who were admitted to the GDR had to accept, however, that these agreements meant working in the production sector rather than pursuing university studies. A two-class system developed in which the country of origin often clearly indicated whether a particular foreigner was studying or working. People from Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, and Iraq mostly came to study. In contrast, people from Angola, Mozambique, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Vietnam, and Cuba went into socialist production and started—according to the economic needs of the GDR—an apprenticeship in labor. Members of this latter group were usually employed in areas where workers were in short supply. This was especially the case in the textile and chemical sectors and in fine mechanics such as the assembling of radios and razors. The foreign workers represented a simple economic calculation for the GDR; even at the beginning of the 1980s there were still approximately 180,000 foreign workers who provided necessary services to the GDR. The import of low-wage workers was, therefore, not solely a feature of West German politics, although the numbers of guest workers were significantly higher there.

Treaties signed by the relevant governments determined who came. Depending on the treaty, one was allowed to stay for three to six years, and rotation was strictly enforced. From the middle of the 1970s onward, about half of these temporary immigrants were female.¹¹ It became increasingly difficult to hire these contract workers over the years, and incidents like the recall of a group of Algerians after the 1977 riots grew more frequent. (The passage from Schmidt's novel comes to mind.) Because of these difficulties women were allowed into the country. The relevant treaties defined these workers (male and female) as a distinct group subject to collective legal restraints. These included:

- payment of 12 percent of the worker's salary to the government of the home country;
- no possibility for bringing over other family members (this applied especially to contract workers);
- immediate deportation in the case of pregnancy (treaties with Cuba, Vietnam, Mozambique, and Zambia included this passage; it was not revoked until 1989);
- immediate deportation should political activity fall outside previously set frameworks (membership in political parties and the formation of political organizations were prohibited);
- mandatory membership in the official labor union of the GDR (*Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, FDGB*) and payment of membership fees (including solidarity surcharges);
- centralized accommodation in shared quarters.¹²

Even personal needs such as cultural events, recreational outlets, and educational activities were possible only according to specific guidelines, which were adjusted from group to group. With respect to labor law, governmental treaties included passages stating that contract workers could not claim any retirement pension or any type of worker's compensation in case of disability. Monthly payments of sixty Marks for the pension insurance fund and sixty months of work in a job that required such payments, however, were absolute prerequisites for residency status.¹³

Foreign newcomers who were subjected to these requirements experienced the shock of having left the often multi-faceted family structures of home and having come to a country in which the lack of integration programs meant immediate personal and social isolation. The citizens of the GDR, however, had only limited access to information about the cultural, economic, and political situation of the foreigners among them, and objective evaluation was difficult if not impossible. Solidarity with the "oppressed peoples of the world" was taught as part of the patriotic educational curriculum in the GDR.¹⁴ In most cases, this

was no more than propagandistic sloganeering, because there was extremely little active exchange, something that would entail everyday encounters, travel, and the mediation of information. Encounters with other cultures in public life (or even preparation for cohabitation with other cultures) were impossible outside the GDR and not planned inside the GDR. Instead they were actively prevented. Students and their teachers (including tutors) had to sign a statement that they would not establish any contacts with their foreign colleagues beyond what was necessary to meet technical and organizational requirements. Certain “old limits of thought”¹⁵ were therefore not only passed on, but also reanimated within a new iconographical framework with national and socialist components.¹⁶

Unlike the situation in West Germany, foreign students and workers in the GDR were unable to establish a social sense of community because they were dispersed throughout the whole country, split into small groups, and housed in quarters separate from the local inhabitants. The social volatility that developed within these quarters is described by Kriechhammer-Yagmur and Proß-Klapproth. “Working and living conditions, the potential for conflict in the cramped residences because of various ethnic rivalries reproduced a feeling of homelessness, a loss of inner stability, a falling away of security, as well as uncertainty and fear of contact.”¹⁷ An important part of one’s own system of social orientation, which could have strengthened personal identity, was completely missing. The leaders of the GDR liked to blame foreigners themselves as the cause of racism and xenophobia, claiming that their cultural differences and unwillingness to integrate into GDR society were responsible for social tension.¹⁸ In the few cases in which foreigners did manage to establish contact with locals, sometimes resulting in close relationships, multi-ethnic couples were not legally entitled to a shared place of residence, and marriage was often impossible because of the treaties already mentioned. This lack of legal entitlement also meant that these foreigners had no right to take legal action or object to governmental decisions. A foreigner could, according to § 6 of the third *Ausländergesetz* of the GDR (1979), lose his or her right of residence at any time, or it could be limited temporarily as well as geographically. The government was not obliged to provide any reasons for such action.¹⁹

CHILDREN OF SOLIDARITY IN WHITE GERMAN EVERYDAY LIFE

Kathrin Schmidt's novel again comes to mind. "Once the daughter had given rise to the most beautiful hopes [...] but then she had come back pregnant from the city where the university was. Her parents took her in and renovated a small room under their roof. They were almost looking forward to their grandchild. From the day the baby was born the girl's parents walked the streets of W. with their heads bowed. The child did not have the usual color and the hair was frizzy. The child now grows in compressed air, two godmothers in pretty camouflage dresses sometimes pretend benevolence."²⁰

Children in such cases mostly grew up with only one parent, usually the mother, or they were adopted. The mothers, who had defied governmental, social, and family rules and limits by starting a relationship with a foreigner and giving birth to Black children, often fought in vain for the possibility to marry their partners. Official permission was required but almost always refused. When refusal was impossible, the civil servant in charge tried to convince the women not to marry by pointing out the situation in the partner's home country and the advantages of socialism. Mostly nineteen to twenty-three years old,²¹ from the working class as well as from the intelligentsia, and in a safe position because they were employed, these women additionally faced prejudices and massive resentment, which can be attributed to a guided construction of myths. "We had also been warned against having a child, because it would lower productivity [...]. Anyway, we're sitting in the cafeteria when a female student came in with a stroller. We were already smiling. Then a colored child put up his head and grabbed for something and we all had to laugh [...]. They say they are all lusting after women [...]; they are much more dangerous and driven by their libido." These are the words of a student of ethnology in the Schmidt novel.²² This myth was reinforced by curricular materials. The book *Völker, Rassen, Kulturen* assigns the people of this planet to different races and appearances, especially in the case of "other races" purportedly typical features such as body weight and proportions.²³ This notion of *Rassenkunde* is then underscored by the

book's cover, where a dancing and singing Black man with folkloristic appearance seems to stress that only the "others" constitute races.

A personal situation that excluded companionship sanctioned by marriage but often entailed hostile encounters with the social environment, an assumed lack of self-knowledge, and insecurity, ignorance, as well as lack of interest on the other side were characteristic of the social conditions that Black children experienced, in contrast to mainstream GDR society, which was based on strong family ties. The study undertaken by Jeanette Sumalgy showed that 48 percent of these children grew up with their natural mother and an adoptive father. Almost 18 percent had only their natural mother, while roughly the same percentage had an adoptive father and an adoptive mother. Four percent grew up with their German grandmother, and only 13 percent with both of their natural parents, one black and one white. The high percentage of those who grew up with no Black parent, coupled with the lack of identification in public discourse, especially intensified the orientational gaps to which Black Germans felt subjected. Sometimes this was perceived as a severe crisis. According to the poll, two thirds of those questioned said that they did not have an adequate contact person to talk to about experiences of violence and exclusion and the resulting problems. Their families were usually not seen as an adequate basis for the construction of an identity. The same individuals felt that they had fallen into a vacuum between school and their parents' house because of their blackness.

Beyond this, the mostly negative associations and clichés connected to the term "black" hindered a positive identification with the "other" parent's origin. Eighty percent of those polled acknowledged having had only very limited sources of information with regard to topics of African or Asian history. This was perceived as another lack of possible help in order to come to terms with one's situation and to develop positive self-esteem. In this case, it was the lack of literature, music, media, and travel. Although the books of Kwame Nkrumah, Frantz Fanon, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Alex Haley were available in the GDR, resources for adolescents in the process of individualization and identity-formation were overall rather poor and often ambivalent. In countless children's books, movies, and comics, children and adolescents were confronted with a(n) "other" history, but mostly in the form of stereotypes. Racism

was simply passed on from one person to the next. Karl May's image of an Indian was not only preserved in movies starring Gojko Mitic, but it was also reactivated in books for young readers, such as *Der Garten des Indianers*, the Indian fairy tales of Edith Klatt, or Kurt Kauter's *Flieg Kondor Tupac Amaru*.²⁴ This exoticism, which also found its way into animal stories such as *Mungo*,²⁵ was quite often linked to the above-mentioned "racial features." (See illustration 1.)

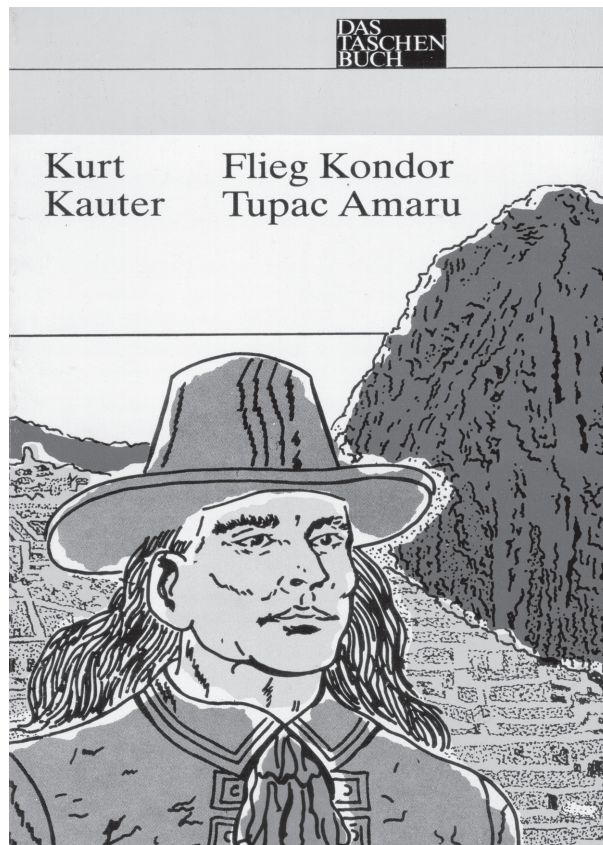


Illustration 1. Title page of Kurt Kauter, *Flieg Kondor Tupac Amaru* (Berlin: Militärverlag der DDR, 1980) (1st paperback ed. 1982)

Tupac Amaru, who is a descendant of European colonizers and therefore a member of the ruling class, becomes “the hero of freedom for the Indios of Latin America, similar to Thomas Müntzer in our country.”²⁶ That this invention of tradition could reach rather peculiar levels is illustrated by Peter Hacks’s and Manfred Salow’s *Der Mann mit dem schwärzlichen Hintern*.²⁷ In a story about Greek mythology the leading characters have distinctive features of difference. Hercules is described as having “brownish thighs.” (See Illustration 2.) This difference had to



Illustration 2. Peter Hacks, *Der Mann mit dem schwärzlichen Hintern*, illustrations by Manfred Salow (Berlin: Kinderbuchverlag der DDR, 1980), 2.

be discarded, however, in order to reconstruct the hero with attributes such as “golden locks” and “rosy soles.”²⁸

THE VILLAGE CALLED AFRICA

“Socialist children’s literature is internationalist. It is indebted to the watchword of the Communist Manifesto: Proletarians of all countries, unite! But to present the entire world in a children’s book also means that our children’s literature does not evade any problem. It addresses contradictions in order to help resolve contradictions. Literature opens up wide to life. Only in this way can it have an effect on life.”²⁹ In the pictorial textbook *Kinder in Afrika* (1969) the image of an entire continent and its inhabitants is so marginalized in comparison to the small European country GDR that eventually only the animals in our zoos bear testimony to that ominous Africa from which a small boy waves farewell.³⁰ Such a depiction, completely devoid of critical reflection, is not surprising when one considers the images of Bummi, already a hit in 1969, who goes to Africa to find the “African girl Sally.”³¹ An elephant born there is chosen to assist him. Geographical conditions are salient in passages such as the following: “The sun burns hot in Africa. Much hotter than in Berlin [...]”³² The patterns of ignorance and unfamiliarity with the neighboring continent that we saw reflected in the Sumalgy poll were therefore not only a problem for Black children and adolescents. Interestingly, Anke Poenicke makes a similar argument in her study of the image of Africa in contemporary West German media and schoolbooks.³³ Figures for identification beyond racist stereotypes and clichés of the oppressed who benefit from socialist aid would have been very important, especially for Black children’s personal image and self-understanding.

Ideologically informed expressions of solidarity in the GDR are fully evident in *Sally Bleistift in Amerika* by Auguste Lazar, a very popular GDR youth book that is representative of many others.³⁴ Its ambivalent message of international understanding and shared *Klassenkampf* is based on an image of the world that can almost be labelled “positive racism,” if I may use such an oxymoron. On the one hand, a detailed and only slightly ideological critique of the system, including some remarks about Russian pogroms—otherwise not suitable for intensive discussion in GDR

circles—is presented. The main character, Sally Bleistift (Illustration 3) is an amiable, pugnacious, and wise old lady who fled the pogroms of Russia and is now actively involved in the struggles of Chicago's working class. By portraying her as assertive, affectionate, and resolute, the text



Illustration 3. Auguste Lazar, *Sally Bleistift in Amerika* (Berlin: Kinderbuchverlag der DDR, 1977), 41.

draws an image of Jewish resistance, which stands in contrast to the prevalent GDR discourse about the Jewish victim. On the other hand, the text draws on openly racist stereotypes of Native Americans and Blacks who have become minorities in the idealized society of the working class sector of the city. Whereas all white characters have proper names like Billy, Ms. Smith, or granddaughter Betty, the representatives of difference have names representing specific features. The only Black man in the story is friendly, strong, clever, and revolutionary, but his name is “Niggerjim.” Two foundlings are called “Redjackett” and “Negerbaby,” “Negerjunge,” or “Negerlein.” Almost a whole chapter is devoted to the search for a name for “Negerbaby;” eventually the baby is given the name of a white man opposed to slavery—John Brown. The story contains obvious references to socialist ideology, which wants to unite all proletarians. It differentiates only along the lines of skin color, or as the literature of the 1970s and the 1980s demonstrates, along the lines of racial categories.

Surely the most positive example of internationalist youth book culture is Ludwig Renn’s revolutionary story *Camilo* from 1970.³⁵ Here the story of a little boy is told, who grows up in the middle of his parents’ involvement in a resistance movement and tries to find his own personal identity. In the book’s introductory scene a self-conscious image opposed to racist stereotypes of the day is developed. When the boy asks his grandfather why the Yankee lady lets her money drop into his hand without touching him, he receives the following answer: “When they have touched a black human being, they immediately wash their hands. I don’t think you are all that dark. You just have black frizzy hair and dark eyes.”³⁶ The following sentences make it clear that the blond Yankees think they are something special and that black skin does not mean that one is uglier. “Does this mean the Yankee lady thought she was prettier? The pale face, the painted lips, and the washed-out blue eyes, are they supposed to be more beautiful?” The following positive drawings (Illustrations 4 and 5) of the island’s inhabitants, with their obvious lack of additional racist labels, once again demonstrate the ambivalence at work in the book.



Illustration 4.

Ludwig Renn, *Camilo* (Berlin: Kinderbuchverlag der DDR, 1970), 34.



Illustration 5.

Ludwig Renn, *Camilo* (Berlin: Kinderbuchverlag der DDR, 1970), 42.

WAS PITTIPLATSCH BLACK? –COMICS IN THE GDR

“We appeal to all those who work in the fields of culture and art to bring home to our youth the great ideas and sentiments of the best works of literature and art, to help cultivate noble thoughts, aesthetic needs, and good taste [...] in order to make accessible to them the richness and beauty of the progressive cultural heritage, of world culture, socialist culture, and socialist art.”³⁷ Whereas West German comics were officially listed as prohibited material until the end of the GDR (*Schund- und Schmutzliteratur*), the GDR’s own *Bildergeschichten*—such as “Atze” and “the Digedags,” the little white goblins who remain white European boys (started in 1955)—were upgraded to politically motivated series at a very early stage. Most comic strips embodied the call to arms against the enemy. As the only GDR magazine that survived the unification process and today is read throughout Germany, *Mosaik* can justly claim status as the longest lasting German comic magazine.³⁸ In various series (America, Orient, and Far East-Series) and far-away countries, *Mosaik*’s heroes engage in difficult struggles against injustice, violence, and misery, deal critically with evil in the world, and accomplish feats that influence world history (such as the liberation of slaves in the Southern United States). These stories often entail a hyperidentification with the stylized minorities in question.³⁹ (See Illustration 6.) The GDR *Bildergeschichten* construct a utopia based on the belief in the human good, the hope of its realization, and love for human beings. In the evil world, fear, deception, hate, and despair create an image of a society that can easily be unmasked as the so-called dystopia of capitalism. Good and bad between the superior (in this case, socialist) culture of the Occident and the inferior culture of the “others” (exotic, submissive, suffering, passive, resigned) are discussed in terms of a simple hierarchic opposition between moral socialism and the immoral world of the capitalism. (See Illustration 7.) Black and white characters, set side-by-side in contrasting contexts, reflect an ambivalent message. On the one hand, there is the “self,” surmounting all obstacles; on the other hand, there is the “other,” more or less succumbing to fate. In this binary logic, the characters yield a collective repertoire of differentiation according to racial and national categories. Strategies of ethnicization and devaluation are combined with strategies

Illustrations 6-8. *Mosaik* by Hannes Hegen - Die Digidags: Amerika-Serie, 10 vols. Issues 152-211 (Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1969)
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Illustration 6. *Rocky Mountains* (book 174, p.11)



Illustration 7. *Der alte Goldsucher* (book 169, p.24)



Illustration 8. *In Amerika* (book 152, p.10-11)

of affiliation. The “others” thus appear as a difference that can be readily consumed, such that the heroes’ inner life appears as hybrid. In this fashion a medium that is very popular among young people creates a sense of heroic global adventures that frame the portrayal of socialist togetherness, international friendship, and multicultural solidarity. Yet these images are steeped in racial stereotypes. Expressions such as “Redskin” and “Nigger Sam” and references to the presumed incoherent speech of Blacks and slaves are used without differentiation. Graphics sometimes avoid such stereotypes, for example, when Blacks and whites are shown living together in peace in the romantic idyll of nineteenth-century Louisiana. (See Illustration 8.)

SOCIALIZATION IN THE SCHOOLS

Primary mediators of education and socialization, the schools in the GDR supported identification with the GDR's own national culture. Introductions to national history and literature offered the students patterns of interpretation that were meant to help young people see themselves as members of this national and political body. Historical traditions from other cultures were only rarely addressed. (The situation in West Germany was much the same in this regard.) Access to these traditions was therefore not generally available to young Black Germans in the GDR.

Paragraph 5 of the Education Law of 1965 sketches the following task for schools: "to raise and educate young people such that their solid knowledge and capabilities enable them to think creatively and to act independently, that their Marxist-Leninist world view permeates their personal convictions and behavior, that they feel, think, and act as patriots of their socialist fatherland and as proletarian internationalists." The SED program of 1976 formulated the following educational objectives for schools:

1. the construction of ideological and political attitudes toward citizenship;
2. the teaching of skills and knowledge that are useful in later professional life;
3. the development of social skills.⁴⁰

This, of course, included a GDR-national identity with the appropriate national sentiments. With this ever-present objective but without any positive role models and because they did not identify with a society that regarded "whiteness" as normal, Black German adolescents lacked the feeling of being part of this GDR. The schools were, therefore, a site where a specific form of discrimination against ethnic minorities was actively produced and practiced.

CONCLUSION

Debates about morals and guilt regarding Germany's twentieth century past raise many new questions about the possibility of a common identity in unified Germany. Research in this field uses various modes of historical interpretation as it searches for answers. The modes of inquiry we choose to pursue influence our behavior in the present, just as present-day experience and needs influence our current views of history. Racism has clearly intensified since reunification. There are many helpful strategies for analyzing the ways in which both postwar German states dealt with "others" after the end of the Nazi dictatorship. But an analysis that focuses solely on racist violence in the new *Bundesländer* with facile reference to the political legacy of a socialist dictatorship is inadequate to explain the socio-political structures of the 1990s. Instead, future scholarship must look more closely, not only at the differences between East and West German policies regarding foreigners and migration, but also at a shared legacy of colonial and Nazi vintage. All this indicates that contemporary Germany cannot be understood with an eye narrowly focused on the present, but only with a broader optic that considers new approaches to its many beginnings.

Translated by Peggy Piesche and Leslie A. Adelson

ENDNOTES

Despite intensive efforts by the author, the legal successors of the former *Kinderbuchverlag der DDR* and the *Militärverlag der DDR* could not be found. Although some rights of the *Kinderbuchverlag* have been transferred to various publishing houses in the Federal Republic of Germany, legal jurisdiction for the sources used in this paper could not be clarified. Any possible claims should be directed to Peggy Piesche in care of AICGS.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations of quotations are provided by Peggy Piesche in consultation with Leslie A. Adelson. Long quotations are provided in the German original for the sake of comparison. „Die DDR wird im Nachhinein immer verschiedener. Für die einen ging sie sang- und klanglos unter – andere hören fast nichts ausser dem Post-DDR-Sound. Das alles vor dem Hintergrund der gnadenlosen Entzauberung des Westens, der vom letzten Fluchtweg oder sinnspendenden Dauerfeind zum schieren Endlosalltag mutierte. In dem Kampf um die Erinnerungshoheit, aus dem die Deutungshoheit über die Geschichte folgen soll, sind ungeschützt dargebotene Fakten, Irritationen, Material wichtig.“ See Lutz Rathenow, „Die DDR höret nimmer

auf: Die verdrängte Wirklichkeit und nicht nur ein Buch,“ rev. of Erhart Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR: 1949-1989* (Berlin: Links, 1997), 1998 <<http://www.oeko-net.de/kommune/kommune8-98/krathe8.htm>>.

² For a bibliography on this topic, see Peggy Piesche, „Identität und Wahrnehmung in literarischen Texten Schwarzer deutscher Autorinnen der 90er Jahre,“ in *AufBrüche: Kulturelle Produktionen von Migrantinnen, Schwarzen und jüdischen Frauen in Deutschland*, ed. Cathy S. Gelbin, Kader Konuk, and Peggy Piesche (Königstein: Ulrike-Helmer, 1999), 195ff. See also Tina Campt, Pascal Grosse, and Yara C. Lemke Muniz de Faria, „Blacks, Germans and the Politics of Imperial Imagination, 1920-1960,“ in *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and its Legacy*, ed. Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, and Susanne Zantop (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1998), 205-29.

³ One exception is Ulrich van der Heyden, *Die Afrikawissenschaften in der DDR: Eine akademische Disziplin zwischen Exotik und Exempel* (Hamburg: LIT-Publishing, 2000). Van der Heyden’s interesting account of African Studies in the GDR relates his research on minorities to research on the GDR itself.

⁴ See Irene Runge, *Ausland DDR: Fremdenhass* (Berlin: Dietz, 1990); the reference to a „complex reality“ appears on p. 5. On the problematic of exclusion and inclusion in the GDR, see also Margarete Mitscherlich and Irene Runge, *Der Einheitsschock: Die Deutschen suchen eine neue Identität* (Düsseldorf: ECON-Taschenbuch, 1995).

⁵ *West Meets East*, ed. Sabine Kriechhammer-Yagmur and Brigitte Pross-Klapproth (Frankfurt: IAF, 1991).

⁶ *Schwarz-Weisse Zeiten: AusländerInnen in Ostdeutschland vor und nach der Wende. Erfahrungen der Vertragsarbeiter aus Mosambik. Interviews - Berichte – Analysen*, ed. BAOBAB (Bremen: IZA, KKM, tdh, 1993).

⁷ Patrice Poutrus, Jan C. Behrends, and Dennis Kuck, „Historische Untersuchungen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in den neuen Bundesländern,“ *Das Parlament [Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, Beilage]* 39 (2000): 15-21.

⁸ See Jeanette Sumalgy, „Afro-deutsche Jugendliche im Schulsystem der ehemaligen DDR – unter Berücksichtigung ihrer bi-nationalen Familiensituation und die Bedeutung für ihre weitere Lebensplanung,“ *Diplomarbeit*, Katholische Fachhochschule Berlin, 1996. Current research shows no evidence of a statistically relevant number of Black Germans in the GDR prior to 1961. Statistically relevant data could be obtained only for those born prior to 1971, since members of this group completed their school-based socialization in the GDR. For the purposes of the present article on the GDR, the term “Black Germans” refers to those children born to a German mother and a father from one of the so-called *Vertragsstaaten*. These children were citizens of the GDR and therefore not foreigners in any technical sense.

⁹ „[...] ein bisschen Angst vor der Zukunft des schwarzweissen Kindes [...]. Andersfarbige gibt es seit einigen Jahren selbst in W. in beträchtlicher Zahl. Sie kamen von Kuba hierher, um sich in verschiedene Berufe einzuüben [...] Aus Algerien, um im städtischen Gummiwerk Schläuche zu wickeln. Und es gab Vietnamesinnen in der Wäscherei, die zuvor durch eine Amnestie nahezu alle Arbeitskräfte aus der Haftanstalt der Kreisstadt verlustig gegangen war. In den Schulen wurden die Kinder bald

aufgefordert, recht viel Angst zu haben vor den Fremden, besonders vor den dunklen Männern aus Algerien, die in den Intershops einkauften und blonden Frauen auflauerten, wenn man der Lehrerin glaubte. Und wer tat das nicht! Tatsächlich waren es auch die algerischen Männer, die sich in die einheimischen Frauen hineinwagten und dort kleine braune Kinder hinterliessen, deren grösser werdende Zahl in W. endlich auffiel. Die Kubaner tranken viel [...], blieben aber stets unter sich, so schien es, während die Vietnamesinnen von keinem Einwohner der Stadt bei alltäglichen Verrichtungen beobachtet wurden, man wusste nicht einmal, wo sie wohnten. Einmal streikten die algerischen Arbeiter im Fahrzeugwerk [...]. [Dies] löste[n] bei der Bevölkerung Empörung aus, [...], so dass die dunklen Arbeiter eines Tages zu packen begannen und durch eine gezähmtere Gruppe ersetzt wurde.“ See Kathrin Schmidt, *Die Gunnar-Lennefsen-Expedition* (Köln: Kiepenheuer, 1998), 65-6.

¹⁰ See Kriechhammer-Yagmur and Pross-Klapproth, 48ff.

¹¹ Both foreigners who came to study and those who came to work as *Vertragsarbeiter* had only limited permission to stay in the GDR.

¹² See Runge, 42ff and 74ff.

¹³ Kriechhammer-Yagmur and Pross-Klapproth, 282-5.

¹⁴ See Poutrus et al, 18 *et passim* for more on this tradition.

¹⁵ Runge, 113.

¹⁶ Poutrus et al, 17.

¹⁷ Kriechhammer-Yagmur, 48.

¹⁸ See Runge, 110-8, especially 112.

¹⁹ See Kriechhammer-Yagmur and Pross-Klapproth, 288-291, on the „Verordnung zur Gewährung des ständigen Wohnsitzes für Ausländer vom 30.11.1988.“

²⁰ „Die Tochter hatte einmal zu schönsten Hoffnungen Anlass gegeben [...], war dann aber schwanger zurückgekehrt aus der Universitätsstadt. Die Eltern nahmen sie auf und renovierten ein Zimmerchen unter dem Dach ihres Hauses. Beinahe freute man sich auf das Enkelkind. Vom Tag der Geburt an liefen die Eltern gesenkten Kopfes durch die Straßen von W.: Das Kind hatte nicht die übliche Farbe und krauses Haar. Es wächst nun in Druckluft heran, zwei Patentanten in hübschen Tarnkleidern spielen von Zeit zu Zeit Wohlwollen vor“ (67).

²¹ See Sumalgy, 9.

²² Schmidt, 15.

²³ N.N. Tschoboksarow and I.A. Tschoboksarow, *Völker, Rassen, Kulturen* (Leipzig/Jena/Berlin: Urania, 1973).

²⁴ Klára Fehér, *Der Garten der Indianer* (Berlin: Corvina, 1973); Edith Klatt, *Der Indianer* (Berlin: Kinderbuch Verlag der DDR, 1958); Kurt Kauter, *Flieg Kondor Tupac Amaru* (Berlin: Militärverlag der DDR VEG/ Das Taschenbuch, 1982).

²⁵ *Mungo*, ed. Traute Stein and Günther Stein, (Berlin: Kinderbuch Verlag der DDR, 1965).

²⁶ This is taken from the cover text for the Kauter book.

²⁷ Peter Hacks, *Der Mann mit dem schwärzlichen Hintern*, illustrated by Manfred Salow (Berlin: Kinderbuch Verlag der DDR, 1980).

²⁸ Hacks, 6, 11, and 14.

²⁹ „Die sozialistische Kinderliteratur ist internationalistisch. Sie ist der Losung des Kommunistischen Manifests verpflichtet: Proletarier aller Länder vereinigt euch! Die ganze Welt im Kinderbuch heisst aber auch: Unsere Kinderliteratur geht keinem Problem aus dem Wege, sie greift Widersprüche auf, um auf die Lösung von Widersprüchen einzuwirken. Literatur öffnet sich weit dem Leben. Nur so kann sie auf das Leben einwirken.“ See the foreword to *Gedanken zur Kinderliteratur – Den Teilnehmern der Zentralen Pionierleiterkonferenz der Freien Deutschen Jugend, überreicht vom Kinderbuchverlag Berlin, dem Verlag der Pionierorganisation “Ernst Thälmann”* (Berlin: Kinderbuchverlag Berlin, 20./ 21. März 1975), 2.

³⁰ Hiltrud Lind and Rudolf Schultz-Debrowski, *Kinder in Afrika* (Berlin: Kinderbuch Verlag der DDR, 1969).

³¹ Ursula Werner-Böhnke, *Bummi in Afrika* (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1969), 3.

³² Werner-Böhnke, 14.

³³ Anke Poenicke, *Afrika in den deutschen Medien und Schulbüchern*, Zukunftsforum Politik 29 (Hannover: KAS-Publikationen, 2001), downloaded from <<http://www.kas.de/publikationen>>.

³⁴ Auguste Lazar, *Sally Bleistift in Amerika* (Berlin: Kinderbuch Verlag der DDR, 1977).

³⁵ Ludwig Renn, *Camilo* (Berlin: Kinderbuch Verlag der DDR, 1970).

³⁶ „Wenn sie einen schwarzen Menschen berührt haben, waschen sie sich gleich die Hände. Ich finde, du bist gar nicht so dunkel. Du hast nur schwarzes Kraushaar und die dunklen Augen. [...] Fand sich dann die Yankiedame schöner? Das blasse Gesicht, die angeschnittenen Lippen und die ausgewaschenen blauen Augen, sollten die schöner sein?“ (7).

³⁷ „Wir wenden uns an alle Kultur- und Kunstschaffenden, unserer Jugend den grossen Ideen- und Gefühlsgehalt der besten Werke der Literatur und Kunst nahezubringen, mitzuhelfen, edle Gedanken, ästhetische Bedürfnisse und guten Geschmack herauszubilden. [...], um unserer Jugend den Reichtum und die Schönheit des fortschrittlichen Kulturerbes, der Weltkultur, der sozialistischen Kultur und Kunst zu erschließen.“ *Gedanken zur Kinderliteratur*, 5.

³⁸ The extremely sparse research on GDR comics can be traced in the historical reconstructions of *Mosaik*. See Reinhard Pfeiffer, *Digedag-Universum* (Berlin: Junge Welt, 1996), and Thomas Kramer, *Das Mosaik-Fan-Buch*, Vol. I and II (Berlin: Dietz, 1993 and 1994).

³⁹ See Mitscherlich and Runge, 65.

⁴⁰ See Barbara Hille and Walter Jaide, *DDR-Jugend, Politisches Bewusstsein und Lebensalltag* (Opladen: Leske and Budrich, 1990), 83 and 278.

**DIVIDED LEGACIES:
EAST GERMAN WRITERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**
Erk Grimm

**INTRODUCTION: WRITING ABOUT THE
MIDDLE EAST IN THE 1990s**

In 1990, an influential literary critic speculated in the daily newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* that the “new passports” and “new identities” of German writers in unified Germany might result in a new literary era, the emergence of which would allow him to bid farewell to postwar literature.¹ Such speculation reflected a desire to link the historical event of national unification to a new periodization of literature, one that would entail a presumed return to purely aesthetic rather than political concerns. From the vantage point of 2002 the present article asks what the “new passports” and “new identities” invoked by Frank Schirrmacher have meant in a geocultural context rather different from the national one that this critic had in mind. How have East German writers in fact renegotiated intercultural questions of citizenship, memory, and perception in the wake of national unification?² Even those younger authors whose work began to appear later in the 1990s had conflicting views of the rapid social changes caused by the *Wende*. What the last decade evidenced was neither a radical new beginning nor a smooth continuity of East German versus West German literary traditions, but rather reorientations within a magnetic field, a depolarization that has not resulted in the obvious hierarchy of East, West, and national that was operative in Schirrmacher’s remarks in 1990.

My article traces typical patterns of this cultural change by examining exemplary texts by three German authors whose encounters with the Middle East in the first decade after German unification demonstrate the uneven process of attaining “new identities” in an unfamiliar cultural terrain. I should mention right away that the poetic encounter with the Middle East in the late 1990s did not trigger special contemplation of the Gulf War and its effects on the region. Of course, while the political debates of 1991 seemed to revolve predominantly around the fears of Germans concerning an entanglement with world politics, they also

focused on the difficult question of a “normalization” of the left and on opportunities to reestablish peace in the Middle East, implying a defense of the state of Israel. In this regard, the Gulf War prompted not only provocative interventions by writers such as Wolf Biermann and Hans Magnus Enzensberger³ but also controversies within the established parties, especially among the Greens and the Social Democrats. However, this controversy on the so-called home front (*Kontroverse an der Heimatfront*, Gunter Hofmann), did not affect most German writers, for several quite complex reasons. I will name only three: the preoccupation of writers with domestic politics in the aftermath of German unification; their difficulties in dealing with the new mode of live media representation;⁴ and lastly, the general disillusionment of writers/poets regarding the social irrelevance of their voice in the media society since the early 1980s.⁵ How the possibility of a new war on Iraq will affect literary debates and poetic production for (East) German writers concerned with the Middle East remains to be seen.

In the following I will concentrate on poetry because a) the genre has been traditionally linked to constructing or deconstructing the subject and b) we witnessed such a massive increase of poetic production in the 1980s and 1990s that critics talk about a new wave of poetry. Examining the latest poetic production will, therefore, shed light on the authors’ identity claims as they are represented in linguistically challenging forms of literary subjectivity. It seems that the transitional character of defining national and cultural identities in the 1990s is most palpable in contemporary poetry, which has turned into a hot medium. Political debates spanning the Gulf War of 1991 and the threat of renewed military conflict in 2002 are not explicitly at issue in the present article, though we might do well to bear them in mind as we consider the poetic production of German subjectivities and the Middle East in the 1990s.

THE POETIC REORIENTATION OF THE 1990s

Let me outline some of the general tendencies of this reorientation. Throughout the last decade one could discern small ripples of a transformation in poetic discourse. What came to the fore were hairline cracks in the psychological make-up of several important German writers

who grew up in the East and gradually managed to reposition themselves with respect to regional affiliations and mentalities as well as to collective memories of the past. In the field of literature, the lasting effects of the transition to a new literary market are far reaching: several poets who were born in the former East moved to regions in the former West; their work began to appear in publishing houses in Frankfurt or Munich instead of Leipzig or Dresden; they entertained an intense dialogue with writers in Austria or England and lived for some time abroad; they refused to be included in anthologies where writers with political affiliations to the secret service of the socialist regime would appear; they even erased the biographical, geographical, or generational markers in their texts so that a general audience can now hardly make out the contours of an “East German” writer, especially if he or she belongs to an age-group that has not yet presented a rich body of literary works. And yet, the wave of memoirs and autobiographical reflections dealing with childhood experiences indicates that there is also a need to stress the relevance of a distinctly non-Western perspective on life in the GDR.

From a sociological point of view, Rainer Zoll and others have persuasively shown to what degree East German biographies differ from their West German counterparts and why certain anxieties resulted from specific social processes that predate the collapse of the East German government by many years and culminated in a characteristic mental disposition.⁶ As far as the literary texts themselves are concerned, however, one notices rather subtle realignments. In poetry in particular, the attempts of many authors to adjust to an undivided post-1989 book market resulted in manifestations of highly individualistic concerns. Consequently, the poets’ mental reorientation found expression in a precarious process of ego formation. Instead of claiming the position of the sovereign intellectual able to build a bridge to a general audience, most poets emphasized sophistication of poetic expression and professionalism in dealing with the tricks of the trade. In contrast to the journalists’ call for a dramatic pronouncement of new directions in literature, writers reacted far less frequently to major historical events than to general social experiences: East German poets such as Volker Braun or Kurt Drawert responded to the market economy, the bureaucratic welfare state, or the importance of designer items in the West; West

German poets such as Thomas Kling commented on historical places in the East or typical GDR items. What East German writers feared most in the aftermath of 1989 were probably the deeper implications of debates about periodization and the legacy of East German literature, which immediately followed the historical *Wende*.⁷ In retrospect, it is remarkable that the literary de-dramatization of history had already been prepared by a) the detachment between poet and a larger audience, in particular, the rift between authors representing the unofficial culture of East Berlin's Prenzlauer Berg district and a general East German readership; b) an almost systematic training in indifference to any form of political participation in the East German state, especially from the perspective of this group of authors; c) the poets' distancing from the fixed coordinates of chronological and progressive time. To put it differently, a great number of poets in the 1980s endorsed an anthropological perspective that highlighted eons rather than strictly defined periods of political history.

I would maintain that after the great debates over East German writers at the beginning of the 1990s—whether we think of the controversy about Christa Wolf or Sascha Anderson—an intellectual repositioning was indicated by a defense of regional traditions, on the one hand, and a plea for “nomadic” literature, on the other. It is the latter that was supposed to serve as a platform for international exchange on the highest level of literary achievement. Apparently, the emphatic sense of mobility, connectivity, and versatility captured in the notion of the nomadic articulates the desire to escape the bounds of a still divided national culture; at the same time, the embrace of the nomadic articulates anxieties about the pull of globalization and the forces of “empire.”⁸ Slightly heightened attention to writers of Middle Eastern descent such as Adel Karasholi and Abdelwahab Meddeb may be said to support this observation. The French Tunisian poet Meddeb, whose work is influenced by medieval Arab mystics, speaks of an “expansion of nomadism on the entire planet,” which he sees as a global development that he calls a “dialogue with the desert.”⁹

The larger issue here is whether any endorsement of such poetic-mystic migrations is not simply an easy way “to extricate thought from the state model.”¹⁰ The concept of nomadology, developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in the late 1970s, was first used in an

anticolonialist sense of “deterritorialization” and has ever since been invoked to articulate oppositional claims to a political alternative of “free” connectivity.¹¹ Christopher L. Miller and others have advocated a different model, a “cosmopolitanism that remains meticulously aware of localities and differences.” Miller argues, “we must enable ourselves to think through borders without simply pretending that they don’t exist.”¹² This view is shared by Bruce Robbins, one of the most astute commentators on what can be described as the problematic transition from political internationalism to cultural cosmopolitanism. In his view we need to move *beyond* our local identities *without* submitting to universalism. Subscribing to postmodern and multicultural critiques of universalism, he nonetheless advocates a *transnational* position that involves more than a domestic multiculturalism enlarged to global proportions. Nor does he romanticize the local as the primary site of resistance against a universalism that many have deemed Eurocentric. From this perspective, the nomadological project of critical theory begins to resemble the “cosmopolitan fantasy of a mapless desert” that gained such currency in the last decade.¹³ The poet Meddeb might be said to stand in for this fantasy, at least in the account that the German editor Sartoris gives of contemporary lyric poetry.

THE NEW PREOCCUPATION WITH THE “ORIENT”

These critical reflections on nomadology and cosmopolitanism inform my discussion of transnational perspectives operating in German poetry since 1989. My emphasis is on how poets of East German descent respond to the Middle East, where they need to define their identity in a different context from the one given in European countries. After sketching the general context of East German poetry vis-à-vis the Middle East, I will analyze exemplary texts by Christian Lehnert, Oliver Mertins, and Durs Grünbein as representative of a new preoccupation with the “Orient” in contemporary German literature. It is, by the way, no coincidence that the poetic exploration of the Middle East takes place around 2000. The beginning of a new millennium triggered efforts to review long-term evolutionary processes, which competed with the transparent chronology of political events and shifted focus to millennia. In poetry by the authors

mentioned above the preoccupation is predominantly with Arab countries. My examination focuses on the confrontation of the poetic subject with less prominent areas of the Islamic Middle East, especially Syria and Yemen. Given the limited space for such a discussion of poetry, I will not be able to elaborate on theoretical questions concerning forms of deconstructed subjectivity that can be detected in East German poetry since the late 1970s; suffice it to say that there is no coherent, fixed, or authoritative lyrical subject in these texts. As far as the interaction between the object of poetic description and a subject-in-flux is concerned, the most striking feature of the poems is a complicated process of projecting images onto one's interlocutor; the poetic persona deals not only with the unfamiliar topography of the Middle East, but also with its own projections in addition to memories of Germany's fascist past and socialist past.

The task of reconciling or translating the different mnemonic layers into a complex poetic representation of historical time enhances contradictory attitudes to a ward reality with which a putative subject co-exists. To be sure, it is not the traveler's encounter with a disturbing social reality that causes what Freud called a splitting of the ego; instead, the subject is, as analyzed by Lacan, always already alienated from itself.¹⁴ An encounter with ossifying images, however, increases the alterity at the core of the poetic subject. Moreover, the historical subject experiences a further splitting since it is now embedded in the double past of unified Germany. This constitutive alienation, exacerbated by visits to the Middle East, needs to be examined in case histories. Symptomatically, the younger writers to be discussed have not (yet) presented themselves as a generation with a collective voice of their own. An acute sense of individual achievements and idiosyncrasies prevails among those who began their career in the late 1980s or even after the so-called *Wende*.

As far as the infrastructure of traveling is concerned, we should note that most East German writers who seized on new opportunities to travel after 1989 have chosen Italy, France, and the United States as foreign travel destinations. It would be fair to say that North America once again played a significant role in the symbolic economy of images of "the West," as widely discussed novels such as Reinhard Jirgl's *Die Atlantische Mauer* [The Atlantic Wall] or Durs Grünbein's poems in *Nach den Satiren* [After

the Satires] indicate.¹⁵ In comparison, journeys to the Middle East and to the Arab world in particular figure less frequently in modern and postwar German literature since there have been limited opportunities to stay in this region as a writer in residence or to read at a Goethe Institute. For reasons that this article proposes to explore, some East German writers have opted to traverse a terrain less traveled by their compatriots. There they still experience, however, what sociologists have called a sudden “collision” with individualism, a phenomenon with which readers of the post-socialist “East German” literature of the 1990s will be familiar.¹⁶

**A JOURNEY TO JORDAN: CHRISTIAN LEHNERT’S
DER GEFESSELTE SÄNGER AND *DER AUGEN AUFGANG***

An examination of two works by Christian Lehnert illustrates how certain encounters with Islamic countries are transformed into German poetry. First, I approach the problem of defining East German identities in the work of a poet whose serious concerns about memory and religion in Western culture are at the center of his recent poems dealing with Eastern Mediterranean countries. Born in 1969 in Dresden, Christian Lehnert studied theology and Middle Eastern literature. After 1989 he traveled to Israel and Jordan and, later, to the Sinai Peninsula. These journeys are reflected in two volumes of poetry, *Der gefesselte Sänger* [The Bound Singer] and *Der Augen Aufgang* [The Opening of the Eyes].¹⁷ Published in 1997, the first volume draws on an intricate web of allusions to Arab culture in an opaque style closer to the unwieldy Prenzlauer Berg texts of the 1980s than to the more transparent, overly elegant, and polished forms en vogue since the middle of the 1990s. Lehnert’s poetry provides an example of how newcomers align themselves in the highly competitive literary mass market of the late 1990s; such alignments can be seen in the thematic, formal, and philosophical orientations manifest in their work. *Der gefesselte Sänger* invokes memories of an ancient Orpheus, and Lehnert clearly partakes of a current trend toward more classical, cosmopolitan, perhaps even “arch-European” modes of expression. At the same time he links his poetic exploration of remote and secret places (such as caves and monuments) to an unusually elevated, occasionally antiquated diction and seems to insist on some lost virtue of

interpretive reflection that can be found in old, written sources. Yet it would be wrong to see his work as mere escapism. Instead, his journeys signify a return to origins through poetic contemplation, perhaps even a return to the Romantic Novalis and Jakob Böhme. This comes as no great surprise, given the special status of literature in what Karl Heinz Bohrer polemically dubbed the “culture conservation area of the GDR.”¹⁸ Lehnert takes his inspiration from literary traditions that are directly linked to the geographical centers of eighteenth-century Romanticism.

Lehnert’s main concern in this first volume is to record an inexplicable disquiet that can be attributed neither to his experience as a soldier in the East German army nor to any event he might have witnessed. Instead one finds in this poetry impersonal memories, even “false memories”¹⁹ that preoccupy the poet and let him perceive the lyric self as a “bild ohne bezeichnung” [81, “image without denotation”]. This could mean something unmarked, uncharted, not yet designated. The poems stage a quest for rejuvenation, a new way of seeing in the figurative sense of dawning realization. In one of the poems, a train ride between Dresden and Poland mobilizes disturbing associations with the *Shoah* as a film that never stops: “meine fahrkarte entwertet/weit hinter der grenze zum möglichen ende eines films” [51, “my ticket invalid/far behind the border for the possible ending of a film”]. Geoffrey Hartman characterizes the appropriation of someone else’s memories as “memory envy,” whereby someone else’s experiences are internalized as one’s own.²⁰ Hartman attributes this phenomenon to the widespread distribution of video testimonies, memoirs, and fictional narratives. While Lehnert’s poem about the train ride seems to foreground an imagined deportation, the reference to celluloid fantasies suggests that either the actual arrival in Poland or the filmic reproduction of history might bring about an end to the haunting images.²¹ This interplay between immersing oneself in memories of Germany’s fascist past and attempting to find a protective boundary is closely linked to the East German subject’s search of geographical arenas that might not trigger immediate associations with the Third Reich. The task of establishing this shield for the sensitive subject takes place in the Middle East, where the individual navigates between actual personal experiences and imagined memories of a distant

past, for example, “die geschichte der angst/des embryos” [87, “the history of the embryo’s fear.”]

Lehnert’s poems of 1997 illustrate the psychological predicament of an East German traveler struggling to identify himself in terms of his new citizenship with reference to a specific region and historical moment. As a voyager arriving in the Middle East, the poetic subject feels first of all like a “mutant in der schale/einer boeing” [83, “a mutant in the shell of a boeing”] or a “kopie eines paßbilds” [83, “copy of a passport photo”]. The poem “In Amman” evokes a trip to Jordan, where the individual seems to enjoy the new freedom of traveling and exploring the ancient culture of the Hashemite kingdom. These prospects are immediately shattered when a personal encounter throws the traveler back in time and place. The visitor is immediately not only confronted with West German cars as icons of modernity but also with the legacy of the Third Reich. The language of the poem appears ripped apart into snippets of dialogue and tessellated images. First, the lyric self notices a 1943 model of a Mercedes that makes him feel caught in a time warp, short-circuited in time (59, “kurzschluß in der zeit”). A beggar confronts the tourist repeatedly with stinging questions about his identity in a singing voice: “kehlige/sequenzen german/ und immer wieder/german nazi?” [59, “guttural/sequences german/and again and again/german nazi?”]. To the beggar’s associations between the tourist and Hitler, the German traveler responds by a “schalten in einen anderen/gang” [60, “shifting into another gear”], slowly moving away from the scene and trying to achieve some active forgetting. At the end of the two-page poem, he seems to have reached a kind of ground zero: “jede erinnerung verlosch” [60, “every memory vanished”].

This failed dialogue between tourist and mendicant illustrates the more general issue of how a specifically East German history and the personal memory thereof are eclipsed in the very moment of possible recognition. As if a postwar development had never existed, the Jordanian beggar expunges the historical changes since 1945 and thus inadvertently forces the tourist to renegotiate his personal recollection of the GDR, his recent experiences of a unified FRG, and an undivided memory of Germany’s fascist past. Since German citizenship is associated with powerful, emotionally charged images of the Third Reich, the tourist in

Lehnert's poem bounces back and forth between an inventory of relics—for example, in a poem about photos of the dead in Jerusalem (63)—and a search for closure. This painful self-interrogation in Israel and Jordan amounts to a poetics of personal recognition that would allow the enunciator to reconcile abstract memory with the affective self in “*einem dunklen Wort*” [“a dark word”].²² Lehnert's dialogue with ancient mystics, including Bedouin poets, conveys a strong emotional need to overcome the ritualized discourse of social renewal that is so precariously linked to new economies, new media, and new generations. His poems seem to call for a non-ritualized, personal, affective renewal that might take place elsewhere. However, this poetic discourse is firmly embedded in a national culture of commemoration and replicates one of the very structures it seeks to overcome, namely the rift between a modern, archiving West and an ancient, archived East. For a German traveler who is burdened by memories of living in the GDR, Jordan and the city of Amman do not offer any relief in the form of experiencing a timeless zone where mystic poetry would transcend the mnemonic images of a socialist past. On the contrary, the visitor's desire to leave those images behind is blocked twice, first by his own desire to encounter an ancient Middle East and then by the mendicant's demand that he identify himself as a Western tourist who might offer “*die härte einer mark*” [60, “the hard currency of a Deutschmark”]. But first of all, the incident evokes images of German racism and the terror spread by German occupation forces in World War II. Thus, the visitor is stuck between his personal memories of socialism (which he cannot articulate in Jordan) and his interlocutor's projections that this visitor might be a representative of the terror regime.

**CIVIL WARS AND MYSTICISM:
THE MIDDLE EAST AS TRANSITIONAL SPACE FOR
OLIVER MERTINS**

A different approach to self-recognition in the Middle East can be found in a slightly older writer who is more closely affiliated with the last productive group of writers to consider themselves a generation in the emphatic sense. The impressive essayistic and poetic production of this Berlin-based, non-conformist writer has received scant critical

attention because of his distance to the book market and his absence from the public arena. Born in 1964 in Berlin, Oliver Mertins has published extensively since the late 1980s. He has worked as a boxer, bookseller, baker, farm hand, and, according to one of his books, a burglar and con artist.²³ Having traveled to the Indian subcontinent, the United States, and the Caribbean, he portrays himself as a fighter against the Western *Einsamkeitsaristokrat* [aristocrat of solitude], who represents a Western society governed by the entertainment and leisure industry.²⁴ This radical but familiar anti-capitalist position has led him to visit places such as Sri Lanka in the midst of a civil war.

At the beginning of *Monachoi* a wanderer engages in imaginary conversation with mystics of the seventh century. In a different setting he drives a jeep in the middle of war-torn Somalia. The book is best described as a mystic travelogue of various historical vignettes. Each entry delivers an account of human despair, love, and suffering in an exalted lyrical prose that praises the wisdom of nomadic thinkers and the entire earth as the nomad's home. Photographs show lonely individuals in Eastern Europe. The spiritual journey here leads from medieval Cologne via Damascus and Baghdad to present-day North Africa. Although these poems, essays, and narratives include copious references to Muslim, Jewish, and Greek voices, it is difficult to identify the contours of the self in what appears to be a series of intense dialogues dealing with wise men and women about the importance of altruism. Any explicit self-definition on the level of citizenship and national identity is carefully avoided;²⁵ there are no intercultural misperceptions or conflicts, in contrast to Lehnert's poem. The reason for this may be that Mertins sidesteps any fissures of personal identity with a neo-humanist doctrine of sacrificing oneself to another. By assuming the role of an inspired cognoscente, the traveler turns into a disembodied voice that can speak in the "Nacht des Exils" ["night of exile"].²⁶

The problem with such a deterritorialized, disembodied position is twofold. This imagined banishment allows the poet to create an imaginary lineage that ties him to mystic men and women. But it fails to embed this lineage in an overall scheme of psychic dis- or reintegration. A defense of diasporic collectivities based on an allegedly pure ideal of mystic wisdom dabbles in universal ethics but severs human rights from the

power dynamics of the nation-state and the author's own positionality.²⁷ In this respect Mertins clings to a depoliticized internationalism confining itself "to the domain of culture or civil society."²⁸ *Monachoi* concludes with various short entries in praise of Arab calligraphy and the martyrdom of lovers. The register is one of elevated, anachronistic language in which German Orientalist views of Sufis and Christian views of ascetic Muslim mystics evoke a highly emotional state of agitation. Here too we encounter a transnational perspective that takes recourse to the desert as the *locus classicus* of a deterritorialized space. The nomad's land here is a space without precise coordinates and hence the appropriate environment for a mystic wanderer. As Bruce Robbins points out, the desert in novels such as Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* is a place where "fraternal solidarity" and "transnational bonding" subscribe to a universal cosmopolitanism that cancels the historical legacy of anticolonial resistance by silencing the voice of Arab nomads.²⁹

Unlike Lehnert, Mertins focuses on present-day military conflicts and formulates a humanist program of non-violent resistance. Mertins makes clear that the defense of human rights still requires what Bruce Robbins has problematized as "dirty universalism," namely a universalism that must shift "from the terrain of culture to the terrain of power."³⁰ Nonetheless, *Monachoi* reveals a more general motivation that is shared by Lehnert to a certain degree. In traveling to Arab countries or reading mystic literature, these two young German writers seek an alternative to the perceived shortcomings of Western civilization, the threats of globalization, and the specter of a weakened welfare state. Theirs is an overwrought multiculturalism in a time warp, catapulting the subject into various zones of a mystic "Orient" threatened by modern warfare. Confronted with what Max Weber characterized as the disenchantment of modernity, they cope with the "rationalization of the world image" by subscribing to "an ascetic or a mystic flight from the world."³¹ The fascination with "Gesängen von Sehnen und Qual" [250, "songs of yearning and torment"], as Mertins puts it, is poetically productive and understandable, given the long-standing tradition of literary martyrdom in German *Geistesgeschichte* (e.g. Lenz, Hölderlin). But hymnic praise of the forefathers does very little to open up new political vistas for thinking about international and national struggles in the context of mass

migration and diaspora in the wake of the cold war. This poetic imagination deploys a “technik des vergessens” [“technique of forgetting”]³² not yet able to re-link nationality to local struggles with a critical voice of resistance.

As noted earlier, Lehnert and Mertins are exceptional in the sense that most East German writers still choose the United States or a European country as their travel destination. Inexpensive mass tourism has of course changed travel options in the last decade, but individually organized journeys to the Eastern Mediterranean are usually motivated by idiosyncratic desires. Lehnert and Mertins seem motivated by theological or subcultural interests in religion and everyday life in the Arab countries they visit.³³ Durs Grünbein’s encounter with the Middle East is symptomatic of a different intercultural constellation. This poet, who is at first glance an unlikely suspect—given his preoccupation with artistic concepts, scientific models, and the modern Western tradition from Charles Baudelaire to John Ashbery—also touches upon Arab culture in his latest volume of poetry. Because he is technically the most advanced poet of the three and probably one of the best known representatives of contemporary German literature, his work warrants more detailed analysis. The poems relevant to the present topic must also be understood in the larger context of German-Arab cultural relations, whose history and infrastructure have not yet received much critical attention.

Durs Grünbein’s early poetry became known in the late 1980s, when many new voices from East Germany had emerged and national unification had given the marginal genre of poetry a much needed and yet involuntarily “political” spin. After 1989 the star of some hitherto unknown writers faded away as quickly as it had risen. Durs Grünbein succeeded where others failed. His poetry was fresh, often sarcastic or a bit melancholic, and the audience loved it. He became one of the most celebrated young writers in unified Germany. Many of his earlier poems exhibit his anglophile literary tastes but also an engagement with modernists such as Osip Mandelstam and Joseph Brodsky. Since 1999, that is, when a thick poetry volume entitled *Nach den Satiren* [After the Satires] appeared, Grünbein’s idiom has shifted considerably toward long, narrative, and seemingly more formalist poems; the verse is now often rhymed and thematically oriented toward a pantheon of familiar Roman

and Greek figures. It should be added that this adoption of a more classically oriented diction can also be traced in works by Raoul Schrott and Thomas Kling. In the case of Durs Grünbein it indicates a process of literary re-orientation tied to an ongoing investment in a transnational European culture still in need of definition.

INTERLUDE: THE DISCOVERY OF YEMEN IN GERMAN LITERATURE

The sudden appearance of Yemen as a theme in German literature requires some explanation. As several recent publications indicate, Yemen first acquired its present status as one of the most popular destinations for Germans traveling to Arab countries in the 1980s. This paralleled the development of bilateral economic and cultural relations, which were further intensified at the end of the 1990s. One of the most ambitious cultural projects in Yemen is the restoration of thousands of fragments of a historical edition of the Qur'an. Discovered in the early 1970s, these fragments have been collected by a team of German scholars who have documented this enormous collection on microfilm over the last two decades. The fieldwork in Yemen was completed in 1997.³⁴ No historical events seem to have altered the mythical image of Arabia felix since the postwar period, which seems astonishing. On the other hand, this "freezing" of time should not come as a complete surprise. Yemen is both geographically isolated from the Northern part of the peninsula and its inhabitants have developed a strong sense of autonomy. For example, the Yemenite government has stubbornly resisted a global market economy. Cultural documents written by Westerners support the view of an already existing cultural conservatism and emphasize the notion of Yemen as a slumber land. Popular travelogues such as Fritz Kortler's *Alt-arabische Träume: Pilgerreise in eine andere Welt und eine andere Zeit* (1982) [Old Arabian Dreams: Pilgrimage to Another World and Another Time]³⁵ subscribe to this, as do older works as well. While these are interesting documents in terms of the continuity of cultural perception, it must be stressed that before the late 1990s there were no highbrow *literary* works presenting Yemen to a German readership in the twentieth century.

A famous Danish expedition of 1761-67 made the region widely known to European readers, thanks to Carsten Niebuhr's famous travelogue, *Den Arabiske rejse* [*Travels through Arabia* in its English translation of 1792].³⁶ This factual account was succeeded by Adam Oehlenschläger's *Aladdin, eller den forunderlige lampe* [1805, *Aladdin or The Magic Lamp*], the German translation of which became a successful source of Romantic fantasies about the Middle East.³⁷ As a precise geographical term and literary topos, "Arabia felix" entered nineteenth-century literary discourse, though tangentially, in Charles Baudelaire's *Les Paradis artificiels* (1858-60) [*Artificial Paradises*]³⁸ and then, more prominently, in Karl May's *Die Todes-Karawane* (1888) [*The Caravan of Death*]. Since then, the 1930s and 1980s have been the main periods for exploring, describing, and fantasizing the southeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula, where Yemen is located. In the modern era, when globetrotting journeys and travel journalism reached an unprecedented frenzy in the 1920s and 1930s, travel writers such as Freya Stark fed European fantasies about the "Southern Gates of Arabia."³⁹ Cultural perception of this region was also, strangely enough, shaped by the Weimar discourse on architecture, in particular by modern writers' fascination with the American high-rise edifice. In spite of the fact that Yemen had not yet embarked on a Western project of modernization, the famous castle-like mud-brick buildings of Yemen seemed an archaic equivalent to Northern skyscrapers. Hans Helfritz conflated images of a faraway America with an equally distant Arabia in his *Chicago der Wüste* (1932) [*Chicago of the Desert*].⁴⁰

After World War II, however, only a few European curiosity seekers visited the remote southern region of the Arabian Peninsula. They went mostly to the "Southern Gates," that is the southeastern part known as Hadhramaut or Hadramawt. In the period spanning the 1960s and 1970s, Yemen seems to have disappeared from German tourists' map of the Middle East. During the Cold War, the division of the country into North Yemen and a Marxist South Yemen resembled the German situation. The knowledge and modernist terminology of the 1920s notwithstanding, postwar Orientophiles continued to generate images of an unknown territory, often in terms of an uncharted "wonderland" or an enchanting "land of frankincense."⁴¹ Popular titles such as *Krummdolch und Erdöl*

by Fritz Sitte (1988) [Curved Dagger and Petroleum] and *Die Königin von Saba* by Werner Daum (1988) [The Queen of Sheba]⁴² still evoke fairy-tale images of a feminized Orient and reflect the entanglement of the West's growing economic interests in the region with an imaginary firmly anchored in the Orientalist tradition. After the reunification of the Arab Republic of Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Yemen on May 22, 1990, the way was paved for a more intense political and cultural exchange between Germany and this Arab nation.

What seems to have changed *within* this tradition since the late 1970s is denoted by a shift from the visual-olfactory register to an emphasis on writing. Originally, German (and European) interest in the long-time monopoly of spice traders whose influence shaped the cultural history and economic power of the region was linked to an exploration of the sense of smell. More recent German tributes to the "sensuality" of the East in the wake of unification invoke the history of calligraphy and mysticism instead. In contrast to the Romantic imagination of the Middle East, this is based on first-hand geographical and archeological knowledge and apparently even stimulated by the most current research projects. This is perhaps a more cognitive approach that plays on the desire to study the Orient as an imaginary origin of the culture of "inspired" writing versus the flow of data in electronic media networks. To borrow a term introduced by Heinz Egge, this renewed *Niebuhrslust* stimulates fantasies of an ancient Arabia felix minus the Baudelarian sense of decadent pleasure and intoxication.⁴³ In the larger transnational context of an imaginary geopolitical arena, the Middle East is much less a military theater (as it is in journalism) than a stage for dramatizing the act of self-recognition and remembering the East as a distant cousin.⁴⁴

In short, this image of an archaic life-world has persisted in spite of armed conflicts, political turmoil, and increasing economic and cultural exchange between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Yemen since the brief civil war of 1994. Critical accounts of political and socio-cultural developments are paid scant attention.⁴⁵ However, the new fascination with Yemen can lead to projects with unpredictable results. Michael Roes, a German writer who had already published a novel about an expedition to Yemen, has begun work on an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in which the actors are untrained Yemenites.⁴⁶

This is another indication of how “Arabia felix” as an imaginary archaic and nomadic space has occupied a prominent place in German film and literature of the late 1990s. The very basis for this interest is institutionally mediated and thus dependent on the nation state, that is, Germany’s cultural politics in the last decade. Because of the political rapprochement between Germany and Yemen, bilateral economic relations and cultural exchange programs have gained special weight and allowed writers to use a modest system of institutional support in unique ways. The emergence of a number of texts about Yemen in recent years signals first of all a shift in the institutional framework that promotes cultural exchange; second, the main players are first-rate writers who steer away from the previous approach that put a heavy emphasis on a type of travelogue, reportage, or popular narrative with little or no literary merits; third, the main mode of expression and the main topic in discussions about cultural exchange are both poetry, which is embedded in the tradition inaugurated by Goethe’s *Der westöstliche Diwan* (1819) [West-eastern divan].

Like Durs Grünbein, writers with a West German background such as Alban Nikolai Herbst, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, and Joachim Sartorius have also participated in cultural events in Yemen in recent years.⁴⁷ The major difference in their treatment of Yemen as a literary subject lies in the fact that the poetic interrogation of the speaker’s self and the issue of “new identities” and “new passports” (to use Schirrmacher’s phrase) do not play any significant role. The question of national identity and the scenarios of recognizing oneself in an unfamiliar—or, as we shall see, a strangely familiar—setting appear predominantly in the work of East German poets.

ARABIA FELIX AND DURS GRÜNBEIN IN YEMEN

The first sequence of poems in the volume *Erklärte Nacht* (2002, Night Explained) evokes familiar scenery in Berlin, Italy, and Greece. Then we slide smoothly into completely different territory, south of the Mediterranean on our mental map. Three poems introduce the reader to places on the Arabian Peninsula before the next sequence returns to Italy. Then, from the perspective of a satellite, the reader glimpses New York

after 9/11, and a faraway spot in Manhattan resembles an extinct volcano (50). Neither these “September-Elegien” [September Elegies] nor the trinomial Arabia-poems are marked by labels indicating a chronological sequence; the visits, real or imaginary, are just part of the ebb and flow of time. This arrangement bespeaks the fatalism of an age of anxiety, in which the exotic and the horrific leave no emotional impact on the individual as long as they can be mastered by a language that tends wounds (52). To reach this level of shockproof subjectivity, however, the poetic subject needs to cultivate connections to important precursors in historically and geographically distant places. Numerous references to Baudelaire, Dante, Virgil, and the like create a protective layer surrounding the subject like a shell so that each moment of a new experience can be immediately transformed into a moment of recognition or *déjà vu*.

In a long sequence of seven stanzas bearing the title “Arabia felix,” Durs Grünbein ventures into the Muslim world (*Erklärte Nacht*, 34-37). A short stay in the South Arabian city of Sana’a is the basis for a brief poetic synopsis of Yemenite culture. The narrative poem lists several typical features, which echo the descriptions of a travel guide and help the enunciator to shape his own idiosyncratic perspective. From a more philosophical point of view, the opening passage reflects on the passing of time in the Orient and monitors physical reactions to the seemingly splendid isolation of Yemen, a country that has not yet felt the deeper impact of a global market economy and in this sense resembles previous poetic tropes that identified the former East Germany with secluded countries such as Albania. Sana’a triggers a troublesome languor derived from a “wandering” of temporal and spatial coordinates (stanza 1). In Yemen, the poem suggests, the mind drifts in the absence of accurate timing. Before the visitor adapts to this temporal continuum, he notices subtle discrepancies between the apparent piety of Yemenites and modern symbols oriented toward Mecca. As a Western tourist, he feels immediately transformed into another person (“Simsalabim, schon war man ein Andrer,” 34). Still, the feeling of staying in the wrong place lingers. In dreams (stanza 3) the sense of artificiality prevails to such a degree that fear of dangerous attacks—by men with guns—is pointless. Allusions to cross-dressing invoke Karl May’s Orient novels such that affect is again relegated to the realm of fantasy.⁴⁸

Marking the center of the poem, the fourth stanza entails a stroll in the city and a last visit to the traveler's host. The post-climactic phase is signaled by renewed mobility that energizes the traveler. As in other Grünbein poems, the notion of flux is extremely important here, since all feelings of historical stasis need to be compensated for by nomadic roaming in this poetic economy. The flow of water, sheer luxury in "Arabia felix," prompts the troubled Western subject from East Germany to circumvent his anxieties through sarcastic remarks such as "Dschihad, der Heilige Krieg, Dschihad. Doch es klingt wie Hatschi" ["Jihad, the Holy War, Jihad. But it sounds like Achoo"]. It is this pun at the climactic end of the fourth stanza that reveals the inadequacies between religious fervor in the public arena and the visitor's ludicrous private confession. The mocking comment shows that the traveler remains unimpressed by the pathos signaling a clash of cultures; instead he is concerned with fighting his allergies by taking a shower after his visits to the dusty streets of the city. The Chaplinesque scene in the shower is rendered in an ironic voice. A secret dialogue with an East German colleague corroborates such a reading: the poem is dedicated to Adolf Endler, a veteran fellow writer in Berlin with a unique sense of humor. By using the banal as a means of turning the descriptive account into an ironic one, Grünbein manages to center the poem upon common bodily experiences; rather than constructing pristine images of the Orient, he builds up layers of comical references that stress the visitor's vulnerability and undermine the conventional dichotomy of West and Middle East.

Having outlined the rather slow pace of dramatization here, I would like to revisit the loss of "the real," the sense of drifting in Sana'a accompanied by a feeling that something is missing there. There is no rupture in time, no alarming sign of "the end," and consequently, Yemen's splendid isolation makes no room for the drama inherent in the turn that rendered the GDR an archive of its former self. This long narrative poem stages a missed opportunity to activate, intensify, and perform a clear-cut separation of Yemen's mythical past and modern present. Similarly, the enunciator's allusions to other literary sources of Yemen oscillate between high and popular literature. This emerges more clearly if we consider the most pronounced literary reference in the Grünbein poem. For the poet's reference to Baudelaire's "artificial paradises" is far more

than a friendly salutation to a precursor. Grünbein obviously expands the French poet's repertoire of images; the Yemenite "paradise" is redefined inasmuch as Baudelaire's decadent appreciation of intoxication is still present, but narcotics⁴⁹ fail to seduce the visitor who mocks imported elements of Western culture (*e.g.* a bar without alcoholic beverages, 35) or the simultaneity of archaic gender relations (the presence of patriarchs) and modern technological equipment such as Russian weaponry (35-37). The last stanza quips that Sana'a is the place where one can still doze away under the influence of frankincense, emanating from hanging electric incense boats (37, "Elektrischen Weihrauch-Ampeln"). The visitor, however, can resist the temptation to fall asleep; his strict regimen helps him stay awake and relegate the "artificial paradise" to nineteenth-century fantasies. In other words, Baudelaire's vision of the Orient is cited but then corrected and ironically dismissed.

Yet Durs Grünbein finds the desired challenge in "Arabia felix," a moment of sudden self-recognition, as the second set of poems illustrates. The intriguing little poem "Einem Fennek in der Altstadt von Sanaa" ["To A Fennek in the Old Quarter of Sana'a"] is typical of the poet's current predilection for long six-beat lines with a colorful variety of di- and trisyllabic feet. It begins with a sudden exclamation, a kind of interior dialogue with the reader. The first statement underscores the fact that in Sana'a there is no zoo, "kein Museum entführter Exoten" [38, "no museum of kidnapped exotic beings"]. The second statement draws attention to humans kept in primitive prisons such as pits and barns. The third and final move makes the reader familiar with the main topic, the obscure animal introduced in the title. The observer's sarcastic perspective allows him to retain an aesthetic sensibility that undermines preconceived notions of empathy for the misery of the poor. Regardless of actual conditions for humans, the visitor seeks to become part of the scenery and create a "fraternal solidarity" of sorts.⁵⁰ While what seems truly exotic is found in archaic cages—where Yemenite prisoners are held!—the foreign animal turns out to be strangely familiar. After the first quarter of the poem (line 8), the observer shifts focus to the unexpected appearance of the *fennek* (desert fox) in an urban wasteland.⁵¹ This is where the animal is described in detail and where the poetic subject prepares his readers

for a change of perspective that culminates in tacit communication with the fox in the last quarter.

The peculiar physiognomy of this animal—“riesige Dreiecksohren, sandgelb” [38, “giant triangular ears, yellow as sand”]—creates a sense of visual familiarity that resonates with the literary reference to Master Reynard’s slight Oriental relative. “Meister Reinekes schwächtiger orientalischer Vetter” (38) is a nod to Goethe and an educated audience. This affiliation is then corroborated and intensified by increasingly concrete references to the *fennek*’s uncanny resemblance to the poet’s own status. Finally, the desert fox even turns out to be an “old acquaintance” that the European visitor recognizes from a terrarium. Now the fox appears as a debased creature whose owner has chained him to a rusty grid. Interestingly, Grünbein does not stress the loss of dignity but the preservation of the physical. The *fennek* therefore differs from the free, nomadic poet in that the fox seems to have kept his most precious attribute, his highly refined sensory apparatus, even in captivity. Accordingly, the *fennek*, now identified with a noble creature, a “Kalif im Exil” [38, “caliph in exile”], and the observer are able to recognize each other by virtue of a feeling the two seem to share. “Scham/Ließ uns innehalten und lauschen, zwei Fremde im Jemen,/Die glitzernden Augen ein Zeichen unserer Flucht durch die Welt.” [38, “Shame /let us pause and harken, two foreigners in Yemen, /Sparkling eyes a sign of our flight through this world.”]

In this poetic treatment of a European traveler’s encounter with the Middle East, the sense of confrontation with the unknown and yet familiar follows a different path from the one we noted in Lehnert’s poem. The animal portrait has become a staple in Grünbein’s poetry, where animals are allegorized as a double of the self. This helps clarify the status of the post-socialist writer who from Grünbein’s perspective is always already an expatriate bound to take visual inventory of his surroundings before he leaves for the next place. The zoo is perhaps the most prominent feature of this taking stock of the strangely familiar. In this case, it is the old quarter of Yemen’s capital, where Yemenites are rendered as silent witnesses⁵² or “white noise,” the backdrop to a psychodrama unfolding in the poem. The dramatization exposes a split between two selves, one the dominant cosmopolitan self (the observer), the other the subjugated

self chained to the nation-state (the *fennek*). The mutual recognition of these two halves is necessary, not for a synthesis, but rather for developing a mechanism that allows the subject to oscillate between detachment and attachment and thus maintain a safe distance from oppressive forms of the nation-state and to the forces of a self-less global existence. This mechanism results in what Jean Jacques Rousseau called “the faculty of attaching our affections to beings who are foreign to us.”⁵³ It is the faculty that drives this poetry. In contrast to their European visitor, the Yemenites described here remain peasants and fail to meet the challenge of urban modernity; they have no sense of voyeurism and live in a distant past. In contrast, the poet in exile recognizes his double in the captured beast whose extraordinary sensory apparatus reveals qualities necessary for the survival of the vulpine individual in capitalist society. The recognition of the self-in-the-other reconciles, at least for a moment and in the imaginary, both halves of the poetic subject’s split identity. Yet there is still a clear division between the underdog and the alpha male in Grünbein’s post-socialist bestiary, which is the basis of a poetic self-formation since the animal in captivity mirrors both the poet’s memories of East Germany (the past) and his feelings of liberation while traveling (the present). The latter implies that one can leave the places of captivity behind. At the same time, each place is checked for the imaginative stimulus it might provide for self-reflection. For the Middle East, the United States, and Italy are not mere occasions for writing a poem; they are necessary for a programmatic expansion and deepening of poetic insights about the self vis-à-vis the (un)familiar.

Does this mean that Grünbein’s approach to the cultural other and collective memory is more unencumbered than Lehnert’s? Not quite. Complications arising from the dialogical dilemma of identification in Lehnert’s poem “In Amman,” where Germany’s socialist and fascist pasts are at issue, are also present in Grünbein’s writings. In a 1991 interview, Grünbein recounts how an American interlocutor asked him about his background. When Grünbein replied that he happens to live in Berlin, the immediate response was, “Free side or bad side?” This reply serves as an isolated punch line (we are not privy to the poet’s response) revealing an ironic maxim, namely, that everything the poet had achieved up to then must have been “poetry from the bad side.”⁵⁴ There are two ways to

interpret this statement. If we read the dictum against the grain, it defines Grünbein's poetic approach as an attempt to focus on the bleak side of the everyday as the lived reality in both communist and capitalist societies; this reading would reveal the decidedly ahistorical, anthropological features of his poetry. But we can also decipher a hidden meaning beneath the surface of mockery. In this reading the maxim serves as a translation of the psychodrama that ensues from the challenge of identifying oneself in terms of the cold war logic of binary "blocs" instead of the third way envisioned by Grünbein. This third way opts for polyphony, sarcasm, and constant perspectival shifts.⁵⁵ The two readings reciprocally illustrate the dual internal mechanism that helps the poetic subject portray itself as part of the masses but also set itself apart from a common pessimism and suffocating nostalgia. In Grünbein's bio-poetics one must retrieve the natural escape instinct in order to attain "die Souveränität einer Eidechse" ["the sovereignty of a lizard"]. On a transnational level, the poet sees himself as a pariah seeking the company of other strange and nomadic individuals who will form the phalanx of a cosmopolitan poetics in response to the post-socialist condition.⁵⁶

Although essays and poems by Grünbein, Mertins, and Lehnert seem to promote nomadism in the unfamiliar geocultural context of unified Germany, it is precisely in the Deleuzian sense of non-representation. This is not the more concrete sense of diasporic identities that has emerged in many postcolonial studies of migrants and borders, especially in the American context. In response to memories of the GDR as socialist state and in response to a "Europeanized" Germany, nomadology implies neither a direct correspondence with minority discourse, nor an overt alliance with the regional affiliations of East German writers (*e.g.*, Heinz Czechowski, Wulf Kirsten, Thomas Rosenlöcher), whose attachment to Dresden and whose feeling of homelessness in unified Germany are inextricably linked to their disillusionment with the failed reforms of the socialist state.⁵⁷ This emotional response is completely missing from Durs Grünbein's poems; even the poems dedicated to his hometown of Dresden emphasize a detached position and the curious gaze of a pilot flying miles above a once familiar terrain. Consequently, the resuscitation of the Deleuzian trope of nomadology serves two purposes. First, it dispels the notion of the poet as an intellectual representative of particular interests

(what German critics have termed *Staatsdichter*) while maintaining the highly evocative image of the underdog that has been banished from the table of the rich and powerful since Ovid. Second, it transforms the idea of being “down there” in a particular region into the image of hovering “up there” in a position of protective aerial surveillance over one’s homeland. The new poet-without-borders imagined in this discourse is no longer anchored to hierarchies of cultural nationalism but can move freely within reticular structures. This poetic vision unhinges the transnational from the local in a depoliticizing gesture, on the one hand, and reflects on the memory culture of the post-socialist 1990s, on the other.⁵⁸

CONCLUSION: A NEW GERMAN TRANSNATIONALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In keeping with Leslie Adelson’s opening remarks at the May 2002 workshop about the need to rethink familiar frameworks for understanding the GDR and its cultural legacy, this chapter has attempted to sketch new ways of reading (East) German poetic discourse of the 1990s. Beyond merely filling in the gaps in our knowledge of East German literature through 1990 (by discovering forgotten writers and texts), we must also develop a newly critical apparatus for analyzing intercultural encounters in post-socialist literature.⁵⁹ The three case studies presented here address the ramifications of poetic introspection in a transnational setting. Crossing into the Middle East, the subject of this German poetics experiences citizenship not only in terms of unquestioned belonging (to Western cultures) but also in terms of a contradictory process of remembering, forgetting, and re-asserting one’s own identity somewhere between nomadism and rootedness. The formal dictates of poetry in the 1990s require that European experience of the Arab world be recoded into more sophisticated vocabularies and images than in previous decades. The most striking feature of this poetry is perhaps its strong emphasis on the nomadic and non-chronological time, which indicates the turn toward anthropological interests among the authors examined here. The poets’ positions are characterized either by cultural cosmopolitanism or by a kind of mystic identification; their views of the Middle East are filtered

through the lens of older literary models of Orientalism, which are of course subject to modification. Lehnert, Mertins, and Grünbein use this lens to take up the challenge of redefining their relationship to the double history of fascism and socialism. These are conjoined pasts that complicate the process of identification and self-assertion for (East) German writers after the demise of the GDR.

Given the intensity of current debates about the generational gap, one might ask whether the youngest cohort shares the emotional coherence that characterized what the critic Matthias Politycki ironically termed “the generation of 1978.” (An insignificant date stands in here for the “eventless” experience of an age group seen as mere bystanders of history).⁶⁰ If we look more closely at the literary production of the last cohort of East German writers, we will find that writers such as Annett Gröschner, Johannes Jansen, Barbara Köhler, Raja Lubinetzki, Thomas Kunst, Jörg Schieke, Tom Pohlmann, Kathrin Schmidt, Micha Schmidt, and Lutz Seiler de-emphasize the journalistic notion of generational coherence (which is nevertheless a factor). Those who never participated in the hard core literary movements in Berlin, Dresden, and Leipzig in the early 1980s do not necessarily advocate the same type of artistic cosmopolitanism that well established writers of West German descent (*e.g.*, Bodo Kirchhoff) have hammered out as a putatively transnational concept for themselves. But they defend a regional identity that marks a similar distance from the national arena.

Crossing national borders seems to involve more than a casual reminder of one’s citizenship to the (East) German poets who seized new opportunities to travel to the Middle East. Regardless of their individual reasons for going, these authors all sought some form of individualization in response to the intensity of conjoined German pasts. Their poetic expressiveness articulates a range of responses to piety, mysticism, civil war, and creaturely misery. Are their reflections on modes of remembering typical of a homogenous age group? There are, of course, many different approaches to the task of dealing with two national histories. But two strands found in works by Christian Lehnert and Durs Grünbein seem to apply generally. The preoccupation with memory and commemoration is a trend that had already grown more complex in the 1980s because of questions concerning the life span of victims,

eyewitnesses, and perpetrators of the Third Reich; the authenticity of media reproduction; and the ruins of the socialist regime, which called for another *Aufarbeitung* of Germany's most recent past. It is precisely this positioning of one's own (East) German culture and the other, Middle Eastern culture as being ruined that allows the poet to save them and store them in what Johannes Fabian has called "theatres of memory"⁶¹ Christian Lehnert's notion of a "technique of forgetting" signals perhaps most aptly a general desire to know *how* the two totalitarian regimes should be remembered and *what* layers of twentieth-century history should be excavated. In addition, there is a more recent trend toward the end of the 1990s, namely the literary exploration of an older divide between the Roman-Greek and Arab worlds. It is stimulated by a renewed interest in nomadology, which is now linked to a cosmopolitanism that seeks to reestablish a newly European foundation by harking back to the heritage of classical poetry. Hence the peculiar interest in grand narratives of the empire, the millennium, the Occident, and the Orient—all of which beg to be seriously questioned by contemporary poets and their readers. The East German poets here might have received new passports, but a reading of their texts in a transnational context makes it clear that the poetic subject is in constant flux—and "new identities" are not in sight.

ENDNOTES

¹ Frank Schirrmacher, "Abschied von der Literatur der Bundesrepublik: Neue Pässe, neue Identitäten, neue Lebensentwürfe: Über die Kündigung einiger Mythen des westdeutschen Bewußtseins," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (October 2, 1990): L 1-2. Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations are provided by Erk Grimm in consultation with Leslie A. Adelson.

² In response to Laurence McFalls's suggestion to re-connect the study of East German culture, literature, and politics with the "East European transformation studies" from which it was cut off, this article argues that in the case of the post-*Wende* poetic discourse the "East German case of transition" (McFalls) cannot be understood as a kind of retroactive identification with the larger entity of post-socialist East European cultures, nor as a simple transformation of GDR-specific, historical sensitivities into a new and common perspective. For the poetic discourse of the late 1990s was more and more geared toward articulating identitarian claims that de-emphasized collectivities and stressed the formation of complicated linguistic and psychic realities in strictly individualistic terms. When the linguistic markers are clearly recognizable in these texts, I will use the term East German; when these markers are hidden or overlap with signals that are of a more generic nature, the term "(East) German" will be used since biographical data such as place of birth no longer indicate that a poet uses a repertoire

of images, expressions, etc. that could be considered a poetic ideolect. See Lawrence McFalls, "GDR and East German Studies in North America." See <<http://www.calvin.edu/cas/egsg/mcfalls.htm>>.

³ Sefik Alp Bahadur, "Die intellektuelle Kriegshetze: Biermann und Enzensberger über den Golfkrieg," in *Die Tageszeitung* (February 15, 1991), 12.

⁴ These difficulties culminated in Jean Baudrillard's sarcastic essay, "La Guerre du Golfe n'a pas eu lieu," which served as a lens through which the military conflict could be perceived by German intellectuals. See Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, trans. Paul Patton (Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1995).

⁵ See Jochen Hörisch and Hubert Winkels, *Das schnelle Altern der neuesten Literatur: Essays zu deutschsprachigen Texten zwischen 1968-1984* (Düsseldorf: Claassen, 1985), and Hans Magnus Enzensberger's reflections on the Gulf War as well as the current state of poetry in *Zickzack: Aufsätze* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1997).

⁶ There is some debate among sociologists as to whether one can speak of decisive generational experiences—whereby a generation can be said to emerge in response to a powerful event—with reference to the GDR. See Rainer Zoll, *Ostdeutsche Biographien. Lebenswelt im Umbruch* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1999), 11, and Wolfgang Engler, *Die Ostdeutschen: Kunde von einem verlorenen Land* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1999), 303-40.

⁷ Ironic attempts at periodization by some authors themselves nonetheless tend to associate the public controversies over writers such as Sascha Anderson and Christa Wolf with a time of transformation. See Matthias Politycki, *Die Farbe der Vokale: Von der Literatur, den 78ern und dem Gequake der Frösche* (Munich: Luchterhand, 1998), 5, 60, and Durs Grünbein, *Das erste Jahr: Berliner Aufzeichnungen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2001), 65.

⁸ As a trope of critical discourse, the term gained prominence in Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's utopian manifesto *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). See their discussion of "U.S. Sovereignty and the New Empire" in chapter 2. For a critique of the Roman/American "empire" see Durs Grünbein, *Erklärte Nacht* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2002), 80, and Peter Bender, "Das Amerikanische und das Römische Imperium," *Merkur* 617/618 (2000): 891-900.

⁹ Meddeb, "Irrfahrer und Polygraph," trans. Hans Thill, *Minima Poetica: Für eine Poetik des zeitgenössischen Gedichts*, ed. Joachim Sartorius (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1999), 66. Adel Karasholi, a poet currently based in Leipzig, was born in 1936 in Dimashq (Damascus), moved to East Germany in 1959, and established a career at the prestigious Johannes-Becher Institute under the tutelage of Georg Maurer. His recent writings combine a strengthened ethnic (post-socialist) identity and poetic imagery that draws on Zoroastrianism and Arab calligraphy.

¹⁰ See Christopher L. Miller, "The Postidentitarian Predicament in the Footnotes of *A Thousand Plateaus*: Nomadology, Anthropology, and Authority," *Diacritics* 23.3 (1993): 32.

¹¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Helen R. Lane and Robert Hurley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1983), 169, 222. Slavoj Žižek refers briefly to the inversion of "deterritorialization" in his

persuasive critique of postmodern politics. See *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999), 209. More recently, “reterritorialization” has been interpreted far more positively as a kind of “cultural nationalism” that seems legitimate in defense of diasporic communities (such as the Armenians in Turkey) or anticolonial demarcations of a sovereign domain. See Bruce Robbins, *Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 49.

¹² Miller, 33. Miller identifies “nomadological” readings with becoming “minoritarian” (21). In a compelling comparison of Deleuze and Guattari’s sources, he demonstrates the authors’ reliance on the presumption of empty space, whereas professional anthropologists address nomads as having pasture rights, ancestral territories, and the like (25).

¹³ See Robbins, 40-7 and 167. The salient features of Robbins’s analysis lie in his careful critique of a “popular culturalism” as a weak form of the “delinking of nationalism from the state” (46). Robbins takes issue with a “detachment from national conflict” (167) and cautiously supports the “ethical imperatives [that] have been attached to and modeled on the sovereign state” (47), by which he does not presuppose a Eurocentric concept of civil society.

¹⁴ See, for example, chapter 16 in Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1977); Lacan, “La science et la vérité,” *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), 855-77. For a lucid discussion of Lacan’s theorizing of the split, which he later anchors in the distinction between truth and knowledge, see Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

¹⁵ Reinhard Jirgl, *Die Atlantische Mauer* (Munich: Hanser, 2000); Durs Grünbein, *Nach den Satiren* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1999).

¹⁶ See Zoll, 372. The author refers to studies by Wilhelm Heitmeyer, who uses the term “Individualisierungs-‘Aufprall’” in order to describe occasionally violent reactions to the sudden transition from socialism to Western individualism.

¹⁷ Christian Lehnert, *Der gefesselte Sänger* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1997); *Der Augen Aufgang* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2000).

¹⁸ Karl-Heinz Bohrer, as quoted in Jochen Hörisch [and translated by Erk Grimm], “Verdienst und Vergehen der Gegenwartsliteratur,” *Deutschsprachige Gegenwartsliteratur: Wider ihre Verächter*, ed. Christian Döring (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1995), 36.

¹⁹ Compare lines such as “nein, falsch erinnert” in Lehnert’s poem “der gefesselte sänger,” *Der gefesselte Sänger*, 81.

²⁰ The German term is “Erinnerungsneid,” used in Heide Steiner’s translation of Geoffrey Hartman, “Tele-Suffering and Testimony in the Dot Com Era,” *Raritan* 19.3 (Winter 2000): 1-18. I refer to the German translation, entitled “Memory.com: Fern-Leiden und Zeugenberichte im Internetzeitalter,” *Sinn und Form* 54.1 (2002): 82.

²¹ For a similar treatment of a journey to Poland see Grünbein’s “Transpolonaise” in *Nach den Satiren*, 154-8.

²² In an epigraph to the poem “Der Augen Aufgang,” Lehnert cites this expression from Paul’s First Epistle. See *Der Augen Aufgang*, 11.

²³ See the bio-bibliography at the end of Oliver Mertins, *Monachoi: Gedichte, Fragmente, Erzählungen, Essays* (Berlin: Galrev, 1996). The Greek term “monachoi” (pl. of “monachos”) means “those who live alone;” it is etymologically related to the English term “monk” and appears in the context of Syrian asceticism to denote members of a monastic order.

²⁴ *Monachoi*, 188-9.

²⁵ East German poets such as Uwe Kolbe, Barbara Köhler, Tom Pohlmann, and Micha Schmidt explore similar experiences in their writings. See Erk Grimm, “Go West? Lyrik, Literaturbetrieb und ostdeutsche Identität in den neunziger Jahren,” *glossen* 10 <<http://www.dickinson.edu/departments/germn/glossen/heft10/grimm.html>>.

²⁶ *Monachoi*, 198, 250.

²⁷ One finds the term “diasporic collectivities” used both in a critical anthropological sense and in an overly optimistic postmodern sense of collectivities linked to virtual geographies. For some commentary on these conceptual tensions, see Kobena Mercer, “A Sociography of Diaspora,” *Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall*, eds. Paul Gilroy, Lawrence McRobbie, and Angela McRobbie (London: Verso, 2000) 232-244; John Durham Peters, “Exile, Nomadism, and Diaspora,” *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*, ed. Hamid Naficy (New York: Routledge 1999), 17-41.

²⁸ Robbins, 33.

²⁹ Robbins, 164-7.

³⁰ See Robbins, 77.

³¹ This is Ahmad Sadri’s rendition of Weber on “Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions.” See Sadri, *Max Weber’s Sociology of Intellectuals* (New York: Oxford, 1992), 66.

³² See Lehnert, *Der gefesselte Sänger*, 46.

³³ Similar to Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient* (New York : Knopf, 1992) and Anthony Minghella’s screen adaption of this novel (1996), the North African desert and Egypt have emerged as prominent topoi in German literature toward the end of the 1990s. See Raoul Schrott, *Die Wüste Lop-Nor* (Munich: Hanser, 2000); Joachim Sartorius, *In den ägyptischen Filmen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2001); Gerhard Roth, *Der Strom* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 2002). In the 1960s and 1970s, a subcultural background or ethnographic interest motivated a few German writers to visit the Islamic Middle East. For example, Nicolas Born traveled to Turkey and Syria in 1958 and visited Lebanon in 1978. In the late 1960s Hubert Fichte went to Egypt and Hartmut Geerken (working as an assistant at the Goethe Institute) lived in Cairo for a number of years. In contrast, a Herderian reflection on the epochs of civilization and a search for real or imagined origins of writing prevail in the late 1990s. Schrott, Sartorius, and Roth share a distinctly non-political attitude that permeates their elegant and colorful literary representations of the Islamic Middle East; a hedonistic and cosmopolitan type of observer figures prominently in these texts. Apparently, the authors’ aestheticizing of the “Orient” serves as a means to foreground European links to an

ancient cultural heritage (e.g. the library of Alexandria, Sumerian hymns) and brush aside threats of globalization.

³⁴ Currently directed by Rüdiger Puin of the University of Saarland, the project is financially supported by the Foreign Office of the German government. It will result in a critical edition of the Qur'an, which could offend devout Muslims. This is a heavily contested area of research that reaches into the center of the debate over the "clash of the civilizations" (Samuel Huntington). A "Western" approach to the Qur'an can be dangerous, as the case of Suliman Bashear demonstrates. This medievalist, who authored *Arabs and Others in Early Islam* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997), was thrown out a window by his students at the University of Nablus in the West Bank. See Claudia Brettar, "UdS: Neues Zentrum für Koranforschung?" *campus* 3 [University of Saarland, Saarbrücken], (July 1999); Alexander Stille, "Radical New Views of Islam and the Origins of the Koran," *The New York Times* (February 3, 2002). The text is available in electronic form at: <<http://www.rim.org/muslim/qurancrit.htm>>.

³⁵ Fritz Kortler, *Alt-arabische Träume: Pilgerreise in eine andere Welt und eine andere Zeit* (Wörgl: Perlinger, 1982).

³⁶ Carsten Niebuhr, *Den Arabiske rejse 1761-1767 : en dansk ekspedition set i videnskabshistorisk perspektiv* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, Rosinante, 1997). The first two volumes of a German three-volume translation, *Beschreibung von Arabien: Aus eigenen Beobachtungen und im Lande selbst gesammelten Nachrichten*, appeared in 1774 and 1778; an English translation, *Travels through Arabia and other countries in the East*, followed in 1792.

³⁷ Adam Oehlenschläger's *Alladin, oder: Die Wunderlampe. Dramatisches Gedicht*, trans. Adam Oehlenschläger, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1820). For the reception of this book, which the author dedicated to Goethe, see Leif Ludwig Albertsen, "Faust and Aladdin: Zu Goethes und Baggesens Faust-Dichtungen und zu Oehlenschlägers Aladdin," *Text & Kontext* 14 (1982):109-34.

³⁸ Charles Baudelaire, *Artificial Paradises*, trans. Stacy Diamond (New York: Citadel, 1996), 35-6.

³⁹ *The Southern Gates of Arabia: A Journey to the Hadhramaut* (New York: Dutton & Co., 1936). See Daniel Van der Meulen, *Hadramaut das Wunderland: Eine abenteuerliche Forschungsreise durch das unbekannte Süd-Arabien*, trans. Frank Lyn (Zürich: Orell Füssli, 1948). The spelling of the geographical term Hadhramaut varies.

⁴⁰ Hans Helfritz, *Chicago der Wüste* (Berlin: Hobbing, 1932).

⁴¹ See Pascal and Marie Maréchaux, *Jemen: Bilder aus dem Weihrauchland*, trans. Evelin Roboz (Cologne: DuMont, 1980).

⁴² Fritz Sitte, *Krummdolch und Erdöl* (Graz: Styria, 1988); Werner Daum, *Die Königin von Saba. Kunst, Legende und Architektur zwischen Morgenland und Abendland* (Stuttgart: Belser, 1988).

⁴³ See Heinz Egge, *Niebuhrs Lust* (Hamburg: Luchterhand, 1992).

⁴⁴ Compare Nina Berman, *Orientalismus, Kolonialismus und Moderne: Zum Bild des Orients in der deutschsprachigen Kultur um 1900* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1997), and her "K.u.K. Colonialism: Hofmannsthal in North Africa," *New German Critique* 75 (1999): 1-27.

⁴⁵ See Rudolf E. Bollinger's *Revolution zur Einheit. Jemens Kampf um die Unabhängigkeit* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1984), and Gisela Frese-Weghöft, *Ein Leben in der Unsichtbarkeit: Frauen im Jemen* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1986).

⁴⁶ Michael Roes, *Rhub Al-Khali: Leeres Viertel* (Frankfurt a.M.: Eichborn, 1996). His film titled *Someone is Sleeping in My Pain: Ein westöstlicher Macbeth* (2002) was made in Yemen. For a commentary on the Roes novel, see Claudia Breger, "Postmoderne Inszenierungen von Gender in der Literatur: Meinecke, Schmidt, Roes," *Räume der literarischen Postmoderne: Gender, Performativität, Globalisierung*, ed. Paul Michael Lützeler (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2000), 97-125.

⁴⁷ See Durs Grünbein, "Gedichte," Joachim Sartorius, "Das irakische Alphabet," and Alban Nikolai Herbst, "Späte Gedichte," *Sinn und Form* 52.6 (November/December 2000): 820-9. Sartorius offers a poetic reflection that discovers the secrets of old Mesopotamia in Oriental calligraphy. "[G]race," "secret," and "incomprehensible" (824-25) are key words in Herbst's text. This novelist's city poem reveals the source of an Orientalism that is well known to German readers; it refers to Yemen as an ancient place where the Middle Ages were eternal and where both Ivanhoe and Winnetou could be met. Present-day Yemen is different because it represents a clean and polished history so that ancient stories are now missing (827). For Arab responses to the Yemen meeting, see Amal Al-Jabouri's literary journal *Divan: Zeitschrift für arabische und deutsche Poesie* 1 (May 2001).

⁴⁸ Karl May's immensely popular "Orient novels" of the late nineteenth century prompted further literary explorations of the Arabian Peninsula by compressing rudimentary academic knowledge into colorful tales. (See Nina Berman's *Orientalismus* for an analysis of Karl May's Orientalism.) As in other novels, May begins *Die Todes-Karawane* with a seemingly erudite introduction followed by a dialogue presenting peculiar characters (including the stereotypical "half-breed") entangled in amusing negotiations of their identities as cross-dressing frontiersmen. See Karl May, *Die Todes-Karawane* (1882; Regensburg: Niedermayr, 1978), 7, where the author provides a taxonomy of Arabia that includes "Arabia felix." In his introduction to this novel, the editor Claus Roxin mentions maps and Claudius James Rich's *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan and on the Site of Ancient Nineveh* (London 1836) as the few sources for May's geographical commentary (Roxin 4). The passage in May reads: "Dieses Land, dessen Quadratmeilenzahl man heute noch nicht genau anzugeben vermag, wurde im Alterthum eingeteilt in Arabia peträa, in Arabia deserta und in Arabia felix, zu Deutsch: in das peträische, wüste und glückliche Arabien." Interestingly, the Dresden-based poet Christian Lehnert also draws on this geographical division of the peninsula when referring to Arabia peträa in *Der Augen Aufgang* (64-65).

⁴⁹ The first section of Baudelaire's *Paradis artificiels* contemplates the intoxicating effects of extracts of hashish, especially the acceleration and rhapsodic nature of thought. See *Artificial Paradises*, 61.

⁵⁰ This is an expression that Robbins uses to characterize the nationless cosmopolitanism and homosocial bonding in *The English Patient*, "a story of the fraternal solidarity of men in the desert" (*Feeling Global*, 164).

⁵¹ The poem thus mobilizes an image of the cunning “animal rationale” that Grünbein uses frequently. The image harks back to one of his few direct responses to public debates, an essay originally published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in November 1991, when it became known that Sascha Anderson had been working as an informant for the East German *Staatssicherheitsdienst*. Like others before him, Grünbein took issue with Wolf Biermann’s harsh condemnation of Anderson and even expressed some sympathy for Anderson’s feeling of isolation (“Das No one to talk to ist das Fazit jeder feinhörigen Poesie”). Grünbein’s image of the lonely fox captures the idea that, for him, there was no aggressive confrontation but simply a retreat from the political responsibility assigned to the writer in the socialist regime. Statements such as “ich spreche für mich und aus unterbrochener Langeweile” indicate something closer to “Fuchslist” in the political labyrinth than Biermann’s “verbale[s] Maschinengewehrrattern.” See Grünbein, “Im Namen der Füchse,” reprinted in *Machtspiele. Literatur und Staatssicherheit im Fokus Prenzlauer Berg*, ed. Peter Böhlig and Klaus Michael (Leipzig: Reclam, 1993), 326, 327.

⁵² See Robbins, 167.

⁵³ Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*, cited in Tzvetan Todorov, *Life in Common: An Essay in General Anthropology*, trans. Katherine Golsan and Lucy Golsan (Lincoln: Nebraska Press, 2001), 14. See Todorov’s discussion of consideration and recognition (13-26, 86-87, 131-134), which informs my interpretation.

⁵⁴ Durs Grünbein, “Poetry from the bad side,” *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter* 124 (1992): 449.

⁵⁵ In this interview Grünbein takes a clear position against the abstract expressionism of a slightly older generation of Berlin writers represented by Bert Papenfuß, Sascha Anderson, and others. Grünbein prefers the polyphony of Ezra Pound’s cantos as the foundation for articulating a counter-position to the Prenzlauer Berg. Viewed from this angle, the question posed by his American interlocutor is part and parcel of the psychodrama that unfolds in Grünbein’s poems as the loner’s struggle between self-assurance and injury (447). For a discussion of Grünbein’s early poems in the context of East Germany’s unofficial literature see Grimm, “Der Hohlkörper des Gedichts: Zur Poesie des Prenzlauer Bergs,” “im widerstand/im mißverstand”? *Zur Literatur und Kunst des Prenzlauer Bergs*, ed. Christine Cosentino und Wolfgang Müller (New York: Lang, 1995), 91-118, in particular 104-8; Grimm, “Das Gedicht nach dem Gedicht: Über die Lesbarkeit der jüngsten Lyrik,” *Deutschsprachige Gegenwartsliteratur: Wider ihre Verächter*, ed. Christian Döring (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1995), 300-4.

⁵⁶ See Durs Grünbein, *Galilei vermißt Dantes Hölle: Aufsätze* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1996), 71 and 201. The essay titled “Wir Buschmänner” is based on a reading of Elias Canetti’s *Masse und Macht* (Hamburg: Claassen, 1960), which Canetti had already begun in the 1930s in direct confrontation with the fascist regime.

⁵⁷ Compare Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 206. See also Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, trans. Michael Eldred (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 218.

⁵⁸ As other poems by Grünbein and Lehnert demonstrate, the history of Dresden grounds these writers' poetic contemplation in personal experience (childhood) and collective memories of the past (air raids, military service in the socialist regime, etc.).

⁵⁹ See the encounters with Arabs in Reinhard Jirgl's novels or Ingo Schramm's novel *Fitchers Blau* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1999). Schramm creates two parallel worlds, one in East Berlin, the other in the Islamic-Turkic culture of Azerbaijan after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

⁶⁰ The latest writings of Uwe Kolbe and Sascha Anderson still include many references to "our generation" or what Anderson calls the "Wille[n] zum Kollektiv." See Anderson, *Sascha Anderson* (Cologne: DuMont, 2002), 196 *et passim*. The sense of generation is far less frequently invoked by the East German cohort that started to write in the middle of the 1980s. This view is corroborated by Franz Eckart's examination of these poets in "Das 'Archiv der Gesten'—über originalgraphische Bücher," "*im widerstand/im mißverstand*?" 177 See Grünbein, *Das erste Jahr* 321, for his most recent interpretation of generational experience. His autobiography shows that the emergence of a younger generation of poets (born in the 1970s) triggers thoughts about the achievements of his own cohort. While this reflection does not bring him closer to Anderson, who defends a feeling of common goals, it is a clear sign of social transition that has yet to prove whether it also involves a new thematic orientation or new poetic mode of expression.

⁶¹ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

**BACK TO THE FUTURE:
TURKISH REMEMBRANCES OF THE GDR
AND OTHER PHANTOM PASTS***

Leslie A. Adelson

THE TURKISH REFERENT AND *WENDE-LITERATUR*

The Turkish turn in contemporary German literature has flickered on the horizon of analytical practices in the field of German Studies for some time now. More often than not, this has transpired under thematic rubrics such as guest worker literature, foreigners' literature, migrants' literature, or—in the most recent incarnation of this chain of signifiers—intercultural literature in Germany.¹ Between this body of literature and its critics there is a question that goes largely unasked: To what exactly is reference being made when one speaks of the Turkish presence in German culture today?² Not asking this question is a problem because failure to do so leaves us recycling treadworn debates about ethnic, national, and cultural identities (Turkish as well as German), but asking it poses a problem, too. For if conceptual assumptions about the “Turkish” referent are fundamentally unsettled, then an analytical puzzle comes into view: The question is not What or whom do these texts represent? but rather What do they do in any given instance? What cultural labor do they actually perform?

Some recent scholarship has taken up related questions. Here one might mention Claudia Breger on mimicry, Kader Konuk on performativity, Deniz Göktürk on transnational imaginaries, Karin Yesilada on satire, and Azade Seyhan on border cultures in particular.³ The present article will focus, however, on one unasked question in relation to another. For over a decade now *Wende-Literatur* (literature marking the turn from a divided Germany to a unified one beyond the cold war) has more than flickered on the critical horizon of international German Studies as scholars assess what remains of the past, what changes unification has wrought, and what the German future holds, both politically and aesthetically.⁴ What happens to these questions when they are read through the lens of our first: To what exactly is reference being made when one speaks of the Turkish presence in German culture today? Urgent concerns about the so-called “foreigner problem” are often linked to

urgent concerns about East-West tensions among Germans in the wake of unification when right-wing xenophobia and racist violence are at issue. Oddly enough, they are rarely thought to be linked *unless* racism and xenophobia are explicitly at issue. But if *Wende-Literatur* signals cultural transformation beyond the mere themes of unification and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past), and if Turkish lines of thought in contemporary literature also signal some kind of cultural transformation in the 1990s, then why should we presume that two arenas of cultural production that share the same historical moment have less rather than more in common?⁵

In what follows I sketch initial arguments for reading some Turco-German literary texts of the recent past as *Wende-Literatur* in its conventional sense, that is, to paraphrase Stephen Brockmann, “as a privileged sphere for reflection” on the cultural effects of national unification.⁶ Four considerations suggest common ground in conceptual terms. First, if an exaggerated attachment to identity as an analytical category is loosened, new questions about the nature of cultural contact in literary texts may be entertained. What exactly makes contact in any given literary text of this period, and what cultural function does that contact serve? Second, if the literature in question is fundamentally about change and even structural transformation, how exactly does a literary text facilitate the emergence of something new at this historical juncture? Third, the ongoing difficulties in overcoming the national divisions that remain in the absence of the Wall have consistently been the subject of much media attention. If new subjects of German history constitute themselves as subjects, at least in part, by virtue of their evolving and imaginative engagement with German pasts, presents, and possible futures, then to what new subject formation does recent literary production contribute, and how? Fourth, the East-West coordinates of internal German divisions in the cold war are complicated by the East-West coordinates that map a pseudo-Oriental presence (Turkey) onto an Occidental Germany (the Federal Republic). East is no longer East, West is no longer West, and the past is not what it used to be either. Because shifting constellations of German historical remembrances are crossroads at which all these questions converge, “Turkish” sites of German memory in the first decade of unification are fruitful ground for excavation.

**UNEXPECTED SCENES AND SEAMS OF
GERMAN DIVISION AND UNIFICATION**

Unification did not inaugurate a literary commingling of Turkish and German remembrances, but it did coincide with its intensification. Large-scale Turkish migration to the Federal Republic began shortly after the Berlin Wall was erected in 1961. As two of the most prolific writers associated with early phases of the demographic shifts that followed, Aras Ören and Güney Dal are best known for their literary reflections—originally in Turkish despite their authors’ long-term German residency—on the guest worker experience, a sociological phenomenon that even today has an undeservedly privileged place in public responses to an increasingly diversified Turkish community in unified Germany. But few people know that Ören explicitly conceived several of his novels from the 1980s on as being *Auf der Suche nach der gegenwärtigen Zeit* (In Search of the Present), that is, as a pseudo-Proustian series of literary reflections on the modernist legacy for a shared Turkish and German present.⁷ Even fewer people know that in Güney Dal’s tale of an industrial strike and a mutant migrant in the mid 1970s, foreign laborers figure as “a piece of living memory” of Germans’ own class history.⁸ In Ören’s prototype for his novelistic quest for the present, plot devices and narrative strategies link the disorienting experience of a Turkish guest worker to unofficial German memories of the Third Reich and its immediate aftermath. In 1990 Sten Nadolny’s breakthrough novel, *Selim oder die Gabe der Rede*, was the first mainstream literary publication to address the cultural nexus of postwar narratives of German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and Turkish migration.⁹ In the same year Emine Sevgi Özdamar, who would soon become the first Turkish-born author to win the Ingeborg-Bachmann-Prize for (German) Literature, made her literary debut with *Mutterzunge*, the two lead stories of which unfold on the very seam of a divided Germany and its contested pasts, Berlin prior to unification.¹⁰

Space is too limited here to do justice to the richness of Özdamar’s prose in the short stories “Mother Tongue” and “Grandfather Tongue,” and these are in any case texts that other scholars have already discussed in some detail.¹¹ A few comments will have to suffice. As is well known, the Turkish woman

who narrates the intergenerational “tongue” stories lives in East Berlin but repeatedly crosses the border into West Berlin in order to make contact with a pre-republican past that Atatürk’s sweeping reforms of the 1920s and 1930s had effectively obliterated in Turkey. This contact takes the form of a heterosexual liaison that is itself cast as lessons in the forbidden language of Arabic.¹² Myriad splits and couplings, anthropomorphic and otherwise, are made thematically explicit and narratologically manifest.

Frequent references to a divided Berlin in these stories can and have been read as a kind of exilic background for weightier tensions informing twentieth-century *Turkish* memories and trauma. Azade Seyhan astutely assesses the aesthetic innovations of “Grandfather Tongue” in this vein. “Image, metaphor, and metonymy re-member bodies of language, culture and their inhabitants dismembered by imperialism, war, conquest, colonization, poverty, and violence. They not only restore them [...] to memory but also invest them with a kind of material reality. Names, identities, and histories that expired along with passports and visas can now be brought back to life only through the potent medicines of memory: language, image, script.”¹³ What happens if Özdamar’s literary configuration of divided sites and bifurcated acts of remembrance in the tongue stories is also read against the grain, as it were, as itself a complex site of German memory work? These two interpretive perspectives are not mutually exclusive, but the understanding of fore- and background shifts in each case. The stories’ frequent references to communism, the cold war, and the West German student movement suggest that multiple vectors of remembrance are at stake; they clearly connote various imaginative relationships to the Third Reich and bifurcated Germany in addition to Turkish and Ottoman pasts.¹⁴

If Berlin as a site of German memory becomes an integral part of a split Turkish memory in the “tongue” stories, can one also say that the split Turkish memory that Özdamar articulates becomes an integral part of a German memory, one that is fractured and remembered in more than simply dichotomous ways? That this is also a question of evolving literary traditions is strongly suggested by Özdamar’s subtle but distinct invocation, not of Bertolt Brecht, who is named in the text, but of Friedrich Hölderlin, who is not. Friends of the narrating persona in “Grandfather Tongue” watch film clips from 1936, which depict two young couples at play. Craig Thomas’s official English translation of this passage reads as follows: “they are on vacation on the banks

of a river, flags of the period are hanging in the small city, crackling at the City Hall. There are no other people in the streets, the four of them eat, drink, throw each other into the river. My friends said, ‘Oh, those 1930s aluminium [*sic*] cups’” (23). This translation obscures one important detail concerning one of the verbs ascribed to the Nazi flags hanging from the town hall. In the Thomas translation these flags can be heard “crackling.” In Özdamar’s German text the Nazi flags in the film “clatter” or “clash” rather than “crackle.” The verb she uses is *klirren*, which connotes the acoustical effects of something that shatters, such as glass, for example, or of something metallic that clashes, such as the arms of opponents on the battlefield. The young couples, the film scenes, and the friends’ responses to these images are thus rendered somewhat differently in the German original.

“[S]ie machen Urlaub am Rande eines Flusses, in der kleinen Stadt hängen Fahnen von damals, klirren am Rathaus. Es gibt keine Menschen auf den Straßen, die vier essen, trinken, schmeißen sich gegenseitig in den Fluß. Meine Freunde sagten: ‘Ach, diese Dreißiger-Jahre-Aluminiumtassen’” (*Mutterzunge*, 18). The narrating persona hears the voice that speaks these final words of nostalgia for aluminum cups from the 1930s “as an echo” (*Mother*, 23). This echo that reverberates in her consciousness is then followed by pains and fever that wrack *her* body. Split subjectivities and fractured memories both converge and diverge in this Turkish persona, who is positioned narratologically as herself a site of German remembrance of the Nazi past and its erasure in the German present of a divided Berlin.

The reference to *Fahnen* that *klirren* in Özdamar’s German wording can only be an allusion to Hölderlin’s “Hälfte des Lebens.”¹⁵ The famous title of the great poet’s hymn from circa 1800 has alternately been translated as “The Middle of Life” (Michael Hamburger) or “Half of Life” (David Constantine). The *Fahnen* that *klirren* or shatter with “clatter” are customarily rendered as metal “[w]eathercocks” (Hamburger) or “weathervanes” (Constantine), that is, as the *Wetterfahnen* (literally: weather flags or indicators) that the abbreviated *Fahnen* would have implied colloquially.¹⁶ In Özdamar’s appropriation of Hölderlin’s diction, the Turkish narrator describes what she sees while observing her friends watch German home movies from 1936. Two young men and two young women—two couples of some sort—vacation by a river, “in der kleinen Stadt hängen Fahnen von damals, klirren am Rathaus” (*Mutterzunge*, 18). These *Fahnen* that hang from the town hall in 1936 are

clearly not metal weathervanes but Nazi flags that “clatter” in the wind. The subtle transposition of a canonical semantic coupling (*Fahnen* and *klirren*) yields a jarring acoustical impression for the informed reader. This impression reflects in turn the split subjectivity of the Turkish narrator, who literally remembers the Nazi past and re-marks its erasure in the nostalgic scene of a divided Berlin, all the while re-membering the German literary canon as well. Her friends watching the film clips from the Third Reich express only nostalgia for the aluminum cups of the time. This nostalgia marks the narrator’s friends, I would suggest, as German. It is the Turkish body that registers this nostalgia “as an echo” and responds to its invasion with fever and pain. Here it is precisely Özdamar’s imaginative engagement with abstract patterns and literary conceits of halving, dividing, coupling, and re-membering that warrant emphasis. These conceptual and commemorative processes lie at the very heart of two pivotal essays to which I now turn the argument.

TURKISH SUBJECTS OF GERMAN MEMORY

If Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Feridun Zaimoglu have been the Turkish-born authors to garner the most critical and media attention for their literary production in German, the most versatile writer in this field is arguably Zafer Senocak. Having first established himself as a poet in the 1980s and then as a journalist and essayist in the early 1990s, this author has begun to reap international acclaim for a tetralogy of literary prose published between 1995 and 1999. The novel and short stories that comprise this work could certainly be discussed in terms of complex vectors of German memory in the wake of unification, as could Senocak’s collaborative projects with Berkan Karpas, an avantgarde installation artist in Munich.¹⁷ Two essays that are especially instructive for rethinking some of the stakes in post-unification remembrances of the Nazi past and a Germany divided by the cold war will be juxtaposed here. Together with Bülent Tulay, Zafer Senocak pointedly asked his Turkish and German compatriots in January 1990, “Doesn’t immigrating to Germany also mean immigrating to, entering into the arena of Germany’s recent past?”¹⁸ What this might mean is explored in an expository essay written in 1995 to commemorate the historic significance of May 8, 1945, and a lyrical essay written in August 1991 to navigate the Baltic Sea island of Hiddensee as “a historical place that has become an imaginary site” (24).¹⁹

Lending his voice to the chorus of public reflections on the fiftieth anniversary of “1945” and all that it connotes, Senocak begins his “Thoughts on May 8, 1995” with a highly mediated image of historical experience. “My father experienced World War II on the radio” (58). The description that follows has a substantive effect of estrangement, at least for a liberal German audience. Fearing a Soviet invasion in the summer of 1941, Turks gathering around the village radio reacted with surprised relief when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, thus preventing the Russian invasion of Turkey. “Hitler was highly rated” (58). The essay then broadens the historical framework, as it also extends the trope of patrilineal generations and mismatched *Doppelgänger*. Here we read that the essayist’s grandfather and great grandfather were captured on the Turco-Russian front in World War I, when Germans and Turks were “brothers in arms” (58); his forefathers experienced the end of the tsarist era as prisoners of war. The patrilineal chronicle segues into a metacommentary on national narratives and new beginnings on an international scale. “A new world arose on Russian soil. Whoever sympathized with this new world was considered in Turkey as godless. Although even modern Turkey was a godless republic, it persecuted these godless others” (58). Sigrid Weigel has addressed the symbolic weight that accrues to gendered “generational” discourses of historical time and new beginnings in the West German culture of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, especially as promoted by the nation’s most influential literary group, founded in 1947 and known as *Gruppe 47*. One might fruitfully consider Senocak’s “generational” narratives in light of Weigel’s analysis.²⁰

Most importantly for present purposes, Weigel probes the myth of successive generations of fathers and sons as a linear account of postwar cultural history that masks the traumatic residue and otherwise unresolved legacy of that history, especially the legacy of what Weigel calls the “secret first generation” of the postwar period.²¹ This consists of those founding fathers of postwar cultural codes and ethical imperatives who cast themselves as sons of a tainted generation but not as themselves tainted, even if part of their childhood and adolescence was spent in the Hitler Youth or in German military service prior to 1945.²² In “Thoughts on May 8, 1995” Senocak does present a patrilineal chronicle of successive generations initially, but his essayistic persona rapidly becomes a narrative problem in this historical account. For, he asks, “What access does someone

whose father experienced World War II on the radio, far from the battlefields, have to this event?" (58). This is not cast as a traumatic problem per se, but as a cultural problem that exceeds existing discursive categories for the experience of Turkish migration, the experience of German unification, and the culture of "coming to terms with the past." Senocak articulates the nature of this problem by pinpointing the historical position from which he speaks. Curiously, he achieves this with a rhetoric of distanciation and negation. "In 1945 my father experienced neither a liberation nor a collapse. He was neither victim nor perpetrator. This vantage point allows me to raise a few questions" (58-59). What becomes clear, however, is that the position from which he speaks—neither/nor and more than once removed—is that of a question. The essayistic subject is in effect a question that tries to speak itself. It does so by interrogating the cultural nexus of Germany past, present, and future at the extended historic moment of national transformation.

If the generational conceits of the essay's opening paragraphs invoke national and international histories of secularization, innovation, revolution, war, and powerful ideologies locked in agonal conflict, the rest of the essay turns to German dichotomies that no longer quite hold as the German center is symbolically reconfigured. As Senocak notes, the collapse of the Third Reich led to Germany's bifurcation "not only into East and West but also into victims and perpetrators" (59). Critical of the West German cult and culture of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*—"For the preoccupation with the victims led above all to attention being distracted away from the perpetrators" (59)—he comments specifically that "the overcoming of the German division in 1989/1990," not the 50th anniversary of war's end, "has stirred up questions" about the way that "Germans deal with their difficult history" (59).

The remainder of Senocak's *thoughtful* essay ultimately calls for "paths of remembrance [...] that lead into the present" (61). Three things must be said about the writer's project here. First, the present in question is decidedly a post-unification present in Germany. Second, it is a commonplace that the German present must confront its national past. Senocak inverts the customary formula by arguing that history must be confronted with its present. If this is not done, he suggests, "[r]emembrance then becomes above all a symbolic act" (60). Third, the non-symbolic (non-ritualized) mode of remembrance he has in mind involves a subjective and imaginative rethinking of relationships

between the Nazi past and a post-unification present, one that includes an ethnic diversity wrought by migration. The question posed by Senocak and Tulay in January 1990 reverberates as a lament and a critique in May 1995 when Senocak writes, “The foreigners in Germany, most of whom have been at home here for a long time, barely bother to reflect on the history of the Germans” (60).

RECONCEPTUALIZING REMEMBRANCE EN ROUTE TO A SHARED FUTURE

Senocak’s essays “couple” Germany’s divided pasts and unified present in imaginative but non-symbolic ways. “The Island: A Travelogue” (August 1991) is the lyrical essay that literally thematizes trajectories of movement and rhetorically enacts paths of remembrance. The writing persona undertakes a journey in space and time from Berlin to the island of Hiddensee, where the great exemplar of German Naturalism, Gerhart Hauptmann, is buried. But the essay’s allusive style and nebulous atmosphere of playful dejection are anything but naturalist.

From the landing dock everyone moves backward. The larks trill. A look scrutinizes the neighbor. While the travelers move backward from the landing dock to mingle among the lives that the dead have laid down—only in this manner do they as strangers reach the village—they run, the island’s inhabitants, forward, run ahead of their own lives, with glances fixed on the future. They load their thoughts and dreams onto kites that they let fly along the main thoroughfares of the island (21).

Metanarratives of historical development are explicitly invoked when the owner of the island’s bicycle shop calls capitalism “the dessert of socialism” (21), which prompts the writing persona to reflect, “According to this view, fascism was the appetizer to the main course—for forty years the brothers and sisters sat at the table and no one got really full” (22). This miming of German national narratives and ideological paradigms for the twentieth century takes place in a rarified setting for historical reflection.

The island, which did belong to the GDR, is imaginatively conjured as a phantasmatic *lieu de mémoire* by the subject of the essay, who pointedly asks what many people seem to want to know about unified Germany. Is it moving forward or backward in time?²³ Senocak's travelogue casts this question in metaphorical terms of abstract patterns of movement, encounter, direction, and filiation. Paths are described

that split whoever walks on them into two parts (or doubles them, depending on one's point of view). One part strives forward, the other backward; one comes with a stomach full from the meal, picking his teeth, the other is a gap in himself between tables set and cleared, a dog without a master. Groups dissolve, couples split, individuals lose their thoughts and dreams. All of them are looking for the path not yet blocked by the department stores' delivery trucks, beyond the main traffic routes. Does this path lead to the future or to the past? (23).

That this is an essay on the imaginative *highways* and *byways* of East and West German unification is clear. But who is the essayistic subject that traces these paths of remembrance in and between the lines of the essay? In stark contrast to Senocak's "Thoughts on May 8," the island travelogue makes no reference whatsoever to Turkish persons, families, histories, or contexts. The essayistic "I" wears no cloak of identity at all. Is there then a "Turkish" subject in this text? If so, it can only be traced as itself a "line of thought" in a German narrative in the historically uncertain time of the present. The essay of 1991 begins with a puzzling question—"Where had Hauptmann buried his box of notes?"²⁴—and segues into a referential assertion: "This question preoccupied me when I went to the island" (20). Here we see quite literally the emergence of a new subject in historical formation, as the essayistic persona is constituted initially as the transitive object of a question that concerns or preoccupies him (it). The imaginative engagement with the question is what allows the subject of the essay to articulate itself as an "I," the contemplative vantage point from which the rest of the essay unfolds.

It is no coincidence then that *this* writerly persona describes the stark asceticism of the Northern landscape as something that can sunder "the most

intense couples" (20), "die intensivsten Paare auseinandertreiben" (*Atlas des tropischen Deutschland*, 50). The abstract dimensions of this conceit must be stressed, for this is not the anthropomorphic trope of heterosexual coupling that figures quite commonly in journalistic and literary accounts of national unification and its historical residue. Senocak's essays suggest instead a conceptual reconfiguration of the divisions and pairings that have most intensively shaped the way we tend to think about German scenes of remembrance on the path to a German future. East/West, *Opfer/Täter*, past/present: these conventional scenes do not customarily allow for "Turkish" inflections of German memory because Germany's resident Turks did not live the German pasts that are meant.²⁵ Studies of immigrant cultures often tend to stress an obsessive longing for the lived pasts and familiar locales left behind.²⁶ The Turkish lines of thought delineated in the present article engage more pointedly with a highly mediated German past en route to a future that Germans and the Turks among them will most certainly share. If, as Andreas Huyssen has shown in another context, structures of remembrance and forgetting are undergoing significant changes in our time,²⁷ then I would also suggest that Senocak's essays write a new subject of German remembrance into being. This is less about the dangers of forgetting the past than it is about new conditions for re-membering twentieth-century Germany in a present that Turks and Germans in the Federal Republic already share. "Doesn't immigrating to Germany also mean immigrating to, entering into the arena of Germany's recent past?" Senocak and Tulay asked in January of 1990. To this one must add that the future of Germany lies ahead no less than its past. This should be borne in mind when we consider Turkish lines of thought in contemporary German literature and memory work.

Soon after the GDR officially ceased to exist, the essayistic persona that travels to the island of Hiddensee reflects, "There is something obscene about everything that ends, like a knife that disappears in a sheath" (24).²⁸ In the allusive phrasing that follows, the German words *Ende* (end) and *Wende* (turning point) reverberate in such a way that a logical linkage between the two is both invoked and rejected. This could be read as a cultural exegesis of the preamble to the West German constitution of 1949, which for forty years upheld unification as the ultimate *raison d'être* for the postwar state: "The end was settled on a long time ago" (24). And yet, the end "must take a surprising turn every time, an unexpected twist. The end must not be a consequence. In the end, developments bring ruin to every belief that one holds" (24). This is

not an homage to cynicism, as a cursory reading of this passage might suggest. I propose to read it instead as an indictment of those conceptual processes that rely—reductively and predictably—on a familiar logic of coupling to grasp the cultural effects of the German *Wende*. East/West, past/present, victim/perpetrator, self/other—these are the figural couples around which the national narrative of historical development tends to revolve. The Turkish “lines of thought” in contemporary German literature and memory work sketched in this article bear elements of historical surprise and cultural innovation that our analytical paradigms have yet to register. Let us then think again and read anew.²⁹

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AICGS apologizes for its inability to reproduce Turkish characters provided by the author and claims full responsibility for any resulting errors in spelling.

ENDNOTES

¹ Elsewhere I have developed critical terms such as “touching tales” and “Turkish lines of thought” to designate narratological phenomena characterizing key literary texts born of Turkish migration. See Leslie A. Adelson, “Touching Tales of Turks, Germans, and Jews: Cultural Alterity, Historical Narrative, and Literary Riddles for the 1990s,” *New German Critique* 80 (2000): 93-124. Narratological “Turkish lines of thought” are part of a more general “Turkish turn” in German literature, but they should not be confused with identity politics, ethnic difference, or putative national mentalities. For the most recent and ambitious overview of the “intercultural” field of contemporary German literature, see *Interkulturelle Literatur in Deutschland: Ein Handbuch*, ed. Carmine Chiellino (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2000). This anthology includes an extensive bibliography on Turkish minority literature. Two recent publications that advance the field methodologically are Azade Seyhan’s *Writing Outside the Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) and Petra Fachinger’s *Rewriting Germany from the Margins: “Other” German Literature of the 1980s and 1990s* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001).

² My allusion to the most famous passage in *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. DuBois is meant to be conceptually suggestive only; no socio-historical analogy or equivalence is intended. See W.E.B. DuBois, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” *The Souls of Black Folk*, ed. David W. Blight and Robert Gooding-Williams (Boston/New York: Bedford Books, 1997), 37: “Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: [...] How does it feel to be a problem?” For an incisive reading of DuBois’s inaugural preposition see Nahum D. Chandler, “Between,” in *Assemblage: A Critical*

Journal of Architecture and Design Culture 20 (April 1993): 26-7. For a critical assessment of the rhetorical conceit that situates Turkish migrants in Germany as forever suspended on a bridge “between two worlds,” see Leslie A. Adelson, “Against Between: A Manifesto,” *Unpacking Europe*, ed. Salah Hassan and Iftikhar Dadi (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2001), 244-55. See also Moray McGowan, “‘Bosporus fließt in mir’: Europa-Bilder und Brückenmetaphern bei Aras Ören und Zehra Çırak, *Brücken zwischen Zivilisationen: Zur Zivilisierung ethnisch-kultureller Differenzen und Machtungleichheiten/Das türkisch-deutsche Beispiel*, ed. Hans-Peter Waldhoff, Dursun Tan, and Elçin Kürsat-Ahlers (Frankfurt a.M.: IKO-Verlag für interkulturelle Kommunikation, 1997), 21-36. For an especially insightful article on aspects of Turkish television in Germany that cannot be grasped in terms of “nation-centred discourses” of “belonging,” see Kevin Robins and Asu Aksoy, “Thinking Across Spaces: Transnational Television from Turkey,” in *European Studies Journal of Cultural Studies* 3.3 (2000): 343-65.

³ See *AufBrüche: Kulturelle Produktionen von Migrantinnen, Schwarzen und jüdischen Frauen in Deutschland*, ed. Cathy S. Gelbin, Kader Konuk, and Peggy Piesche (Königstein: Ulrike Helmer, 1999) for both Claudia Breger, “‘Meine Herren, spielt in meinem Gesicht ein Affe’? Strategien der Mimikry in Texten von Emine S. Özdamar und Yoko Tawada” (30-59), and Kader Konuk, “‘Identitätssuche ist ein [sic!] private archäologische Graberei’: Emine Sevgi Özdamars inszeniertes Sprechen” (60-74). Articles by Deniz Göktürk include “Muttikulturelle Zungenbrecher: Literatürken aus Deutschlands Nischen,” *Sirene* 12/13 (1994): 77-92; “Verstöße gegen das Reinheitsgebot: Migrantenkino zwischen wehleidiger Pflichtübung und wechselseitigem Grenzverkehr,” *Multikulturalismus und Populärkultur*, ed. Ruth Mayer and Mark Terkissidis (St. André/Wörtern: Hannibal, 1998), 99-114; and “Turkish Delight—German Fright: Migrant Identities in Transnational Cinemas,” *Mediated Identities*, ed. Deniz Derman, Karen Ross, and Nevena Dakovic (Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2001), 131-49. On satire see Karin Yesilada, “Schreiben mit spitzer Feder: Die Satiren der türkisch-deutschen Migrationsliteratur,” *‘Spagat mit Kopftuch’: Essays zur deutsch-türkischen Sommerakademie*, ed. Jürgen Reulecke (Hamburg: Körber-Stiftung, 1997), 529-64. For Yesilada’s overview of post-*Wende* literature by Turkish Germans, see her “Topographien im ‘tropischen Deutschland’—Türkisch-deutsche Literatur nach der Wiedervereinigung,” *Literatur und Identität: Deutsch-deutsche Befindlichkeiten und die multikulturelle Gesellschaft*, ed. Ursula Beitter (New York: Lang, 2000), 303-39. Azade Seyhan’s most recent publication in this field has a broadly comparative focus that spans national and transnational contexts (*Writing Outside the Nation*). For one of the best discussions to date of the Turkish language as a “subtext” for Emine Sevgi Özdamar’s novel of 1992, see Kader Konuk, “Das Leben ist eine Karawanserai: Heimat bei Emine Sevgi Özdamar,” *Das Land in Sicht: Heimat—weiblich?*, ed. Gisela Ecker (Munich: Fink, 1997), 143-57.

⁴ On these and related topics see Keith Bullivant, *The Future of German Literature* (Oxford: Berg, 1994); *Beyond 1989: Re-reading German Literature since 1945*, ed. Keith Bullivant (Providence: Berghahn, 1997); Stephen Brockmann, *Literature and German Reunification* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); *Women*

and the Wende: *Social Effects and Cultural Reflections of the German Unification Process*, ed. Elizabeth Boa and Janet Wharton (Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994); Wolfgang Emmerich, *Kleine Literaturgeschichte der DDR, Erweiterte Neuausgabe* (Leipzig: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1996); *German Unification and Its Discontents: Documents from the Peaceful Revolution*, ed. and trans. Richard T. Gray and Sabine Wilke (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996); *Wendezeiten, Zeitenwenden: Positionsbestimmungen zur deutschsprachigen Literatur, 1945-1995*, ed. Robert Weninger and Brigitte Rossbacher (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1997). For an extensive German-language bibliography on the subject see *Wende-Literatur: Bibliographie und Materialien zur Literatur der deutschen Einheit*, ed. Jörg Fröhling, Reinhild Meinel, and Karl Riha, 3rd rev. ed. (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang/Europäischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1999).

⁵ This is not to suggest that they share the same historical moment in exactly the same way.

⁶ In *Literature and German Reunification* Brockmann explains, "I treat literature as a privileged sphere for reflection on German national identity" (19). I have altered the final phrasing somewhat to avoid what in my context would be an undue emphasis on identity.

⁷ Marcel Proust's project appeared in seven parts and fifteen volumes between 1913 and 1927 as *A la recherche du temps perdu*. The German translation bears the title *Auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Zeit*, trans. Eva Rechel-Mertens (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1994). The English version is available as *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: Pantheon, 1981). For a complete listing of the Ören novels that comprise his "Proustian" project, see n. 6 in Adelson, "Against Between."

⁸ *Wenn Ali die Glocken läuten hört*, trans. [from Turkish] Brigitte Schreiber-Grabitz (Berlin: Edition der 2, 1979), 92. Unless otherwise indicated, all English translations in the present article are my own.

⁹ For an analysis of the Nadolny novel in this context see Leslie A. Adelson, "Opposing Oppositions: Turkish-German Questions in Contemporary German Studies," *German Studies Review* 17.2 (1994): 305-30. See also Ülker Gökberk's critique of that analysis in "Culture Studies und die Türken: Sten Nadolnys *Selim* oder die Gabe der Rede im Lichte einer Methodendiskussion," *German Quarterly* 70.2 (1997): 97-122, and my "Response to Ülker Gökberk," *German Quarterly* 70.3 (1997): 277-82. In the longer project from which the present article derives, I propose to compare the "touching tales" of Sten Nadolny's *Selim* with those in Doron Rabinovici, *Suche nach M.* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1997).

¹⁰ Emine Sevgi Özdamar, *Mutterzunge: Erzählungen* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1990), English *Mother Tongue*, trans. Craig Thomas (Toronto: Coach House, 1994). Both versions will be cited here.

¹¹ See especially Seyhan, Konuk, and Breger, as well as Annette Wierschke, *Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung: Kulturkonflikt und Identität in den Werken von Aysel Özakin, Alev Tekinay und Emine Sevgi Özdamar, mit Interviews* (Frankfurt a.M.: IKO, 1996).

¹² Here the word “forbidden” means something closer to taboo than proscription.

¹³ *Writing Outside the Nation*, 121. Here Seyhan remarks simultaneously on the works of Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Gloria Anzaldúa.

¹⁴ These are all themes that play an even more elaborate role in Özdamar’s novel of 1998, *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, which I plan to address in an extended version of this analysis.

¹⁵ Friedrich Hölderlin, *Werke* (Zürich: Atlantis, 1944), Vol. I: *Gedichte*, 236.

¹⁶ I thank my colleague Geoffrey Waite for alerting me to the fact that some Hölderlin scholars believe the poet’s phrasing was intended to be more ambiguous (and more political) than is often assumed. English translations of the poem cited here are “The Middle of Life,” *Friedrich Hölderlin: Poems and Fragments*, trans. Michael Hamburger (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), 371, and “Half of Life,” *Friedrich Hölderlin: Selected Poems*, trans. David Constantine (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1990), 56.

¹⁷ For an introduction to Senocak’s work in the twentieth century, see my “Coordinates of Orientation” in Zafer Senocak, *Atlas of a Tropical Germany: Essays on Politics and Culture, 1990-1998*, ed. and trans. Leslie A. Adelson (Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), xi-xxxvii. For the little known collaborations with Berkan Karpat, see Berkan Karpat and Zafer Senocak, *nazim hikmet: auf dem schiff zum mars* (Munich: Babel, 1998), as well as Berkan Karpat and Zafer Senocak, *Tanzende der Elektrik: Szenisches Poem* (Munich/Berlin/Cambridge MA: Verlag im Gleisbau, 1999). On the former see Karin Emine Yesilada, “Nâzims Enkel schreiben weiter,” *Hundert Jahre Nâzim Hikmet 1902-1963*, ed. Monika Carbe and Wolfgang Riemann (Hildesheim/Zurich/New York: Olms, 2002), 180-211.

¹⁸ For the German original see “Deutschland—Heimat für Türken?” *Atlas des tropischen Deutschland: Essays* (Berlin: Babel, 1992), 16. For the authorized English translation see “Germany—Home for Turks?” in Senocak, *Atlas of a Tropical Germany*, 6.

¹⁹ The expository essay is Zafer Senocak, “Gedanken zum 8. Mai 1995,” *Vom Vergessen vom Gedenken*, ed. Brigitte Sauzay, Heinz Ludwig Arnold, and Rudolf von Thadden (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1995), 91-93. The lyrical essay cited here is Zafer Senocak, “Die Insel: Ein Reisebericht,” *Atlas des tropischen Deutschland*, 50-55, here 55. English translations of both essays may be found in *Atlas of a Tropical Germany*, 58-61 and 20-4, respectively. The English translations will be cited in this article.

²⁰ Sigrid Weigel, “Die ‘Generation’ als symbolische Form: Zum genealogischen Diskurs im Gedächtnis nach 1945,” *figurationen: gender literatur kultur* 0 (1999): 158-73. Parts of *Mann im Unterhemd*, which opened Senocak’s tetralogy in 1995, and most of *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft*, the novel that appeared in 1998, are such “generational” (but not simply patrilineal) narratives. For a comparison of genealogy and gender in *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft* and Monika Maron’s *Pawels Briefe*, see Katharina Gerstenberger, “Difficult Stories: Generation, Genealogy, Gender in Zafer Senocak’s *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft* and Monika Maron’s *Pawels Briefe*,” *Recasting Identity in Contemporary Germany*, ed. Stuart Taberner (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 2002 [forthcoming]).

²¹ Weigel's phrasing is "heimliche erste Generation" (168).

²² Weigel discusses the controversy over Martin Walser's autobiography and his insistence on the innocence of childhood experience and of its literary reflections in this vein. See also Amir Eshel, "Vom eigenen Gewissen: Die Walser-Bubis Debatte und der Ort des Nationalsozialismus im Selbstbild der Bundesrepublik," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 74.2 (2000): 333-60.

²³ See *Rügen: Deutschlands mythische Insel*, ed. Roswitha Schieb and Gregor Wedekind (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1999), for a controversial discussion of a different Baltic Sea island as a *lieu de mémoire* for the German nation.

²⁴ This puzzler is itself historically and aesthetically coded. The question alludes to a mode of perceiving the world and rendering these perceptions aesthetically. It alludes further to valuables buried by Germans at war's end to prevent Allied troops from finding and destroying or otherwise making off with them. Guy Stern of Wayne State University tells an anecdote about the GIs who found Hauptmann's box full of paper destroying it in anger and disappointment (personal communication).

²⁵ Aleida Assmann notes that most German citizens today have no living memory of the Nazi past. Commenting on how things have changed since Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich wrote of a collective German neurosis in 1967, she also hints at—but does not elaborate—"multicultural" implications for rethinking German cultures of memory. See her essay "1998—Zwischen Geschichte und Gedächtnis" in Aleida Assmann and Ute Frevert, *Geschichtsvergessenheit—Geschichtsversessenheit: Vom Umgang mit deutschen Vergangenheiten nach 1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1999), 25. Here she writes with reference to the publication of *The Inability to Mourn*, "Inzwischen erscheint die Voraussetzung ihrer Argumentation, die Annahme einer deutschen Kollektivseele, als problematisch. Diese 'essentialistische' Konstruktion einer homogenen Einheit können wir heute noch weniger teilen, nachdem die Mehrheit der deutschen Bürgerinnen [*sic*] keine lebendigen Erinnerungen an die NS-Zeit mehr haben und sich die Bundesrepublik zu einer multikulturellen Gesellschaft entwickelt hat."

²⁶ Seyhan's *Writing Outside the Nation* similarly stresses past losses to be addressed.

²⁷ Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, and Amnesia," *Public Culture: Society for Transnational Cultural Studies* 30 (2000): 21-38. In particular Huyssen speaks of the "globalization of Holocaust discourse" (23).

²⁸ The allusion to sexual coupling is stronger in the German original: "Alles, was zu Ende geht, hat etwas Obszönes an sich, wie ein Messer, das in einer Scheide verschwindet" (*Atlas des tropischen Deutschland*, 54).

²⁹ There is of course a certain irony in the fact that Turkish-German authors are taking up the issue of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in critical ways that elude many mainstream German authors. The contrast between Zafer Senocak and Martin Walser is relevant here. See brief remarks on this in my introduction to the English-language edition of *Atlas of a Tropical Germany* (xxx). Katharina Gerstenberger characterizes *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* as a "project of the 1970s and 1980s," noting further that more German writers since the *Wende* are interested in German normalcy instead.

Gerstenberger then discusses ways in which Senocak and Maron—as two exceptions to the rule—“rewrite the project of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.”

**ROYAL IMAGINARIES AND CAPITAL ARCHITECTURE:
BERLIN'S HOHENZOLLERN PALACE AND THE PALACE
OF THE REPUBLIC**

Claudia Breger

ARCHITECTURAL DEBATE AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT

The debate continues. The future development of the Marx-Engels-Platz/Schlossplatz in Berlin Mitte has been under discussion for over ten years now. And despite a recent parliamentary decision on the subject, the controversy seems unlikely to have reached its end as this volume goes to press in early fall of 2002. Late last year the German public was informed of a decisive vote taken by a committee established by the German government and the city of Berlin in the fall of 2000. With a narrow majority of one (and several members absent), the committee recommended the partial reconstruction of the Baroque Hohenzollern castle that had been located on the site until 1950. In order to allow for this reconstruction, the remains of the GDR Palace of the Republic, which had been erected in place of the castle in the 1970s and was dismantled because of asbestos contamination only recently, are to be razed entirely. At the same time the committee's final report suggests that a reconstruction of some of the palace's sections, such as the hall of the East German parliament (Volkskammer) will be considered.¹ On the basis of these recommendations the Bundeskabinett and the Berlin Senate decided, in a joint meeting in May 2002, to appoint another committee to develop a concept for the use and financing of the project. This was to be followed by an architectural competition (Realisierungswettbewerb).² While this joint committee suggested that the controversial issue of the Baroque façades be reconsidered as planning for the future structure progresses, the parliament (*Bundestag*) decided on July 4, 2002, that the Baroque design for three of the façades should be treated as a given in the competition.³ Thus, things have definitely gone well for those who had campaigned for a reconstructed castle since the early 1990s. On the web-site of the *Förderverein Berliner Stadtschloss*, which is closely associated with the conservative newspaper *Die Welt*, we read that a clear majority in Berlin, including East Berlin, favors such reconstruction. We

read further that a rather impressive range of individuals has lent support to reconstruction, including the federal chancellor and a number of left-wing politicians, artists, and intellectuals.⁴ Recently a Berlin-based journal of cultural theory published a special issue written mostly by East German contributors, which, according to the editorial introduction, intends to reassure those who fear the expressive power of historical architecture (Aussagemacht historischer Architektur) and to articulate the longing (Sehnsucht) for the lost object of the castle. Some internal critics of the issue had wanted to discuss the castle discourse critically instead.⁵

What is this public “longing” about? First of all, it is of recent vintage. Christoph Dieckmann explains that, at the beginning of the debate, the reconstruction of the royal palace seemed to be a rather absurd project of sentimentalist reactionaries, who raised their voices in the context of a CDU campaign against the Palace of the Republic in 1990, at a time when 98 percent of the East German populace wanted to keep “their” Palace of the Republic.

A new player enters the stage: Wilhelm von Boddien, a dealer in agricultural machinery from Hamburg. Boddien has a spleen. He wants the Hohenzollern castle back [...]. A crackpot idea turns into the collective vision of the *Fridericus-Rex* faction and Berlin nationalists. Powerful publicity rushes over the *ortlose Mitte der künftigen Berliner Republik*.⁶

I will analyze the rhetoric of the powerful publicity that has shaped the debate on the two palaces—and in the course of this process—established a widespread longing for the castle while obviously diminishing the often cited East German sentimentality concerning the Palace of the Republic. In what follows I attempt to sort out the complex and conflicted ways in which this post-unification debate must be understood as part of the debate on the architectural shape of the Berlin Republic and thus on the politics—and poetics—of historical identity and memory in contemporary Germany.

Die ortlose Mitte der künftigen Berliner Republik—this virtually untranslatable phrase, which suggests *ex negativo* that it is necessary to locate a center in order to allow for the definition of any future republic—is doubtless one of the central topoi informing the palace debate. The center “without a place” is a center imagined as lost,⁷ a *historische Mitte*, as the name of the official committee itself connotes: Internationale Expertenkommission Historische Mitte Berlin. As Wilhelm von Boddien argues in his introduction to one of the volumes on the project, the site of the royal palace defined the center of the state from 1443 until the end of the GDR, with the exception of the Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany, and the city was architecturally developed from and around this palace.⁸ Despite multiple competitors for the status of “center” that the complex city of Berlin has to offer, this royal claim is almost unanimously accepted, even by Boddien’s adversaries. In this way the site is attributed with a certain dignity that—as a state secretary has suggested—should position it beyond party interests.⁹ Party interests are clearly discernible, however, in the architectural memories and fantasies filling the declared *Mitte* of the capital and, metonymically, the nation. Thus, the defenders of the Hohenzollern castle deploy a notion of historical identity centered in the monarchic era of the Prussian and German capital between absolutism and the Wilhelmine Empire.¹⁰ In their view the founders of the Palace of the Republic are illegitimate usurpers of the historical nation. After all, their political fathers destroyed the remains of the castle in 1950, thus robbing themselves of the symbol of the capital that they had inherited—a symbol, that, as castle defenders further contend, was established precisely by virtue of its destruction as a “symbol of the legitimate, the entire, the real Germany.”¹¹

According to official GDR discourse, however, the Palace of the Republic fulfills the “historically legitimate claim of the working class, to construct for itself a building in the heart of the capital [...] that appropriately represents the working class in a dignified way.”¹² The booklets and picture books published after the completion of the Palace of the Republic in the late 1970s characterize the historical significance of the site by taking recourse to a tradition of resistance. This resistance is traced in relation to and even within the monarchic building, from a bourgeois rebellion against the first Hohenzollern building on the site,

up to Karl Liebknecht's proclamation of a socialist republic from the balcony over the castle portal in 1918.¹³ When the royal palace was destroyed, this portal was saved and integrated into the new *Staatsratsgebäude*, i.e., the GDR government building. This detail suggests that it is too simple to contend—as narratives of the castle's destruction often do—that the early GDR officials favored a complete break with “the past.”¹⁴ In the debate about the planned demolition of the castle in 1950, GDR experts and politicians discussed both the re-use of monarchic buildings in other communist countries and the value of the Baroque architecture of the royal palace, especially with regard to Andreas Schlüter, the palace architect whose success in Nazi Germany did not hurt his postwar reputation in either Germany. The decision to raze the remains of the castle, however, seems to have been informed by a mixture of economic and political considerations, the latter including the desire for a large parade ground in the center of the city and, of course, the eagerness to demonstrate a break not with “the past” per se but with the Prussian heritage, which was seen as strongly contaminated by the Nazi uses of it.¹⁵

Thus the GDR eventually had a new, republican “palace” of its own, a building designed, as its name already suggests, to replace its predecessor in a mode of both displacement and mimesis. Its critics—who dubbed it “Palazzo Prozzo”—and others too have pointed out the building's connotations of splendor and magnificence and its function as a showpiece.¹⁶ The architect Heinz Graffunder retrospectively claims that he intended to create a “certain grandeur [Erhabenheit]”¹⁷ and even the official publications from the 1970s point out that the building's “luxurious” decor (white marble, great flights of stairs, the excessive use of light, and the “golden” shimmering glass façade, for example) served purposes of *Repräsentation*. This is representation in the sense not only of standing-in-for but also of performance, in the sense in which the term is associated with aristocratic modes of power in modern discourse. Only the referent of this “self-representation in the process of class struggle” is disputed.¹⁸ Whereas official GDR discourse positioned “the working class” or simply “the people” as this referent,¹⁹ other voices speak, in parody, about “Erich's” [Honecker's] “lamp store,” “Erich's dacha next

to the canal” (EDEKA), or also more generally about the “provincial lordship” reflecting itself in the luxury of the palace.²⁰

After 1989 this “most important representative building of the extinct GDR” and “symbol of both the sovereignty and the capability of socialist society” turned, with all its ambivalent connotations, for its defenders and opponents alike, into an emblem for that society. It became, metonymically, “a piece of [the] GDR” [ein Stück DDR].²¹ Described in this manner, however, it had to conflict (and not only topographically) with the—now activated and actively generated—memories of its royal predecessor, the “original” residence of political power, which some of its advocates describe as “part of our national identity.”²² The suggested reconstruction of the castle thus functions as a project of national reassurance [nationale Vergewisserung] or even as part of a process of “normalization.”²³ In the search for a collective identity for the new, the—as hegemonic discourse claims, “reunited”—Germany, the postwar turn away from the Prussian heritage is renegotiated as something that seems abnormal. Already by the late 1970s, both German states had initiated a process of reconsidering their relationship to the Prussian heritage, which was compromised by the Nazi recourse to these Prussian figures of power. In the West a large exhibit on Prussia stirred some controversy in the early 1980s. In the GDR the shift in attitude was signaled by the fact that a large equestrian statue of Frederick II, known as Frederick the Great, which had been removed after 1945, was re-erected in its old place on the boulevard Unter den Linden.²⁴ In the 1990s this process of heritage reclamation—in its liberal version, a return to Prussia’s friendly side, the phantasmatic vision of a rather enlightened, rather tolerant Frederick the Great without his wars of conquest—acquired a new quality. After its preliminary culmination in the celebration (in 2001) of the three-hundredth anniversary of the Prussian kingdom, Brandenburg’s Secretary of Social Services, Alwin Ziel, stimulated a new controversy early in 2002 by suggesting that after the planned unification of the *Bundesländer* Berlin and Brandenburg, the future political unit should be called *Preußen*.²⁵

These renegotiations of collective identity with regard to Germany’s Prussian past clearly inform the “public longing” for the royal palace. Yet they entail a couple of significant displacements. While the Prussian

kings may be deemed worthy of historical respect by a majority of the German cultural elite at the turn to the twenty-first century, it would be another matter to enlist their political connotations in any direct sense to create an identity for the Berlin Republic, for which the reconstructed palace is intended to provide a center. The royal architecture is clearly not intended to function as a “symbol of centuries of Hohenzollern servitude,” as it was described by those who decided on its demolition in 1950.²⁶ Therefore, in the debate on the reconstructive project, the complexly problematic figures of monarchic power surface primarily in intertwined modes of invocation, negation, and displacement. While the defenders of the reconstructive project claim that its opponents reject it because of the connection to Prussian monarchy, the latter actually refer astonishingly seldom to “the desire for the splendor of Prussian rulers” that might inform the longing for the royal palace.²⁷ In the absence of the monarchs, however, the architectural dignity of the castle metaphorically stands in for them, often assuming the anthropomorphic shape of an individual murdered by GDR “barbarians.” Thus the advocates of the royal palace describe its destruction as “cold-blooded murder” while the defenders of the Palace of the Republic in turn speak about the latter having been “massacred” by neglect in the 1990s.²⁸

In any case, the planned reconstruction of the royal palace is explicitly *not* about the reinstatement of monarchic signifiers for those who favor reconstruction, but about creating public memories of how Berlin became the capital of Germany.²⁹ This separation of the reconstructive project from what seems to be its obvious political symbolism is further underscored by the circumstance that the actual political center of the new capital is located to the West, in the so-called Spreebogen. Thus, the *former* center of the state—now said to have become the center of the city—is intended to serve predominantly in the latter function in the future, and ironically, only thereby to guarantee national identity. At least on the literal level of the debate, the suggested normalization is the “normalization of the center of a European city”³⁰—a question of topographical rather than political order. This normalization, however, is assumed to require a building of the castle’s size. While the committee disagreement and narrow vote mentioned earlier primarily concerned the question of whether the Baroque façades of the building should be

reconstructed, there is both inside and outside this committee a considerably larger majority in favor of erecting a new structure with the dimensions of the royal palace, in order to “repair” the center’s “architectural ensemble.”³¹ There is widespread agreement, not only on this, but also on the castle structure’s superior potential to effect such repair. This is remarkable, especially when we consider that, on the one hand, the royal palace has often been described as an enormous “grey box” that was experienced as “gruesome” by its contemporaries.³² On the other hand, the builders of the Palace of the Republic used a lot of ink explaining how *their* structure harmoniously completed the architectural ensemble of the city center.³³

NEGOTIATING POLITICS AND AESTHETICS: THE PALACES’ TWO BODIES

In order to analyze these intersubjective negotiations of topographical harmony, I would like to suggest a heuristic appropriation of Ernst Kantorowicz’s famous analysis of early modern political theory. Like the king (or even like the totalitarian leader discussed by Slavoj Žižek with reference to Kantorowicz’s categories), the palaces of Prussian monarchy and the socialist republic have at least two bodies.³⁴ They have not only their “body natural” but also a “body politic” that represents their symbolic position, their “dignity.” This is not identical with, but also cannot easily be separated from their material incarnation. In other words, political significations and architectural structures overlap in ways that might be perceived as, in the vocabulary of political theology (see Kantorowicz), “mystic.” In the case of the royal palace, the problematic monarchic connotations of its body politic are rhetorically displaced by the assertion that its reconstruction is an issue less of the representation of power than of topography, culture, and history.³⁵ The current debate thus cleanses the royal palace of traces of authoritarian power, while the Palace of the Republic is not released from the political connotations of its royal name. This palace is presented as contaminated by exactly those implications of power that are displaced in the perception of the monumental castle. One thus claims that the GDR palace was “too much a representation of state power” (*zu sehr Machtdemonstration*).³⁶

But in which ways, with regard to which body was it so? Interestingly, the architects of the GDR Palace of the Republic in the 1970s already gestured in the same direction as today's advocates of the royal palace. Their architectural composition was supposed to replace the historical center of "power and administration" by new, "generous ensembles of state and economy, commerce, culture and leisure," thus changing the character of the center from the "dominance of leadership" to the "dominance of culture."³⁷ With its combination of parliament hall on the one hand, and multiple spaces for theatre, conferences, music, dance, and dining on the other, the Palace of the Republic was intended to represent an encompassing collective identity, a notion of the people as the agent of politics *and* culture, with the latter notion embracing both high and popular forms.

With these designations, however, the GDR palace's body politic looks like a rather respectable thing, almost like a representation of democracy rather than authoritarianism. In the current debate, the GDR palace's cultural functions are often mentioned as something that should be preserved in future uses of the site. Some contributors stress the significance particularly of its popular offerings. As a "house of the people," the Palace of the Republic—often compared to the Centre Pompidou in Paris—supplemented the surrounding landscape of museums, operas, and university buildings with a *Stück U-Kultur*.³⁸ The evaluation of the political function of the palace as the seat of the GDR parliament is somewhat more complicated. While the parliament is often dismissed as a mockery [Scheinparlament], precisely this lack of power makes it difficult to describe the GDR parliament as a representation of totalitarian state authority. Furthermore, the parliament hall of the Palace of the Republic has its historical significance for the history of the Berlin Republic as well. It was here that in 1990 a new GDR parliament decided the unification of the two Germanies, a circumstance that has been mentioned as a reason to preserve the Palace of the Republic.³⁹

Thus the Palace of the Republic is perceived as possessing historical and cultural dignity. In this situation its alleged contamination with the representation of authoritarian power seems to apply primarily to its body natural, *i.e.*, contamination is perceived with regard to design and materiality. For example, architect Hans Kollhoff claims that in its exterior design, the Palace of the Republic is "a mixture of Western commercial style and socialist party

conference-gesture.”⁴⁰ Commerce and communism. Against this hybrid form (of the “palace of a republic of misled ideologues”), the advocates of the royal palace suggest that the royal palace be reconstructed as a “masterpiece of world art,”⁴¹ in other words, an architectural representation of high culture untainted by political signification.

The nation said to be at stake in the reconstructive project is obviously the *Kulturnation*—in the tradition of the nineteenth-century concept that served to distinguish precarious national identities before national unification. This concept was reclaimed as the positive, apolitical, and thereby seemingly uncorrupted component of national identity in the latter half of the twentieth century. Since the aesthetics of communism and commerce cannot signify this cultural identity, the Palace of the Republic is to be torn down for—in the logic of displacement—“purely aesthetic reasons,” as Rainer Haubrich claims in *Die Welt*. According to Haubrich, the GDR palace’s “bad” ugly architecture produces a “shock” in every spectator of “average sensitivity,” whereas the royal palace with its famous *Schlüterhof* presents a “miraculous creation of the North German Baroque.”⁴² While Baroque excess and ornateness, which had been castigated by the Enlightenment and, in this tradition, socialist aesthetic theory (and other twentieth-century theories as well),⁴³ seem to be above any aesthetic reproach in the current debate, “Erich’s” aesthetic of excess and splendor is not even defended by the advocates of the GDR building.⁴⁴ The *gediegen[e]* marble façade now appears “embarrassing” and without any art historical “substance.”⁴⁵ As most contributors to the debate stress, this reproach is directed, not at socialist architecture per se, but rather at the aesthetics of the 1970s, or more generally at modernity (for which the Palace of the Republic also stands in).⁴⁶ Without art historical “substance,” however, the building is seen as “dead” once it was closed down because of asbestos contamination. One sees nothing but a “shell,” the “mortal remains” of a building.⁴⁷

In this vein many proposals for the site also call for the “skin”⁴⁸ of the Palace of the Republic to be removed in order to save some of the palace’s symbolic value. With Kantorowicz, we could describe this “skin” as a body natural that has lost its relation to the body politic, nothing but a mortal “being” condemned to death by its asbestos affliction. Under these circumstances, its dignity (as a *Volkshaus*, the symbolic site of German unification) must obviously be transferred to a successor, a material body better suited to occupy the throne of the Berlin Republic. If we pursue this appropriation of Kantorowicz’s

notions further, we could say that the political implications of this process (as constituted through the rhetoric of the current debate) are at least twofold. First, even if the death of the Palace of the Republic was not quite a natural one (but rather the result of murdering, let's say, a tyrant), the transfer of authority to another body natural guarantees the continuity of the body politic. It suggests, in our case, that the identity of the GDR is not simply excluded from the new Germany's history, but rather integrated into its political formation.

Second, we must address the question of succession, the future development of the site. According to Claude Lefort and, with him, Žižek, democracy is characterized by the essential emptiness of the throne, that is, the insignificance of the body natural that occupies it, always only temporarily. Žižek, however, introduces a paradox to this context. By his account, the body natural of the monarch is also "transsubstantiated" once the monarch occupies the symbolic position of king—and does so irrevocably. Thus, the two bodies of the king stubbornly stick together, and neither dethronement nor death dissolves the sublime quality that attaches to the body of a former leader. (Žižek attempts to explain the workings of totalitarianism here).⁴⁹ The material body of the royal palace seems to occupy a comparable status in the debate on its reconstruction, unlike the insignificant shell of the Palace of the Republic. Albeit equally affected by both "natural" and "unnatural" factors of destruction (weather, bombs, and demolition, after which most parts of the body are lost, recycled, or transformed into rubble),⁵⁰ the royal palace has, at the same time, become immortal and invincible by dint of its art historical dignity. By virtue of its sublime materiality, the "content," "meaning," or "myth" of the building,⁵¹ that is to say, its symbolic dignity seems to be inseparable from its body natural. Alternative designs for reconstruction therefore appear unacceptable.

ROYAL MATERIAL: HYBRID BODIES OR PARTIAL COPIES

Reconstruction is a complicated thing, since it involves technologies of artificial reproduction, while the modern imagination of the body natural is tangled up in the rhetoric of originality. The plan to rebuild the royal palace according to photographic documents stirred controversy not just with regard to the political and aesthetic message of this project, but also with regard to the legitimacy of the reconstructive act itself. After all, the project challenges

the hegemonic norms for the protection of historic monuments (as established by the Charta of Venice in 1964) that privilege “conservation” over “restoration”⁵² and thus call for the preservation of the *authentic* “body natural” of historic monuments, including even its signs of use and decay. In the debate on the royal palace this type of “fundamentalism”⁵³ is echoed in the arguments of those who oppose the royal structure. Given that “historical evidence” cannot be accurately reproduced in material form, that the “scars of history cannot be reproduced,” they claim that the project would erect a “neo-Baroque cardboard box,” a “fake” object or a *kitsch* “copy” that would lack the sensual quality and artistic dignity of the original historical “body.”⁵⁴ According to the logic of this rhetoric of originality, the evaluation of the palaces thus threatens to perform a complete turn. While a reconstructed castle would be merely an “empty shell,” only an independent new building, a “new Palace of the Republic” could claim the status of “original.” (See also the montage on p. 121).⁵⁵

While the opponents of the royal palace thus take recourse to a modern aesthetic grounded in “nature” and “individuality,”⁵⁶ its advocates began to collect support for their project by raising a life-size canvas mock-up of the royal palace in 1993 (see p. 121). In accordance with postmodern challenges to the aesthetics of authenticity, their “neo-traditional” or “neo-historicist” approach includes a plea for the legitimacy of artificial reproduction.⁵⁷ Rather than completely dismissing the rhetoric of originality, however, most of the royal palace’s advocates try to negotiate between a plea for revising the hegemonic norms of conservation and an affirmation of their loyalty to principles of authenticity. For example, they defend the production of “copies” as one of “the very last” options to protect historical monuments and suggest that including available left-over material fragments of the original building would allow for an “authentic recreation.”⁵⁸

The legitimacy of reconstruction is thus established in terms of a process that we might call mimesis as opposed to a process of mimicry—with its traditional connotations of partial and superficial reproduction—in order to save the dignity of the castle’s body natural. This logic denies legitimacy to mimicry. Yet this rhetorical strategy clashes with the actual plans for the site. From the very beginning of the debate, the advocates of the royal palace had to admit that its complete reproduction, including the insufficiently documented interior, would hardly be possible. At the same time the appointed committee

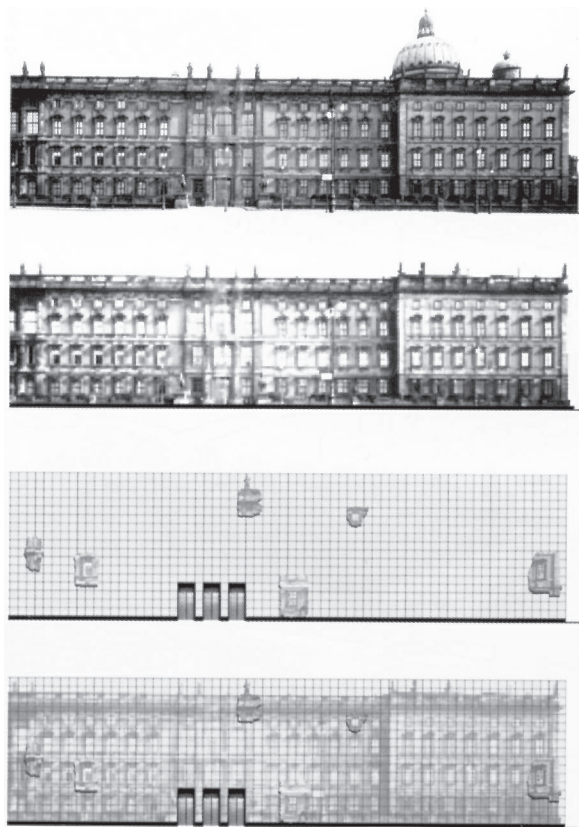


A kitsch castle—Neuschwanstein—on the Schlossplatz (from *Der Berliner Schlossplatz*, 9; montage by *Der Tagesspiegel*, rights with *Der Tagesspiegel*)

soon decided that only a partial reconstruction of the façades was to be further debated. The weekly *Der Spiegel* commented on this news with the headline, “A blow for all Prussian romantics: A faithful reconstruction of the royal palace is dismissed. What remains are royal backstage bits and pieces.” The supporters of the royal project quickly declared that they never wanted anything else anyway.⁵⁹

This affirmation of partial reconstruction might surprise in a debate that has been, after all, centered around the idea of healing the “body” of the city, with the (site of the) palaces designated as its “heart.”⁶⁰ Alternative metaphors such as “hinge” or, more ambivalently, “joint” suggest that the envisioned royal body might turn out to be a cyborg hybrid of the kind described by Donna Haraway.⁶¹ But what does this mean with regard to the relevant concepts of identity? Could, and, if so, *how* could the two bodies of the palace—or, for that matter, of the palaces—be transformed into a body of royal hybridity? Would this entail the figure of an uncanny doubling of identity that, at least according to Homi Bhabha, deconstructs the coherence of the body of power rather than guaranteeing its continuity?⁶²

Axel Schultes, the architect who designed the new chancellery, submitted a proposal for the site of the palaces, in which he develops the idea of splitting (and in the same move, doubling) the royal palace as a gesture of resignification. Enlisting “Schinkel’s dream” (Schultes actually attributes his model to Schinkel), he suggests a cut through the royal palace that would divide it in half and thus symbolize a separation of powers—a displaced, democratically embellished Prussian myth.⁶³ Beyond this explicitly political vision, the notion of hybridizing the royal body almost constitutes something like a common denominator of the diverse proposals for the site.⁶⁴ Most of these proposals suggest integrative solutions that combine traditional and modern elements—as in the “Janus-faced” castle with a digital façade that provides different visions depending on the location of the spectator (see below). More specifically, they often



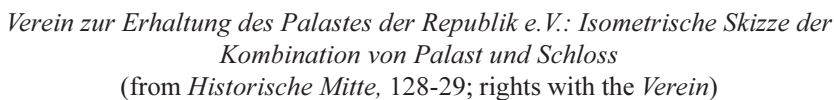
Von Gerkan, Marg und Partner (Hamburg), Das Janus-Schloss
(rights with the architects)

combine parts of the royal palace with parts of the GDR Palace of the Republic. As a conceptual rather than concrete architectural given, the idea of this combination was even used as the basis for the work of the government committee. Guidelines recommended a “synthesis” intended to symbolize the “acceptance of the complete history of this site.”⁶⁵ When the committee chair described the recommendation at hand as a plan to realize “the idea of the Palace of the Republic in the skin of the royal palace,” however, the two royal bodies involved were once more neatly separated and, in the same move, subjected to a fiction of wholeness quite at odds with the actual plans, which also include “creative” rearrangements of the different façades.⁶⁶

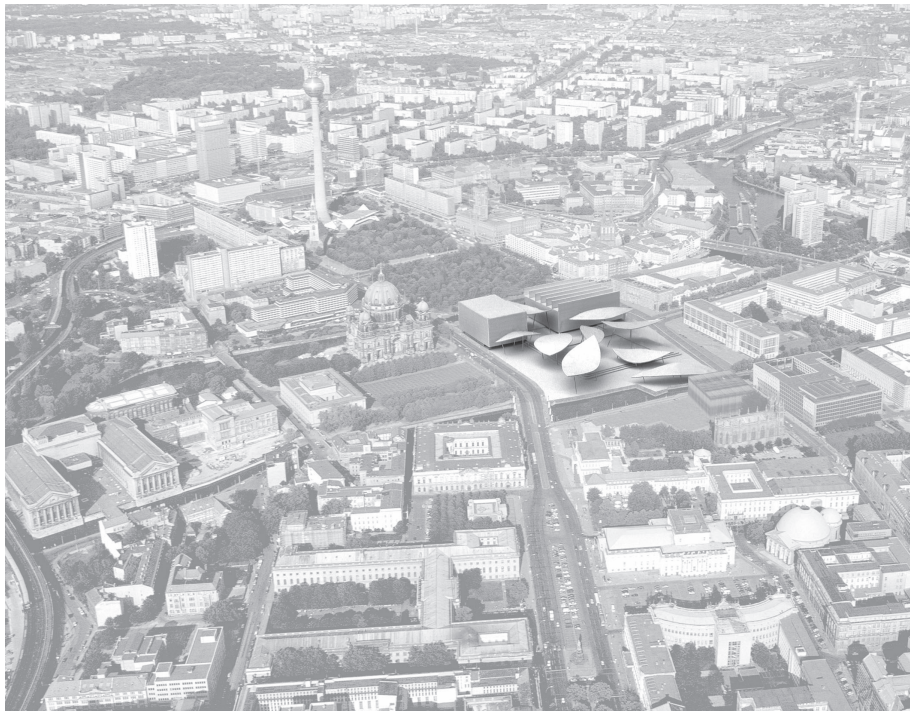
A more interesting proposal was submitted by Hans Kollhoff, who translated his general plea for architecture in the service of historical memory into a plan to “wed” the idea of royal palace to the “science fiction charm” of the 1970s.⁶⁷ Despite his aversion to modernism in general and particularly in the GDR palace, he goes beyond suggesting that some of its interiors (such as the large hall for cultural events or the *Bier-* and *Weinstube* with their Baroque and classicist designs) be included. He additionally suggests that the GDR-style interiors need not be completely covered over by the “skin” of the castle, proposing instead that the reconstruction actively incorporate modern structures. At the other end of the current landscape of architectural design, the Verein zur Erhaltung des Palastes der Republik e.V. also presented a proposal for a “marriage,” one that extends the project of reconstruction to the asbestos patient (see page 124). And one of the recent individual proposals for the site programmatically develops the idea of the site as a palimpsest of political fantasies, creating an open ensemble that includes a split version of the Palace of the Republic, the reconstruction of the basement of the castle, and modern pavilions (see page 125).

These pavilions are intended to be used as a location for the “museums of the cultures of the world.”⁶⁸ In this designation for the use of the site, this recent proposal associates itself with a concept that was publicly advanced in the spring of 2001 with regard to the reconstructed royal palace and generated such widespread agreement among the factions that the royal reconstruction gained tremendously in favor over the following months. According to this suggestion, the future palace is to house the non-European collections of the Berlin museums, currently located far away from the city center, in Dahlem. As Peter-Klaus Schuster (the general director of Berlin’s public museums)

Schuster claimed that the intended cultural resignification of the political site was supported by the circumstance that the “ethnological” (*sic*)—by this Schuster means non-European—collections of the Berlin museums are not as one-sided as those in London or Paris by virtue of not resulting from colonial activities, but rather from scholarly research.⁷¹ This narrative about the innocence of the *Kulturnation*, however, invites critical analysis with regard to the ways in which this “better” side of Prussian-German identity has been



implicated in imperialist frames of thought and action. Is it really such a great idea to enclose the “ethnological” art of non-European peoples in an imperial body at the center of the *Kulturnation* and to enlist such a configuration explicitly for the articulation of an identity for the new Germany? Or, put another way, why do these non-European collections require the royal dress of Baroque façades, and why should they be asked to confer a new legitimacy to such façades? Are these collections being assigned the task of providing “substance” for the shell?⁷²



Matthias Sauerbruch & Louisa Hutton, Berlin: *Vogelperspektive von Westen*
(rights with the architects)

THE FUTURE OF INTERCULTURAL TRANSFER

Considering the complex interplay of the palaces’ bodies in public discourse and memory, it seems at the very least reasonable to ask whether it would not be easier to develop the intended intercultural meanings within and in tension with modern pavilions of the kind suggested by the above proposal than by a

reconstruction of the Baroque residence of royal authority. Or one might ask from a different, but perhaps equally reasonable perspective whether the idea of the “ethnological” museum meshes so well with the Baroque architecture of royal splendour that we might want to consider alternative concepts for the actual use of the future structure. The proposal of the Verein zur Erhaltung des Palasts der Republik suggests, for example, integrating the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (currently located in the West Berlin Kongresshalle, close to the Reichstag in the Tiergarten) into the reconstructed building. As a major public institution known for addressing relations between German and foreign cultures through exhibits, conferences, political debates, and multiple other events, this “House of the Cultures of the World” represents an alternative concept of intercultural transfer, more complex than that of the museum with its imperial legacy, and possibly better suited to occupy the center of the Berlin Republic. How such an institution would signify inside “Erich’s” golden façades is of course an important question that remains to be addressed. But perhaps this means that the debate *should* continue.

Translated by Claudia Breger and Leslie A. Adelson.

ENDNOTES

¹ See *Abschlußbericht*, ed. Internationale Expertenkommission „Historische Mitte Berlin,“ Im Auftrag der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und des Landes Berlin (Berlin: Brandenburgische Universitätsdruckerei und Verlagsgesellschaft, 2002), 19.

² See Stefan Kirschner, „Stadtschloss im Dornröschenschlaf? Eine neue Kommission soll die Möglichkeiten eines Wiederaufbaus prüfen – noch eine,“ *Die Welt* (May 15, 2002), <<http://www.welt.de/daten/2002/05/17/0517kar332377.htm?print=1>> as of May 29, 2002.

³ See Martin Lutz, „Bundestag für barocke Fassade am Berliner Stadtschloss,“ *Die Welt* (July 5, 2002); <<http://www.welt.de/daten/2002/07/05/0705de342421.htm?print=1>> as of July 30, 2002.

⁴ See <<http://www.berliner-schloss.de>> (with links to *Die Welt*’s thematic archive). According to a poll conducted by the Forsa Institute for *Die Welt* in the summer of 2001, 34 percent of the Berlin populace favored the castle, 17 percent the GDR Palace (29 percent of those from East Berlin), and 32 percent favored a park. See Rainer Haubrich, „Der Palast der Republik ist tot,“ *Die Welt* (August 14, 2001); <http://www.berliner-schloss.de/print_artikel_71.html> as of August 14, 2001. In March/April of 2002 a poll by the same institute found that 42 percent of the Berlin populace favored the reconstructed castle (and 17 percent still favored the GDR palace). See the webpage of another initiative, the Gesellschaft zum Wiederaufbau des Berliner Stadtschlösses

e.V., <<http://www.berliner-stadtschloss.de>>. Even in 2002, this majority for reconstruction was thus not an absolute majority.

⁵ See Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm, „Editorial: Das Schloss,“ *Ästhetik & Kommunikation* 32:114 (2001): 8-10. Unless otherwise indicated, English translations of German quotations are provided by Claudia Breger in consultation with Leslie A. Adelson.

⁶ See Christoph Dieckmann, „Der sterbende Schwan: Berlins Palast der Republik, Symbol des deutschen Umgangs mit Geschichte, wird 25 Jahre alt,“ *Die Zeit* Nr. 17 (April 19, 2001), 72.

⁷ See Christian van Lessen, „Totes in Berlins Mitte zum Leben erwecken“ [on the design entry by Krüger/Schuberth/Vandreike], *Der Berliner Schlossplatz: Visionen zur Gestaltung der Berliner Mitte* (Berlin: Argon, n.d.), 72-4, here 72.

⁸ Wilhelm von Boddien, „Die Gegenstände: Schloss und Palast, Eine Beschreibung des Themas,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte – Pro und Contra*, ed. Wilhelm von Boddien and Helmut Engel, 2nd ed. (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 2000), 9-13, here 9.

⁹ See Hans Stimmann, „Reurbanisierung der historischen Staatsmitte,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 67-74, here 67.

¹⁰ This excludes not only the democratic era of the Weimar Republic, but also the pre-baroque history of the city. See Jörg Haspel, „Zwischen Hohenzollernschloss und Palast der Republik: Konservatorische Anmerkungen zur Behandlung eines Denkmalortes,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 55-65, here 59.

¹¹ See Goerd Peschken, „Wer hat Angst vor dem Berliner Schloss? Ein Vortrag und sein Kommentar,“ *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* 32.:114 (2001): 21-30, here 28.

¹² See Martin Beerbaum and Heinz Graffunder, *Der Palast der Republik* (Leipzig: VEB E.A. Seemann, 1979), 9.

¹³ See Beerbaum and Graffunder, 15. See also Manfred Schröter and Wolfgang Grösel, *Berlin: Palast der Republik* (Leipzig: VEB E.A. Seemann, 1977).

¹⁴ See Laurenz Demps, „Alltagssorgen und Schlossabriss—Alltagssorgen und Zukunft des Palastes der Republik,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 119-25, esp. 121.

¹⁵ For this debate see, for example, Renate Petras, *Das Schloss in Berlin: Von der Revolution 1918 bis zur Vernichtung 1950* (Berlin: Verlag Bauwesen, 1999), 111-27. See also the following documentation of the debate (Petras 133-54).

¹⁶ See Christian van Lessen, „Vorwort,“ *Von Erichs Lampenladen zur Asbestruine: Alles über den Palast der Republik*, ed. Kirsten Heidler in cooperation with Ingetraud Skirecki (Berlin: Argon, 1998), 8-11, esp. 9-10.

¹⁷ Heinz Graffunder, „Erinnerungen und Gedanken des Architekten,“ *Von Erichs Lampenladen*, 28-38, here 29.

¹⁸ Bruno Flierl, „Hintergründe des Palastbaues,“ *Von Erichs Lampenladen*, 21-7, esp. 22.

¹⁹ See Beerbaum and Graffunder, 9 and 15f.; see also Schröter and Grösel.

²⁰ See Peter Ensikat, „Mein Palast der Republik,“ *Von Erichs Lampenladen*, 59-65, esp. 60.

²¹ See von Boddien, 9 and 12; van Lessen, „Vorwort“ 9.

²² See Werner Knopp, „Schwachpunkte der politischen Diskussion zum Wiederaufbau des Berliner Schlosses,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 107-9; see also Helmut Engel, „Die Inhalte der Schlossdebatte,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 101-5, here 105.

²³ Stimmann, 67.

²⁴ For an overview, see Hans Dollinger, *Friedrich II von Preußen: Sein Bild im Wandel von zwei Jahrhunderten* (Munich: List, 1986), 209ff.

²⁵ See „Ziel will Preussen wiederhaben,“ *Die tageszeitung* (February 15, 2002), 19.

²⁶ See Haspel, 60-1.

²⁷ See Knopp, 107, and Wolfgang Pehnt, „Das Bauwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 85-8, here 86. A critic noted that even the word *Schloss* has sometimes been avoided in public discourse and replaced by “Grand Project.” See Klaus Hartung, „Eine Stadt hofft auf Heilung,“ *Die Zeit* Nr. 30 (July 19, 2001), 35.

²⁸ First invoked by Walter Stengel, director of the East Berlin Märkisches Museum in 1950, this notion of “cold-blooded murder” has often been quoted and recycled in the contemporary debate. For example, see von Boddien, „Die Gegenstände,“ 12.

²⁹ See Peschken, 27.

³⁰ See Stimmann, 67.

³¹ See, for example, Ingrid Stahmer at <http://www.berliner-schloss.de/c_fuersprecher.php> as of August 14, 2001.

³² See Demps, 123. See also Frei Otto, „Das pulsierende Herz von Berlin,“ *Der Berliner Schlossplatz* 96-8, here 96.

³³ See Beerbaum and Graffunder, 15, 17-19, and Bruno Flierl, „Planung und Bau des Palastes,“ *Ein Palast und seine Republik: Ort – Architektur – Programm*, ed. Thomas Beutelschmidt and Julia M. Novak (Berlin: HUSS-Medien, 2001), 56-72, esp. 67.

³⁴ Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957); Slavoj Žižek, *Grimassen des Realen: Jacques Lacan oder die Monstrosität des Aktes*, trans. Isolde Charim, Thomas Hübel, Robert Pfaller, und Michael Wiesmüller, ed. Michael Wetzel (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1993).

³⁵ See Stimmann, 68.

³⁶ Christian van Lessen, „Viel Raum fürs Volkshaus“ [on the design entry by Hinrich Baller], *Der Berliner Schlossplatz*, 26-8, esp. 27.

³⁷ See Beerbaum and Graffunder, 10, and Flierl, 25, for full citations in German. This shift from “leadership” to “culture” situates the palace in relation to earlier conceptions for the socialist center.

³⁸ Peter Conradi, „Dem Staat das Volk zeigen,“ *Der Berliner Schlossplatz*, 14-5, here 15.

³⁹ See Haspel, 65.

⁴⁰ See Hans Kollhoff, „Schlosspalast, Haus und Stadt,“ *Der Berliner Schlossplatz*, 60-3, esp. 61.

⁴¹ See Christian van Lessen, „Die Vision fällt ins Wasser – oder?“ [on the design entry by Bernd Kühn], *Der Berliner Schlossplatz*, 76-8, esp. 78.

⁴² See Rainer Haubrich, „Sprengt den Palast der Republik! Schlechte Architektur, falsch platziert: Warum das Bauwerk aus DDR-Zeiten einem neuen Stadtschloss weichen muß“, *Die Welt* (December 7, 2001); <<http://www.welt.de/daten/2001/07/12/0712fo267066.htm?print=1>> as of August 14, 2001.

⁴³ See *Wörterbuch der Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Claus Träger (Leipzig: VEB Bibliographisches Institut, 1986), 63, on the „Formüberhang“, „Überladenheit und Maßlosigkeit“ of the Baroque; „[d]as Ornament verselbständigte sich.“

⁴⁴ Compare Katharina Lange's interview with Wladimir Rubinow. One of the architects of the Palace of the Republic, Rubinow evades the aesthetic question persistently foregrounded by the interviewer and eventually responds, „*Ich gebe keine Geschmackswertungen.*“ See „Der Palast der Republik: ein Palast der Republik ... oder ein Kuckucksei?“ Interview mit Katharina Lange (1999), <<http://www.kultur-netz.de/pdr/rubinow.htm>> as of April 26, 2002.

⁴⁵ See van Lessen, „Der Palast bekommt sein Stückchen Schloss“ [on the design entry by Rob Krier], *Der Berliner Schlossplatz*, 68-70, here 68. See also Wolf R. Eisentraut, „Ein aufmerksamer Besucher,“ *Von Erichs Lampenladen*, 55-8, here 55. The word *gediegen* has multiple connotations, among them “tasteful,” “high quality,” “solid,” and, I would add, *spiessbürgerlich* or “petit bourgeois.”

⁴⁶ For a detailed description of architectural links, especially to the Bauhaus tradition, see Anke Kuhrmann, „Zwischen Bauhaus und DDR-Moderne: Der Palast und seine Ideengeschichte,“ *Ein Palast und seine Republik*, 92-107.

⁴⁷ See Hildegard Noack, „Tante Martha, wenn du wüsstest,“ *Von Erichs Lampenladen*, 117-9, here 117.

⁴⁸ See van Lessen, „Viel Raum fürs Volkshaus,“ 26.

⁴⁹ See Žizek, *Grimassen des Realen*, 124-6, esp. 134 for an explanation of Lefort's notion of democracy.

⁵⁰ See Wilhelm von Boddien, „Sachfragen: Die Quellenlage zum Wiederaufbau des Schlosses,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 47-53.

⁵¹ See Gesine Weinmiller, „Mythos und Bedeutungsalter,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 43-4.

⁵² See Hermann Wirth, „Rekonstruktion, Wiederaufbau, Nachbau oder Kopie?,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 17-24, esp. 19. See also Haspel 55-7 with regard to the 1993 decision by the German national committee for the protection of historic monuments, which confirmed this principle for the future capital, stating explicitly that buildings from the Nazi and SED regimes were to be treated as worthy of protection.

⁵³ Wirth, 19.

⁵⁴ See Wolfgang Schäche, „Für ein Recht auf Rekonstruktion—Warum der Wiederaufbau eines Bauwerks nichts mit Unmoral zu tun hat,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 37-42, here 38; Stephan Waetzoldt, „Das Bauwerk als Erlebnis von Geschichte,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 75-84, here 77; Weinmiller 44. Haubrich cites the state secretary for culture, Julian Nida-Rümelin, in „Gut gefälscht!,“ *Die Welt* (January 13, 2001), <<http://www.welt.de/daten/2001/01/13/0113>

ku215230.htx?print=1> as of August 14, 2001. „Das wiederaufgebaute Schloss wäre Kitsch [...], nichts als eine bildliche Kopie eines angeblichen Originals,“ according to Peter Eisenman. See the interview with Peter Eisenman, „Was ist noch kritisch?,“ *Die Zeit* (January 25, 2001), 41. Yet „[d]ie Qualität des Schlüterbaus [...] haftet an der skulpturalen Oberfläche des Steines, [der] sinnliche[n] Oberfläche,“ according to Tilmann Buddensieg, as quoted in Helmut Engel, „Die Inhalte der Schlossdiskussion,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 101-5, here 102.

⁵⁵ For „eine leere Hülle“ see the text explaining the design entry by Tim Heide, Verena von Beckerath, and Andrew Alberts, *Historische Mitte Berlin: Schlossplatz, Ideen und Entwürfe 1991-2001* [catalogue of the exhibit in the *Staatsratsgebäude*, July 13-December 8, 2001], ed. Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung (Berlin: Ruksaldruck, 2001), 84. „Ein ‚Original‘ könnte nur der eigenständige [...] Neubau sein—ein neuer ‚Palast der Republik‘“ (Waetzoldt 75).

⁵⁶ They sometimes do so with a Benjaminian twist. See Pehnt, „Das Bauwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 85.

⁵⁷ See Hanno Rauterberg, „Raus aus den alten Rastern!“, *Die Zeit* (June 21, 2001), 33; Schäche; and for an explication of the connection with biotechnology, see also Pehnt. Interestingly, von Boddien’s volume on the debate opens with an article from the new edition of the *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, which historicizes the notion of originality. See Friedrich Vollhardt, „Originalität—eine Begriffsbestimmung,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 15-6.

⁵⁸ See Wirth, 21 and von Boddien, „Sachfragen,“ 48. Von Boddien further notes that an archaeologically exact reconstruction of the castle based on modern computer technology would easily prove the absurdity of the charge that a reconstruction creates something like a Berlin Disneyland („Sachfragen“ 50).

⁵⁹ See Harriet Dreier, „Eine 1:1-Replik ist hinfällig,“ *Der Spiegel* (April 19, 2001); <http://www.berliner-schloss.de/c_artikel_42.php> as of August 14, 2001. See also Rainer Haubrich, „Ein offenes Haus der Kultur,“ *Die Welt* (April 20, 2001); <<http://www.welt.de/daten/2001/04/20/0420kar248304.htx?print=1>> as of August 14, 2001. For the plans of the Förderverein, see <http://www.berliner-schloss.de/c_architekturkonzept.php> as of July 29, 2002.

⁶⁰ See Hartung. See also Joseph P Kleihues, „Der Ort, an dem das Schloss stand,“ *Der Berliner Schlossplatz*, 11-3, esp. 11. Von Boddien describes the loss of the castle also as „amputation“ („Die Gegenstände“ 10).

⁶¹ Words such as *Scharnier*, *Gelenk*, as well as *Herz* figure importantly. See Stephan Braunfels, „Eine Brücke zwischen Ost und West,“ *Der Berliner Schlossplatz*, 34-6. Or the city is described as “out of joint” [*ein aus den Fugen geratener Stadtraum*] and in need of a structure providing ‚support‘ [*Halt*]. See Weinmiller, 44. See also Donna Haraway, “Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980’s,” *Socialist Review* 80 (1985): 65-108.

⁶² See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁶³ Axel Schultes, „Schinkels Traum: Das Verhältnis des preussischen Generalbaumeisters zur Berliner Mitte,“ *Der Berliner Schlossplatz*, 17-8.

⁶⁴ See also the proposal to transform the royal palace into a city in its dimensions, Dieter Eckert *et al.*, „Das Haus des Kaisers wird zur Stadt,“ *Der Berliner Schlossplatz*, 42-4.

⁶⁵ *Historische Mitte Berlin, Schlossplatz*, 142.

⁶⁶ „Die Idee des Palastes der Republik in der Hülle des Schlosses“ (Hannes Swoboda, as quoted by Haubrich, „Ein offenes Haus der Kultur“). The plans presented by von Boddien at the time suggested not only replacing the medieval Eastern façade of the castle with a modern design, but also replacing the unsightly [*unansehnliche*] Western wall of the famous Schlüterhof with a double of its splendid Eastern wall. See „Vorschläge zur künftigen Schloss-Nutzung,“ *Die Welt* (April 20, 2001); <<http://www.welt.de/daten/2001/04/20/0420b01248460.htx?print=1>> as of August 14, 2001.

⁶⁷ Hans Kollhoff, „Schlosspalast, Haus und Stadt,“ 60; see also Hans Kollhoff, „Die Wiedergeburt des Schlosses aus dem Geiste der Gemütlichkeit,“ *Die Berliner Schlossdebatte*, 79-84.

⁶⁸ See the text of the exhibit catalogue accompanying the entry by Matthias Sauerbruch and Louisa Hutton, *Historische Mitte*, 132).

⁶⁹ See Peter-Klaus Schuster, „Welch schöner preußischer Traum,“ *FAZ* (April 23, 2001); <http://www.berliner.schloss.de/print_artikel_46.html> as of August 14, 2001.

⁷⁰ „Mit dem kulturpolitisch so pointierten Vorschlag [...] verwandelt sich das preussische Dilemma plötzlich zu einer glanzvollen Lösung [...] ... erweist sich die Bundesrepublik als Repräsentantin einer anderen deutschen Tradition [...]: Der kostbarste Platz dieser Bundesrepublik wird vorgehalten [sic] für die anschauliche Kenntnis und Vermittlung des anderen, des Aussereuropäischen [...]. Man könnte geradezu von der alchimistischen Verwandlung Preussens durch seine Museen und Universitäten zum Ruhme auch dieser Bundesrepublik sprechen“ (Schuster).

⁷¹ „Dass die ethnologischen Sammlungen Berlins im Unterschied zu London oder Paris nicht durch kolonial bedingte Schwerpunkte und mithin Einseitigkeiten, sondern als Ergebnis sammelnder Museumsgelehrter von beispielhafter Vollständigkeit sind [...]“ (*sic*, Schuster).

⁷² In an interview with the newspaper *Die Welt*, the architect Josef Paul Kleihues, originally not in favor of reconstructing the castle, explicitly explains his conversion to the façades with this concept for the use of the future structure. See „Respekt vor dem Kollegen Schlüter!“, *Die Welt* (January 30, 2002); <<http://www.welt.de/daten/2002/01/30/0130kar310983.htx>> as of July 29, 2002.

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