

Germany's Rubble Texts: Writing History in the Present, 1943-1951

by

Kathryn A. Sederberg

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Germanic Languages and Literatures)
in the University of Michigan
2014

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Julia C. Hell, Chair
Associate Professor Kerstin Barndt
Associate Professor Andreas Gailus
Associate Professor Johannes von Moltke

© Kathryn A. Sederberg 2014

DEDICATION

To my parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is such a pleasure to take a step back from my work and thank all of those who have helped me along the way. I would first like to thank my committee members, who have supported me and my project throughout my years as a graduate student at Michigan: Julia Hell, Andreas Gailus, Johannes von Moltke and Kerstin Barndt. They have all been wonderfully supportive and constructive readers of my work. I am especially grateful to Julia Hell, who offered patient and thoughtful guidance every step of the way, and has consistently challenged me to be a better reader, writer, and thinker.

At the University of Michigan, I was lucky to study with a great group of graduate students. Jennie Cain and Ariana Orozco were with me from the beginning, and have always been supportive friends and colleagues. Sara Jackson, Solveig Heinz, Alan Itkin, Nick Block, and Simon Walsh were wonderful mentors and I benefited greatly from our conversations and exchange of work. I am particularly thankful to Seth Howes for his feedback on drafts of my work and for our many helpful conversations. Abby Anderton, Andy Cavin, Candice Hamelin, Nic Heckner, Andrea Rottmann, Emma Thomas, and Naomi Vaughan also deserve special thanks for their friendship and for reading my work. Naomi and Ariana, thanks for your encouragement during the final weeks.

Thanks to Hartmut Rastalsky, who was more than just a teaching mentor, but also an infinite source of support and advice. I have learned so much from him and cannot thank him enough for all he has done for me as a graduate student and instructor.

Likewise, I owe thanks to Kalli Federhofer for always keeping his door open and providing encouragement. Among my friends in Ann Arbor, I would also like to thank Jessica von Hertsenberg, Rachel Yang Antoun, Peter Halquist and Katie Asher Halquist. In Providence, thanks to my writing group: Eric Foster, Silja Maehl, and Philipp Maurer.

On the other side of the Atlantic, I would like to thank Klara von Carlsburg, Karin and Rolf Binder, and the Brombas family, who all gave me endless support during my first year abroad as a wide-eyed exchange student, and ever since. I would also like to acknowledge professors Dolores Peters and Karen Achberger at St. Olaf College for their support and mentorship and for encouraging me to pursue graduate study, as well as Ulrike Weckel, who has been a generous and supportive mentor.

This project and my graduate studies would not have been possible without the support of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, the International Institute, Rackham Graduate School, the Center for Research on Women and Gender, and Fulbright. I am grateful for the opportunities I have been given to study here and abroad. I also indebted to the work of Hatcher Library, especially Beau Case but also Inter-Library Loan for their work behind the scenes/screens. Additionally, I thank Jennifer White, Kevin Calhoun, and Sheri Systema Geiger for their support.

Finally, the more personal thanks go to my family, who has given me unconditional encouragement—even when it meant that I spent more time in Germany than in Duluth. I owe a great deal to my grandparents, Kenneth and Kathryn Johnson and Robert and Jeanne Sederberg, and I am grateful that they have always been so involved in the lives of their grandchildren. Thanks to Elisabeth and Anna, my wonderful sisters who never stop reminding me what matters and how to have more fun. I dedicate this

dissertation to my parents, Bruce and Brenda Sederberg, who have given me so much love and support, and who always encouraged me to pursue the work I love. Together they taught me how to be a curious and open-minded explorer of the world.

And finally, Michael Powers, thank you for your sense of humor and your patience, for all our conversations, for reading so many drafts of my work, and for being at my side every step of the way.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Figures	vii
Abstract	ix
Introduction: “Brüchigkeit der Form” in Germany’s “Rubble Years” 1943-1951	1
Chapter 1: Writing the Present: The Diary in Retreat and Defeat	30
Chapter 2: Writing from within History: Victor Klemperer’s Wartime Diaries and <i>LTI</i>	91
Chapter 3: “Zeitgeschichte im Präsens”: Wolfgang Koeppen’s <i>Tauben im Gras</i>	123
Chapter 4: A Future History: The Rubble Film <i>Berliner Ballade</i>	170
Chapter 5: “Bloß gut, daß alles zu Ende war”: Arno Schmidt’s <i>Schwarze Spiegel</i>	203
Chapter 6: “Finding Language for the Germans”: Communication, Transformation, and Reeducation in Essays of Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt	251
Conclusion	302
Appendix: Annotated Bibliography of Published Diaries	309
Bibliography	318

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1.	Erich Andres (Hamburg, 1943)	31
Figure 1.2.	Richard Peter, sen., “Suchmeldungen am Wohnhaus Winckelmannstraße,” (Dresden, 1945)	31
Figure 1.3.	Anonymous photo of “ruin graffiti”	31
Figure 1.4.	Viktor in postwar Berlin (<i>Unsere Mütter unsere Väter</i> , 2013)	32
Figure 1.5.	Still from <i>Liebe 47</i> (1949)	32
Figure 1.6.	Still from <i>Liebe 47</i> (1949)	32
Figure 1.7.	A preprinted diary with day-by-day pages for five years	55
Figure 1.8.	A notebook made into a diary, with pages divided by hand	55
Figure 1.9.	Diary of Iri M.	58
Figure 1.10.	<i>Feldpostbriefe</i> , returned to sender	66
Figure 1.11.	Diary of Ise T.	70
Figure 2.1.	Reich Chancellery, Berlin	100
Figure 2.2.	Detail from Klemperer’s Diary, “LTI. HISTORISCH”	101
Figure 2.3.	Montaigne, in Klemperer’s <i>Die romanischen Literaturen</i>	110
Figure 3.1.	American representatives tour the ruins of Berlin (Billy Wilder, <i>A Foreign Affair</i> , 1948)	148
Figure 3.2.	Gertrude Stein sees the Rhine from the air (1945)	154
Figure 3.3.	Richard Peter, sen., “Blick vom Dresdner Rathausturm nach Süden,” Dresden, 1945	163

Figure 3.4.	Munich, photographer unknown	163
Figure 4.1.	Berlin building, photographer unknown, 1946	171
Figure 4.2.	Photo by Hildegard Dreyer, Berlin, 1947	171
Figure 4.3.	From the opening sequence of <i>Berliner Ballade</i> (1948)	180
Figure 4.4.	From the opening sequence of <i>Berliner Ballade</i> (1948)	180
Figure 4.5.	From the 1947 performance in Cabaret Ulenspiegel, Berlin	185
Figure 4.6.	Otto Normalverbraucher returns to Berlin (<i>Berliner Ballade</i>)	188
Figure 4.7.	Otto Normalverbraucher returns to Berlin (<i>Berliner Ballade</i>)	188
Figure 4.8.	Otto walks through the Tiergarten	189
Figure 4.9.	Otto walks through the Tiergarten	189
Figure 4.10.	From <i>Germania Anno Zero</i> (Roberto Rossellini 1948)	190
Figure 4.11.	From <i>Germania Anno Zero</i> (Roberto Rossellini 1948)	190
Figure 4.12.	Otto “in seinen drei Wänden” (<i>Berliner Ballade</i>)	193
Figure 4.13.	Former officer in train (<i>Berliner Ballade</i>)	199
Figure 5.1.	Excerpt from <i>Schwarze Spiegel</i>	212
Figure 5.2.	Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Roman ruins (1774)	235
Figure 5.3.	Hubert Robert, “Vue de la Grande Galerie du Louvre en ruines” (1796)	239
Figure 5.4.	Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre, “St. Christopher House, ex-Public Library”	240
Figure 5.5.	A. Paul Weber, “Das Ende”	247
Figure 7.1	First edition, <i>Jakob Littners Aufzeichnungen</i> (1948)	304

ABSTRACT

With the decline and defeat of National Socialism, German society experienced a period of radical semantic openness in which historical narratives broke down, creating a heightened uncertainty as to what it meant to live in the present. This dissertation examines the literary and visual culture as well as political theory of the period that engaged with the notion of “rubble” at metaphoric, tropological, and structural levels. Looking beyond the canon of *Trümmerliteratur* (rubble literature), the concept of “rubble texts” allows for an analysis of cultural forms that bear witness to wartime and postwar Germany as a landscape of both ruin—which points to legible layers of the past—and rubble—a disorientating state of destruction. Close readings of texts address the telling conflation of rubble and ruin in contemporary discourse, which reflects both the desire to create something new and the persistent presence of the old. Additionally, this project expands the traditional focus on 1945 as the *Stunde Null* (Zero Hour) to the period 1943-1951, looking both backward and forward to Germany’s periods of rubble and rebuilding (*Trümmer-* and *Aufbaujahre*).

This dissertation highlights the diary as a crucial yet often overlooked form that offers evidence of the historiographic and temporal crisis in texts of this moment in German history. Formally, the diary contains several forms paradigmatic of “rubble texts”: presentist temporality, stuttering forward movement, lack of narrative arc, and reflections on the act of writing. Rubble film, photography, and modernist literature of

this period provide other examples of an aesthetics of fragmentation, self-consciously engaging with the concept of “rubble” and attempting to stake out new space for postwar German culture. Primary materials include unpublished diaries of German civilians, the wartime diaries of Victor Klemperer, literary works by Wolfgang Koeppen and Arno Schmidt, the rubble film *Berliner Ballade* (Robert Stemmle), and essays by Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt. Incorporating archival research, this dissertation considers questions of temporality and the writing of history, the pragmatics of writing in times of crisis, and the politics of rubble texts in the context of postwar projects of *Umerziehung* (reeducation) and *Entnazifizierung* (denazification).

INTRODUCTION

“Brüchigkeit der Form” in Germany’s “Rubble Years” 1943-1951

Das Kennzeichen unserer Zeit ist die Ruine. Sie umgibt unser Leben. Sie umsäumt die Straßen unserer Städte. Sie ist unsere Wirklichkeit. [...] Sie ist das äußere Wahrzeichen der inneren Unsicherheit des Menschen unserer Zeit. Die Ruine lebt in uns wie wir in ihr. Sie ist unsere neue Wirklichkeit, die gestaltet werden will.

-Hans Werner Richter¹

There is something uncanny about reading the diary of a stranger. At first thought, we recognize that this is due to a breached intimacy, because we think of diaries as private documents, full of thoughts hidden from an “outside” world. The “I” voice seems to speak directly to us, inviting us into a space immediate and personal. But beyond this indiscretion, the sense of the uncanny stems from a temporal transgression. As we touch the text, or as our eyes skim the words on the page, noting the dated entries, we travel in time to a present moment now past. The author wrote this entry without knowledge of the future, without knowing how the story would end. And we, as readers, know that at least the text survived, offering pieces of a life now past.

In the preface to his wartime diary published as *Notabene 45*, Erich Kästner describes the strange place of the diary in time, and the way diary entries present “snapshots” of the past:

Tagebücher präsentieren gewesenes Präsens. Nicht als Bestandsaufnahme, sondern in Momentaufnahmen. Nicht im Überblick, sondern durch Einblicke. Tagebücher enthalten Anschauungsmaterial, Amateurfotos in Notizformat,

¹ Hans Werner Richter, “Literatur im Interregnum,” *Der Ruf* 1, no. 15 (1947): 11.

Szenen, die der Zufall arrangierte, Schnappschüsse aus der Vergangenheit, als sie noch Gegenwart hieß.²

Kästner contrasts a presentation of the past that includes overview (*Überblick*) with the view of the diary, which offers a glimpse of a moment (*Einblick*), scenes arranged more by chance than by writerly composition. These images of a future past are made by “amateurs,” spontaneously, not staking a claim to analysis or synthesis. It is a similar kind of snapshot-like effect that Arno Schmidt mimics in his postwar literary prose. Schmidt even calls the scenes presented in his stories “Momentaufnahmen” or “snapshots,” rejecting the representation of life as a continuum.³ As the narrator expresses in the story *Aus dem Leben eines Fauns*:

*Mein Leben ? ! : Ist kein Kontinuum ! (nicht bloß durch Tag und Nacht in weiß und schwarze Stücke zerbrochen ! Denn auch am Tage ist bei mir der ein Anderer, der zur Bahn geht; im Amt sitzt; büchert; durch Haine stelzt; begattet; schwatzt; schreibt; Tausendsdenker; auseinanderfallender Fächer; der rennt; raucht; kotet; radiohört; »Herr Landrat« sagt : that’s me !) : ein Tablett voll glitzernder snapshots.*⁴

Schmidt takes the metaphor further by presenting the snapshots “glittering,” in a “tray”—still submerged in the photochemical liquid. The images are perhaps underdeveloped, or overdeveloped, not yet stable objects. It is fitting that Kästner and Schmidt, who both utilized the diary form in their postwar works, are drawn to the metaphor of the photographic snapshot. Kästner, in reflecting on the diary, is interested in its relation to time and the “moments” captured in scenes of the past. Schmidt uses elements of the diary form in developing a literary prose style that represents memory, and the discontinuous “porous presence” of consciousness (*der porösen Struktur [...] unserer*

² Erich Kästner, *Notabene 45. Ein Tagebuch* (Berlin: C. Dressle, 1961), 13.

³ Arno Schmidt, “Berechnungen,” in *Bargfelder Ausgabe der Werke Arno Schmidts* (Zürich: Haffmanns Verlag, 1987), 102. Emphasis in original.

⁴ Arno Schmidt, “Aus dem Leben eines Fauns,” in *Bargfelder Ausgabe, Werkgruppe I* (Zürich: Haffmanns Verlag, 1987), 301. I reproduce Schmidt’s idiosyncratic punctuation here.

Gegenwartsempfindung).⁵ While Kästner's use of the snapshot metaphor focuses on the temporal dimension, Schmidt also notes how the presentation of self occurs through a distancing technique allowing for the presentation of self as split or multiple. This can be seen in the narrator above, who writes himself in a double process of identification ("that's me!") and disidentification ("[der ist] ein Anderer").

In this dissertation, I consider how the end of the Second World War and the immediate postwar period in Germany brought about new forms of writing to represent past and present and to write the self at a threshold. Writers sought forms and language to capture the strange temporality of a period of transition and crisis. The diary, I argue, is a crucial yet often overlooked form of this period; first, for how it engages with time, and second, for how it exhibits a transformative and incomplete writing of the self. Additionally, the text produced in the act of diary writing is highly variable, usually characterized by ruptures and incompleteness, presenting loosely connected scenes rather than an arc of narrative. This form is also highly presentist, as diary entries are usually written in close proximity to the events narrated. The openness of the diary form allowed writers a means to represent and work through this period of crisis, allowing for reflections on the passage of time and the place of the writing subject in history.

At both the formal and the thematic levels, I argue, much German writing of the period 1943-1951 emphasized historical uncertainty and the contingency of the future in ways which not only broke radically with Nazi thinking about history, but would also remain at odds with the competing historical narratives that emerged later in divided Germany. Indeed, as we will see, this period was marked by the breakdown of the

⁵ Arno Schmidt, "Berechnungen I," in *Bargfelder Ausgabe der Werke Arno Schmidts* (Zürich: Haffmanns Verlag, 1987), 167.

historical narratives which organized political and social life under National Socialism, and by a heightened uncertainty as to what it means to live in the present. Diaries, in particular, offer convincing historical evidence of this period's historiographic and temporal crisis. Not only diaries, but also rubble film and modernist literature of this period provide examples of this uncertainty and crisis. Shifting focus away from the usual chronological caesurae of 1945 and 1949, I am particularly interested in exploring how present-times were configured in relation to past and future, and in tracing a shift in these configurations which began before 1945, as defeat became increasingly certain, and which continued past the founding of the two German states: Germany's "rubble years."

Hermann Glaser has used the term "rubble years" for his study of the period 1945-1948, what he calls the "cultural roots of postwar Germany."⁶ Yet clearly there was rubble and ruination before the ultimate defeat of National Socialism in 1945—both physical and metaphorical. Additionally, this period represents not only the "roots" of postwar culture, but rather a complex landscape of cultural forms and tropes, some of which became crucial to later founding myths of the two German states and some of which have become largely forgotten. Beginning this study in 1943 allows us to look at the earliest "rubble years," as the National Socialist state crumbled apart and the German population began to work through this period of personal and national crisis. In February 1943, Goebbels employed a new rhetoric of urgency in his famous "Total War" speech, urging Germans "Die Stunde drängt!" With the large-scale bombing of German cities such as Hamburg and Berlin in 1943, and the defeat at Stalingrad, the effects of total war were felt throughout German society, in its cities and towns—not just by soldiers or

⁶ Hermann Glaser, *The Rubble Years: The Cultural Roots of Postwar Germany* (New York: Paragon House, 1986). In the German edition of the text, Glaser uses the term "Trümmerzeit." Hermann Glaser, *Kulturgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (München: C. Hanser, 1985), 9.

political elites. With this turning point in the war, the German population as a whole was presented with ruin in its many forms: social, political, and cultural.

In keeping with this more expansive notion of Germany's "rubble years," I also propose expanding the generic and medial boundaries of our definition of Germany's "rubble texts" from the period 1943-1951. Although the terms *Trümmerliteratur* (rubble literature) and *Trümmerfilm* (rubble film) are already widespread in reference to postwar works set in ruined Germany, my dissertation looks at the central role of other forms in this period, including wartime diaries and political and theoretical essays in addition to film and literary texts. As the category of "rubble film" is used in film studies, it does not refer to a certain genre of film, but rather to the films set in the ruins of destroyed Germany that often share common themes relevant to challenges of postwar German society. The term "rubble literature" was made famous by Heinrich Böll in his 1952 essay "Bekenntnis zur Trümmerliteratur," in which he defends contemporary authors who take up the issues of ruination—physical, moral, or otherwise—often to the dismay of the public.⁷ Likewise, I am defining "rubble texts" as cultural objects produced during the period 1943-1951 that engage with the present moment of Germany in ruins. My argument is that these texts are often characterized by a concern for time and temporality, as well as by self-reflective consideration of what it means to bear witness to this moment of historical rupture and change. Examining this unusually pensive and troubled moment in German history also helps us understand how periods of historical rupture also bring forth new cultural forms and call attention to the need for renewed attention to language.

⁷ Heinrich Böll, "Bekenntnis zur Trümmerliteratur," in *Werke*, ed. Árpád Bernáth and Annamária Gyurácz (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2007).

On a formal level, I also examine how rubble texts present an aesthetics of fragmentation, using short and episodic forms. As Klaus Scherpe writes, the many reports and first-hand accounts that filled newspapers after the war replaced “den Roman [...], der noch nicht geschrieben werden kann.”⁸ In place of the novel, Scherpe argues, we should consider the form of montage found in postwar newspapers a kind of precursor to the short story.⁹ Whereas Scherpe traces a lineage between reportage and the short story that begins after the war, I look at the proliferation of diaries during the Second World War to locate literary forms which become reused and adapted in postwar modernist texts. As I will show, it is crucial to look before 1945, to the last years of the war, to trace these developments.

Fragmentary forms, or the fragmenting of form, can be found in various documents of the rubble years. The writer and film critic Wolfdietrich Schnurre, in an article on the rubble film *In jenen Tagen*, writes that filmmakers should make a virtue out of the necessity of short forms:

Dennoch halte ich die hier gewählte Kurzform der blitzlichthaft aufblendenenen Episode – hier von den oft geradezu lapidaren Dialogen Schnabels äußerst wirkungsvoll unterstützt – unserer augenblicklichen geistigen Situation entsprechend – für die ehrlichste, ja für die uns heute einzig gemäße Art einer Aussage über die letzten Jahre. Denn um ein Epos zu schaffen, müssen sich unsere Augen erst einmal vom Sog selbst miterlebter Details lösen können. Dazu aber sind Jahre nötig. Jeder heute unternommene Vergangenheit zu Leibe zu rücken, wird jedoch, an der Fülle des zu Bewältigenden gemessen, noch auf weite Sicht fragmentarisch sein müssen. Warum also nicht auch hier aus der Not eine Tugend machen?¹⁰

⁸ “Menschen und Schicksal. Dies war mein Leben. Interview mit einer ‘politischen Frau’” in *Die Welt*, April 2 1946. Quoted in Klaus R. Scherpe, *Die rekonstruierte Moderne: Studien zur deutschen Literatur nach 1945* (Köln; Weimar; Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1992), 26.

⁹ *Ibid.*, xv.

¹⁰ Wolfdietrich Schnurre, “Erfindungsgabe und Improvisationsarbeit,” *Der neue Film*, Nr. 4, July 7, 1947. In Hans-Michael Bock, ed. *Schatten des Krieges. Innovation und Tradition im europäischen Kino 1940 - 1950*, Hamburgisches Centrum für Filmforschung (Berlin: Absolut Medien, 2009), 105-6. Ernst Schnabel wrote the screenplay with Helmut Käutner for the film *In jenen Tagen*.

Schnurre notes that the short episodes of the film are a result of the inability to get distance from recent events. This reflects artists' search for new forms through which to better understand and represent the present moment. While film was one medium suited to presenting short scenes and stories, this technique can also be found in literature as well as in published and unpublished diaries. Gerhard Nebel, in the introduction to his war diary, writes that during such a tumultuous time it is not possible to write a "größeres Werk": "Zeit und Kraft reichen nur zu abgerissenen Notizen."¹¹ The diary form, he notes, is characterized by its non-literariness:

Es macht ernst mit der Brüchigkeit der literarischen Formen, von der selbst die Form der Formlosigkeit, der Roman, erfaßt worden ist [...] Das Sein hat sich zerstückelt und entleert, und darauf antwortet der Mensch [...] mit den Fetzen und Bemerkungen seiner Tagebücher, in der Hoffnung, daß noch einmal eine wahrhafte und strahlende Gestalt möglich sein wird.¹²

Nebel's use of the term "Brüchigkeit der Formen" refers to the fragmentation (*Bruchstücke*) found in dairies, but also to the *fragility* of form itself (*Brüchigkeit der Formen*), the way it can crumble into pieces as it does in diaries, modernist literature such as that of Schmidt and Koeppen, or in rubble films. Nebel notes that this reflects a parallel "Zerstückelung" of human existence—to which the diary is a response, albeit a kind of compromise. Although many diarists want to write their way "out of the crisis" (and "out of the diary"), others see the state of rubble as an enabling condition. The "fragility" of literary form can also be seen as a strength of the diary, as individual diarists creatively adapt the text to their own needs.¹³ Working on an articulation of his own postwar poetics, Arno Schmidt also plays with the diary form, creating a

¹¹ Gerhard Nebel, *Bei den nördlichen Hesperiden. Tagebuch aus dem Jahr 1942* (Wuppertal: Marées Verlag, 1948), 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 7.

¹³ Philippe Lejeune, *On Diary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 195.

“Perlenkette kleiner Erlebniseinheiten, innerer und äußerer.”¹⁴ His modernist stories string together small and vivid scenes, “ein ständiges Feuerwerk von Einfällen und Pointen.”¹⁵ Thus my definition of “rubble texts” also includes a formal component: they do not aim for totality, but instead present short and often incomplete scenes or images. Such texts are not composed in hindsight, offering knowledge of the present, but write in the present, or write fragments of the present. Klemperer, in his diaries, thematizes this problematic most directly and eloquently.

I have determined this periodization of Germany’s rubble years 1943-1951 through the body of sources under analysis, rather than adopt the political turning points 1945 or 1949 as defining the boundaries between aesthetic epochs. Diary writing, for instance, increased significantly after the defeat at Stalingrad, reaching a peak in 1945 and trailing off after the war’s end.¹⁶ The era of rubble film lasted from 1946 with the first German postwar film *Die Mörder sind unter uns* into the late 1940s. In regards to literature, I focus on works by Wolfgang Koeppen and Arno Schmidt, two modernist authors who are not usually considered part of the canon of “rubble literature.”

Nevertheless, their texts are set in the rubble of destroyed Germany and take up issues of the time, while formally experimenting with a style of “Brüchigkeit,” the fragility and fragmentariness of form. Koeppen’s *Tauben im Gras* (1951), a mosaic of stories set in

¹⁴ Schmidt, “Berechnungen I,” 167.

¹⁵ Gerd Müller, “Die Literatur der Bundesrepublik und der deutschsprachigen Schweiz,” in *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Viktor Zmegac (Königstein: Athenäum, 1984), 502.

¹⁶ There is some debate among diary scholars whether these periods of crisis are also overrepresented in archives (especially the Kempowski collection at the Akademie der Künste), and there is therefore an exaggerated sense of an increase in writing at this time. My own research would substantiate the claims of Susanne zur Nieden, who writes that many women began keeping a diary in 1943 or 1944. She also notes that the war’s end, as well as the first months after the war, were “Schreibschwerpunkte.” Susanne zur Nieden, *Alltag im Ausnahmezustand: Frauentagebücher im zerstörten Deutschland, 1943 bis 1945* (Berlin: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1993), 73. Heinrich Breloer, in building his collection, writes that the “Schwerpunkt der Tagebücher” was clearly in the 30s and 40s. Heinrich Breloer, ed. *Mein Tagebuch. Geschichten vom Überleben 1939-1947* (Köln: Verlagsgesellschaft Schulfernsehen, 1984).

postwar occupied Munich, is now largely considered a preeminent novel of the postwar period. Arno Schmidt's futuristic story *Schwarze Spiegel* (1951) imagines the post-catastrophic setting of Germany after the *next* world war, presenting the narrative through diary-like first person fragments. In addition to this literary and filmic material, I also discuss how philosophers Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers addressed the problem of the "rubble" of German society. Their essays from the postwar period, "Report from Germany" and "Die Schuldfrage," respectively, consider what it means to "find language" for the Germans after the war in a process of dialogue, self-reflection and self-transformation.¹⁷

Metaphors of Time in Germany's "Zero Hour"

Notions of a "zero hour," or a historical break sharply cleaving the National Socialist era from the ensuing postwar period, have haunted the study of German culture since 1945. The year 1945 has shaped studies of German history and culture, not only as a subject of fascination in itself, but also as a date bookending studies of National Socialism or studies of the postwar period. This phenomenon is not unique to German studies, as the end of the Second World War is still considered a major turning point—if not *the* major turning point—of the 20th century in European and global contexts. In the last few years alone, monographs have been published such as Tony Judt's *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*; Ian Buruma's *Year Zero: A History of 1945*, with a focus on continental Europe as well as Asia; and Ian Kershaw's *The End*, an attempt to understand

¹⁷ "1945 lebte ich in der Hoffnung, als politischer Schriftsteller mit vielen anderen die Sprache zu finden für die Deutschen." Karl Jaspers, "Karl Jaspers - Ein Selbstporträt (1966/67)," in *Schicksal und Wille: Autobiographische Schriften*, ed. Hans Saner (München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1967), 37.

Germany's drawn-out surrender.¹⁸ In the field of literature, 1945 continues to resurface as a date of fascination and popularity: Hans Fallada's postwar novel *Der Alpdruck* was just republished (Aufbau 2014) and Alexander Kluge's latest book is a compilation of perspectives from *April 30, 1945* (Suhrkamp 2014).¹⁹ The television miniseries *Unsere Mütter, unsere Väter* (2013), which thematized the lives of five "ordinary" Germans during the war, was watched by millions of Germans—not without controversy. "Soviel Hitler war nie," as Norbert Frei claimed in *1945 und wir*, discussing the new "wave" of the Second World War in contemporary media, coinciding with a generational shift between a generation that lived through this period, and future generations that inherit its memory. "Eine Flut von Filmen, Fernsehbildern und Erinnerungen bringt uns, den Nachgeborenen, '1945' näher denn je."²⁰

In this extensive popular and scholarly interest in the end of the Second World War, the Stunde Null has remained a particularly strong metaphor. The term itself seems to contain a powerful narrative about time and history, about rupture and new beginnings, as well as images of the immense destruction, and the repair and recovery needed in the postwar era. Many studies of German literature have tended to reproduce the caesura of 1945 in their periodizations, leaving the various literary projects and their experimentations with style and form that take place *within* this Stunde Null essentially unexamined. Additionally, most discussions of the Stunde Null have treated the topic as a yes/no question: was there a zero hour? In this dissertation, I propose that we look again

¹⁸ Ian Buruma, *Year Zero: A History of 1945* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2013); Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005); Ian Kershaw, *The End: Hitler's Germany, 1944-45* (London; New York: Allen Lane, 2011).

¹⁹ Hans Fallada, *Der Alpdruck* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2014); Alexander Kluge, *30. April 1945: der Tag, an dem Hitler sich erschoss und die Westbindung der Deutschen begann* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2014).

²⁰ Norbert Frei, *1945 und wir* (München: C.H. Beck, 2005), 7.

more closely at the language used during this period, and at the many varying metaphors of time and temporality that circulated around 1945, but also more broadly between 1943 and 1951. My project considers the Stunde Null not as a moment of rupture, but as a transitional space within which the discussion of timepoints and epochs proliferated and new, sometimes experimental, forms of writing emerged. Whereas diarists rarely explicitly experiment with form, novelists are very conscious of doing so. Nevertheless, both diaries and literature reveal the same kind of stuttering text fragments that grapple for forms of expression and representation.

This period contained many competing models of time and temporality which were drawn upon by two German states whose official historical self-understandings emerged, in large part, from debates about whether a Stunde Null was possible in the first place. Lutz Koepnick also points to the powerful mythic potential of the zero hour, as it could accommodate multiple meanings:

Although the trope of the zero hour suggested a shared German need to leave the past behind, and inhabit one and the same new present, German culture in the shadow of the Nazi period, in fact, was often marked by conflicting recollections and anticipations, by contradictory temporalities that resisted any attempt to be synthesized within the single space of the present.²¹

Common to these temporalities, however divergent they may be in the details, was a divide between a violent past and a new space of the future. Most importantly, this also involved an investigation of the present.

For writers beginning to publish at the war's end, the rhetoric of a zero hour signaled a break not only in terms of politics, but also in terms of a moral and aesthetic new beginning. Many writers became famous through their involvement with Gruppe 47,

²¹ Lutz Koepnick, "Culture in the Shadow of Trauma?," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, ed. Helmut Walser Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 718.

a forum for postwar literature convened by Hans Werner Richter.²² These authors, proclaiming a new beginning, later became known under the category of “rubble literature.” As Stephen Brockmann writes, although most of these writers were marginal figures at the time, “the ‘zero hour’ consciousness that they represented came to dominate the literature of the Federal Republic.” Brockmann continues,

Hence, while one must accept the fact that the “zero hour” is more a literary historical myth than a reality, one must also accept the fact that this myth has acquired increasing significance during the postwar years and has, precisely for that reason, taken on a certain stubborn reality of its own—in the present, if not in the past.²³

Helmut Peitsch has described the development of the zero hour concept especially in regard to the early 1960s, as “postwar literature” was equated with the keywords “‘Nullpunkt,’ ‘Kahlschlag’ und ‘Trümmerliteratur.’”²⁴ Andreas Huyssen emphasizes that although we may deny that 1945 was a Stunde Null, which he defines as “a radical new beginning unburdened from memory,” this is not enough: “The point is to understand the popularity of this metaphor as the beginning of a denial and willful forgetting of the past that shaped the history of both German states for decades to come.”²⁵ In the following, I briefly sketch the development of Stunde Null rhetoric and its variations in the immediate postwar period, focusing on the notions of time and history enveloped in the term.

The term “zero hour” was not used immediately in Germany in 1945. Instead, it has its origins in exile. Erika Mann, in an essay published 1940 against American

²² See Böttiger for a discussion of the group’s crucial rewriting of the relation between authors, publishers, and the media. Helmut Böttiger, *Die Gruppe 47: Als die deutsche Literatur Geschichte schrieb* (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2013).

²³ Stephen Brockmann, “German Literature, Year Zero: Writers and Politics, 1945–1953,” *Department of Modern Languages* (1997), http://repository.cmu.edu/modern_languages/8. Accessed July 29 2014. Published in Geoffrey J. Giles, ed. *Stunde Null: The End and the Beginning Fifty Years Ago* (German Historical Institute Occasional Paper 20, 1997), 59-74.

²⁴ Helmut Peitsch, *Nachkriegsliteratur 1945 - 1989*, Schriften des Erich Maria Remarque-Archivs (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2009), 11.

²⁵ Andreas Huyssen, “German Painting in the Cold War,” *New German Critique* 37, no. 2 (2010): 212.

appeasement policies in a volume entitled *Zero Hour*, warned Americans about the importance of decision making during this crucial time. “Act! This is your hour, it’s the final hour—the Zero Hour!”²⁶ Mann invokes the term “zero hour” in the appeal for a political or military decision, suggesting that time has gained a new urgency. Notably, the Zero Hour refers here to the *end* of time, or time running out. In the context of defeated Germany, the concept is reversed: the clock is standing still, or time is marked as new.

Although it took several years for the term to become prominent in reference to Germany’s postwar situation, this does not mean that rhetoric of a “zero hour” was absent in postwar Germany. The language of the time focused on terms of ending and beginning: *Zusammenbruch* and *Katastrophe*, or *Anfang*, *Neubeginn*, and *Wiederaufbau*. In reference to a period of rupture, the concept of *Nullpunkt* or *Stunde Null* did not surface until a few years later. In tracing the origin of the term, Stephen Brockmann attributes the “first significant postwar reference *specifically to a Zero time*” to Roberto Rossellini’s 1948 rubble film *Germany Year Zero*.²⁷ German writers, although perhaps not using the term *Stunde Null* explicitly, began to develop a rhetoric of “Nullpunkt” soon after defeat.

Many short manifesto-like texts attempted to find a voice for postwar literature. Key figures included Hans Werner Richter, Gustav René Hocke, and Alfred Andersch,

²⁶ Erika Mann, “Don’t Make the Same Mistakes,” in *Zero Hour. A Summons to the Free*, ed. Stephen Vincent Benét, et al. (New York; Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1940), 76. In the preface to the book, Stephen Vincent Benét likewise argued that time is of the essence: “the hands of the clock are hurrying as I write.” Stephen Vincent Benét, “Six of Us Talking” in *Zero Hour*, 10.

²⁷ Emphasis added. See Brockmann, especially “The Origins of the Term ‘Zero Hour’” in Stephen Brockmann, “German Culture at the ‘Zero Hour,’” in *Revisiting the Zero Hour 1945: The Emergence of Postwar German Culture*, ed. Stephen Brockmann and Frank Trommler (Washington, DC: American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 1996), 12. Günter Neumann’s cabaret “Schwarzer Jahrmarkt” from late 1947 (discussed in Chapter Four) also contained the subtitle “Eine Revue der Stunde Null.” See Regina Stürickow, *Der Insulaner verliert die Ruhe nicht : Günter Neumann und sein Kabarett zwischen Kaltem Krieg und Wirtschaftswunder* (Berlin: Arani, 1993), 55.

who had spent time in the “elite” prisoner of war camp in Rhode Island with a special focus on reeducation, where they founded the journal *Der Ruf*.²⁸ Upon their return to Germany, they became leading voices in the public sphere and in the publishing world. These authors and publicists wrote of an “absoluten und radikalen Beginn von vorn” (Hans Werner Richter), “Kahlschlag” literature (Wolfgang Weyrauch), and “tabula rasa” (Alfred Andersch).²⁹ Many new authors styled themselves as a “young generation” who rejected the escapist poetry of the so-called “inner emigration.”³⁰ These kinds of programmatic claims for a new literary moment, beginning at Stunde Null were also driven by the desire to stake out a claim for a new generation, rather than admitting their indebtedness to their predecessors.³¹ As Maren Jäger notes, “Die These von dem absoluten Neuanfang entsprach völlig dem zunächst zukunftsgerichteten Zeitgeist, da man sich (dem gemeinsamen Bedürfnis einer Vergangenheitsbewältigung zum Trotz)

²⁸ About 400,000 German soldiers were sent to POW camps in the United States. Of those, a select few were interned in the “Universitätslager” Fort Eustis (Virginia) and Fort Getty (Rhode Island), Special Projects reeducation centers. Gustav René Hocke, *Im Schatten des Leviathan: Lebenserinnerungen 1908-1984* (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2004), 247. For more on these camps, see Aaron D. Horton, *German POWs, der Ruf, and the genesis of Group 47: the political journey of Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014); Ron Theodore Robin, *The Barbed-Wire College: Reeducating German POWs in the United States during World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Barbara Schmitter Heisler, *From German prisoner of war to American citizen: a social history with 35 interviews* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2013). Schmitter Heisler’s work includes interviews with former prisoners of war, some of whom were involved in the “reeducation” camps.

²⁹ Hans Werner Richter, “Warum schweigt die junge Generation“ in Hans Werner Richter, *Der Ruf: eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*, ed. Hans Schwab-Felisch (München: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1962); Wolfgang Weyrauch, ed. *Tausend Gramm. Sammlung neuer deutscher Geschichten* (Hamburg; Stuttgart; Baden-Baden; Berlin: Rowohlt Verlag, 1949); Alfred Andersch, *Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung: ein Beitrag zur Analyse der literarischen Situation* (Karlsruhe: Verlag Volk und Zeit, 1948).

³⁰ Hans Werner Richter, “Warum schweigt die junge Generation?“ in Richter, *Der Ruf: eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*: 31-32. They claimed that they were the *true* “lost generation”: “eine wahrhaft ‘verlorene’ Generation.”

³¹ Richter famously wrote of this generation gap in a 1946 article in *Der Ruf*: “In Deutschland redet eine Generation, und in Deutschland schweigt eine Generation.” He writes that this younger generation was left an ever-growing heap of moral, spiritual, and social rubble. *Ibid.*, 29, 31.

von jeglicher Tradition erbittert und erschüttert abwandte.”³² Jäger’s description of a “zukunftsgerichteten Zeit” is crucial. In a pamphlet on *Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung*, Alfred Andersch also addresses the need for a break and new beginning: “wie aus dem Zwang einer völlig neuartigen Situation heraus, steht die junge Generation vor einer tabula rasa, vor der Notwendigkeit, in einem originalen Schöpfungsakt eine Erneuerung des deutschen geistigen Lebens zu vollbringen.”³³ The rhetoric of a new beginning is a highly optimistic perspective on the possibilities for doing something new and breaking with a (radically destructive and murderous) past.

Not all texts, however, depicted the future as a wide open space of optimism. Others emphasized the state of suspension in which Germany found itself, and the tension felt between an oppressive past and absent future. Speaking about this decisive moment for German literature, Andersch describes how Germans only have a small space in which to act:

in einer Welt, die sich wie auf des Messers Schneide bewegt, in dem schmalen Raum zwischen einer apokalyptischen Vergangenheit und dem Alptraum eines nahen Untergangs. Nur dieser schmale Raum, nur eine kurze Spanne Zeit ist uns zugemessen, in der wir handelnd über die Art unserer Zukunft entscheiden können.³⁴

Wolfgang Koeppen, in his novel *Tauben im Gras*, uses the metaphor of an “Atempause auf dem Schlachtfeld,” describing the heightened sense that another war is on the horizon. Two of the following dissertation chapters look at material that employs a

³² Maren Jäger, *Die Joyce-Rezeption in der deutschsprachigen Erzählliteratur nach 1945* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2009), 38.

³³ Andersch, *Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung: ein Beitrag zur Analyse der literarischen Situation*: 24. Speaking for his generation of *Heimkehrer*, the young author Wolfgang Borchert wrote, “Wir sind eine Generation ohne Abschied, denn wir haben nichts, zu dem wir heimkehren könnten [...] Aber wir sind eine Generation der Ankunft. Vielleicht sind wir eine Generation voller Ankunft auf einem neuen Stern, in einem neuen Leben.” Wolfgang Borchert, *Das Gesamtwerk* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1949), 60-61.

³⁴ Andersch, *Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung: ein Beitrag zur Analyse der literarischen Situation*: 30.

futuristic frame to show contemporary audiences and readers the present moment from a position of (imagined) distance: the film *Berliner Ballade* and Schmidt's *Schwarze Spiegel*. This kind of framing device presents yet another mode of presenting the present time. To summarize, the Stunde Null found many varying articulations, often relaying an intense preoccupation with time and the relation between past and present.

Postwar Literature, Rubble Literature, Realism, and Modernism

The idea of a new beginning was also expressed in terms of aesthetics. Postwar authors wanted to claim a new language for German literature and break with literary conventions. Implicitly or explicitly, they also claimed a break from the twelve years of National Socialism in which language no longer corresponded to reality. Authors were looking for "Klarheit der Form und Unmittelbarkeit der Aussage," as Gustav René Hocke reported in a 1946 essay entitled "Deutsche Kalligraphie oder: Glanz und Elend der modernen Literatur."³⁵ In opposition to a style of literature characterized by "Kalligraphie," these authors wanted to create a new form of realism:

Eine neue Gattung, so könnte man sagen, ist in den Zeitschriften aller "Zonen" entstanden: der kaleidoskopartige Bericht über Deutschlandfahrten. Auf diesen - ja - Irrfahrten wird, noch ganz impressionistisch, Tupfen um Tupfen, Bewegung um Bewegung, die Wirklichkeit zurückgewonnen. Hier gleitet man an den Menschen heran, auch an den ganz andersartigen. Man sieht die Dinge und sagt mutig etwas über sie aus; in Trümmern entdeckt man die ersten neuen Gesetze der soziologischen und psychologischen Wirklichkeit von heute, vor allem Eindeutigkeit und Einfachheit des Leids und doch die Mannigfaltigkeit der Reaktion darauf.³⁶

³⁵ Gustav René Hocke, "Deutsche Kalligraphie oder: Glanz und Elend der modernen Literatur," *Der Ruf. Unabhängige Blätter der jungen Generation* 1, no. 7 (1946). Reprinted in Richter, *Der Ruf: eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*: 203-08; here 206-207.

³⁶ Hocke, "Deutsche Kalligraphie oder: Glanz und Elend der modernen Literatur." In Richter, *Der Ruf: eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*: 206-07.

Hocke emphasizes that this young new generation of writers is not trying to evade the political reality. Instead, they portray their time “as it is”: “Der Blick wird schärfer. [...] Man sieht die Dinge, wie sie sind, und bezeichnet offen und ohne Arabesken, was man am Rande der Wege und Ruinen findet.”³⁷ In his memoirs, Hocke discusses the wide resonance of his essay and how it became programmatic “für eine neue Generation von Schriftstellern, die dem Begriff ‘Wirklichkeit’ einen jetzt konkreteren Sinn geben wollten.”³⁸

The language used in such essays emphasized the “accuracy” and “realism” of postwar language. Andersch noted this tendency in his 1948 assessment of German literature: “Der Hauptstrom scheint aber instinktiv zum reinen Realismus hinzudrängen, bemüht, diesen mit neuen Formen, mit der Intensität unmittelbarer Erlebniskraft zu füllen.”³⁹ Without using the term, Andersch’s language is full of the pathos of the Stunde Null, describing the openness of the future and the possibilities for new authors. Using Hocke’s term “Kalligraphie,” Andersch describes the challenge of overcoming mainstream literary trends: “Wenn es dieser jungen Literatur gelingt, sich formal überzeugend zu prägen, wird ihr die Zukunft gehören, unbeschadet des breiten Stroms der Kalligraphie, der immer noch den Vordergrund beherrscht.”⁴⁰ Wolfgang Weyrauch, the author known for coining the term “Kahlschlag-Literatur,” also described the need for a path-breaking new start for the German language.

Aber die vom Kahlschlag wissen, oder sie ahnen es doch mindestens, daß dem neuen Anfang der Prosa in unserm Land allein die Methode und die Intention des Pioniers angemessen sind. Die Methode der Bestandsaufnahme. Die Intention der

³⁷ Hocke, *Im Schatten des Leviathan: Lebenserinnerungen 1908-1984*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 281-82.

³⁹ Andersch, *Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung: ein Beitrag zur Analyse der literarischen Situation*: 25.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Wahrheit. Beides um den Preis der Poesie. Wo der Anfang der Existenz ist, ist auch der Anfang der Literatur.⁴¹

Weyrauch also uses medical metaphors to describe the “surgical” precision of “Kahlschlägler,” and their insistence on reality and truth: “[sie] fotografieren nicht. Sie röntgen. Ihre Genauigkeit ist chirurgisch. Ihre Niederschrift ist eine Antisepsis.”⁴² In a small pamphlet on “Objektivismus,” Walter Kahnert calls for a minimalist, or “ökonomischen,” postwar style—in “substance” as well as in terms of form. Kahnert, head of Herbig Verlag, listed off the keywords of the period: “Objektivität, Unbegrenztheit, Wirklichkeit, Wahrheit.”⁴³ Excited to read works of American and European modernism which had been banned under the Nazis, postwar journals published Kafka, Orwell, Hemingway, and T.S. Eliot. Weyrauch’s anthology of “new German stories,” which contains the appeal for “Kahlschlag-Literatur,” begins with “Fünf Modellgeschichten” from Hebbel, Kleist, Maupassant, Tschechow, and Hebel—apparently models for the kind of parsed-down language Weyrauch called for. German authors were thus trying to rewrite modernist literary history, and see themselves as the inheritors of tradition while employing rhetoric of newness.

Hans Werner Richter also claimed that the new language of postwar authors would be “realistisch,” “zeitgemäß” and “modern”:

Die heutige schreibende Jugend hat sich zum großen Teil von dem ungeheueren Schock der letzten Jahre noch nicht erholt und zieht sich in eine imaginäre romantische Welt zurück. Ein Beispiel dafür ist die wachsende Zahl der Lyriker. Sie leben noch immer in einer anderen Zeit, ihre Vorbilder sind meist Rilke, George, Heyse, Alverdes und andere. Eine zeitgemäße Sprache sprechen sie nicht.

⁴¹ Weyrauch, *Tausend Gramm. Sammlung neuer deutscher Geschichten*, 217.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 217-18. Such rhetoric bears echoes of German Expressionism, such as Kasimir Edschmid’s famous claim “Sie sahen nicht. Sie schauten.” Kasimir Edschmid, “Über den dichterischen Expressionismus,” in *Deutsches Lesebuch*, ed. Walther Killy (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei, 1968).

⁴³ Walter Kahnert, *Objektivismus. Gedanken über einen neuen Literaturstil* (Berlin: Herbig, 1946), 7-8, 9.

[...] Unsere Sprache wird modern sein, es wird jedoch genügend Spielraum vorhanden sein, allen wirklichen Talenten das Wort zu erteilen.⁴⁴

Böll uses this same contrast in his essay on Trümmerliteratur, juxtaposing authors who take on the challenges of the present with those who present images of a pastoral idyll. “Die Zeitgenossen in die Idylle zu entführen würde uns allzu grausam erscheinen, das Erwachen daraus wäre schrecklich, oder sollen wir wirklich Blindekuh miteinander spielen?”⁴⁵ It seems, Böll notes, that this is what the contemporary reading public is demanding of “modern authors”: “Blindekuh nicht als Spiel, sondern als Zustand.”⁴⁶ Like many of his contemporaries cited above, Böll also proposes realism as the response to this illusion: “wir wollen [die Wirklichkeit] so sehen, wie es ist, mit einem menschlichen Auge.”⁴⁷ Böll makes this task sound easier than it was. The literary works I analyze in this dissertation struggle to gain and represent a sense of reality. Many writers feel, however, that language no longer reflects reality, or that a sense of reality is no longer in their grasp.

Horizons of Time: Temporality and History

My project revisits this discourse of the Stunde Null to illuminate the rubble years as a period with many competing models of time. This period, I argue, should be viewed in terms of its time layering, and the way rubble texts continually relate and overlay various temporalities. For example, director Helmut Käutner urges filmmakers to take up time thematically: “Die Probleme des deutschen Gestern, des deutschen Heute und des

⁴⁴ Richter, quoted in Sh., *Die Neue Zeitung*, München, 7.11.1947 in Reinhard Lettau, ed. *Die Gruppe 47. Bericht, Kritik, Polemik* (Neuwied; Berlin: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1967), 25.

⁴⁵ Böll, “Bekanntnis zur Trümmerliteratur,” 59.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

deutschen Morgen, soweit sie sich schon abzeichnen, müssen Hauptthema unserer Arbeit werden.”⁴⁸ This direct concern with time and the intersection of past, present and future is a central characteristic of the rubble years. To show how this is done, I draw upon the work of Reinhart Koselleck, who took up the concept of time in the writing of history in essays spanning three decades from the late 1960s to the 1990s.

Koselleck draws attention to the concepts used by historians in writing history, and to the fact that human experiences of time exceed natural measures, such as the abstract time measured by calendars and clocks.⁴⁹ Noting that all models of time are necessarily spatial, Koselleck develops the categories of the “space of experience,” in which past is made present, and the “horizon of expectation,” the future made present. The horizon suggests an “absolute limit” of that which can be imagined or expected: “it directs itself to the not-yet, to the non experienced, to that which is to be revealed.”⁵⁰ Experience, on the other hand, is constituted by layers of past experience, and has a non-linear, non-teleological character: for “all experience leaps over time.”⁵¹ By this “leap,” Koselleck refers to the work of memory, and to the fact that human subjects recall experiences to mind non-chronologically and associatively. Although the space of experience and horizon of expectation may seem like distinct conceptual mechanisms,

⁴⁸ Helmut Käutner, “Demontage der Traumfabrik” in *Film-Echo*, Nr. 5, Juni 1947. Reprinted in Bock, *Schatten des Krieges. Innovation und Tradition im europäischen Kino 1940 - 1950*, 24.

⁴⁹ Koselleck’s work on time has been compiled into two volumes: *Futures past* (first published in German, 1979; English 1985), and *Zeitschichten* (2000). Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985). English translation: Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004). There is no English translation for *Zeitschichten*, but some of the essays are contained in Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing history, Spacing concepts*, ed. Todd Samuel Presner (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

⁵⁰ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*: 261, 59. Koselleck inherits this key concept from Hans-Georg Gadamer, For more on the “horizon” in Gadamer, see especially the section “The Principle of History of Effect,” in Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London: Continuum, 2004), 301-06.

⁵¹ Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*: 260-61.

Koselleck emphasizes that they do not exclude one another, but rather work together to create a sense of temporality.⁵² In this way, historical subjects may have a sense of an alignment or misalignment of experience and expectation, which produces feelings of acceleration or deceleration, constancy and change.⁵³

Koselleck's work has received renewed attention in recent years, with historians as well as literary scholars turning their attention to "futurity" and "presentism."⁵⁴ This scholarship has paved the way for studies of the interrelations between time, culture, and history, with particular attention to the subjective experience of time and the writing of this experience. In this dissertation, I show how individuals living through a transitional historical moment try to describe situations in which time feels somehow *different*, more intense. Many ordinary people begin writing a diary to address this sense that the nature of time has changed, and with it their possibilities for self-expression and communication. Authors and filmmakers explore time as fragmented, accelerated, or historical in their works. Wartime and postwar rubble texts, as I will show in each chapter, mediate the temporal imaginary by making the past present, and reflecting on the horizon of the future.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵³ The affective dimension here is crucial, but is understated in Koselleck. Expectation may be characterized as "hope," as Koselleck writes, but also fear, disappointment, dread. Memory may likewise be traumatic, painful, unwanted. The influence of the affective dimension on these structures should be developed further.

⁵⁴ François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité: présentisme et expériences du temps* (Paris: Seuil, 2003); "What is the Role of the Historian in an Increasingly Presentist World?," in *The New Ways of History: Developments in Historiography*, ed. Gelina Harlaftis (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010); Leslie A. Adelson, "DAAD Faculty Summer Seminar 2012: The Futures of Interdisciplinary German Studies," *German Studies Review* 35, no. 3 (2012). Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); Leslie A. Adelson, "Futurity Now: An Introduction," *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 88, no. 3 (2013); Kerstin Barndt, "Layers of Time: Industrial Ruins and Exhibitionary Temporalities," *PMLA* 125, no. 1 (2010). Lynn Hunt points out that Koselleck, as well as Paul Ricoeur's work on time, was drowned out by discussions of postmodernism, and is only now finding its proper resonance. Lynn Hunt, *Measuring Time, Making History* (New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2008), 16.

Leslie Adelson's working definition of futurity enables us to describe how the future is *used* as it also "emerges as an object of thought."⁵⁵ Adelson writes, "Futurity in this sense arguably becomes especially pressing when the future emerges not only as an object of thought but also and acutely as a problem in thought."⁵⁶ This is the case during the period 1943-1951, in which National Socialist frameworks of time and history were destroyed and the future was radically opened up. The Nazi model of futurity projected a "long" future in the construction of a racial empire, asking Germans to imagine themselves in the future looking back. A vivid example of such rhetoric can be found in a speech Goebbels delivered April 1945 in Berlin, in which he challenged officials to imagine the "terrible days" of the present moment as a color film, shown 100 years later, referencing the "Durchhaltefilm" *Kolberg*. He asks them to imagine their role: "Everybody now has the chance to choose the part which he will play in the film a hundred years hence. [...] Hold out now, so that, a hundred years hence, the audience does not hoot and whistle when you appear on the screen."⁵⁷ With the defeat of National Socialism, this model of "long" and heroic futurity was rendered unstable; the previously imagined future became unthinkable. The temporal consciousness mediated in rubble texts thus had to allow for multiple coexisting temporalities; it showed the complexity and heterogeneity of historical time. Analysis of texts from this period allows us to observe, in a concrete historical case, how subjects recognize and register changes in their experience of time and how in doing so, they revise the horizons that shape this experience.

⁵⁵ Adelson, "Futurity Now: An Introduction," 215.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ From the diary of Rudolf Semmler, entry from 17 April 1945. Rudolf Semmler, *Goebbels - The Man Next to Hitler* (London: Westhouse, 1947), 194.

To summarize, there are two main arguments I advance throughout the dissertation. First, I explore how texts from the period 1943-1951 write the *present*, and how they represent the relationship between past, present, and future. As I argue, there is also a heightened sense that time is *historical*, and that the personal and private lives of individuals are bound to world-historical time in a new way. Drawing on the work of Koselleck, I examine how distinct layers of time overlap in texts from the postwar period. For example, in diaries, we can observe how individual subjects become aware that historical time is overlapping with their own time in a new way, and that the horizon of the future becomes increasingly difficult to comprehend or imagine. The present tense of the diary constructs this limited horizon, as the text is not a narrative constructed in retrospect, but rather a day-by-day chronicle constantly in progress. This produces a stuttering text, as the diarist haltingly chronicles both world-historical and private events. The diary may be seen as an extreme case which sheds light on a phenomenon equally present in other textual forms. As I will show, film and literature had their own techniques for presenting this present moment and the openness of the future.

This represents not only an intervention in terms of periodization, tracing such temporal shifts back into the war years, but it also presents a revision to our understanding of literary history. A second element of my argument involves rethinking the terminological framework within which German postwar modernism has been analyzed. I examine how the “rubble texts” under analysis also relate to more canonical models of “rubble literature,” and how they cite, rework, or subvert established narrative strategies or representational cues. Klaus Scherpe has argued that there was indeed a “reconstructed modernism” in postwar Germany despite the prevalence of conservative

tendencies. If Scherpe locates the origins of the postwar German short story in the genre of reportage (the “modernist” found in the “unliterary”), I show how the diary entry can be seen as formally significant for the postwar period. The episodic nature of the diary form, and the presentation of scenes rather than closed narrative, is a central aspect of rubble texts. As I cited Gerhard Nebel above, this involved a “Brüchigkeit der literarischen Formen,” a tendency towards fragmentation and a fragility of previously established conventions, genres, and forms. I argue that the diary form is part of the “reconstructed modernism” of the postwar period. This involves reflections on language and language use—as in the work of Koeppen and Schmidt—or implied experimentation with language—as in the case of diarists who seek the means to express themselves and work through changes in the present.

Above I noted that my project considers both the content and form of rubble texts. I end my dissertation with an examination of two writers who bring out the crucial political dimension of this aesthetics, Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt, in their discussion of German guilt. Jaspers and Arendt published essays in the postwar period that emphasized the high stakes of the Stunde Null, and the challenges facing German society. In looking at their essays, I also return to an aspect of my project that is present from the beginning in the diaries: the moment of encounter with the other and the possibilities for conversations about the meaning of the past and the present for the future.

Chapter Outline

The six chapters of this dissertation revisit Germany's rubble years through a wide range of visual and textual culture. Chapter One, *Writing the Present: The Diary in Retreat and Defeat*, theorizes the diary's unique ability to address the openness of post-defeat temporality. The "boom" in diary writing during this period shows how the creative potential of this form enabled scenarios and situations not possible in other spheres of life. I concentrate on three aspects of these sources: First, I examine how diaries necessarily position themselves in and towards the new temporality of this period. Diaristic writing formally marks and manages the now of writing as well as of historical time; it also thematically addresses the rapidly-changing present and open future. Second, the diary text shifts between and among multiple addressees: the self, another, the text itself, and the future, creating scenarios of conversation. These others reflect the strong desire to communicate which lies at the heart of the diary, and the desire for language that captures reality and the physical presence of the other. And third, the diarist is able to imaginatively present social interactions in staging moments of dialogue that weave past, present, and future by blending the voice of the writing subject with those of others who enter her text.

This chapter works with archival diary sources, mostly written by civilian women. Although much work has been done on the male war diary, women's civilian war diaries are rich sources which have been often overlooked.⁵⁸ As Helmut Peitsch has shown in his work on autobiography after the war, the proliferation of autobiographical texts served

⁵⁸ The exceptions include, most notably, the work of Susanne zur Nieden. zur Nieden, *Alltag im Ausnahmezustand: Frauentagebücher im zerstörten Deutschland, 1943 bis 1945*. For a good overview of Jünger's diaries and their reception, see "Tagebücher" in Helmut Peitsch, *Deutschlands Gedächtnis an seine dunkelste Zeit: zur Funktion der Autobiographik in den Westzonen Deutschlands und den Westsektoren von Berlin 1945 bis 1949* (Berlin: Sigma Bohn, 1990).

many purposes. Diaries were often published in self-defense, to explain (sometimes with an eye towards revision) what one had done during the war, for example, Ernst Jünger's controversial and highly popular *Strahlungen*.⁵⁹ In his foreword, Jünger names the diary "neue Literatur":

Der Tagebuch-Charakter wird vielmehr zu einem Kennzeichen der Literatur. [...] Die Wahrnehmung, die Mannigfaltigkeit der Töne kann sich in einem Maße steigern, das die Form bedroht und das in unserer Malerei getreulich festgehalten ist. Demgegenüber ist literarisch das Tagebuch das beste Medium. Auch bleibt es im totalen Staat das letzte mögliche Gespräch.⁶⁰

Jünger praises both the formal possibilities of the diary as well as the refuge it offers its writers, as "das letzte mögliche Gespräch." In my discussion of unpublished diaries written by German civilians, I also consider the formal advantages of this kind of writing, which was usually only intended for family members or for the self (rather than for a larger public). I argue that these texts often served a very different function, creating scenes of address and allowing for multiple dialogic encounters.

Building on the first chapter's insights into the rhetorical structure and temporality of the diary, Chapter Two, *Writing from within History: Victor Klemperer's Wartime Diaries and LTI* offers an analysis of Victor Klemperer's extensive writing from the perspective of a Jew surviving day by day in the Third Reich. I show how his continual reflection on the difficulty of gaining historical perspective "from within" reflects the limited horizon of the diary form and the tensions between his various writing projects: diaristic, autobiographical, and historical. Klemperer explicitly thematizes the question of writing history, reflecting on what Koselleck would call the "horizon of expectation," and "space of experience." He is a self-reflective witness to history being

⁵⁹ Helmut Peitsch, "Deutschlands Gedächtnis an seine dunkelste Zeit": zur Funktion der Autobiographik in den Westzonen Deutschlands und den Westsektoren von Berlin 1945 bis 1949.

⁶⁰ Ernst Jünger, *Strahlungen* (Tübingen: Heliopolis-Verlag, 1949), 8-9.

written in the present. His work on Nazi language, which is later published as *LTI*, represents a new kind of writing history that uses short, episodic forms. In his diaries, Klemperer creates a counter-space to the Nazi telling of history and what *they* deem “historic,” substituting the microscopic for the Nazis’ macroscopic perspective and memorializing his friends and neighbors put to death by the Nazis.

In Chapter Three I turn to the author Wolfgang Koeppen, whose postwar novels confronted German society with a representation of its own present. Whereas Klemperer is interested in ordering time and making sense of history, Koeppen plays with the categories of time and space through a “mosaic” of stories, questioning the omniscient perspective and realist conventions of character and plot. I consider how Koeppen uses a fictionalized microcosm of postwar German society to reflect on multiple modes of perception: from “ordinary sparrows” wandering through the ruins of Munich, to a “microscopic” or “atomic” perspective, to the aerial view. In Koeppen’s novel, the history of the present is presented with a “thick” sense of time and simultaneity which also exposes the overlapping layers of time present during a day in postwar Munich. His densely intertextual modernist poetics weave multiple discourses throughout, self-consciously reflecting on the limits of perspective, the experience of time, and individuals’ attempts to find meaning.

In Chapter Four, I focus on the film *Berliner Ballade* (Robert A. Stemmle, 1948), which imagines what it will be like to look back on Germany’s “zero hour” from a point a century into the future. The film’s creative futuristic frame from the year 2048, I argue, is an attempt to give viewers historical distance they did not have in 1948 and challenge them to see the postwar period in a new way. My interpretation shows how the

filmmakers used flashback, montage and superimposition, elements of cabaret, and parody of documentary conventions to direct viewers' attention to the ruins of Germany, as well as to the layers of history present in the postwar landscape. In this way, *Berliner Ballade* also calls attention to its own doubts about the generic conventions of rubble film, using distancing techniques to remind viewers that they are supposed to be viewing this film as if from a position in the distant future. I also show how this rubble film tries to contain the rubble within the film, insisting that it is a different kind of "Zeitfilm," while still reminding viewers that ruins are part of their past and present.

In Chapter Five, I present an analysis of Arno Schmidt's *Schwarze Spiegel* (1951) as "rubble literature," showing how Schmidt explores the possibilities for narration after the Second World War. Schmidt's story is set in the future, after yet another world war with a catastrophic nuclear ending, and a Robinson-like protagonist who believes himself to be the sole survivor. I argue that Schmidt's story is shaped by a disidentification with the past that sets it apart from other works of this period that focus on "Vergangenheitsbewältigung," or a direct (and often moralizing) thematization of Germany's recent history. Schmidt's diary fragments, or "strung-together" scenes, are a counter-model to plot-driven stories emphasizing continuity. As the narrator sifts through the rubble of Germany, his thoughts create a palimpsest that reproduces, at the level of its form and organization, the temporal and textual strata visible in the debris of its thematic material. The reader explores this landscape as well, confronted with a similar task of excavation: the dense intertextuality of the text. I show how Schmidt presents us with an unconventional contribution to a body of "rubble literature," offering insights into the possibilities for narrative after radical violence and destruction. Read in this way, the

narrator's (fictional) entries are both a means to *create* and *salvage* culture from the wreckage, creating a text which becomes part of the rubble of culture left to those who may come later.

In Chapter Six, I return to a specific aspect of the diaries that I looked at in Chapter One—the writing of encounters that are both public and private. Through analysis of two major political-philosophical texts written during the aftermath of the war, Karl Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) and Hannah Arendt's "Report from Germany" (1950), I show how these authors are invested in the state of communication and conversation after the war. Rather than adopt the Allied model of "reeducation," which presupposes a telos of the new citizen, Jaspers and Arendt construe the goals of "denazification" and "reeducation" as an experimental process involving communication and the assumption of personal responsibility. I show how these texts prioritize conversation over retreat, and speech over silence, regarding postwar Germany as an unfinished project facing considerable obstacles.

CHAPTER 1

Writing the Present: The Diary in Retreat and Defeat

In photographs from the ruins of Germany, we may observe a curious phenomenon: “ruin graffiti,” chalk writing on the stone remnants of bombed-out areas. Those who have survived both leave their names and addresses and pose questions as to the whereabouts of others. Unable to send mail, telegraphs, or phone their friends and family, they write in chalk out of the desperate desire to communicate and to find one another amidst the chaos and displacement. The urgency of these messages is conveyed through exclamation points and question marks, “Liebe Eltern, Wo seid Ihr?? Nachricht nach Halle!!” and through the sheer amount of direct reference to life and death, “Franz, lebst du?”, “Vietheer, leben alle,” “Heinrich Singer lebt.” The question of “where are you?” is at the same time the question of “are you alive?” and hints that to be missing was possibly to be dead.

This practice of ruin writing was captured by photographers Erich Andres in Hamburg and Richard Peters in Dresden after the bombing of those cities, as well as other anonymous photographers (Figures 1.1-1.3).¹ Films old and new have also cited this practice as an iconic image of the period—from rubble films such as *Liebe 47* (Wolfgang Liebener, 1949) to the recent miniseries *Unsere Mütter, unsere Väter* (Figure

¹ See other images in Klaus Honnef, *Ende und Anfang: Photographen in Deutschland um 1945: Katalog zur Ausstellung des Deutschen Historischen Museums vom 19. Mai bis 29. August 1995* (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 1995).



Figures 1.1-1.3. Erich Andres (Hamburg, 1943); Richard Peter (Dresden, 1945); Anonymous.

1.4).² In *Liebe 47*, the *Heimkehrer* Beckmann finds the only evidence of his wife’s survival under the words “WIR LEBEN”: “*Lisa Beckmann, jetzt Mühlenstr 24*” (Figures 1.5 and 1.6). In this landscape of death, these chalk signs are the only thing pointing to the existence of living beings. The motivation for such writing was largely pragmatic—enabling loved ones to find one another and trace each other’s paths. But this practice of ruin writing, and its ambiguous relation to death, is also a sign of a period characterized by radical shifts in the spaces and possibilities for communication. The chalk writing represents the need for new forms of address and communication in this period of rupture and upheaval, beginning during the last years of the war, and extending into the immediate postwar period. The scribbles and signatures written on the stone, as well as the photographic evidence of their existence, are eerie traces of those who have survived in a present now past.

² Wolfgang Liebeneiner, “*Liebe 47*.” (1948). This film may also be found on the DVD *Schatten des Krieges. Innovation und Tradition im europäischen Kino 1940–1950* (absolut Medien, 2009).



Figure 1.4. Viktor in postwar Berlin (*Unsere Mütter unsere Väter*, 2013)



Figures 1.5 and 1.6. Stills from *Liebe 47* (1949).

Diaries from the war's end also testify to the need to rethink the possibilities for communication during this period. Diaries are produced out of a need to communicate and express oneself. They often create a scene of address, calling out to loved ones. Yet unlike the ephemeral traces of the ruin graffiti, long gone from the landscape, diaries are unique textual artifacts of a period of radical change and upheaval. Towards the end of the Second World War, and in its immediate aftermath, an extraordinary number of Germans kept a diary. Especially the years 1943-1946 witnessed an increase in diary

writing, reaching a peak in 1945 and trailing off after the war's end.³ In the foreword to his own diary published in 1948, Gerhard Nebel describes why the diary is characteristic of the postwar period:

Wir sind in ein Zeitalter der Tagebücher eingetreten, und ich denke dabei nicht nur an das "Journal" André Gides und die "Strahlungen" Ernst Jüngers, sondern auch an die unzähligen Tagebücher, die von Unbekannten während des Krieges geführt wurden, und von denen sicherlich ein beträchtlicher Teil an den Tag kommen wird.⁴

In these many diaries written during the war, diarists mention receiving diaries as birthday and wedding gifts, being assigned diary writing in school, and diary competitions organized by the National Socialists.⁵ A few rare diarists, like the "ordinary Berliner" Franz Göll, were lifelong diarists, leaving a long paper trail of their pasts.⁶ But most civilians began writing daily notes during the crisis years of the war, as men went missing on the front, communication was broken off from friends and family, and there was a growing sense that one was living through historical events.

These notes—written in bound books, school notebooks, calendars, or on loose pages—vary widely in writing style, structure, and content. Often diarists refer not to a "diary," but to their notebook, or to their notes (*Aufzeichnungen*), and their writing is similarly dismissed as "Schreiberei" or "Geschreibsel." These terms hint at a crucial aspect of such texts: writers are not producing a totality, a *Buch* or *Tagebuch*, a composed and finished whole, with beginning and end, but rather fragmentary writings that

³ See footnote 16 in Introduction for more on the increase of diary writing at this time.

⁴ Gerhard Nebel, *Bei den nördlichen Hesperiden. Tagebuch aus dem Jahr 1942* (Wuppertal: Marées Verlag, 1948), 5.

⁵ Janosch Steuwer's forthcoming project on diaries in National Socialism will be of interest in this regard. Janosch Steuwer, "'Weltanschauung mit meinem Ich verbinden.' Tagebücher im nationalsozialistischen Erziehungsprojekt." Paper presented at conference "Selbstreflexionen und Weltdeutungen. Tagebücher in der Geschichte und der Geschichtsschreibung des 20. Jahrhunderts," Bochum, Germany, July 2014.

⁶ Peter Fritzsche, *The Turbulent World of Franz Göll: An Ordinary Berliner Writes the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

accompany daily life during wartime.⁷ It is important to note that the diary can only loosely be called a “genre” or form, but is instead perhaps best characterized by its very openness. Individuals, sitting down to write, all have unique interpretations of what it means to “write a diary,” or in German, *Tagebuch führen* or *Aufzeichnungen machen*. Diarists create a text with a unique signature and writing style, lending this text meaning according to their personal situation. They are often unsure about their attempts to write, and what their writing is doing or not doing, yet the diary gives them the possibility for self-expression and communication not otherwise possible.

Much could be said about these rich and variegated sources, about the role of the diary during this period and the purposes and motivations for writing. In this chapter, I focus my argument on three main claims. First, I argue that during this period of historical rupture, the problematic of time comes to the fore. I show how diary writing mediates and manages temporality, and how these texts thematize and reflect changing notions of futurity with the end of National Socialism. I do so by engaging with the work of Reinhart Koselleck and his metahistorical concepts of the “space of experience” and the “horizon of expectation.” Second, I show the imaginative potential of the diary to create scenes of address. Through close readings, I demonstrate various functions of diary writing during this period, and the crucial openness of the diary form which allowed for individual self-expression. I highlight the hybrid *Brieftagebuch* as a crucial form of this period. And third, I argue that the practice of diary writing created intermediary spaces in which individuals could pose difficult questions and think through social relationships—a

⁷ Although this incomplete and fragmentary nature of diaries is something I emphasize throughout, for the sake of brevity I will still refer to “diaries” and “the diary.” I would also like to highlight the difference between the German and English terminology, as *Aufzeichnungen* (notes) is commonly used in German to refer to what we call “diaries” in English.

crucial practice during this period of shifting social norms. Because the defeat of the German nation was experienced by many as a personal, familial, and national crisis, individuals sought to negotiate a situation in which previous forms of identification and community building were called into question. I show how this is reflected at the textual level, as the writer seeks recognition and poses questions about the relations between private and public spheres, national and local identities, as well as the possibilities for communicating with others.

The diaries selected for analysis are examples of “ordinary” writing, in the sense that they are authored by non-literary (although sometimes well-educated) civilian Germans, sometimes written to be shared, but not with the intention of publishing (see Appendix for a bibliography of published diaries).⁸ Recording the concerns of daily life alongside notes on world-historical events, these diaries testify to the broad range of experiences of German civilians at the war’s end, and to a range of emotional responses to the defeat. Because of this focus on the German civilian population, the texts are mostly written by women, writing during a time when many men were absent.⁹ Ultimately, I show the diary to be a rich site through which to analyze this period of dramatic shifts and changes in social, political, and familial or local spheres. Close attention to the rhetorical and literary strategies of diarists can enrich our understanding

⁸ The term “ordinary diaries” is from Jennifer Sinor. Susanne zur Nieden uses the term “Laientagebücher.” My sources include both published diaries and about 100 unpublished diaries, from the Walter Kempowski Archive (WKA) at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin and the Deutsches Tagebucharchiv (DTA) in Emmendingen. For more on published diaries, see Helmut Peitsch, “*Deutschlands Gedächtnis an seine dunkelste Zeit*”: zur Funktion der Autobiographik in den Westzonen Deutschlands und den Westsektoren von Berlin 1945 bis 1949 (Berlin: Sigma Bohn, 1990); Carsten Wurm, “Die Autobiographik,” in *Deutsche Erinnerung: Berliner Beiträge zur Prosa der Nachkriegsjahre (1945-1960)*, ed. Ursula Heukenkamp (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 2000).

⁹ I also have excluded *Fluchttagebücher*, diaries written while their authors were fleeing from the eastern territories. These works require a different set of questions and interpretive frameworks, and are beyond the scope of this project.

of this period, and also reveal the importance of writing practices in periods of historical change and uncertainty.

The Diary of the “Stunde Null”: Writing in the Face of Radical Openness

When the Soviet Army reached Berlin in late April 1945, Berliners retreated into basements and bomb shelters, fearfully hiding themselves from public view and from the euphoric victors. Slowly, the soldiers began to enter German houses, first seeking soldiers and weapons, later seeking spoils of victory, taking both women and material objects. Among the many souvenirs they took, many German sources from this time mention their preference for wristwatches and pocketwatches. “Uhr, Uhr” (watch/clock) becomes a refrain of the victors noted by the defeated. The Soviets also famously turned ahead the German clocks two hours to “Moscow Time,” which remained in effect a few weeks until the arrival of the Western Allies.¹⁰ One man commented in his diary, “Heute sollen die Uhren nach russischer Zeit gestellt werden, sofern man noch eine hat.”¹¹ The journalist Margret Boveri watched the Soviet soldiers play with their watches and writes, “wir hingegen, wir Uhrenlosen, schätzen nur noch wieviel Uhr es ist.”¹² These examples from Berlin demonstrate a frustration with the confusion of time expressed all over Germany—intensified by the lack of mail, newspaper, and radio. As Hertha von G. complains, “Noch immer hat niemand genaue Zeit – keine öffentliche Uhr mehr, keine Radio-Ansage. Man weiß kaum das Datum und den Wochentag.” She then immediately

¹⁰ Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 255.

¹¹ Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Walter Kempowski Biographienarchiv, (henceforth WKA), 764, Anonymous Diary, Entry from 9 May 1945. All translations from unpublished diary sources are my own.

¹² Margret Boveri, *Tage des Überlebens: Berlin 1945* (München: Piper, 1985), 114. Entry from 4 May 1945.

connects this situation to the future, writing, “Was bringt die nächste Stunde?”¹³

Although she writes that one “hardly knows” the day, her dated diary entry clearly marks the day as “Sonntag, 6. Mai.” In Bremen, Walther K. writes similarly, “Man hat kein Empfinden mehr für zeitliche Einordnungen, weiß kaum, welcher Tag es ist.” His entry is dated “28.4.45. Sonnabend.”¹⁴

As the German front lines begin the military retreat in 1943, there is a parallel movement of retreat on the home front into alternate spaces of communication and reflection. The diary becomes a site of *Flucht* and *Zuflucht* (flight and refuge), providing writers the possibility for self-expression and communication with the self and others, and a means for thinking about the meaning of the present moment in face of defeat. As in the examples above, diarists write and mark time while also thematizing the *feeling* of confusion, suggesting that time has been *taken from* them. In this way, they exhibit a complex and at times contradictory relation towards time. The question, “What will the next hour bring?” reveals an incrementalization from “the future” in the abstract, to the day, to the smaller unit of the hour.

In the following pages, I highlight how the diary relates to the organization of a temporal imaginary. My analysis interweaves a formal analysis of the diary with a historically specific argument about the role of diaries in Germany during this period. First, I discuss the motivations and stakes of diary writing during the end of the Second World War and in the war’s aftermath. I also consider how the diary as a genre is inherently related to history and history writing, and explore what it means for diarists at this time to reflect on the writing of history in their texts. Second, I make a more formal

¹³ WKA, 3697, Diary of Hertha von G., Entry from 6 May 1945.

¹⁴ WKA, 3825, Diary of Walther K., Entry from 28 April 1945.

analysis of the way the diary writes time from a position in the present. Other autobiographical genres, such as the memoir, are written with a larger amount of retrospective distance between the scene of writing and the events being written, yet the diary is written in the present tense. The horizon of what the diary is able to process each day is often experienced as frustratingly small and limited. As Margo Culley writes, “While the novel and autobiography may be thought of as artistic wholes, the diary is always in process, always in some sense a fragment. [Diaries] derive [their shapes] from their existence in time passing.”¹⁵ I argue that this presentist focus is a central aspect of this transitional period. And last, I discuss how this act of writing attempts to order time, seeking to contain and manage it, sorting experience and trying to make connections between temporal dimensions.

New Time: writing history

At the end of WWII, the boom in diary writing can be directly linked to wartime crisis, as many diarists were concerned with the sudden convergence of historical events with their own life and private concerns. As Susanne zur Nieden indicates, the war changed the way individuals understood meaning in their lives: “Der Krieg überlädt das persönliche Leben mit gesteigerter Bedeutung.”¹⁶ The war’s end also brought increased displacement and death—and a need for comfort and refuge as other means of communication broke down. Many diaries from this time take the form of hybrid letter-diaries (*Briefstagebücher*), addressed to loved ones, as mail correspondence was interrupted. Other diarists begin to

¹⁵ Margo Culley, ed. *A Day at a Time: The Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1985), 19.

¹⁶ zur Nieden, *Alltag im Ausnahmezustand: Frauentagebücher im zerstörten Deutschland, 1943 bis 1945*: 63.

chronicle historical events, as they have the sense that they are living through history and may someday want to retell these events to their children or grandchildren. These writing practices reflect a culture and time in which diary writing was heralded for both its literary possibilities as well as its use as a text for self-reflection and self-exploration. In Nazi Germany, the diary was also a “popular generic form” and the practice of diary writing was promoted both on the front and on the home front.¹⁷ Diarists could purchase preprinted diaries with the dates filled in, or they could choose to write in blank notebooks or on loose-leaf paper. They adapt the diary practice to their own individual needs, sometimes blending registers of the chronicle and the inventory with discursive self-reflection. In his work on Franz Göll’s diaries, Peter Fritzsche shows how Göll used three separate books for his “multiple” selves, keeping a household account book, writing a memoir, and writing a diary.¹⁸

With the defeat of National Socialism, the war’s end challenged previous expectations. The diary, with its frequent questions and daily entries, proved to be an ideal form for engaging with time which was felt to be new and historic. Diarists often figure time as dynamic, intense, and quickly changing. “Ausgerechnet in dieser Zeit muss man leben,” writes Maxi-Lore E. from Leipzig.¹⁹ “*This* time,” with its deictic temporality, refers to the lived present tense as well as to a historical moment of rupture. As defeat becomes more certain, and Allied troops enter German cities and towns, civilians reflect on their place in history. Maxi-Lore experiences historical time as

¹⁷ In his afterword to the diaries of Horst Lange, Schäfer notes that the diary was a “populäre Gattungsart der Nationalsozialisten.” Hans Dieter Schäfer, “Horst Langes Tagebücher 1939-1945,” in *Tagebücher aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, ed. Hans Dieter Schäfer (Mainz: v. Hase & Koehler Verlag, 1979), 312.

¹⁸ “Franz Göll’s Multiple Selves,” in Fritzsche, *The Turbulent World of Franz Göll: An Ordinary Berliner Writes the Twentieth Century*: 33-77. As I will show in Chapter Two, Victor Klemperer also writes multiple autobiographical texts in parallel.

¹⁹ DTA, 340, Diary of Maxi-Lore E., Entry between 25 May - 10 June 1945.

distressing and cruel, asking the pages of her diary, “Wann werden wir wohl wieder mit Ruhe und Sicherheit in die Zukunft schauen können?”²⁰ This passage, with its description of the writer’s place in time, also demonstrates how the horizon of expectation seems to overwhelm previous experience and former expectations for the future. In contrast to the diarists who imagine a future point of security, from which to look back, she expresses the desire for a future point from which to again look into the future. As Koselleck writes in *Futures Past*, “All testimony answers the problem of how, in a concrete situation, experiences come to terms with the past; how expectations, hopes, or prognoses that are projected into the future become articulated into language.”²¹ Koselleck also emphasizes the spatial metaphors of “standpoint” and “position” vis-à-vis time employed to describe relations between past, present, and future, and the language available to writing subjects to conceptualize the time.

The conditions of possibility of real history are, at the same time, conditions of its cognition. Hope and memory, or expressed more generally, expectation and experience—for expectation comprehends more than hope, and experience goes deeper than memory—simultaneously constitute history and its cognition. They do so by demonstrating and producing the inner relation between past and future or yesterday, today, or tomorrow.²²

In making the past and the future present, diarists work through and narrate the possibility of recognizing time as historical.

To some diarists, it seems impossible to imagine the future, or conceive of future expectations. Writing from the Black Forest in early April 1945, Maria K. wonders: “Ach was wird dieses letzte sein? Ich kann nichts mehr voll ausdenken, weil unsere heutige Lage einmalig ist, wir stehen vor einem ungeheuren Neuen, und wissen nicht, wie es

²⁰ DTA, 340, Diary of Maxi-Lore E., Entry 25 May -10 June 1945.

²¹ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 3.

²² *Ibid.*, 258.

kommen wird und was es bringt.”²³ At this point, she has not seen her husband for a year and can no longer write to him, as her letters are returned. This description relays a sense of the anxiety surrounding what was experienced as the “monstrosity” or immensity of the openness of the future, the uniqueness of the present situation, and the uncertainty of what will happen next and whether she and her husband will live to see it. She tries to think the relation between past, present, and future, but time is felt to be intensely *new*. The future is overwhelming and threatening, exceeding her ability to “think” it. John Zammito, in response to Koselleck’s idea that history is always “more and less” than what we are capable of imagining, draws attention to the relation between novelty and surprise.

Experience is something each of us invariably gathers and sorts, precisely as a resource to forestall surprises. That is, we constantly sift events into patterns of recurrence and repetition to create a “space of experience.” Without repetition there can be no knowledge; knowledge is always only *recognition*. But novelty signals disappointed anticipation, *anomaly*.²⁴

The diary is often used as a tool to “gather” and “sort” experience, to create a sense of continuity. In many of these diaries, the future no longer coincides with past expectations, and can therefore only be written as a question, an unknown.

During such periods of political, social, and cultural change, events are often perceived as having *historical* significance, and time gains a sense of speed and urgency. Diarists describe time as being filled with events, rapidly changing and exceeding their capacities to understand them. Diana J. writes on May 2, after hearing of Hitler’s death, “Die Ereignisse überstürzen sich!”²⁵ Walter S. writes optimistically, “Mit Riesenschritten

²³ DTA, 1775, Diary of Maria K., Entry from 1 April 1945 (Easter Sunday).

²⁴ John Zammito, “Koselleck’s Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History,” *History and Theory* 43, no. 1 (2004): 129.

²⁵ WKA, 1676, Diary of Diana J., Entry from 2 May 1945.

marschiert die Zeit. Die Zeit des Hitlerwahns ist vorbei. Und liegt auch groß wie ein Gigant die Aufgabe des Neuaufbaus vor uns, wir werden es schon schaffen.”²⁶ The sense of acceleration reflects a growing gap between expectations and experience. Gert von E., an economist from Wuppertal, writes in mid-August 1945 that the process of writing itself makes him conscious of how quickly things are happening: “[dass sich] ungeheuer rasch ungeheuer viel ereignet.”²⁷ The limits of daily writing reinforce this sense—as diarists can hardly describe or note everything that is going on, especially when events prevent them from writing every day. Luise H., as she begins to write a diary, feels overwhelmed by the need to catch-up: “Die letzten Wochen waren so ausgefüllt bis zum Rande mit Ereignissen, Stimmungen, Gefühlen, daß es mir schwer fallen wird, alles nachträglich aufzuschreiben.”²⁸ Time is figured as intense, “filled,” and as exceeding her abilities to catch up with it. Echoing this sentiment, Erika B. writes: “Was geschieht so alle Tage?! Blätter und Blätter könnte man damit beschreiben.”²⁹ Wilhelm K., head of the Reichsbahn in Halle, begins writing in mid-April 1945 to fill hours when he (under normal circumstances) would have been working: to make notes about this “ereignisschwangeren Zeit,” as he puts it, “a time pregnant with events.”³⁰

Many figure time as a strong historical force, and themselves as small or helpless, as passive objects being swept or pulled along. The actual confusion over what is happening in the “outside” world reinforces this sense of intensity. In April and May 1945, many Germans are unsure when or whether the surrender has taken place. As Hertha von G. notes, many civilians witnessed historical events without understanding

²⁶ DTA, 44, Diary of Walter S. Entry from 21 May 1945.

²⁷ WKA, 3983, Diary of Gert von E., Entry from 19 August 1945.

²⁸ DTA, 548, Diary of Luise H., Entry from 18 February 1945.

²⁹ WKA, 4914, Diary of Erika B., Entry from 23 March 1945.

³⁰ WKA, 4364, Diary of Wilhelm K., Entry from 14 April 1945.

them, as the events “slip past” them:

Neulich ein großes schönes Feuerwerk am Abendhimmel. Wir wussten nicht warum. Vermutlich war es der Tag der Kapitulation. Die Revolution ist uns entglitten, der Waffenstillstand ist uns entglitten, wir wussten nicht einmal, dass er da war, macht- und hilflos lassen wir alles geschehen, niemand fragt nach uns und kann uns brauchen, außer zum Schippen.³¹

German civilians feel both inside and outside of history-in-the-making, as they attempt to read the signs around them. This diarist supposes the fireworks marked milestone events but cannot know for sure. She ends the comment with sarcasm, saying that the Germans, the defeated, have become bystanders, only good for manual labor.

Figuring time as historical, and the self as outside of this history, reinforces a sense of passivity, that one is not an actor or agent in history, but an unknowing bystander. The concept of passivity is sometimes combined with rhetoric of being betrayed and abandoned (by Nazi leadership). Ingrid B. demonstrates anger and frustration with this “betrayal,” and at the same time she holds on to *Endkampf* language of “faith” and “hope.”³² The language, alternating between “I” and plural “we” forms, also reflects an ambiguous sense of agency or passivity:

Ich konnte mein Tagebuch nicht weiter führen, es fehlte Ruhe und Zeit. Das Geschehene *nahm uns mit*, stellte uns in Kampf und Not und *verbot jede persönliche Regung*. Jetzt *weiß ich*, was Krieg ist, jetzt *weiß ich*, was Furcht ist, weiß aber auch, was Glauben und Hoffen ist. Wie konnte der Führer sein Volk, *das an ihn glaubte*, in dieses Elend stürzen. Wie konnten sie von Siegen reden, wo der Feind schon mitten im Land war!³³

Like many others, Ingrid extends her “I” to a larger “we” of passive civilians being taken along by events, reinforcing the lack of personal agency, a separation of personal and world-historical spheres. She feels not only (collectively) betrayed because of the defeat,

³¹ WKA, 3697, Diary of Hertha von G., Entry from 12 May 1945.

³² See chapter on “Glauben” in Victor Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen*. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2007).

³³ WKA, 4121, Diary of Ingrid B., Entry from end of May. Emphasis added.

but because she now knows better the extent of the lies that were being circulated about a possible victory. Her continued use of Nazi language and belief in the “Führer,” at the same time as she expresses anger of betrayal, reflects a confused “now” of the writing present. She seems both unable to do away with Nazi futurity (*Glauben, Hoffen, Volk*), but also disillusioned, sensing that there is a new “now,” and new realities in terms of experience (war, fear).

The figuration of time as historical is often connected to a concept of history as cyclical, consisting of repetitive structures and recognizable patterns. Diana J. reassures herself that this defeat is—relative to other historical wars—not so bad: “Aber in der Geschichte hat es noch viel schlimmere Kriegsenden gegeben und wieviel Menschen vor uns mußten noch entsetzlichere Dinge über sich ergehen lassen.”³⁴ She imagines herself into a long lineage of “the defeated,” seeming to accept any “terrible” things the German people will now face in defeat. As Berlin becomes the front line, the journalist Margret Boveri recalls images from Napoleonic battles: “Die Sache kommt näher und wird immer echter. Die Rauchwolken sehen aus wie auf den Schlachtbildern aus der napoleonischen Zeit.”³⁵ Images from the war bring about another temporal “leap” backwards, connecting past and present. The view of smoke signifies days of grander warfare, of horses and canons. At the same time that diarists face new experiences, they try to relate them to what they know of history. Looking out of the train window at Kassel’s Wilhelmshöhe, Gerhard M. is also reminded of the Napoleonic era, a connection evoked by the landscape. He recalls that Napoleon II [sic] was kept prisoner there in 1870, and reflects on the cyclical nature of history in his diary:

³⁴ WKA, 1676, Diary of Diana J., Entry from 17. Mai

³⁵ Boveri, *Tage des Überlebens: Berlin 1945*: 66. Entry from 25. April 1945.

Ach ja, die Geschichte ist eine Lehrmeisterin, aber wer lernt *wirklich* aus ihr? Ein A. Hitler hat auch immer wieder den erzieherischen Wert des Geschichts-Studiums betont, und doch hat ihn das nicht davor bewahrt, die Tatsachen *seiner* Gegenwart völlig falsch zu beurteilen und für die Sprache seines Geschicks nach wie vor blind und voreingenommen zu sein. Der freie Blick über den Gang der Dinge hin, der sich willenlos hingibt – wie selten ist er!³⁶

This insightful passage reflects on the writing of history, and the challenge of reading history—its events and structures, as well as what of the present will become historical. He reflects on the difficulty of judging history in the present, and gaining a “clear overview.” As time is recognized as qualitatively new and accelerated, and intensely different, it is also felt to be historical, but incomprehensible because of the position “inside” historical structures.

Presence: “touching time”

In Koselleck’s conceptualization of time, as the past is made present in experience, and the future is made present in expectation, the idea of “presence” seems to suggest a state in between and in flux, a *process* of imagining these temporal overlaps. The diary makes this backward and forward-looking gaze visible. The “present” of the diary is a means of recollecting the recent past and imagining the future. It is best represented in the scene of writing, often directly thematized or described by diarists. As the diarist thinks and reflects in the present, she recounts key events of the recent past, and wonders about the future. Such reflection is also often the motivation for writing in the first place: to reflect on one’s place in time, on history, and on the future. The past reveals itself through memories and reflections on these memories, and the future is made present in the form of hope, fear, or questioning. Repeated interrogative forms (*Was wird aus uns? Was soll*

³⁶ WKA, 6673, Diary of Gerhard M. Entry from 31 July 1945. [It was Napoleon III who was held prisoner there.]

werden? Was wird werden?) show how writers seek to understand their place in a life which is still being formed, being written and re-written every day. The past is a “moving target,” as Smith and Watson write in *On Autobiography*, “both the unified story and the coherent self are myths of identity. We are always fragmented in time, taking a particular or provisional perspective on the moving target of our pasts.”³⁷

For diarists, it is above all the present and the future which is also a “moving target,” as well as the story of the self, because it is constructed day-to-day rather than retrospectively. Diarists often have a strong desire to know their story and its place in history, but from the position of the diarist they cannot. To Robert Fothergill, it is the series of entries that defines a diary, as well as its shifting temporalities—reflected in the very tense of writing:

the format reflects or constructs the passage of future into past as essentially diurnal. Yesterday, today, tomorrow. Sometimes an entry which has rendered in the past tense the experiences of a day-not-yet-over will shift into the present tense to utter the “now” of the instant of writing. Having caught up to the moment, the writer and the text attend at the frontier of time.³⁸

This “frontier” or “horizon” is often felt to be a painful unknown during the war’s end in Germany. In her Berlin diary, the elderly widow Else T. writes, “Die Zukunft ist ein großes Fragezeichen.”³⁹ She repeats this statement several times, noting how the openness and uncertainty of the future weighs on her: “Alles ist ein großes, schweres Fragezeichen.” There is a gap between the strong desire to understand and narrate, and the inability to do so. The diary can only present the future in its uncertainty, and the present as a text continually under revision.

³⁷ Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 61.

³⁸ Robert A. Fothergill, “One Day at a Time: The Diary as Lifewriting,” *Auto/biography Studies* 10(1995): 84.

³⁹ DTA, 1303, Diary of Else T., Entry from 15 May 1945.

As the diarist writes the date and puts the day to paper, the future is only white space that continually extends as the diarist writes into it. Koselleck lays emphasis on the inability to experience the future: “[The] horizon is that line behind which a new space of experience will open, but which cannot yet be seen. The legibility of the future, despite possible prognoses confronts an absolute limit, for it cannot be experienced.”⁴⁰ The diarist wants to read the future, to make it visible, but is “stuck” in the present. Philippe Lejeune continually stresses the “progressive” movement of the diary with time: “it advances with the moving front of life, digesting the near past and filling the near future with plans. It is like a jet engine or surfing...it is always on the very crest of time moving into unknown territory.”⁴¹ In other essays, Lejeune repeats the image of “surfing on time,” describing the “thrill” of the diary as “the feeling of *touching time*.”⁴² In these metaphors, time is a fluid substance and the diarist is constantly in motion. However, in diaries written towards the war’s end, this motion is not fluid, but stuttering and fragmented. Narrative creates fluidity and coherence, but the diary’s fragmentary nature can only take the past and future and make them present one day at a time, constantly re-writing and revising one’s horizon of expectation and exposing its limits. The diarist is often frustrated with her limited vision, asking desperate questions that go unanswered. To use Lejeune’s metaphor, the surfer keeps falling, perhaps briefly catching a wave, but always falling.

Diarists frequently comment on the experience of time passing, and the way they *feel* time, weighing on them as it pulls them along. Generally, their experience of the present is overwhelming and challenging, using clichés such as “diese schwere Zeit,” “in

⁴⁰ Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*: 261.

⁴¹ Philippe Lejeune, *On Diary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009), 208.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 182, 209. Emphasis in original.

dieser kritischen Zeit,” “in dieser Zeit der Not und des Jammers.” Lisbeth F. writes, “Die Zeit ist doch zu schwer und hart, unerbittlich grausam!”⁴³ And Maxi Lore E. resigns, “Ich kann die Zeit in ihrer Schwere und Unfassbarkeit kein bisschen begreifen.”⁴⁴ Other diarists attempt to predict what is looming on the horizon: “Es steht uns jetzt eine ganz schreckliche, grausige, furchtbare Zeit bevor.”⁴⁵ Their expectations shift and become fearful and worried as the future takes on new meaning.

The frequent thematization and figuration of time itself is striking. At the end of WWII, diarists often began writing because they felt that they were living through something historical. At the same time, however, the past is often experienced as too “near” to be understood, thus some diarists project a distant future, a time from which they may look back and understand the present. Some imagine this future moment as the return of a loved one who might read the diary, or they write for future generations. This way of writing time imagines leaps or jumps in time and space, desiring a point at which the current present can be conceived as *past* and understood as meaningful. In this way, the 67-year-old widow Agathe M. projects the future into her text: “Wenn meine Enkel einst meine Aufzeichnungen lesen, wird hoffentlich eine neue Zeit angebrochen sein, ein glückliches Zeitalter.”⁴⁶ By imagining her grandchildren reading her diary, she also inserts a new temporal horizon into her text, looking back on her present moment. In her first entry, Hanna S. writes that she keeps the diary for her future self, to record and document her thoughts during this “most critical” time of the war, in which time is intense and accelerated: “ich möchte von dieser Zeit, ihrem Alltag und ihren

⁴³ WKA, 3135, Diary of Lisbeth F., Entry from 24 October 1945.

⁴⁴ DTA, 340, Diary of Maxi-Lore. Entry from 17 April 1945.

⁴⁵ WKA, 6718-1, Anonymous Diary., Entry from 6 April 1945

⁴⁶ WKA, 5958, Diary of Agathe M., Entry from 3 May 1945.

Lebensumständen etwas festhalten, wenn es uns überhaupt einmal vergönnt sein wird, mit gelassenem Abstand das Geschehen des Krieges zu betrachten.”⁴⁷ There is a tension in her entry between the space of experience (daily life in wartime) and the diarist’s horizon of expectation (a distant future in which she will be able to look back at this moment). As Koselleck emphasizes, it is this tension which generates a sense of historical time. For these women, this tension also furthers the sense that they are living history. Even this future vantage point (“einmal”) is called into question as Hanna S. uses a passive form of future perfect, “wenn es uns überhaupt einmal vergönnt sein wird,” *if* they (the Germans) will ever *someday be granted* the ability to look back. The future is no longer in her hands.

Similar to Hanna’s desire to “capture” her present moment, the anonymous diarist of *A Woman in Berlin* figures her work of diary writing as an attempt to “capture” time in motion.⁴⁸ After reflecting on the way time is “slipping by like water,” without measure, she reflects on her writing: “Occasionally I’m amazed at how determined I am to capture this timeless time.”⁴⁹ The present moment is figured as fleeting, quickly becoming past. As visible in these examples, writing the present is a means of trying to understand this movement of time, and often projects a future in which the diarist will be able to “look back” from a position of relative security and calm.

The young and the elderly have different experiences of these temporal shifts, and their place in this quickly-moving history.⁵⁰ Twenty-four-year-old Erika B., whose fiancé

⁴⁷ WKA, 4308, Diary of Hanna S., Entry from 15 February 1945.

⁴⁸ Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City: A Diary* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2005).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁵⁰ See also Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence Through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). In this book, Fulbrook uses the concept of social generations, “in order to explore how the ‘same’ historical period can be experienced quite differently

Werner was killed in 1942, comments that the beautiful spring makes the feeling of time passing more painful: “Ein Wetter zum Leben, zum lieben – für den Frieden – und meine schönsten Mädchenjahre gehen dahin, die Zeit rennt davon!”⁵¹ Her sense of the quickness of time is tied to her experience of her youth passing, as she feels a disparity between what should be a time of peace and youth, but is instead consumed by war. Diana J., the mother of two young children, keeps a diary for her absent husband. She combines her personal fate with that of the German people. She writes, “Wir sind noch so jung und die schönsten Jahre unserer Liebe gehen dahin! Und immer wieder die quälenden Gedanken, was aus uns und unserem Volk wird.”⁵² Like the other young woman, she says that youth is “lost” or “slipping away” (*gehen dahin*), identifying with a young generation whose fate is tied to that of the nation. In contrast, the elderly Elisabeth von F. feels too old for a future, one that will demand strengths beyond her abilities. “Es ist an dieser Zeit wohl das Schwerste, daß das Wort *Zukunft* so gut wie ausgelöscht ist. Wie sollen wir zwei alte Menschen auf diesen Trümmern etwas Neues aufbauen? Dazu gehören wohl Herkuleskräfte.”⁵³ For her, the future is unimaginable, only the young can perhaps build it up again—a task that will be physically demanding. The diary enables her to pose questions and reflect on her place in period of rupture and change.

Dated traces: ordering time

The diarists who write about their attempts to “capture time” in the present already hint at

according to social age or life stage at the time...” (v). Koselleck also writes of generational differences as they shape the experience of time. See “Erinnerungsschleusen und Erfahrungsschichten: Der Einfluß der beiden Weltkreise auf das soziale Bewußtsein” in Reinhart Koselleck, *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), 265-84.

⁵¹ WKA, 4914, Diary of Erika B., Entry from 23 March 1945.

⁵² WKA, 1676, Diary of Diana J., Entry from 20 May 1945.

⁵³ WKA, 5314, Diary of Elisabeth v. F., Entry from 16 June 1945.

the performative nature of the writing practice. With its (often daily) entries, the diary constructs an incremental and constant sense of self-continuity and temporality. The increment of the day is often a defining aspect of these texts, as well as the dated entry placed *before* the text.⁵⁴ In *Das europäische Tagebuch*, Gustav René Hocke traces the diary back to the practice of chronicling, and the diary as a “chronological collection, a dated register, a diaristic album of deeds and events – a container and means of collecting observed world affairs and events of the day.”⁵⁵ This act of containing and collecting is also emphasized by Jennifer Sinor in her work on “ordinary” diaries (those not intended for publication). Sinor notes that such texts function within the realm of *time in* rather than *time when*—measured time rather than occasioned time.⁵⁶ Similarly, Lejeune defines diaries as a “series of dated traces.”⁵⁷ The diarist does not write on the occasion of events, but each day (or at regular intervals), no matter how mundane the entry may be. The young Annemarie P., encouraged to write a diary by her teacher at the start of the war, writes every day, sometimes noting only: “Heute hab’ ich nichts besonderes erlebt.”⁵⁸ Such entries show the plotlessness and “middleness” (Sinor) of the diary form, highlighting the central notion of continuity in this writing practice and the usage of repetition and ordering mechanisms. “If the diary’s primary technology is one of seizing

⁵⁴ Arno Dusini, *Tagebuch: Möglichkeiten einer Gattung* (München: Fink, 2005). See especially the chapter on “TAG.”

⁵⁵ Gustav René Hocke, *Das europäische Tagebuch* (Wiesbaden: Limes, 1963), 45.

⁵⁶ Jennifer Sinor, “Reading the Ordinary Diary,” *Rhetoric Review* 21, no. 2 (2002). Here Sinor is also indebted to the work of Stewart Sherman on the changes in telling time in the 17th century. See Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and English Diurnal Form, 1660-1785* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). See also Gustav René Hocke on this point about “literary” vs “real” diaries. Hocke points out that in studies of the diary form, those that are not written for a public are more important than “literarische Pseudo-Tage[bücher],” although he admits there is a gray zone, for example with artistic diaries like that of André Gide with “echtem diaristischem Charakter.” He also excludes travel diaries, focusing his study on “real” or “intimate” diaries rather than “literarisch-geformte oder nur fingierte [Tagebücher].” This points again to the openness of the diary form, and its many variations. Hocke, *Das europäische Tagebuch*: 11, 16.

⁵⁷ Lejeune, *On Diary*: 179.

⁵⁸ DTA 154, Diary of Annemarie P. Later, “Heute hab ich nichts schreibenswertes erlebt.”

and containing measured moments within highly regulated, ordered spaces,” Sinor writes, “then that which is not measured (the detailed and the unusual) threatens to disrupt.”⁵⁹ It is thus not only the narrative itself which creates continuity, but the ritual act of writing. The very act of dating an entry and listing the day’s activities, through the use of a limited vocabulary, is a way of creating control and building a “fiction of stability,” to make order and “put things to right.”⁶⁰ For these reasons, the diary form has several advantages for those writing during this period of historical crisis. The act of writing is in this case a way to fight against the fear of the future (or the fear of a lack thereof), and the shifting temporal horizons of past, present, and future.

The diary mediates a temporal imaginary of time as abstract, empty and homogenous, with empty pages often divided into uniform sections. Stephen Kern describes how the introduction of new technologies—such as public clocks—around the turn of the twentieth century brought about different ways of understanding and experiencing time and space: “The thrust of the age was to affirm the reality of private time against that of a single public time and to define its nature as heterogeneous, fluid, and reversible.”⁶¹ At the same time, the individual experience of time is and remained qualitative and heterogeneous. The diary contains tensions between time as private and public, homogenous and heterogeneous, fluid and fragmented. This is why many diarists feel compelled to write every day, even if they merely note “nothing.” Although the structure of the diary refers to natural, chronological (calendar) time, the entries themselves belong to the sphere of private time. Milestone dates and anniversaries

⁵⁹ Sinor, “Reading the Ordinary Diary,” 131-32.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁶¹ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 34.

throughout the year, but especially the year's end, contain particularly reflective (and retrospective) passages about the diarist's life.⁶² One woman, Luise S., does not write every day, but often writes once a week, and on special occasions when she has reason to reflect: a year since she has last seen her husband, his birthday, a year since he has gone missing, Christmas, New Year's, her own birthday, *Heldengedenktag* (Heroes Memorial Day), her daughter's confirmation, Mother's Day—days when she wishes for her husband's presence and reflects on her situation.⁶³ This practice of writing on special dates marks time as qualitatively different, separating out "special" days on which she thinks back and forward, reflecting on time's passing and her hopes for the future. Rituals and anniversaries become a means of reflection on the tension between experience and expectation, projecting hopes into the open space of the unknown future and trying to make sense of past experiences.

The space of the diary page and its organization of entries visually represents the way the text manages time. For example, the life-long diarist Charlotte preferred diaries that enabled her to use the same book for multiple years.⁶⁴ One preprinted book contains the title page: "Year by Year: A Tabulated Diary for Five Years."⁶⁵ Each page of the diary had a day (e.g.: 16 April) and spaces to write in the year (e.g.: 19__), so each page would contain the same day for five years. She would work through the first space of the page, and then next year go back to the beginning of the book, filling in the second row

⁶² This is both part of the diary's limited temporal horizon, daily structure and attempt to emplot the life using other time conventions. The present tense is felt by diarists to be confining and inadequate. They want to make sense of their world and want a meaningful context for their life, but their entries usually only span a day or a few days.

⁶³ DTA, 1002, Diary of Luise S. These holidays and events also mark the diary as written in/with Nazi time.

⁶⁴ DTA, 1047. Diary of Charlotte. Also the diary of Hedwig G. (DTA 968) contains a diary from the late 1930s, used for three years. "Das übersichtliche Tagebuch für 3 Jahre."

⁶⁵ Jahr um Jahr: Ein übersichtliches Tagebuch für fünf Jahre.

on each page.⁶⁶ As paper perhaps became scarce, or she could no longer purchase such diaries, she made her own by dividing up the page into three segments (see Figures 1.7 and 1.8). She even re-purposed a small diary intended for the year 1942 and used the book, dividing the pages, from 1942 – 1946. This mode of writing visually represents the practice of diary writing as a means of managing time and bringing order and regularity to one’s life. On any given page, one can *see* past, present, and future—in neat boxes. Holidays and birthdays mark dates that are qualitatively different. Although this is an extreme example, diaries that use a more open, unmeasured form of writing also contain elements of this ritualistic practice of containment. The writing practice contains the general chaos of life and the anxiety-producing openness of the future.

In summary, one of the diary’s central functions during this period was to *write time*. During this period of historical rupture, diarists reflect on time passing and what it means for time to be accelerated or historical. They often figure time as a force in their lives and reflect on their place in national history. Often, diarists’ chronicles of “living through” tumultuous historical events on a national or international level is interwoven with private concerns and local considerations. The act of diary writing mediates and manages temporality, at the same time that the openness of the diary form allows individual diarists to produce meaningful original accounts. The horizon of what the diary is able to capture or chronicle each day is often experienced as frustratingly small and limited. At the same time, the diary becomes the place where even the most unspectacular events are noted. Both types of experiences point to the presentist focus at

⁶⁶ Lejeune points out that many diarists like to re-read their texts. Such a structure would facilitate this method, allowing the diarist to compare a day in a year to the previous years. See especially “The Continuous and the Discontinuous” and “How do Diaries End?” and “Rereading Your Diary” in Lejeune, *On Diary*.

that time which is a central component of diary-writing in this transitional period. Furthermore, this act of writing attempts to order time, seeking to contain and manage it, sorting experience and trying to make connections between temporal dimensions.

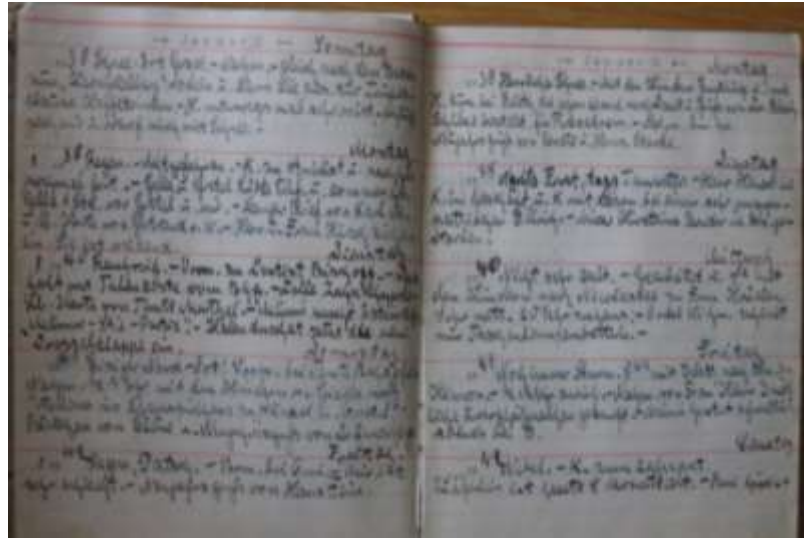


Figure 1.7.: A preprinted diary with day-by-day pages for five years. Photograph by author.



Figure 1.8. A notebook made into a diary, with pages divided by hand. Photograph by author.

“Als wär es ein Brief an dich”: The *Briefstagebuch* and the Multiplicity of Address

As correspondence began to break down towards the end of the war, many civilians used a diary to carry on conversations that could no longer be continued through letters or face-to-face. During the war, Germans wrote millions of *Feldpostbriefe*, letters to and from men serving in the military.⁶⁷ As this was no longer possible, the diary became an ersatz medium for this regular and prolific communication, and many chose to write in the form of a *Briefstagebuch*, a hybrid letter-diary. This form allows for a unique kind of multiplicity of communicative forms as well as addressees, as the diarist could use the text to communicate with herself, with absent others, and with the imagined text itself. Like other diary forms, the *Briefstagebuch* entails a writing of the self, with the main goals of communication, self-expression, and self-exploration. Cynthia Huff argues that we need new reading strategies for manuscript diaries to acknowledge how the self is constructed through techniques of “fragmentation, assumed and multiple voices, exclusion, and utilization of space.” Huff continues, emphasizing the difference from traditional autobiography, “diaries are deeply contextualized, family-centered, multimedia discourses, and hence the ‘self’ projected in these documents is multidimensional, not unified. In this sense, form and subjectivity work together.”⁶⁸ In this section, I highlight how the openness of the diary form allowed for imaginative and creative possibilities for writing, and allowing for a multiple and transformative self. Because the defeat of the German nation was experienced by many as a personal,

⁶⁷ See Ortwin Buchbender and Reinhold Sterz, *Das andere Gesicht des Krieges: deutsche Feldpostbriefe, 1939-1945* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1982). See also Jochen Schubert’s afterword in Heinrich Böll’s collected letters for a good overview of this writing practice. Heinrich Böll, *Briefe aus dem Krieg 1939-1945*, ed. Jochen Schubert, 2 vols. (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2001).

⁶⁸ Cynthia Huff, “Reading as Re-Vision: Approaches to Reading Manuscript Diaries,” *Biography* 23, no. 3 (2000): 508.

familial, and national crisis, individuals sought to negotiate a situation in which previous forms of identification and relationality were called into question. I show how this crisis is reflected at the textual level, as the self seeks recognition and poses questions about the relations between private and public spheres, national and local identities, as well as other possibilities for relating to others.

As German civilians were unable to continue sending *Feldpostbriefe*—for many reasons at the war’s end—the diary or the *Briefstagebuch* became an ersatz medium for this regular and prolific communication.⁶⁹ As Evamaria K. explains in her first entry, “Da ich nicht länger die Möglichkeit habe, meinen Eltern meine Gedanken zu schreiben, wie ich es zu tun pflegte, werde ich mich auf diesen Seiten mit mir selbst unterhalten.”⁷⁰ The diary picks up where letter-writing left off, offering a different possibility for self-communication. Another diarist, 35-year-old Carla B. begins writing a diary in March 1945, naming the departure of her loved one as the reason for writing. She turns to the diary to “converse” with this unnamed addressee (“mich mit Dir zu unterhalten”).⁷¹ In other cases, the diary also opens possibilities for shifting the intended addressee within the same text. The elderly Else T. writes with all her children in mind, often shifting between them: “Irgendwelche Nachricht von Dir mein Herzensjunge zu bekommen, wird ja nicht möglich sein, so will ich weiter warten. Und was magst Du, lieber Hans, machen??? Ob Eure Ecke noch frei ist, mein Trautekind? Ach, alle die Fragen, die das Herz bewegen!”⁷² Similarly, Susanne B. begins writing for her daughter, and when she

⁶⁹ See Buchbender and Sterz, *Das andere Gesicht des Krieges: deutsche Feldpostbriefe, 1939-1945*. See also Jochen Schubert’s afterword in Heinrich Böll’s collected letters for a good overview of this writing practice. Böll, *Briefe aus dem Krieg 1939-1945*.

⁷⁰ WKA, 3237, Diary of Evamaria K., From 27. March 1945 - 29. April 1945.

⁷¹ DTA, 56, Diary of Carla B. Entry from 17 March 1945.

⁷² DTA, 1303, Diary of Else T. Entry from 3 May 1945.

finds out that she is alive and safe, she shifts the text to address her son, who is in a POW camp (See also Figure 1.9, a mother writing to her sons).⁷³

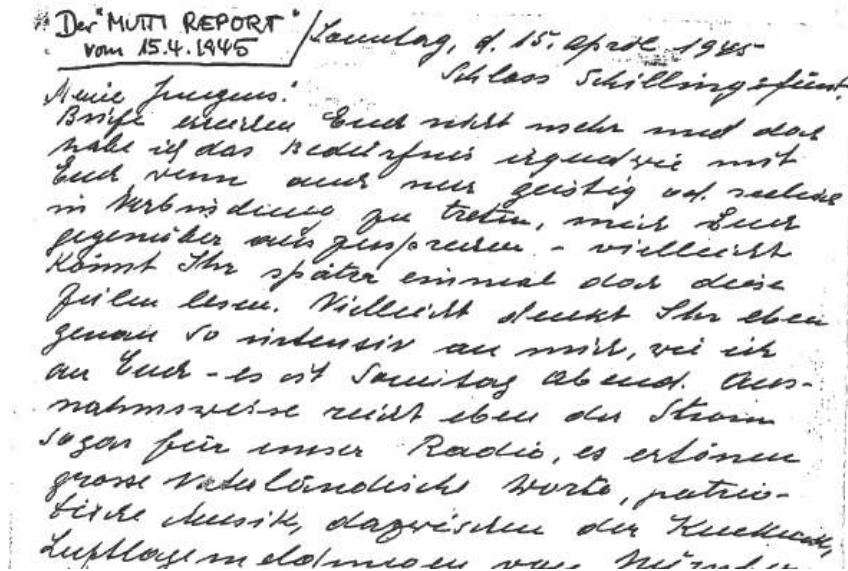


Figure 1.9. Diary of Iri M., addressed to her sons, written to replace letter correspondence. Image by author.

Many diarists see themselves as “inventing” the form of the *Briefstagebuch* out of the need to speak and be heard. The diary creates a space where new kinds of communication are possible, and should be read for their spatial metaphors. In March 1945, Carla B. writes that Germans no longer have a safe place of refuge, “einen sicheren Zufluchtsort,” yet this is exactly what she is creating through her diary: a place to escape and to communicate with those who are absent, as well as a space to communicate with herself.⁷⁴ The text is often figured as a kind of imaginative liminal space in which one can reach the absent, allowing for communication not possible in other spheres of life. As Hildegard W. puts it, her “little book” allows her to speak her thoughts and keep her absent husband informed about her experiences of this “difficult time.” The diary allows

⁷³ WKA, 1271, Diary of Susanne B.

⁷⁴ DTA, 56, Diary of Carla B. Entry from 20 March 1945.

her to “reach” him when letters cannot, and she imagines the text as a kind of bridge for his return:

Du mein liebster Mann, Da meine Briefe Dich wohl nicht erreichen, schreibe ich dies Büchlein voll. Ich habe Dir immer so viel zu sagen. Den ganzen Tag spreche ich in Gedanken mit Dir und erzähle Dir alles, was mich bewegt. Wenn Du eines Tages zu uns zurückkehrst, sollst Du nachlesen können, wie wir die schwere Zeit ohne Dich durchgestanden haben.⁷⁵

At the same time that diarists might imagine the future moment in which the text is read, they are also aware that this may not be possible.

The question of absence inscribed into these *Briefstagebücher* is simultaneously haunted by the question of death. The particular form of the *war diary*, as Manfred Jürgensen describes, is rooted in precisely this question of death as it conditions such an exceptional time of writing:

Wie alle diarischen Schriften wurzelt das Kriegstagebuch in der *Gefährdung des Ich*, in der Austauschbarkeit seiner existentiellen Verfremdung; es vereinigt in konzentriertester Form Erlebnisbericht und Reflexion, individuelles Schicksal und allgemeine Erfahrung. Der extreme Ausnahmezustand belegt die Regel eines sozial verantwortlichen Menschenlebens.⁷⁶

Confronted with their individual endangerment, diarists writing during wartime often feel that they are living through an experience not only as individuals, but as part of a generation. Thus their writing often combines a chronicle of world-historical events and comments and reflections on the reverberations of these events on more local circumstances. The *Briefstagebuch* as written during this period also highlights the variability and plasticity of the diary form. In this case, the text is not private, but is imagined as dialogic, as intersubjective communication. These texts also show how diaries are often written with an imagined future moment in mind, in which the text might

⁷⁵ WKA, 34, Diary of Hildegard W. 23 April 1945.

⁷⁶ Manfred Jürgensen, *Das fiktionale Ich: Untersuchungen zum Tagebuch* (Bern; München: Francke Verlag, 1979), 21.

reach its addressee. I now turn to three individual examples to show through close textual analysis how the *Briefstagebuch* both thematized the scene of writing and created an imaginative address.

Helga F.: “Ich brauche deshalb keine Schleier über meine Gefühle zu legen”

My first extended example is that of Helga F., a 34-year-old wife of a pastor and mother of three children, who began keeping a diary in the form of a *Briefstagebuch* in November 1944, when she was no longer able to send letters to her husband. In fact, she writes that she is only now starting to feel the effects of the war, being unable to receive letters from “unsere Lieben.” Like Hildegard W. above, she uses “wenn” hypothetical constructions to imagine the moment of her husband’s return, and imagine giving the material text to its intended recipient.

Mein liebster Karl-Albrecht!
Briefe kann ich Dir nicht mehr schicken, es ist aus. Aber schreiben muß ich Dir.
Wenn du diese Briefe wirklich einmal lesen solltest, was Gott uns in seiner Gnade
schenken möchte, dann hast Du wenigstens einen ganz kleinen Eindruck von der
Zeit, in der wir getrennt waren – aber innerlich weiter verbunden blieben.⁷⁷

Helga writes of a “need” to keep writing, and that perhaps diary writing even has its benefits: as she no longer has to censor her letters for things that might worry her husband while he is at the front: “wenn ich Dir diese Blätter zu lesen gebe, ist alles vorbei, und Du bist wieder bei mir gewesen, oder vielleicht sogar noch bei mir.”⁷⁸

Although she does not know how their story will end, the diary creates a sense of

⁷⁷ WKA, 5439, Diary of Helga F., Entry from 6 November 1944.

⁷⁸ WKA, 5439, Diary of Helga F., Entry from 6 November 1944.

continuous time between the writing present and her husband's future return. The diary is figured as a conversation, as she ends one entry, "morgen unterhalten wir uns weiter."⁷⁹

For Helga, writing is not only a connection to her absent husband, imagining his return in the past tense ("du bist bei mir gewesen"), but it enables a more open expression of feelings not possible in everyday conversation or in letters. "Ich brauche deshalb keine Schleier über meine Gefühle zu legen, kann ganz ruhig und offen mein Herz ausschütten und Du kannst nachträglich in alle Winkel reingucken."⁸⁰ She uses the metaphor of lifting a veil, exposing her feelings, and "pouring" out her heart. There is an excess of that which is to be told and expressed, and of the gap between writer and reader: "wenigstens den Extrakt sollst Du wissen, damit es uns einmal leichter fällt, wieder den Anschluß zu erreichen. Ich lebe jetzt ja in einer ganz anderen Welt als Du."⁸¹ The diary allows her to carry on a conversation with her husband, and imagine where they may someday pick back up again. She also anticipates the challenge of their reunion, considering their different experiences of the war.

Helga, like many others, often intersperses her writing with "Ach du," "geliebter Mann," "du mein Geliebter," or her (regionally marked) nickname for her husband, "Alterle." These are poetic terms and terms of endearment, which bring a layer of emotionality to the address, and also continually reveal a narrative form borrowing heavily from epistolary writing. The repeated address serves as an attempt to conjure him as a listener. The act of writing is here a direct substitute for letter correspondence, which is itself a substitute for face-to-face conversation. Mixing desires and counterfactual wishes, she speaks in the subjunctive, wishing that she could express herself directly:

⁷⁹ WKA, 5439, Diary of Helga F., Entry from 26 December 1944.

⁸⁰ WKA, 5439, Diary of Helga F., Entry from 6 November 1944.

⁸¹ WKA, 5439, Diary of Helga F., Entry from 6 November 1944.

“Und doch täte es mir direkt gut, wenn ich Dir auch mal von meinen Sorgen etwas erzählen könnte und mich aussprechen könnte! Aber das ist ja alles unmöglich.”⁸² The diary becomes a site of compromise; serving as her conversation partner, or at least as a silent listener. This relationship is highly emotional—it “does her good” to speak of her troubles.

This same diary also shows how diarists often reflect on their writing as they move from one physical book to the next. These allusions to the very material aspect of the diary (opening a new volume) offer an opportunity to reflect on how much one has written, and how much one will write in the future. It shows how the material of the text can be both medium, for a message, and addressee (“liebes Tagebuch”).

Das zweite Heft nehme ich mir nun vor. Es ist mir oft gar nicht möglich, daß ich Dir schon so lange nicht schreiben konnte. Alterle, wenn ich daran denke, daß unsere Trennungszeit vielleicht länger dauert als die, die wir bis jetzt durchgemacht haben, dann ist mir direkt körperlich schlecht und ich meine, daß ich es nicht mehr ertragen kann.⁸³

Opening a second notebook brought Helga F. to think about the physical separation that she faces. The book makes the duration of time concretely apprehensible—in the form of pages written. She imagines the time of separation as a quantity that might be extended, or even doubled.

A common theme in diaries is the inability to express thoughts and emotion elsewhere. Helga F. shifts between a reflection about the time of separation, and the time of war and hardship (its unthinkability), and her emotions: “Ich bin innerlich oft so mutlos und darf es doch gar nicht zeigen.”⁸⁴ Because she cannot *show* her emotion, the diary fulfills a need to express herself, while offering a place hidden from public view.

⁸² WKA, 5439, Diary of Helga F., Entry from 31 December 1944.

⁸³ WKA, 5439, Diary of Helga F., Entry from 17 March 1945.

⁸⁴ WKA, 5439, Diary of Helga F., Entry from 17 March 1945.

She later brings up this topic again, saying that the short letters she is able to send in the mail are really nothing more than “signs of life” (*Lebenszeichen*): “Das was ich fühle und denke, kann ja diesen Briefen nicht anvertraut werden! Deswegen will ich wenigstens in dieses Heft ab und an einige Zeilen an Dich schreiben.”⁸⁵ The intersection of thought and feeling is located in the diary as a space allowing for freedom of emotional expression. For these reasons, the diary perhaps reveals a *more* emotional self, and the diarist comments on censoring his or her feelings from others or from public view. Similarly, Susanne B. writes that she can’t tell others what she is thinking. Apparently still hoping for German victory, she realizes this emotion is perhaps best censored: “Aber sagen darf man von solchen Gedanken nichts, ich sage schon immer viel zu viel. Ich habe gestern zwischendurch auch noch eine weiße Fahne rausstecken müssen!”⁸⁶ The diary becomes a “safe” space for emotional expression during a period of quickly-changing norms. Although the diary is often thought of as hyperemotional, some diarists write their diary self as less emotional, self-censoring from the text.⁸⁷ This also shows how a writing subject may manage her self by division: a writing (emotional) self, and a social (controlled) self. Or the opposite—some may use the diary to create a “brave” and emotionally stable self, performing different emotional selves to public, familial, and diary worlds.

⁸⁵ WKA, 5439, Diary of Helga F., Entry from 22 April 1945.

⁸⁶ WKA, 1271, Diary of Susanne B., Entry from 16. April 1945.

⁸⁷ There are many examples of diarists who try not to “think” (or write) uncomfortable thoughts. They start to write/think something, and censor themselves, or try to use the writing to “banish” these thoughts. One young man, after witnessing the horrors of the bombing of Dresden, tries to command himself not to think about it. “Doch ich will mich zwingen, nicht daran zu denken. Stur bleiben, stur bleiben, sonst halte ich nicht durch.” Entry from 18 February 1945. Klaus Granzow, *Tagebuch eines Hitlerjungen 1943-45*. (Wiesbaden : Limes Verlag, 1986). Johann H. writes, “Ich mag gar nicht weiter denken. So einsam und verlassen bin ich und mein großes Leid kann ich niemand anvertrauen.“ Entry from 27.2. And occasionally “business” is used as a way to ward off unwanted thoughts: “Aber zum Nachdenken blieb uns ja, Gott sei Dank, wenig Zeit.” WKA 3715/2. Diary of Magdalena K., Entry from 4. Juni 1945.

As mentioned above, writing to the absent other also frequently causes the writer to think about whether the addressee is alive or dead. The diary can become a liminal space, between life and death, dream and waking, where the writer can relive dreams and memories, wishes and conversations. In this way, the diary even creates the possibility for impossible conversations, i.e. those with the dead, missing, or absent. As Helga F. writes, “Während ich schreibe, denke ich oft: Schreibe ich schon an einen Toten oder wird er leben.”⁸⁸ She also recognizes the huge differences that will lie between them, and that they will have to “start all over again,” and try to understand one another. “Wir leben seit langer Zeit in zu verschiedenen Welten mit zu verschiedenen Eindrücken, die nicht ohne Folgen bleiben werden. Ich weiß, daß ich mich leider in dieser Zeit sehr verändert habe und ganz gewiß nicht zu meinem Vorteil.”⁸⁹

As she reflects on these differences, and how she has changed, she describes herself as a person who has become “hart,” “als ob alles an mir abgleite.”⁹⁰

Das ganze Leid, was andere bedrückt (oder ist es nur eine Sicherheitsmaßnahme meiner Seele, weil ich sonst krank würde?). Es stumpft alles ab, manchmal fühle ich alles wie eine Last, ja sogar meine eigenen geliebten Kinder. Das ist mir so entsetzlich! Ich liebe sie sooo sehr, aber frage mich immer wieder, was soll aus ihnen werden? Ob ich jetzt nicht glücklicher wäre, sie wären nicht geboren? Und während ich das schreibe, weiß ich ganz genau, daß schon allein dieser Gedanke Sünde ist. Hin und hergerissen werde ich.⁹¹

This striking moment of emotional honesty documents a process of self-dialogue, including thoughts-one-dare-not-think (would I be happier without my children?), and self-judgment (this thought is a sin). She even writes “während ich das schreibe...”,

⁸⁸ WKA, 5439, Diary of Helga F., Entry from 17 March 1945.

⁸⁹ WKA, 5439, Helga F., Entry from 22 April 1945.

⁹⁰ Another diarist also describes herself as “hart geworden”. She uses the term “hart” repetitively: “wir sind hart geworden, weil wir es leiden mußten...”, “ich habe für vieles keine Tränen mehr, was mich früher todunglücklich gemacht hätte. Härter wie hart ist alles in uns, starr geworden in diesem Krieg.” DTA 1775, Diary of Maria K.

⁹¹ WKA, 5439, Diary of Helga F., Entry from 22 April 1945.

adding a meta-level that shows what the process of writing *does*, bringing new thoughts to the paper. Helga's attempt to analyze herself ("ist es nur eine Sicherheitsmaßnahme meiner Seele?") also demonstrates a reflective depth to the text as she "thinks aloud" in her writing.

For Helga, writing a diary brings comfort in the difficult months of the end of the war. The act of writing enables her to "converse" with her absent husband, and express feelings that she feels are unwelcome or inappropriate in other spheres of life. At the end of April 1945, she learns that he is alive, and the text continues to converse with him, imagining her husband's return and the difficulties that will face them as they attempt to understand one another despite such different experiences of the war. On May 5th, she turns to address the political situation:

Alterle, jetzt ist es so weit! Wir haben kapituliert. Der Russe wird uns bald besetzen. Alterle, ein furchtbares Gefühl zu sagen, daß alles umsonst war. Du weißt, wir haben immer damit gerechnet. Du weißt, daß ich nie auch nur einen Augenblick an den Sieg geglaubt habe! Aber es ist doch schwer zu ertragen, wenn auf einmal die Niederlage da ist, und wir verloren haben. Der Gedanke ist so furchtbar! Wie wirst Du erst an uns denken, mit welchen Sorgen und Gefühlen.⁹²

Still using the form of the letter to write to her husband, this passage shows various shifts in her voice while reflecting on German defeat. Writing as a German, she writes that "we" surrendered and will be occupied. The first-person-plural "wir haben immer damit gerechnet" seems to speak on behalf of herself and her husband, a shared political view separate from a larger social body. She then shifts to the first person to emphasize that *she* never believed in victory. At the same time, she admits conflicting feelings about defeat and the feeling of loss, and meaninglessness ("alles umsonst"). At the end of the passage, she tries to imagine herself through her husband's eyes, and his worries. This

⁹² WKA, 5439, Diary of Helga F., Entry from 8 May 1945.

diary entry shows how the *Briefstagebuch* allows for a highly fragmented voice and address, and accommodates complex, ambiguous, and shifting feelings about defeat. In the next example, I turn to a diary also addressed to a missing husband, which focuses on the private and familial circumstances during the war's end.



Figure 1.10. *Feldpostbriefe*, returned to sender, “gave his life for the German Empire” (*zurück: gefallen für Großdeutschland*). Photograph by author.

Luise S.: “Ich schreib als wäre es ein Brief an dich”

The second diary is that of Luise S., the mother of two children and the wife of a gardener who is fighting at the Eastern Front. She receives word that her husband Paul is missing on 16 January 1944. A week later, she begins to write a diary in the form of letters to her husband, strongly paralleling the themes of the other women: the desire to

communicate and chronicle her personal experiences (of difficult times) for her husband's return.

Und daß mir das Warten u. Bangen um Dich nicht gar so schwer wird, will ich in dieses Heft immer, wenn es mir zu schwer werden will, mit Dir reden. Wenn Du mir auch jetzt keine Antwort geben kannst, einmal wenn Du wieder bei mir bist, sollst Du es lesen, damit Du weißt, wie es war, als Du für uns verschollen warst.⁹³

Like in the case of Helga F., the “notebook” allows her to “converse” with her husband, and she also thinks about the moment when he will return and be able to read through the text.

The diary of Luise S. is highly emotional: her loneliness and despair are expressed on every page. Her first entry breaks off rather quickly, and when she resumes the next day she says that she didn't have the nerve to write (*meine Nerven versagten*), and that she became faint and had to put the writing down. Her language is emotional and desperate, and the journal seems to provide one small comfort. Through writing, she assures herself that her husband *must* return. She lives at the margins of life and death, as she even wishes at one point, “Warum nur liege ich nicht unter den Trümmern.”⁹⁴ She questions whether she can manage the daily struggle to stay alive, which is both physically and mentally challenging.

The writing process is a way of convincing herself that her husband is still alive (and that she should live). Indeed, it performs this reassurance: “ich sehne mich unsagbar nach Deiner Liebe, Deinen lbn. Worten, Deinem guten Blick. Tag u. Nacht verlangt mein Herz nach Dir. Du mußt einfach wiederkommen, Du mußt!”⁹⁵ She returns repeatedly to

⁹³ DTA 1002, Diary of Luise S. Entry from 23.1.44.

⁹⁴ DTA 1002, Diary of Luise S. Entry from 18.8.44.

⁹⁵ DTA 1002, Diary of Luise S. Entry from 23.1.44.

the scene of her husband holding the book in his hands as a motivation for picking up the pen:

Alle Sorgen u. Gedanken möchte ich in dieses Buch schreiben. Aber meine Hand ist so unruhig. Sie will mir einfach nicht mehr gehorchen. Doch es ist mir, als müßtest Du doch einmal das Heft in Händen halten u. darin lesen. Da will ich dann von Klausu u. Edith viel erzählen, damit Du von Deinen Kindern etwas weißt aus der Zeit, da Du nicht um sie sein konntest.⁹⁶

Like other writers, Luise also begins to imagine the gap between home front and front experiences, and the problems in personal relationships that might ensue at the war's end.

Luise S. also demonstrates the need for the diary in times of crisis, and the desire to *not* need the diary any more. For many, diary writing means absence, personal hardship and the potential death of loved ones (and one's own death).⁹⁷ As Lejeune writes, "A crisis diary is, if I dare say so, in search of its own ending. You are constantly searching how to get out of the crisis, and as a consequence, out of the diary itself."⁹⁸ Hardly two weeks after starting the diary, Luise questions how long she will "need" to write: "Nun habe ich 8 Tage nichts mehr geschrieben. Ach wie lange werde ich das Heft benutzen müssen? Wie lange wirst Du für uns unerreichbar sein?"⁹⁹ Another eight days go by before she writes again, questioning how long until her husband's return, again connected with the material aspect of the notebook—time passed as pages filled with writing: "Ob das Heft wohl viele beschriebene Seiten bekommen wird? Oder ob Du bald zurückkommst?"¹⁰⁰ Luise longs for both the end of her separation from her husband and

⁹⁶ DTA 1002, Diary of Luise S. Entry from 31.10.44.

⁹⁷ See also Philippe Lejeune and Victoria A. Lodewick, "How Do Diaries End?," *Biography* 24, no. 1 (2001).

⁹⁸ Lejeune, *On Diary*: 195.

⁹⁹ DTA 1002, Diary of Luise S. Entry from 2.2.44.

¹⁰⁰ DTA 1002, Diary of Luise S. Entry from 10.2.44.

with it, the end of her diary writing—both of which are inextricably linked to this period of crisis.

A week later their house and plant nursery are bombed and everything is destroyed. For a woman in an already desperate situation, this is almost the end for her. “Wie soll ich das alles meistern? Paul, Liebster, Du fehlst mir so sehr mit Deiner Ruhe und Gelassenheit. Hier schreibe ich in das Heft als wäre es ein Brief an Dich. Wirst Du all dies je einmal lesen?”¹⁰¹ The writing not only poses questions to her absent husband, but is also an attempt to compensate for this lack of communication (and to deny his probable death). She thinks of these thoughts as building a “bridge,” the writing actually creating a spiritual connection to her husband: “Paul, Liebster meine ganze Seele sucht Dich in dem weiten weiten Rußland. Fühlst Du es wohl, wie meine Liebe über Raum und Zeit eine Brücke bauen will?”¹⁰² Writing is a way of bridging distance and helping to alleviate homesickness and longing, especially through these passages that imagine or create a listener.

Luise’s diary has multiple functions. When she begins writing, believing her husband to be missing, it is an account for him of family life. The diary chronicles major events and describes the children. But increasingly, the address shifts between her self and husband. She writes for comfort and for communication, even if it is only self-communication. The language of Luise S. is highly repetitive, as the same worries weigh

¹⁰¹ DTA 1002, Diary of Luise S. Entry from 25 February 1944.

¹⁰² DTA 1002, Diary of Luise S. Entry from 21 July 1944. Another diarist uses a similar metaphor, not that of a bridge but of wings, after receiving mail from her far-away parents: “Wenn man Zeilen aus einer anderen Welt in Händen hält, dann bekommt man Sehnsucht nach Flügeln. Ich möchte auch dorthin, aber es geht nicht und so muß man sich inzwischen mit Schreiben begnügen.” DTA, 185 I/1/4. Diary of Edeltraud G., Entry from 2 November 1945. Another woman imagines that her daughter must be thinking of her, and writes that they are thus connected in thought. “Ich muß wohl Deine sorgendenden Gedanken bei uns gefühlt haben, denn ich habe den ganzen Tag an Dich und Deine Ängste gedacht, freilich auch ebenso oft an die Jungens, wo mögen sie wohl sein!” WKA 1271, Diary of Susanne B. Entry from 10 April 1945.

on her week after week. She even recognizes this, and questions the point of writing: “Ach wozu schreibe ich überhaupt in dies Heft? Es ist ja doch nur immer dasselbe Fragen u. Hoffen.”¹⁰³ Although she sees the writing as futile, she continues to write intermittently every week or every few weeks. Her sad and lonely text returns again and again to the themes of loneliness and the fear of death. She is so overwhelmed by the absence of her husband—and the potential of his death—that she can hardly bear her daily life. She continues writing the diary until 1948, and although her entries become shorter and less frequent, she persists to address the book to her missing (presumably deceased) husband.

Mittwoch 10. März 1938

Was und wie lange werde ich in dieses Buch schreiben werden es gute oder schlechte Jahre sein? Werden sie mich noch Frau sein, oder schon Frau nennen Die ganze Zukunft ist ein Fragezeichen, nur eines man merke ich sicher, daß wir Adolf Hitler als Führer haben, der uns den Weg zeigt, und sein „Mein Kampf“ soll mich begleiten, damit ich immer besser seine Ideen begreife und auch danach lebe, wenn es auch oft sehr schwer erscheint.

Seite 447 Weltgeschichte wird durch Minoritäten gemacht

„Wann auf einem Volke eine bestimmte Summe höchster Energie ist. Tal Kraft auf ein Ziel vereint erscheint es mit ihm der Trägheit der breiten Massen entgegen auf wegen ist, sind diese wenigen Prozente in Heeren der gesamten Zahl emporgestiegen. Weltgeschichte wird durch Minoritäten gemacht dann wenn sich in dieser

Figure 1.11. Diary of Ise T., who, like Luise S., starts her first entry: “Was und wie lange werde ich in dieses Buch schreiben? Werden es gute oder schlechte Jahre sein? [...] Die ganze Zukunft ist ein Fragezeichen, nur eines [?] stark und sicher, daß wir Adolf Hitler als Führer haben, der uns den Weg zeigt, und sein ‚Mein Kampf‘ soll mich begleiten...“.

¹⁰³ DTA 1002. Diary of Luise S. Entry from 12 September 44.

Johann H.: “Nur im Traume kann ich mich noch mit dir unterhalten”

The diary of Johann H. in Bremen has strong parallels to the themes and emotions of Luise S., from the perspective of a 52-year old widower. Unlike Luise, who is uncertain whether her husband is alive or dead, Johann knows he is writing to the dead.¹⁰⁴ He begins his text on New Year’s Day 1945, out of the desire to conjure his wife, his “liebe Hanni,” as a listener, and laments that he has no one to talk to and that language is inadequate. “Meinen großen Kummer in Worten auszudrücken, ist mir nicht gegeben, doch wenn ich Dir alles persönlich erzählen könnte, Du nur würdest mich verstehen.”¹⁰⁵ He was married to his wife 22 years, and although we don’t know how she died, he alludes twice to a particularly tragic death (“Du bist mir auf einer solch tragischen Weise genommen”).¹⁰⁶ For Johann, the diary is a place of grief, memory, fantasy, dreams, and mourning. He remarks that he cannot show his emotions to others, and that his son is now his only reason for living. Especially at the beginning of the diary, in January and February 1945, the entries are centered on his wife and his longing to be with her and converse with her.

The diary often includes dreams in which he imagines he is with her again. “In der Nacht warst Du wieder bei mir. Wir schliefen und ich hörte Dein regelmäßiges

¹⁰⁴ See also Gretel B. “Tagebuch für einen Toten” in Breloer, *Mein Tagebuch. Geschichten vom Überleben 1939-1947*, 108-17. Gretel B. also begins writing upon the death of her husband Robert. “Und nun, mein lieber Robert, wohin mit all meiner Liebe, meiner stillen Sehnsucht und den vielen, vielen Gedanken, die ich ansonsten in Briefen an Dich niederlegen konnte?? – Ich weiß es, immer wenn es mich dazu drängt, schreibe ich an Dich, wenn ich auch meine Zeilen nicht mehr abschicken kann. Ich brauche aber diese Unterhaltung mit Dir zum inneren Ausgleich, zum Einsbleiben mit Dir, um Dir oft in inniger Zwiesprache ganz nahe zu sein.” Entry from 24 January 1945. She also receives a letter from her husband after his death. A few days later, she notes how “grausam” life can be, as she receives a card with congratulations on their marriage the same time as the more complete message of his death arrives [married 4.11.1944].

¹⁰⁵ WKA, 5747/8, Diary of Johann H. Entry from 6 January 1945.

¹⁰⁶ WKA, 5747/8, Diary of Johann H. Entry from 6 January 1945.

Atmen. Du warst es! Ich fühlte Dich! Ach wäre der Traum doch ewig geblieben.”¹⁰⁷ The next day, after another particularly vivid dream, he writes, “Ich möchte diese Sekunden festhalten.”¹⁰⁸ He thinks about the dreams as liminal spaces, between life and death, where he is able to talk to her. “Nur im Traume kann ich mich noch mit dir unterhalten. Das Erwachen müßte dann aber nicht wieder kommen. Es geht aber nicht nach Wunsch. Einmal wird auch für mich die Stunde kommen, wo ich von diesem Dasein erlöst sein werde.”¹⁰⁹ He repeats this idea, thinking about being with his wife in death, “Letzte Nacht warst Du im Traum wieder bei mir. Könntest Du mich bei dieser Gelegenheit nicht mitnehmen?”¹¹⁰ He also goes to the cemetery to speak with her, and goes hiking in Heidelberg where they used to walk together, retracing her steps and imagining that he sees her footprints. He searches for sites that allow him to talk to the dead, and conjure her presence. Even when not writing, Johann H. notes that he daydreams about his wife. “Im Zuge stellte ich mir vor, wie schön es wäre, wenn ich jetzt zu Dir gehen könnte, und wie Du mich in unserem Heim empfangen würdest.”¹¹¹ Although he writes that he can only “talk” to his wife in his dreams, we may observe that the diary is also such a place, albeit a more one-sided conversation. The openness of the diary form allows him to imagine and relive these moments, experiencing her presence in the process of writing.

Johann’s diary also shows us the intertwinement of his personal battles with those of the nation. He does this through a kind of parataxis: placing personal crisis next to world-historical, one’s own life events next to those of the nation. He keeps the diary from January to May 1945. In January and February, Johann’s thoughts only occasionally

¹⁰⁷ WKA, 5747/8, Diary of Johann H. Entry from 6 January 1945.

¹⁰⁸ WKA, 5747/8, Diary of Johann H. Entry from 6 February 1945.

¹⁰⁹ WKA, 5747/8, Diary of Johann H. Entry from 28 January 1945.

¹¹⁰ WKA, 5747/8, Diary of Johann H. Entry from 27 February 1945.

¹¹¹ WKA, 5747/8, Diary of Johann H. Entry from 9 January 1945.

shift from mourning his wife's death to the political situation ("Die Zukunft liegt besonders im Augenblick trübe vor uns. Werden wir den Sturm im Osten aufhalten können?") to his son's visit on leave from his position as a "Flakhelfer." In early February, he shifts from describing his grief and depression to a brief comment about the state of the military situation. He briefly mentions going to the Volkssturm but provides no details. Jennifer Sinor, drawing upon Rebecca Hogan's work on "Engendered Autobiographies," argues that parataxis functions in the diary to measure time, keeping it controlled and constant: "The reader cannot tell which event within the sentence or the paragraph was the most significant and, therefore, must grant equal weight to all parts."¹¹² For example, Johann mentions his conscription to the Volkssturm and then continues to write to his wife: "Morgens zum Volkssturm. Ich war am Tage bei einer ganz trübseligen Stimmung. Immer mußte ich an Dich denken."¹¹³ In the context of the war's end, parataxis often works to level the private and the world-political, to further retreat from the political sphere and assert the primacy of the small, local, and familial.

In April and May, Johann's diary moves away from a focus on his wife to follow the events of the war's end more closely, to the point where he stops addressing his wife, using the text to note the key events of the war's end: "Die Ereignisse überstürzen sich. Man ist nicht mehr in der Lage, alles festzuhalten."¹¹⁴ He starts to turn his attention from himself to those around him, observing, "Alles Schöne ist verschwunden, nur die Trümmer sind uns geblieben. Die Menschen werden Tag für Tag ernster. Man sieht es ihren Gesichtern ab, daß sie alle Kummer haben. Frei davon ist niemand."¹¹⁵ His own

¹¹² Sinor, "Reading the Ordinary Diary," 132-3.

¹¹³ WKA, 5747/8, Diary of Johann H. Entry from 4 February 1945

¹¹⁴ WKA, 5747/8, Diary of Johann H. Entry from 1 and 2 April 1945.

¹¹⁵ WKA, 5747/8, Diary of Johann H. Entry from 7 February 1945.

pain is now generalized, as he sees pain and ruin everywhere around him. On 1 April, Johann reflects on the lost war. He repeats the clichéd rhetoric also used by Helga, “Alle Opfer scheinen umsonst gebracht zu sein.” He is critical of those who continue to fight, repeatedly using language of “betrogen und belogen,” emphasizing the “blindness“ of the Germans and the deception of the government: “Sind wir alle mit Blindheit geschlagen und wollen wir nicht sehen, was sich in der Welt abspielt? Die Zipfelmütze hat der Deutsche über Augen und Ohren gezogen und will die Wirklichkeit nicht hören und sehen.”¹¹⁶

These three diaries: Helga F., writing to her “Alterle”; Luise S., whose husband is missing; and Johann H., whose wife was “tragically” taken in the last few months of the war, all demonstrate the way the diary is able to create “impossible” speech situations. Each diarist retreats into a creative, productive and imaginative space in order to communicate with his or her loved ones. The war dramatically changed lives, interrupting possibilities for communication, and forcing individuals to create new ways of expressing themselves. In doing so, they conduct a new form of writing history, thematizing changes in time and their place in this transitional period. While the examples here have been mostly one-sided soliloquies focusing on personal suffering, they also reveal shifts between public and private events, creating a space to “try out” language and thoughts outside of the public sphere, or carry out work of mourning. Ultimately, the *Briefstagebuch* is a rich site through which to analyze this period of dramatic shifts and changes in social, political, and familial or local spheres. As seen most clearly in the example of Johann, although a diary might begin as a form of communication (with the absent or dead), it often shifts to new kinds of self-communication and self-expression.

¹¹⁶ WKA, 5747/8, Diary of Johann H. Entry from 1 and 2 April 1945.

The Self and Community After the *Volksgemeinschaft*: The Diarist's Social Worlds

The young Irmgard K. (who later described her diary as “Bekenntnisse von gerade religiöser Hitlerverehrung”) describes a typical scene upon the arrival of the Allied soldiers, in this case Americans, in her hometown of Bochum. She sits behind closed curtains, peeking out, watching the soldiers walk confidently by with cigarettes in their mouths. Her assessment of this image reads: “jeder Zoll: Der Sieger.”¹¹⁷ She describes her feelings of grief and anger and her sense of helplessness as she is faced with the undeniable signs of Germany's defeat and Allied victory.¹¹⁸ Here, sitting at the window, she attempts to hide herself while yet looking out. At other times she describes retreating to her bedroom, and into the pages of her diary, to express thoughts she knows are no longer welcome in her household, where her mother has removed all the family's Hitler portraits; or in public, where neighbors and friends are hanging white flags of surrender.

This diary reveals a complex spatialization of writing (retreat, privacy) and of sociality, both of which have dramatically shifted within a matter of days. The end of the war brought a radical shift in social relations: whether between non-Jewish Germans, the former victims of the Nazi regime, Allied occupiers, or Germans returning from exile. As Atina Grossmann puts it, the war's end brought together “different worlds on the same terrain, divided by memory and experience.”¹¹⁹ These groups also interacted continually, “they contested issues of relative victimization, guilt, responsibility, commemoration, and

¹¹⁷ WKA, 2583, Diary of Irmgard K., Entry from 12 April 1945. The diarist herself, in a kind of “foreword,” remarks on her discomfort while rereading the diary she wrote as a 19-year-old girl. She wanted to turn the materials over to the archive “unzensiert, unausgewählt, unkorrigiert, unbearbeitet, auch dann, wenn es um die Bekenntnisse von gerade religiöser Hitlerverehrung geht (weswegen ich einige Schaudergefühle überwinden muß.”

¹¹⁸ WKA, 2583, Diary of Irmgard K., Entry from 12 April 1945.

¹¹⁹ Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 3.

reparations.”¹²⁰ This diary of a young girl shows how the diary could be one site of such contestation and interaction—even if it means an imagined and subjective interaction. From her position of security and safety, this young diarist looks both outwards and inwards, in an attempt to understand and cope with defeat. Irmgard’s diary is not only about herself, but her relationship with her mother, her loss of Hitler and Nazi Germany, and her future, and integrating these changes into her self-understanding.

What diaries like that of Irmgard show us is an individual facing world-shattering change, and how she uses diary writing to address and work through this rupture. Margo Culley emphasizes that diary writing is about creating a sense of self-continuity, especially when this continuity seems lost, paradoxically by objectifying the self through self-analysis.¹²¹ Diary writing can be a kind of “picking up the pieces,” and trying to sort out what the future will be like. In this last section, I turn specifically to the question of the ruptured social body—the breakdown of the *Volksgemeinschaft*—and how the diary was used to reflect on questions of society and community. I do this by reading scenes of encounter presented in diaries. These dialogic episodes, in which a conversation is retold, are highly self-reflective moments of social interaction presented within a text usually considered hermetic and private. They are crucial representations of a social body in crisis and transition.

As Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer put it in their introduction to *Shattered Past*, Germany was “a society that broke apart in producing war and genocide”:

The networks of German society were torn, to the very core of personal existence, by the violence that they generated and suffered. Hence, their history cannot be reassembled as if brutality and savagery had not left any traces or could not be separated out from the main course of long-term developments. By the same

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Culley, *A Day at a Time: The Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present*, 10.

token, the assertion of life after genocide, in processes of leave-taking as much as in reconstituting bonds of civility and community, makes telling this history possible after all. It also makes for a permanently fractured history.¹²²

Although they are looking at long-term developments, and how German history has been “reconstructed” since 1945, it is useful to draw attention to the kind of social rupture Jarausch and Geyer point to and its long-term effects. In diaries from the end of the Second World War in Germany, few diarists carry out the kind of critical self-reflection advocated by writers and philosophers such as Karl Jaspers.

In his work on the life-long diarist Franz Göll, Peter Fritzsche notes how diary writing is a symptom of a modern self needing to become autonomous: “The requirement to construct autonomy, to be oneself by producing oneself, made the self more strategic in its dealings with others, more self-reflective in the contemplation of its own subjectivity, and more apt to take up the role of diarist to advance and chronicle the struggle of selfhood.”¹²³ To think of the diary in terms of a “chronicle” of the “struggle of selfhood” is productive because it emphasizes the process of formation and change. The period in which many Germans were writing a diary was also a period in which many Germans were forced to confront a radically different world, and forced to not only admit defeat, and retreat politically, but also retreat from previous social and cultural norms. With the breakdown of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, or rather, revealing the *Volksgemeinschaft* to have been a false monolithic homogeneity, Germans struggled to manage the new social conflicts of the period. The diaries in this section all look at the

¹²² Konrad Hugo Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 15.

¹²³ Fritzsche, *The Turbulent World of Franz Göll: An Ordinary Berliner Writes the Twentieth Century*: 10-11.

“struggle of selfhood,” and how diarists narrate and present themselves during this period of change.

I read passages of dialogue in diaries as strategies of working through challenges of the changing social sphere(s). By writing scenes of dialogic encounter, diarists bring other “characters” into their texts and reflect on what they said or could have said in response. These are scenes and scenarios of what Atina Grossmann calls the “close encounters,” between Germans, Jews, and Allies in postwar Germany, but also within these social groups, which themselves are far from homogenous.¹²⁴ At the textual level of these encounters, we can observe the limits of language, the struggle to express oneself, and the intensely emotional nature of such exchanges. These scenes show that the diary is not merely or solely *introspective* but also considers personal relationships and the way the self is formed in exterior spaces. Dialogue allows the author to “replay” a past conversation and reflect upon its meaning, as well as the way the self is changed through these conversations. Narrating scenes of dialogue also enables the diarist to work through seemingly impossible or contradictory scenarios. The diarist becomes the protagonist, faced with an “other” who is brought into the text.

Through forms of writing such as dialogue, the diary both *refers* to a world and *creates* a world. Paul John Eakin, in *How our Lives Become Stories*, emphasizes that first-person narratives are interactive and relational: the “narrator’s story is refracted through the stories of others.”¹²⁵ Especially in scenes of dialogue, the diarist represents herself and the conversation through narrative modes and styles. These passages show us the extraordinary creative potential of this form—as the scene of re-telling incites

¹²⁴See Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*.

¹²⁵ Paul John Eakin, *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), 216.

reflection, self-questioning, and an attempt to come to terms with the limits of communication. The narration and descriptions found in diaries are already an interpretation of experience on the part of the author, whereby language plays a large role. As Joan Scott writes in her classic essay on “The Evidence of Experience,” we make meaning of events through language and through discourse, “narratives are inescapably historical; they are discursive productions of knowledge of the self, not reflections either of external or internal truth.”¹²⁶ Many scholars of autobiography and diary have also highlighted the narrativization of the self in diaries. Manfred Jurgensen points to the “Verdichtung des Ich,” in that the reflexive writing self is simultaneously writer and reader of her self-representation.¹²⁷ On an emotional level, the process of writing may also entail a process of defamiliarization, as Jonathan Flatley describes it: “My own emotional life must appear unfamiliar, not mine, at least for a moment, if I am to see its relation to a historical context. The idea is to allow one’s own emotions to lose their invisibility and necessity and become instead contingent, surprising, relative.”¹²⁸ Flatley describes a process of self-distancing which is facilitated through diary form. Writing about one’s emotions also makes diarists aware of the possibilities and limits of self-expression.

One such example is Maria K’s reflective dialogue from 12 April 1945. Maria, the mother of two small children living in the Black Forest, has a husband on the front lines. In this entry, she begins by describing the lack of material goods, the daily fear of airplanes flying overhead, the desire for word from her husband, and the “expense” of

¹²⁶ Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 795.

¹²⁷ Jurgensen, *Das fiktionale Ich: Untersuchungen zum Tagebuch*: 7.

¹²⁸ Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 6.

feeling. After a reflection upon her emotionality, she reports a conversation she had with an unknown woman in Karlsruhe. The direct manner in which this woman asked her a seemingly impossible question, “Sind Sie schon gestorben?” resonated with Maria and caused her to think about what that impossibility meant.

Ich schaute sie an und sagte, beinah ja. “Ich bin schon gestorben,” sagte sie, “nicht nur einmal mehrmals, denn diese letzte Todesangst immer wieder auszustehen ist mehr als der Tod selbst.” Sie war verschüttet und im Keller neben ihr starben die Menschen an Erstickung oder Luftdruck und nun war ihr das so gräßlich, daß sie lieber tot als lebendig wäre. Ich muß sagen, als wir im Keller lagen, da dachte ich auch, nun ist alles, alles vorbei, und ich umarmte meine Kinder mit einer letzten Ruhe u. wartete, und dann war es doch nicht unsere letzte Stunde. Aber ist’s nicht der Anfang, wenn man vollständig hilflos dem ausgesetzt ist.¹²⁹

Although the diarist herself was perhaps unable to express her experience in this way, as life after death, she identifies with this expression. She writes, “Ich muß sagen,” as if this story forces her to confess she shared a similar sentiment. These two women share a moment in which they recognize a common experience. Judith Butler writes, “No matter how much we each desire recognition and require it, we are not therefore the same as the other, and not everything counts as recognition in the same way...it still matters that we feel more properly recognized by some people than we do by others.”¹³⁰ The recognition that was provided in the conversation about “life after death” serves as an impetus for further reflection upon the nature of her own feelings and about the experiences of the war, including the trauma of aerial bombings.

In the aftermath of this traumatic experience, Maria uses the language of the unknown woman to also create a community of those with a similar near-death experience. She continues this entry, thinking about what “everyone” is going through

¹²⁹ DTA, 1775, Diary of Maria K., 12 April 1945.

¹³⁰ Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 33.

during this time, and uses many emotionally loaded words to describe the scenes all around her, between mothers and soldiers and husbands and wives. This passage draws many others into conversation with the diarist. This is not only the case for the unnamed woman in Karlsruhe, but also for a cacophony of feelings and perspectives which she describes to reassure herself that she is not alone in this difficult situation—the impossible situation of having survived death. She ends by addressing her “armes Herz,” a cliché personifying herself and her emotionality.

The same process of creating the self and community through dialogue can be found in the diary of Erika S., born 1926 in Hamburg and raised with clear social-democratic political convictions. Her father, a local SPD politician, was arrested and interned in a concentration camp multiple times. She writes in September 1943 that she hopes to end her diary with the line “Hinein in die Befreiung!” Although this young woman is explicitly anti-Nazi, and waits hopefully for the British troops to arrive, the excitement in her entry for the day of 8 May, German capitulation, is undermined by troubling thoughts and reflections about a chance encounter she had with a former officer. She addresses her diary:

8.5.45: Bedingungslose Kapitulation der deutschen Wehrmacht!! [...] Ich weiß nicht, warum ich heute nicht ganz so froh und lustig sein kann, wie ich es mir früher vorgestellt habe. Vielleicht kommt es von dem heute Erlebten. Das erzähle ich Dir [the diary] nachher noch, jetzt muß ich Radio hören und schreibe die nackten Tatsachen.¹³¹

Although she tries to maintain a strict chronology and writing pattern in the diary—beginning with the historical events of the day—from the start she alludes to a disturbing

¹³¹ In Heinrich Breloer, *Geheime Welten: deutsche Tagebücher aus den Jahren 1939 bis 1947* (Frankfurt: Eichborn, 1999), 128; 29. Also note that the “Dir“ is the diary itself, whom she calls her “friend.” An extended version of this diary is included in Breloer’s *Mein Tagebuch. Geschichten vom Überleben 1939-1947*.

event “dem heute Erlebten” that has altered the lens through which she understands the day’s events. As is the case in many diaries, the diarist struggles between an attempt to create a coherent temporality (chronological narration) of the day’s events, while being interrupted by transcriptions of radio broadcasts, repetitions of rumors or the reporting of historical events.

On this particular day, she describes the events leading up to the surrender and then returns to address this previously-alluded to experience—an encounter in the train with a man sitting across from her. As they exit the train, he accidentally steps on her heel. As he apologizes, they get drawn into conversation. “Und nun geht er neben mir, mein Gegenüber aus dem Zug, und wir gehen nebeneinander her, als ob wir uns schon lange kennen. Und plötzlich sind wir mitten im Gespräch. Und worüber spricht man? Vom Kriegsende, natürlich. Und vom Krieg.”¹³² In this account, one can picture the two unfamiliar persons, brought into contact through a chance encounter. She shifts from her diary language, a recounting of events, into an extended anecdote in the present tense, as if it is still unfolding as she writes. She replays the scene in her mind and on the page. It turns out that this man was an officer, and is now wearing civilian clothing to escape imprisonment. Erika notes her own discomfort in responding to him, and the strange way in which their conversation unfolds:

Ich weiß nicht, was ich dazu sagen soll. Und dann sprechen wir doch. Sehr angeregt sogar. Ich merke, daß er ein kluger Mensch ist. Aber er ist ein verzweifelter Mensch. “Wenn ich keine Familie hätte, würde ich nicht mehr leben.” “Nanu?” Nun finde auch ich meine Sprache. “Haben Sie den Mut verloren?” – “Den Mut!?!” Es klingt wie Hohn, er sagt es laut, und sein Stimme klingt verzweifelt. Und leise dann: “Ist es nicht alles zu schrecklich? Ist es nicht zu traurig, daß unser Deutschland so enden mußte?” Ich spüre die Verzweiflung, die in diesem Menschen steckt. Ich möchte ihm helfen, aber wie? Wie vielen

¹³² Heinrich Breloer, *Mein Tagebuch. Geschichten vom Überleben 1939-1947*, 187. Also: *Geheime Welten: deutsche Tagebücher aus den Jahren 1939 bis 1947*: 130.

Soldaten geht es heute so wie meinem Nebenmann! Wie viele Welten sind ihnen zusammengebrochen. Und die meisten stehen vor dem Nichts, haben Heim, Existenz, Gesundheit und Familie verloren. Und nun?¹³³

Erika carefully observes his tone of voice, his grief and desperation, and her own changing opinion towards this stranger.

She seems to register increasing sympathy for this man as she imagines that he is not alone in his feelings and she thinks of him as representative of so many soldiers returning home. They continue to walk together, “sehr langsam, sehr ernst.” As she writes this in her diary, she notes the sensation of her happiness has been taken from her. She narrates their conversation almost as a competition of suffering.

Wo bleibt nur meine frohe Stimmung? Ich kam doch so vergnügt von R! Will sich etwa die Verzweiflung und Trauer meines Nebenmannes auf mich legen? Nein, noch ist es nicht soweit. Ich spreche darum zu ihm davon, daß für uns mit dem Kriegsende eine neue Zeit anbricht, daß wir nun frei sind und erst jetzt wieder in die Zukunft schauen mögen. Ich spreche von den Qualen der zwölf Jahre, erzähle ihm von meinem Vater, von unserem Geschick in den schweren Jahren!¹³⁴

Returning to the idea expressed at the beginning of the entry, that she wanted to celebrate this historic date, Erika is upset that this man has spoiled her mood. She describes how she wanted the war’s end to mark a new time, characterized by a future-looking gaze. Instead, she also describes her family’s history during the Third Reich.

As she finishes, he tells her about his life as an officer, and his initial enthusiasm. “Auch über den Nationalsozialismus sprechen wir.” She informs him that they knew in advance that destruction and defeat of the Nazis was the only possibility. The soldier describes his own disillusionment and process of “revelation”:

Ich ließ mich zuerst blenden.[...] Wenn ich dann die Begleiterscheinungen sah, dachte ich: Die begleitenden Umstände und Umrahmungen sind schlecht, der Kern ist gut. Und dann kam die Erkenntnis, daß es umgekehrt war. Der Kern ist

¹³³ Heinrich Breloer, *Geheime Welten: deutsche Tagebücher aus den Jahren 1939 bis 1947*: 130-31.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

schlecht gesehen, und die Umrahmungen waren gut. Als ich das erkannt hatte, beging ich den Fehler, weiter Offizier zu bleiben.[...] Und nun?¹³⁵

Erika notes the desperation in his voice and can only look at him “sadly.” She describes how this encounter affected her deeply and notes the inadequacy of putting it into words in the pages of the diary: “Ich kann es nicht so beschreiben, wie er war.” By writing down the conversation, she not only recounts her actual conversation but begins to register how she and her encounter undergo the same process of mourning. Through their dialogue, or rather its retelling, Erika’s story becomes, as Eakin has described, “refracted through the stories of others.” Erika devotes extensive space in her diary to retelling this encounter. At the end, she writes that she is proud of how she acted during this encounter. “Was haben die letzten Tage nur aus mir gemacht? Ich komme mir viel reifer vor. [...] Die Zeit fordert jetzt auch von mir, daß ich reifer bin als sonst. ‘Erwachsen’ bin ich nun wohl? Oder wie nennt man das?”¹³⁶ She narrates this experience as the culmination of a period of growing up, as well as a moment of facing up to the political situation within Germany.

The third example comes from the wartime diary of the later poet and author Ingeborg Bachmann, who experienced the war’s end as an eighteen-year-old in Vienna. In the passage below, Bachmann records in her diary an encounter with a British soldier. As she retells this scene, she uses the diary to say all the things she wanted to say to him, but could not, because she was afraid of seeming insincere.

“So, Sie sind eine Maturantin”.[...] Dann sagte er: “Natürlich BdM.” Mir war plötzlich ganz übel und ich habe überhaupt kein Wort herausgebracht und nur genickt. Ich hätte ihm ja sagen können, dass ich wahrscheinlich garnicht mehr auf einer Liste stehe, weil ich mit 14 nicht übernommen worden und auch nicht vereidigt worden bin und dass ich dann nie mehr geholt worden bin oder

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Heinrich Breloer, *Mein Tagebuch. Geschichten vom Überleben 1939-1947*, 189.

hingegangen bin. Aber ich weiss nicht, was mit mir los war. Ich habe mir auch gedacht, dass ihm wahrscheinlich alle Leute erzählen, dass sie nie dabeigewesen sind und nur gezwungen worden sind, und ich habe auch sofort gedacht, dass er mir kein Wort glauben würde. Zum Schluss sagte er noch “Denken Sie noch einmal scharf nach, ob Sie nicht Führerin gewesen sind. Wir erfahren es ja doch, wenn Sie es gewesen sind.” Ich brachte noch heraus: “Nein.” Aber ich glaube, ich bin ganz rot geworden und vor Verzweiflung noch röter. Es ist ganz unverständlich, warum man auch rot wird und zittert, wenn man die Wahrheit sagt.¹³⁷

Over half of this passage is an outpouring of the thoughts and feelings Bachmann had but could not express to her interlocutor. The actual conversation is reduced to a few laconic lines, whereas in the diary she creates a kind of parallel space, going back to this moment and drawing out the responses and thoughts she *could have* had or *did have* at the time. She starts with the subjunctive, “ich hätte ihm ja sagen können,” and then adds clause after clause expanding this thought. She is trying both to understand his position and her own feelings and reactions.

The diary turns into a site of compromise from the exposure of public self-expression. In this instance, Bachmann asserts her honesty and political position, although she could not do so during the conversation. This excerpt reveals her desire to be seen as expressing a certain kind of sincerity and how hyper-aware she seems of her body and her physical emotional reactions (“Mir war plötzlich ganz übel,” “Ich glaube, ich bin ganz rot geworden”). “Rot” here seems to signify first an uncontrollable shame or embarrassment, and then anger or frustration, due to her “Verzweiflung.” She is not in control of her body and her emotions, although she knows in retrospect that it was illogical to respond in such a way: “Es ist ganz unverständlich, warum man auch rot wird und zittert, wenn man die Wahrheit sagt.” This highly self-aware reflection in the diary

¹³⁷ Ingeborg Bachmann, *Kriegstagebuch: Mit Briefen von Jack Hamesh an Ingeborg Bachmann*, ed. Hans Höller (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), 16-17.

allows Bachmann to regain some of the sense of agency and self-worth she did not feel during the conversation.

The last example is from a young girl, who as a (former) BDM member was brought to a concentration camp near Hamburg by Allied soldiers to help nurses care for the sick and dying inmates.¹³⁸ In this diary, Elfie W. records day-by-day her experience and emotional response as she is brought to the camp, in part to assure herself that what she saw was real. Her entire diary is framed with the intention of making something unbelievable believable—to herself and eventually to others: “ich muß unbedingt aufschreiben, was hier los ist. Sonst glaubt man es mir nicht.”¹³⁹ The diary begins on 1 May, as the girls are brought to a camp in order to help “clean up” (*saubermachen*). “Ich bekam einen furchtbaren Schreck und mußte an die Bilder zu Hause denken. Ein KZ-Lager! Davon hatte ich in den letzten Tage gerade genug gehört! Hoffentlich müssen wir nicht in das Lager mit den vielen Toten, dachte ich.”¹⁴⁰

She later adds an addendum to this day’s entry: “1.5.45 spät abends.” “Ich habe eben das Schlimmste gehört. Ich muß es heute noch aufschreiben. Wir haben eine Kerze. Da geht es. Aber jetzt von Anfang an!” She has met German medics (*Sanitäter*) who tell the girls what to expect in the camp.

¹³⁸ WKA, 3876, Diary of Elfie W. The diary of Elfie Walther has been excerpted in Werner Volland Klaus Borgsen, *Stalag X B Sandbostel: zur Geschichte eines Kriegsgefangenen- und KZ-Auffanglagers in Norddeutschland, 1939-1945* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1991), 227; Gerhard Hirschfeld and Irina Renz, “Vormittags die ersten Amerikaner”: *Stimmen und Bilder vom Kriegsende 1945* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2005), 176. A section in English is also translated in Robert Barer, *One Young Man and Total War. From Normandy to Concentration Camp, a Doctor's Letters Home* (Edinburgh: Pentland, 1998), 290.

¹³⁹ WKA, 3876, Diary of Elfie W. Entry from 1 May 1945.

¹⁴⁰ Any explicit reference to the “KZ-Bilder” is rare, especially in May 1945. For more on the practice of shaming through these images, see Ulrike Weckel, *Beschämende Bilder: deutsche Reaktionen auf alliierte Dokumentarfilme über befreite Konzentrationslager* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012). Assmann claims that the public exhibition of KZ photographs created a “Täter-Trauma,” arguing that this experience also created an accusation of collective guilt, even if this was not the official policy of the Americans. Aleida Assmann and Ute Frevert, *Geschichtsvergessenheit - Geschichtsversessenheit: vom Umgang mit deutschen Vergangenheiten nach 1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1999), esp. 112-139. Weckel disagrees with this assessment. See especially footnote 64 in Weckel, *Beschämende Bilder*: 37.

Ich kann es kaum wiedergeben, so unfäßbar ist es! [...] In mir ist ein schreckliches Durcheinander. Kann das wahr sein? [...] dann stimmen sicherlich auch die Bilder aus Bergen-Belsen. Und was mag es sonst noch alles geben, wovon wir keine Ahnung haben?!¹⁴¹

Although she is beginning to react to the stories told by the medics, her lines still contain traces of skepticism: “dann stimmen sicherlich auch die Bilder” and “was mag es sonst noch alles geben.” She describes herself as “sprachlos” and “ungläubig” as she asks desperate questions about what will await them in the camp. Her text reveals a process of self-questioning, doubt and acceptance, fear and confusion, as she becomes increasingly desperate and reflective about what she could have/should have known about the crimes of the Nazis, and the question of guilt of the German people.

Das glaubt uns ja zu Hause keiner, wenn wir das berichten. Ich mußte immer daran denken, wie wir den Führer geliebt und verehrt hatten. Alles, was der uns sagte, war Lüge! Was ist das denn gewesen, der Nationalsozialismus? Wir dachten doch immer, das sei etwas Schönes und Edles. Wieso war alles so grausam? Warum bringen die denn unschuldige Menschen um, die so hilflos sind? [...] In dieser Nacht bin ich endgültig fertig geworden mit all dem, was ich für gut gehalten habe. Menschen sind widerliche Schweine alle, alle, - ich eingeschlossen. [...] Ich habe noch keinen Häftling gesehen und merke, daß ich froh darüber bin. Ich habe Angst davor, sie zu sehen. Wie können wir uns entschuldigen?¹⁴²

The last question, “Wie können wir uns entschuldigen?” reveals her fear of facing the prisoners, with the acknowledgement that there is no way—through words or otherwise—to speak to them, or to apologize.

A few days later, she is moving living bodies and corpses with the other girls. In her diary, she describes in great detail her physical emotional reaction to death, as well as the injurious reactions of the other “patients,” which she feels she understands:

Ich hatte vorher noch nie einen Toten gesehn. Heute mußte ich gleich zwei tragen. Als der erste starb, habe ich mich nicht beherrschen können und bin in Tränen

¹⁴¹ WKA, 3876, Diary of Elfie W. Entry from 1 May 1945, “spät abends.”

¹⁴² WKA, 3876, Diary of Elfie W. Entry from 2 May 1945.

ausgebrochen.[...] Als seine Mitpatienten, die stehen konnten, mich weinen sahen, grinsten sie. Die haben soviel gesehen, denen macht das Sterben nicht mehr aus. [...] Man hat das Gefühl, sie wollen uns strafen, weil wir Deutsche sind. Kann man ja verstehen.¹⁴³

While Elfie's diary is yet another example of how the diary was used to work through shifting social worlds, this passage demonstrates both the functions and limits of the diary. This girl has used the diary both to document her experience and to cope with the traumatic experiences and realizations she has made during the ten days she was at the camp. She has created a space for reflection: reassessing what she has previously believed and thought, and reflect on how she could possibly share this experience with her family. At the same time, however, she repeatedly notes that the diary is insufficient—that language itself is part of what has failed her. These few days have changed her life forever, as the diarist also noted in a short preface sent in along with the diary, decades later:

Ich habe viele Jahre darunter gelitten, dass ich damals so verblendet und dämlich war. Ich konnte lange keinem Juden ins Gesicht sehen vor Scham. Warum hat man sich nicht für Andersdenkende interessiert, warum habe ich nichts gewusst? Wir kannten keine Juden, keine Hitlergegner. Hatten auch niemand im Bekanntenkreis oder in der Nachbarschaft. Aber ist das wirklich eine Entschuldigung? Sicherlich hätte ich – wenn ich gewusst hätte – mitleiden können. Nicht einmal das war der Fall. Als mir in Sandbostel die Augen aufgingen, fiel ich in ein tiefes Loch. Es hat lange gedauert, bis ich herauskam.¹⁴⁴

This preface continues to use a similar sort of reflective frame found in her own diary years before, mixing questions and reflections. It seems to both convince herself of her innocence, and yet question this innocence: “Aber ist das wirklich eine Entschuldigung?” The question “warum habe ich nichts gewusst?” parallels her own entry from 2 May 1945. It is as if she is still attempting to think of the words she would say to address a

¹⁴³ WKA, 3876, Diary of Elfie W. Entry from 5 May 1945.

¹⁴⁴ WKA, 3876, Diary of Elfie W. Writer's preface to archivist.

prisoner, and none of them suffice. This incommensurability—this “Loch”—is this impossibility of speech, and also the limit of the diary in working through this traumatic experience.

Conclusion

As demonstrated in this chapter, writing a diary at the war’s end and in the immediate aftermath had multiple functions. Diarists wrote in an attempt to “grasp” or bring order to time. Stuck in the present tense, yet moving forward, each day revising the horizon of expectation, the diary form allowed the writer to imagine the intersection of past, present, and future and to reflect on the nature of time itself during this period of transition and upheaval. The diary is constantly pulled between two poles in this struggle to write and understand recent history—or lived history—from within, or from “nearest proximity,” and the desire to tell the life of the self as narrative. This latter kind of self-narration requires a position from which to narrate in retrospect, which is frustrated by the limits of the diary form, stuck in the present, and accentuating the limited horizon of the future.

The openness of the diary form enabled writers to creatively adapt their texts to their needs. Through the examples of the *Briefstagebuch*, I showed how the diary also combined other writing practices, allowing diarists to create situations such as writing to the dead. Speaking and writing in the diary, diarists could alternately address an absent loved one, the future, the self, and the text itself. And last, I examined examples of diaries as highly social texts, reflecting tensions in postwar Germany. Here, also, the diary creates a space separate from public exposure, yet allowing the diarist to express herself openly. In the diary as a space of retreat, diarists created productive and imaginative

space in order to create possibilities for self-communication and self-expression. In doing so, they conduct a new form of writing history, thematizing changes in time and their place in this transitional period.

In the following chapters, I will continue to discuss how the diary form, with its short entries and narrow horizon of expectation, can be seen as paradigmatic for cultural production during this period. Many rubble texts demonstrate the frustrated and limited perspective of those writing in the present, desiring the advantages of a retrospective gaze. Additionally, I will show how the scene of writing, often described in diaries through reflections on the motivations for writing, is presented differently in visual and literary works. And last, I consider the ethical or political stakes of writing during this period of societal rupture. The unpublished diaries presented here are highly divergent in terms of self-awareness and self-critical reflection. I will return to this theme in Chapter Six in my discussion of Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt, who work to produce a discourse of *Selbsterziehung* in opposition to Allied models of *Umerziehung* and *Entnazifizierung*.

CHAPTER 2

Writing from “within” History: Victor Klemperer’s Wartime Diaries and *LTI*

Wir wissen nichts von der fernen Vergangenheit,
weil wir nicht dabei gewesen, wir wissen nichts von
der Gegenwart weil wir dabeigewesen sind.

- Victor Klemperer, 5 July 1942

Manchmal geht mir durch den Sinn: kein Roman
kann phantastischer sein als unser Leben jetzt. Ich
lasse mich treiben.

- Victor Klemperer, 11 March 1945

I was writing ancient history, when modern history
knocked at my door.

-Chateaubriand¹

Among the many published diaries of the Second World War and the postwar period, one account has achieved canonical status: the wartime diaries of Victor Klemperer.²

Persecuted by the Nazis for his Jewish background, Klemperer was “the perfect insider [] transformed by the regime’s ideology and its internalization by the population into the ultimate outsider.”³ As a former professor of philology, and as a lifelong diarist, he used

¹ Chateaubriand, “Études ou discours historiques,” in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Ladvocat, 1831), III, 1; cited in François Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité: présentisme et expériences du temps* (Paris: Seuil, 2003), 92.

² Klemperer was a lifelong diarist and his “diary” is comprised of many volumes of “diaries” and loose-leaf pages, sometimes hand-written and sometimes typed. For example, the period 7 December 1941–26 May 1945 is made up of handwritten pages in a folder. From 15 August 1941–5 December 1941, as well as 18 July 1945–29 March 1946, he re-used a linen-bound notebook originally used 4 November 1934–3 May 1936. See “Einführung” in Victor Klemperer, *Victor Klemperer: Die Tagebücher (1933 - 1945). Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Walter Nowojski (Berlin: Directmedia Publishing, 2007). For simplicity, I sometimes refer in general to his “diary,” although I refer to these many volumes. My footnotes refer to these editions: *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years*, trans. Martin Chalmers, 2 vols. (New York: Modern Library, 1999); *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten: Tagebücher 1942-1945*, ed. Walter Nowojski and Hadwig Klemperer, 2 vols. (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1996). When a passage is not included in these volumes, I note “NA,” and am using the Nowojski digital edition.

³ Omer Bartov, “The Last German,” *The New Republic*, 28 December 1998, 35.

the diary form to its greatest potential to chronicle the political, societal, and linguistic changes around him. Klemperer wanted to understand these changes in Germany under National Socialist rule, bear witness to the ensuing catastrophe, and leave a record of the fate of those around him. For these reasons, the diary, although it was not originally written for publication, has become a highly valued document of this period. As Martin Chalmers notes in his preface to the English translation, Klemperer's work has "become a part not only of German but also of European and world literature."⁴

After the war's end, Klemperer began to rework his diary notes and observations, in preparation for a volume on Nazi language: *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen*, published in 1947. The book, comprising 36 chapters, details the role of language in Nazi culture and society. Klemperer is quick to explain that the book does not offer synthesis, humbly describing his work as "Arbeit der ersten Stunde."⁵ Future scholars, he writes, will be faced with the task of compiling these fragments into a history of the period. The idea of a work "of the first hour" implies a nearness to events, and a lack of distance required to generate understanding of those events. In this way, Klemperer poses the question of the "zero hour" in terms of a preoccupation with history in the immediate aftermath. Klemperer's *LTI*, and more importantly, the diaries which contain the notes for this project, offer preliminary analysis of the language and culture of National Socialism. Additionally, Klemperer's diaries also engage with theoretical questions about the writing of history and the possibilities for achieving historical understanding as someone who has lived through the historical events being written.

⁴ Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years*, trans. Martin Chalmers, 2 vols. (New York: Modern Library, 1999), xx..

⁵ Victor Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen*. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2007), 24.

This chapter is centered on the idea of “Arbeit der ersten Stunde,” and the spatial metaphor of “nearness” to the past. What does it mean to be writing history *in the present*, or “from nearest proximity,” as Klemperer puts it? At issue is not ancient history, but history which has “come knocking,” as Chateaubriand describes in the epigraph quoted above. Throughout his diaries, and in the *LTI*, I argue, Klemperer develops a new way of writing history which responds to this situation of having lived through periods of historical crisis as a self-reflective witness. Unable to assume the traditional position of the historian who writes history retrospectively, Klemperer’s diaries written during the Third Reich reflect on the challenges of writing and making sense of history. He uses the form of daily entries to note the private and the particular, while thematizing the limits of what one can know in the present as a subject living through history. For Klemperer, diary writing ultimately becomes both a documentary archive and a source of formal innovation for his project of writing the history of the present. I show how Klemperer’s study of Nazi language and his diaries can be read together as collage-like autobiographical texts which also reflect on the conditions of writing. As I will claim, these reflections are in part generated by the tension between the diary form and Klemperer’s other modes of writing, chief among them the genre of literary history. In my analysis, I also relate Klemperer’s work to larger questions in twentieth-century German history and literary studies: categories of witnessing, experiencing, knowing, and understanding history, as well as their representation in autobiographical forms.

In the following, I first briefly illustrate how Klemperer experiments with the method and form of writing history in opposition to that of the National Socialists.

Klemperer's history uses a technique of "collecting" observations and anecdotes, drawing attention to the minutiae of everyday life. Second, I demonstrate how Klemperer's diary maintains a simultaneous desire for, and distrust of, the distanced voice of the historian. His challenge, he realizes, is a paradox of proximity: to write a historical account, one needs both personal experience (nearness to events), and an objective position (distance from events). Accordingly, he continually expresses skepticism about the ability of either the eyewitness or the historian to know and write history. Third, I argue that the collage-like autobiographical nature of the *LTI*—Klemperer's book on the language of the Third Reich—should be read together with the diaries as an early attempt to make sense of the recent catastrophe of National Socialism. As Klemperer increasingly doubts he will survive, he develops a means of writing the history of the National Socialist present through fragments, adapting the form of Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique*. In this analysis, I make use of a critical digital edition of Klemperer's diaries which contains passages cut from the first edition (1995-1996). This allows me to also call attention to some of the self-reflective repetitions of the diary which were often removed to make the lengthy diary more readable.

Klemperer was born in 1881 in Landsberg an der Warthe and was raised in a Reform Jewish family. He studied German and Romance languages and literature in Munich and he became a professor of Romance languages at Dresden's Technical University in 1920, where he worked as a specialist in eighteenth-century French literature, publishing general histories of French literature as well as articles on philology until he was removed from his position by the Nazis in 1935. Because of his marriage to Eva Schlemmer (a

non-Jewish German), Klemperer was not deported—he lived out the Third Reich within, yet excluded from, German society.⁶ His diary details how the National Socialists gradually stripped him of his rights, how they banned him from using all libraries, forced him to move into a *Judenhaus* (Jewish house), wear the yellow star, and perform forced manual labor. His daily entries are characterized by fear, hunger, and news of Jewish tragedies. Watching the Jews around him die or be deported, he wrote that he increasingly felt like Odysseus, facing the cyclops who told him “Dich fress’ ich zuletzt.”⁷

During these years of persecution and terror, it was above all his scholarly writing that gave Klemperer a sense of purpose. After he lost his position at the university, he continued working, waiting for the end of the Third Reich. Katie Trumpener has highlighted the importance of his scholarship as a “refuge,” at the same time that the writing act contained both a “sense of cosmic despair and [] hope of futurity.”⁸ Although Klemperer continually questioned the risk of writing—knowing that the discovery of the diaries by the Gestapo would risk his own life and that of others—his writing remained his hope, his “Balancierstange,” which gave him purpose and comfort.⁹ For this reason, Denise Rüttinger has suggested we look at these texts for the “autopoetic process”: to show the impulse “die eigene Existenz in Schrift zu bewahren,” which in and of itself

⁶ Aschheim notes that 98% of German Jews who survived the war were in so-called “mixed marriages.” Steven E. Aschheim, *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer: Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Times* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 81. See also Nathan Stoltzfus, *Widerstand des Herzens: der Aufstand der Berliner Frauen in der Rosenstrasse - 1943* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002).

⁷ Entry from 2 March 1943 (*Zeugnis*, 2:338; *Witness*, 2:205). “You will I eat last.”

⁸ See the very good review essay by Trumpener. Katie Trumpener, “Diary of a Tightrope Walker: Victor Klemperer and His Posterity,” *Modernism/modernity* 7, no. 3 (2000): 490; 91.

⁹ “Mein Tagebuch war in diesen Jahren immer wieder meine Balancierstange, ohne die ich hundertmal abgestützt wäre.” Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen.*: 18-19. “Again and again during these years my diary was my balancing pole, without which I would have fallen down a hundred times.” *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI - Lingua Tertii Imperii. A Philologist's Notebook*, trans. Martin Brady (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 10.

becomes an “identitätsbildenen Moment.”¹⁰ The entries are a patchwork of scholarly notes, second-hand stories and anecdotes, and a register of his and Eva’s private concerns. As Susanne zur Nieden writes, “it is precisely the mixture of private and contemporary observations and reflections which makes his diaries such impressive historical documents.”¹¹ Klemperer’s erudite prose is peppered with French, Latin, Italian, and Greek phrases and citations—revealing his classical humanistic education and the wide range of texts which serve as intertextual references in his writing. He looks both inward and outward, observing himself and his changing thoughts, as well as carefully observing society and culture around him. As Stephen Aschheim notes, “there is something obsessive, deeply egocentric, about Klemperer’s graphomaniac reflex of everyday record-keeping.”¹² Klemperer himself notes the “vanity” in his desire for recognition and for the importance of his text.¹³ As Aschheim continues, “It was not just egoism but also the discipline and honed skill of an articulate scholar combined with a growing realization that his testimony and experience—if he and/or it survived—would be of crucial historical importance, that rendered such a detailed document possible.”¹⁴ In an entry from 1942, Klemperer describes the “Auf und Ab” of such emotions: “Die Angst, meine Schreiberei könnte mich ins Konzentrationslager [sic] bringen. Das Gefühl

¹⁰ Denise Rüttinger, *Schreiben ein Leben lang: die Tagebücher des Victor Klemperer* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2011), 27.

¹¹ Susanne zur Nieden, “From the Forgotten Everyday Life of Tyranny: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer,” in *Marginal Voices, Marginal Forms: Diaries in European Literature and History*, ed. Rachael Langford and Russell West (Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999), 150.

¹² Steven E. Aschheim, *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer: Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Times* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 72-73.

¹³ See also footnote 46 on Klemperer’s use of the phrase “vanitas vanitatum” in Rüttinger, *Schreiben ein Leben lang: die Tagebücher des Victor Klemperer*: 196.

¹⁴ Aschheim, *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer*: 73.

der *Pflicht* zu schreiben, es ist meine Lebensaufgabe, mein Beruf. Das Gefühl der *vanitas vanitatum*, des Unwertes meiner Schreiberei. Zum Schluß schreibe ich doch weiter...”¹⁵

Klemperer’s work from this time includes three main projects, which he hoped to publish after the war. At times, these projects blur into one another, and might therefore usefully be considered “parallel” texts, or a “network” of texts.¹⁶ First, Klemperer was continuing work on a literary history of eighteenth-century French literature. Second, he was working on an autobiography project called the *Curriculum Vitae*, using his earlier diaries as source material. The diary itself was not intended for publication, but was used to gather notes that would later be useful in preparing these other manuscripts. But as these projects became increasingly unfeasible, Klemperer recognized that his diary notes contained the potential for a third project, the “LTI,” or “lingua tertii imperii,” the language of the Third Reich. This study focused on what Klemperer described as the “inescapable” Nazification of language during the Third Reich, commenting on its use by German citizens as well as by Jews.¹⁷ Starting in the early 1930s, Klemperer began collecting extensive notes on lexical, rhetorical and syntactical changes in the German language, noting the language of newspapers, speeches, overheard conversations,

¹⁵ Entry from 8 February 1942.

¹⁶ Rüttinger, *Schreiben ein Leben lang: die Tagebücher des Victor Klemperer*: 23. See also Peter Fritzsche for analysis of Franz Göll’s “multiple selves.” *The Turbulent World of Franz Göll: An Ordinary Berliner Writes the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

¹⁷ Until the posthumous publication of his diaries in the mid-1990s, Klemperer was most known for this book, published in 1947 (50 years before the diaries would be published). Both Karlheinz Barck and Roderick Watt have written on the LTI alongside another similar study from the time, Werner Krauss’s novel *PLN*. Klemperer himself noted their similarity in title, claiming “it was in the air.” See Roderick H. Watt, “‘Landsersprache, Heeressprache, Nazisprache?’ Victor Klemperer and Werner Krauss on the Linguistic Legacy of the Third Reich,” *The Modern Language Review* 95, no. 2 (2000); Karlheinz Barck, “Intellectuals under Hitler,” in *A New History of German Literature*, ed. David E. Wellbery (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005).

euphemisms, naming practices, and jokes.¹⁸ Beyond studying language in the strict lexical sense, he was also interested in cultural ephemera, and the rhetorical “effect” of the “language” of fascism, broadly conceived. For example, he wonders whether a “Kinderball mit Hakenkreuz,” spotted in a shop window, would belong in this lexicon.¹⁹

This third project, the analysis of Nazi language, marks a shift in Klemperer’s work. Rather than making notes based on primary sources from the past, Klemperer began to carry out a study of the *present* that he experienced first-hand. When the Nazis first came to power he “took flight,” as he describes in the *LTI*, escaping into his work to avoid the National Socialists. When he lost his position, he writes, “[ich] suchte mich erst recht von der Gegenwart abzuschließen,” seeking refuge in his scholarship of the Enlightenment thought of Voltaire, Montesquieu and Diderot.²⁰ But as Klemperer lost all his civil rights, including library privileges, he was increasingly forced to face the present head on. He used his diary to observe the societal changes in Nazi Germany, fashioning himself as the “Kulturgeschichtsschreiber der gegenwärtigen Katastrophe.”²¹ With this shift, he created a space to confront the *present*, attempting to chronicle, record, and analyze the present moment as history. In this sense, his diaries also transformed into a chronicle, bearing witness to the catastrophe unfolding before his eyes.

¹⁸ He starts using the term “LTI” in July 1941, but already much earlier he makes observations about language and culture. In 1933, for example, he notes how Jewish books must be called “Übersetzungen” (25 April 1933). In 1934 he mentions a study of “Sprache des 3. Reichs” (1 August 1934).

¹⁹ Ball mentioned in an entry 30 March 1933.

²⁰ Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen.*: 21.

²¹ Entry from 17 January 1942 (*Zeugnis*, 2:12; *Witness*, 2:7). “The chronicler of the cultural history of the present catastrophe.”

All its days were “historic”: The Nazi writing of history

National Socialist historiography provided a counter-model for the development of Klemperer’s own form of writing. Rhetoric of a new time, as history in the making, was crucial to the way the National Socialist Party sought to represent itself. This was less an attempt to *chronicle* history than to *perform* history—to make every event historic and to make themselves the heroes of this history. In a very tangible sense, this monumental history was performed and written into the landscape, in the architecture of the Nuremberg rally grounds, the Reich Chancellery, and in the grand model for a future transformation of Berlin into “Welthauptstadt Germania,” all works designed by or overseen by Hitler’s chief architect, Albert Speer.²² For the National Socialists, German history became a thousand-year history and the concept of a *tausendjähriges Reich* stretched out the future into a space of imperial glory. A good illustration of this model of futurity is a speech by Goebbels from April 1945, in which he challenged Berlin officials to imagine the “terrible days” of the present moment as a color film, shown 100 years later. He began the speech with a reference to the film *Kolberg*, asking his listeners to imagine their role in a future film: “Everybody now has the chance to choose the part which he will play in the film a hundred years hence... Hold out now, so that, a hundred years hence, the audience does not hoot and whistle when you appear on the screen.”²³

²² In *Neue deutsche Baukunst*, Speer describes the importance of architecture: “Die Baukunst war in ihren stärksten Werken immer mit wahrhaft großen Zeiten verbunden; sie wuchs an ihnen, verkörperte sie, raffte sie zusammen in unvergängliche Zeichen, die weit mehr als die Äußerungen aller anderen Künste Jahrhunderte und Jahrtausende über ihre Zeit hinaus lebendig blieben.” Albert Speer, *Neue deutsche Baukunst* (Prag; Amsterdam: Volk und Reich Verlag, 1943), 7. See also Speer’s memoirs for descriptions of this “architectural megalomania.” *Erinnerungen*. (Berlin; Frankfurt am Main: Propyläen Verlag; Ullstein, 1969).

²³ From the diary of Rudolf Semmler, entry from 17 April 1945. Rudolf Semmler, *Goebbels - The Man Next to Hitler* (London: Westhouse, 1947), 194. As Semmler relates this scene, he says that Goebbels “made a fool of himself” and that “the fifty odd men present started at one another in amazement and didn’t know whether to laugh or swear.” This is also the last entry in the published Semmler diary.

Nazi futurity thus projected a long future in the construction of a racial empire, asking Germans to imagine themselves in the distant future looking back. This model of temporality is also visible in Hitler and Speer's ruin theory: Nazi architects were told to "build for 'eternity,'" while imagining that "these buildings should also 'go to ruin' in such a way as to create a 'bridge across time.'"²⁴



Figure 2.1. Reich Chancellery, Berlin. Photo by Heinrich Hoffmann.

The Nazis' overuse of the words "heroic," "historic," and "eternal" did not go unnoticed by Klemperer, who often commented on this rhetoric in his diaries. While making notes on the historical consciousness of the Nazis, Klemperer reflects on what it means to live through historical events. In his diary, he notes that before events were deemed "historic" (thus becoming *events*), they were his own "hazy memories": "blasse Erinnerungen an mehr od. minder bewußt Miterlebtes." Continuing, he wonders at what point an event goes from being merely "interesting" to "historic": "Ich sagte zu Eva: kein Mitlebender

²⁴ Julia Hell, "Imperial Ruin Gazers, or Why did Scipio Weep?," in *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 183.

weiß, was wirkliche Historie wird, u. was nur so vorbeiströmt u. versinkt. Zwanzig Jahre danach ist ein heute großes Begebnis versunken u. eine unbeachtete Winzigkeit geschichtliches Datum geworden.”²⁵ Klemperer uses the metaphor of a “stream,” and of events “sinking,” to note the difficulty of predicting this course of history. To those living through periods of historical crisis, it is near impossible to determine what may in hindsight become “historic” (*geschichtliches Datum*).

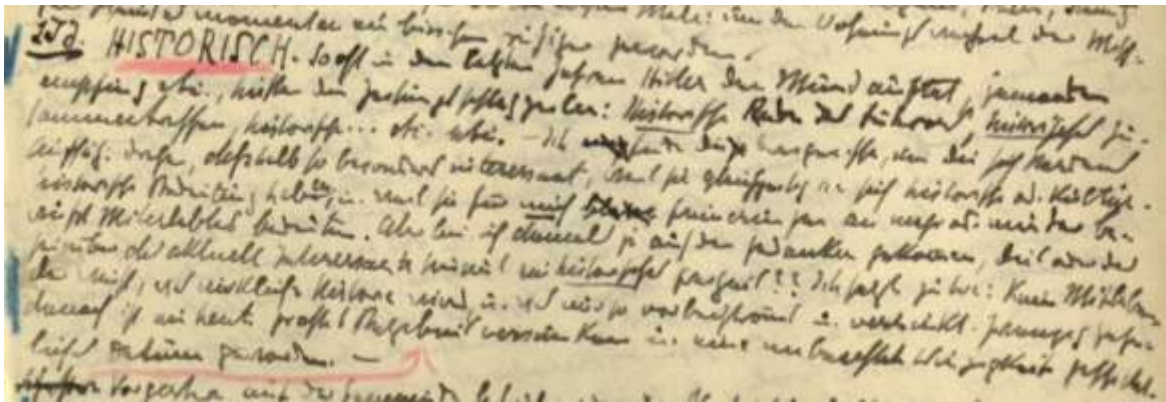


Figure 2.2. Detail from Klemperer’s Diary, “LTI. HISTORISCH.”

The Nazis, in elevating dates to historic events, instrumentalize the past to create monumental history, in the Nietzschean sense, highlighting great events to write themselves into the narrative of future greatness.²⁶ Klemperer draws attention to the performative dimension of this act, as the National Socialists name their actions “historic,” calling on Germans to participate in making history. In *LTI*, Klemperer mocks

²⁵ Entry from 5 December 1942 (*Zeugnis*, NA, *Witness*, NA). Emphasis in the original. “LTI. HISTORIC. As often as Hitler opened his mouth in the last few years, or received someone etc. the newspaper headlines read: *Historic* Speech of the Führer, *historic* meeting, historic... etc. etc. – I find these events [...] especially interesting because they not only have historic or cultural-historical relevance in themselves, but also because for me they signify hazy memories of events I more or less consciously lived through. But back then, did it ever occur to me that this or that would be a *historic* event, beyond its importance at the time?? I said to Eva: no one who lives through something knows what will really become History, and what will just flow rushing by and sink. Twenty years later, something that was today a great occurrence is sunken and an unnoticed detail has become a historical date.”

²⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 68.

the ubiquity of the Nazis' proclamation of "historic" events, arguing that their proliferation of holidays, anniversaries and celebrations resulted in an unhealthy lack of "ordinary days": "man könnte sagen, es habe am Alltagsmangel gekrankt, tödlich gekrankt, ganz wie der Körper tödlich krank sein kann am Salzangel-, so hält es eben alle seine Tage für historisch."²⁷

Klemperer's diagnosis of an "Alltagsmangel," or lack of the quotidian, is remedied in his own account of this period. He insists on the private stories and particulars of daily life as a Jew in the Third Reich, preserving exactly those events and details which might otherwise "sink," or be carried away and lost in the stream of time. As he tells his neighbor in the *Judenhaus*, Moritz Stühler, "Ich will Zeugnis ablegen." Stühler is skeptical: "Was Sie schreiben, ist alles bekannt, u. die großen Sachen, Kiew, Minsk etc., kennen Sie nicht." In response, Klemperer explains that there is value in recording the "mosquito bites" rather than the "great events" of history:

"Es kommt nicht auf die großen Sachen an, sondern auf den Alltag der Tyrannei, der vergessen wird. Tausend Mückenstiche sind schlimmer als ein Schlag auf den Kopf. Ich beobachte, notiere die Mückenstiche ..." [Stühler] eine Weile später: ["Ich habe mal gelesen, die Angst vor einer Sache ist immer schlimmer als das Ereignis selber. Wie sehr graute mir vor der Haussuchung. Und als die Gestapo kam, war ich ganz kalt u. trotzig. Und wie uns das Essen hinterher geschmeckt hat! All die guten Sachen, die wir versteckt hatten, u. die sie nicht gefunden hatten"... "Sehen Sie, *das* notiere ich!"²⁸

Like the diarists in Chapter One, Klemperer records scenes of dialogue to work through his relations to friends and acquaintances, and attempt to make sense of shifts in German

²⁷ Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen.*: 64.

²⁸ Entry from 8 April 1944 (*Zeugnis*, 2:503; *Witness*, 2:307-308). "Conversation with Stühler senior: "I shall bear witness." – "The things you write down, everybody knows, and the big things, Kiev, Minsk, etc., you know nothing about." – "It's not the big things that are important to me, but the everyday life of tyranny, which gets forgotten. A thousand mosquito bites are worse than a blow to the head. I observe, note down the mosquito bites..." Stühler, a little later: "I once read that fear of something is worse than the event itself. How I dreaded the house search. And when the Gestapo came, I was quite cold and defiant. And how good our food tasted afterward! All the good things, which we had hidden and they had not found." – "You see, I'm going to note that down!"

society. In collecting these fragments of daily life, Klemperer's project is an act against the Nazi writing of monumental history. Additionally, the self-reflexivity of this reported dialogue draws attention to the conditions of writing, and exposes Klemperer's simultaneous self-doubt and pride in his account. The notion of *bearing witness*, as expressed here, highlights the moral dimension of the text, and the acknowledgement that he writes in face of death to preserve an account of the persecuted and those who lost their lives.²⁹

Susanne zur Nieden marks the year 1940 a turning point from "private diarist" to "chronicler," as Klemperer is expelled from his home and forced to live in a *Judenhaus*.³⁰ The diary becomes a monument in a different sense, a kind of written memorial to those who were persecuted and murdered by the Nazis, documenting crimes against the Jewish population.³¹ This act of writing as memorialization also performs a different kind of history writing, again in opposition to the National Socialists. The foreword to *LTI* is entitled "Heroismus. Statt eines Vorworts," and includes a central anecdote in which Prof. Klemperer explains heroism to a young student who came of age during the Third Reich:

Zum Heldentum gehört nicht nur Mut und Aufspielsetzen des eigenen Lebens. So etwas bringt jeder Raufbold und jeder Verbrecher auf. Der Heros ist ursprünglich ein Vollbringer menscheitsfördernder Taten. Ein Eroberungskrieg, und nun gar ein mit soviel Grausamkeit geführter wie der Hitlerische, hat nichts mit Heroismus zu tun.³²

He then contrasts what was called "Heldentum" during National Socialism, which was loud, vain, and public, and true "Heroismus," which is "um so reiner und bedeutender, je

²⁹ Martin Sabrow and Norbert Frei, *Die Geburt des Zeitzeugen nach 1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012), 29.

³⁰ zur Nieden, "From the Forgotten Everyday Life of Tyranny: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer," 152.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen*: 13.

still er ist, je weniger Publikum er hat.”³³ At this point, he names especially the “Aryan” wives who bravely suffered torment and discrimination in support of their Jewish husbands, like his wife Eva, to whom the book is dedicated. The book thus begins with a contrast between the loud and monumental, and the silent and private, the small stories of everyday life. This is also clearly the role he hopes to attain in his diary writing. As he writes at one point of his collecting, studying, reading: “Wird einmal noch ein gutes Buch daraus, dann war es Heroismus – wenn nicht; seniler Zeitvertreib.”³⁴

Neil Donahue calls Klemperer’s work “a kind of *Zeitgeschichte im Zeitlupentempo*,” an “anatomy of crisis, in its mundane particulars, [...] a protracted deliberation on the central calamity of German culture and Western society in the twentieth century.”³⁵ Donahue draws attention to the slow pace that characterizes the diary and its day-to-day chronicling. I would like to emphasize how in writing such an account, Klemperer creates a counter-space to the Nazi telling of history and what *they* deem “historic,” substituting the microscopic for the Nazis’ macroscopic perspective. This is reflected in both the content as well as the form of the text, as Klemperer collects and documents the non-events of history, as opposed to writing Nietzschean monumental history. Arvi Sepp makes connections between this mode of “micrological historiography” and the philosophy of history of Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer. Klemperer resembles Benjamin’s “ragpicker of history,” by focusing on the micrological, on the “margins” of history.³⁶ This method contains foresight that his

³³ Ibid., 14.

³⁴ Entry from 16 September 1944 (*Zeugnis*, 2:586; *Witness*, 2:359).

³⁵ Neil H. Donahue, “At the Heart of the Matter: Deliberations on Crisis in the Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1933-1945,” in *Literarisches Krisenbewusstsein: ein Perzeptions- und Produktionsmuster im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Keith Bullivant and Bernhard Spies (München: Iudicium, 2001), 109.

³⁶ Arvi Sepp, “Die Politik des Erinnerns. Aktuelle Anmerkungen zur autobiografischen Zeitzugenschaft in den Tagebüchern Victor Klemperers,” in *Literatur im Krebsgang: Totenbeschwörung und Memoria in der*

neighbor at first cannot understand, as he says “these things are all known” (*Was Sie schreiben, ist alles bekannt*). Klemperer, on the other hand, already has another reading public in mind, another future present, although he is still unsure of the form his history will take. In contrast to the self-confident grandiosity of National Socialist futurity, Klemperer’s future-oriented plans and hopes for his work are always uncertain and self-questioning, combining hope with fear.

Writing history as skeptical witness: “Que sais-je?”

In addition to opposing the monumental history of the Nazis, Klemperer’s diaries also contain a profound skepticism that counters the overly confident tone of Nazi historiography. As Martin Walser has noted, “Klemperers Art, sein Erlebnis mitzuteilen, ist von Anfang an von Fragezeichen begleitet.”³⁷ Throughout, Klemperer reflects on the categories of historical knowledge and understanding, leading him to question the objectivity of the historical observer or chronicler (the eyewitness), and the historian, whose account is rarely drawn from first-hand observations.³⁸ In part, as I will argue, this reflection stems from the tension between the diary form, limited to daily entries with a narrow temporal horizon, and the form of autobiography, which is able to sort and order time retroactively, using character and plot devices that create coherence. Klemperer often senses the limits of his account, as he does not know whether he will survive to gain

deutschsprachigen Literatur nach 1989, ed. Arne De Winde and Anke Gilleir (New York; Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 82. Sepp also points to the section on the “Sammler” in Benjamin’s *Passagenwerk*. See also Miguel Skirl, “Was sammeln?” in Andreas Urs Sommer, Dagmar Winter, and Miguel Skirl, *Die Hortung: eine Philosophie des Sammelns* (Düsseldorf: Parerga, 2000), 96-148.

³⁷ Martin Walser, *Das Prinzip Genauigkeit: Laudatio auf Victor Klemperer*, Edition Suhrkamp. Sonderdruck (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), 42.

³⁸ The role of skepticism in the diary is often overlooked. Arvi Sepp’s essay is an exception in this regard. Sepp, “Die Politik des Erinnerns. Aktuelle Anmerkungen zur autobiografischen Zeitzeugenschaft in den Tagebüchern Victor Klemperers.”

the retrospective position of the historian or autobiographer. The diary entries periodically thematize the role of time passing, and the distance between present and past in giving a historical account. In his work as a literary historian, writing about a period nearly two centuries removed, Klemperer wrote from a position of temporal distance from persons and events. Yet this distanced perspective is at odds with the position of the diarist—his only possibility for writing during the Third Reich.

As I have discussed in the previous chapter, the diary proceeds by means of a stuttering forward movement, using singular daily entries with a limited view of past and future. As Culley puts it, “the diary is always in process, always in some sense a fragment.”³⁹ Writing in close proximity to the past, and “stuck” in the present, the diarist is “always on the very crest of time moving into unknown territory.”⁴⁰ For this reason, diaries contain many questions, as well as open-ended reflections on the future which is still to be written. As Felicity Nussbaum writes, the diary presents a tension between the self of past and present: “While the diary creates a record of the past, its discourse produces a crisis of attention to the present, a shift to a series of current events rather than narrative perspective on the personal past, that puts autobiographical writing in combat with itself.”⁴¹ This “combat” between autobiographical forms is heightened in Klemperer’s case, as he was simultaneously working on his memoirs and his diaries. In the memoirs, he used retrospective narrative perspective to retell his childhood and formative years, using the diaries to help him remember details. In 1939, he comments on the challenge of this mode of writing, also not knowing how the book will end:

³⁹ Margo Culley, ed. *A Day at a Time: The Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1985), 19.

⁴⁰ Philippe Lejeune, *On Diary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009), 208.

⁴¹ Felicity Nussbaum, “Toward Conceptualizing Diary,” in *Studies in Autobiography*, ed. James Olney (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 133.

Ich will nicht fragen, wie weit ich das Curriculum führen kann, auch nicht was sein Schicksal sein wird. Nur weiter. – Dichtung und Wahrheit; die innere Wahrheit respektiere ich völlig, das “Dichten” ist nicht viel mehr als ein Formen und Gruppieren, manchmal ein Contrahieren, manchmal ein Auslassen. Die Arbeit ist viel schwerer, als anzunehmen war, meine Tagebücher lassen mich oft im Stich.⁴²

In writing the diary, Klemperer is limited to this “crisis of attention to the present,” to use Nussbaum’s words. Sepp has also noted the function of the diary to bring order to Klemperer’s life, also in structuring time, “das Tagebuch ist für Klemperer ein Ablagesystem, das Schreibgegenwart, Vergangenheit und Zukunft strukturiert. [...] Das Tagebuch avanciert so zum kulturellen Archiv, indem es vereinheitlicht, organisiert und Sinn verleiht.”⁴³

This sense of temporal suspension underpins an entry from September 1944, in which Klemperer expresses the feeling that the present has overwhelmed other possibilities of imagining time:

Man ist mit Gegenwart überschwemmt, es gibt keine Zeitgliederung; alles ist unendlich lange her, alles läßt unendlich lange auf sich warten, es gibt kein Gestern, kein Morgen, nur eine Ewigkeit. Auch das ein Grund, warum man von erlebter Geschichte nichts weiß: Das Zeitgefühl ist aufgehoben; man ist gleichzeitig zu stumpf und zu überreizt, man ist überfüllt mit Gegenwart. [...] seit Stalingrad also seit Anfang 43, warte ich auf das Ende.⁴⁴

Klemperer uses highly descriptive, poetic language to note his frustrated attempt to make sense of the texture of time. Utilizing only the present tense, he writes that the present has displaced all other temporalities and has both under- and overwhelmed the sensory

⁴² Entry from 27 June 1939 (*Zeugnis*, 474; *Witness*, 302).

⁴³ Sepp, “Die Politik des Erinnerns. Aktuelle Anmerkungen zur autobiografischen Zeitzeugenschaft in den Tagebüchern Victor Klemperers,” 84.

⁴⁴ Entry from 14 September 1944 (*Zeugnis*, 2:582; *Witness*, 2:357). “One is overwhelmed by the present, time is not divided up, everything is infinitely long ago, everything is infinitely long in coming; there is no yesterday, no tomorrow, only an eternity. And that is yet another reason one knows nothing of the history one has experienced: The sense of time has been abolished; one is at once too blunted and too overexcited, one is crammed full of the present. [...] Ever since Stalingrad, since the beginning of ’43 therefore, I have been waiting for the end.”

apparatus (“zu stumpf und zu überreizt”). Time remains elusive, out of grasp, unordered, as he had similarly expressed years before: “man hat jetzt gar kein Zeitgefühl mehr, alles ist nicht unterteilte zähe Endlosigkeit.”⁴⁵ Both the past and the future feel far away. He locates “eternity” (*Ewigkeit*) not in the future, as messianic salvation, but in the present. This presentness makes historical consciousness impossible, as the relation of present to past and future has become indistinguishable. This passage employs the impersonal pronoun “man,” as if to suggest that he is not alone in this sensation, but instead that it is characteristic of the period. The last sentence, however, shifts to the solitary “I” voice—“ich warte auf das Ende”—signaling that perhaps he not only waits for the war’s end, and the demise of Nazism, but also fears his own death.

The question of ordering time pervades the diary in the form of spatial metaphors of temporal distance as well as visual metaphors. Thinking back on the past decades, Klemperer wonders why he did not recognize certain trends, reflecting on his lack of “vision” as a witness to historical events: “Aber wieder u. wieder u. immer stärker bewegt mich: *warum* habe ich das alles unwissend, blind miterlebt – *blind* wo ich doch die Augen offen hielt?”⁴⁶ He wonders whether it was his lack of “sight” or whether all those who live through history are blind. “Que sais-je?” Klemperer asks repeatedly, of the past or the present.⁴⁷ “Was hab ich von den miterlebten Dingen wirklich miterlebt und

⁴⁵ Entry from 30 August 1940 (*Zeugnis*, 1:548; *Witness*, NA). “One no longer has a feeling for time, everything is undivided, fluid endlessness.”

⁴⁶ Entry from 23 August 1942 (*Zeugnis*, NA; *Witness*, NA). “But again and again, and I am more and more concerned: *why* did I experience all of that unknowingly, blindly, - *blind*, whereby my eyes were certainly open?”

⁴⁷ Entry from 19 March 1942 (*Zeugnis*, 2:49; *Witness*, 2:30). “Von der Vergangenheit weiß ich nichts weil ich nicht dabeigewesen bin; und von der Gegenwart weiß ich nichts, weil ich dabei gewesen bin.” “I know nothing about the past, because I wasn’t there; and I know nothing about the present, because I was there.” He slightly modifies this statement three months later, when he writes that “we” know nothing of the past, as quoted above and in the epigraph. These repetitions of the diary are particularly interesting, because they also demonstrate the lack of editing which distinguishes the diary from the memoir form.

wie?“⁴⁸ Rather than a privilege, the first-hand experience of history is often described as an obstacle to objectivity and true understanding. These reflections on writing history are sometimes marked with the phrase “*que sais-je*” (what do I know?), a reference to Michel de Montaigne, referring skeptically to the limits of subjective knowledge. In one of his earlier literary histories, Klemperer included an engraving of Montaigne, depicting the philosopher foregrounded by his *Essais*, as well as the phrase “QUE SAIS JE” (Figure 2.3). This question, as Klemperer writes in the body of the text, was for Montaigne “Würze und Milderung des Daseins, niemals aber eine Qual.”⁴⁹ For Klemperer as well, following his Enlightenment predecessors, “que sais-je” becomes a motto throughout the next decades, as he considers his perspective as one who has lived history. “Ich war im Kriege, ich habe die Revolution und das dritte Reich aus allernächster Nähe erlebt – que sais-je? Und wer weiß mehr?“⁵⁰ In the act of diaristic writing, which facilitates this kind of questioning, he draws attention to the categories of witnessing, knowing, and understanding as well as the traditional position of the historian, writing retrospectively and compiling an account through primary sources. In addition, he at times becomes painfully aware of his outsider status, and his attempt to judge the German people as someone excluded and persecuted: “Que sais-je? Und que sais-je?, ich als Jude vom

⁴⁸ Entry from 27 March 1942 (*Zeugnis*, 2:34; *Witness*, 2:56) “Of the events that I witnessed, what did I really experience and how?”

⁴⁹ Klemperer also gives prominent attention to Montaigne in his introduction to the co-edited volume on “Roman literature.” He writes of Montaigne, “er weiß, daß er nichts weiß, aber er breitet mit stolzem und ironischem Behagen das überreiche Wissen aus, das ihn zu dieser höchsten Erkenntnis führt, und sie verbrennt ihm nicht im geringsten das Herz [...] Sein Que sais-je?, das charakteristisch genug das sokratische οἶδα οὐκ εἰδώς ins Fragende umbiegt, ist ihm zugleich Würze und Milderung des Daseins, niemals aber eine Qual, mit der er aufs äußerste zu ringen hat.” Victor Klemperer, *Die romanischen Literaturen von der Renaissance bis zur französischen Revolution*, ed. Victor Klemperer, Helmut Hatzfeld, and Fritz Neubert (Wildpark-Potsdam: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion M.B.H., 1924), 23.

⁵⁰ Entry from 31 January 1938 (*Zeugnis*, 1:396; *Witness*, NA). “I was in the war, I experienced the revolution and the Third Reich from a position of nearest proximity – que sais je? And who knows more?”

heutigen Zustand der arischen Deutschen?“⁵¹ These self-observations about the role of the witness become an essential aspect of the diary.



Figure 2.3. Montaigne, in Klemperer’s *Die romanischen Literaturen*.

Klemperer also frames his skepticism about the writing of history in terms of a paradox of distance: there are disadvantages to both the position of the witness, who is near to events, and the historian, who is temporally removed. It is important to recall that Klemperer was working in parallel on texts which required very different temporal structures. As a diarist, Klemperer is a “Mitlebender,” who is writing from “within” history (“aus allernächster Nähe”). As a literary historian of eighteenth-century literature, he is working to reconstruct the distant past. And as an autobiographer, he writes about his own life—that which he experienced firsthand—from a position of distance. As stated

⁵¹ Entry from 3 August 1942 (*Zeugnis*, NA; *Witness*, NA). “Que sais-je? And que sais-je?, me, as a Jew, of the current condition of the Aryan Germans?” See also Aschheim for more on Klemperer’s German-Jewish identifications. Aschheim, *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer*.

above, in the first years of the war, Klemperer thinks of his diary merely as notes for his memoir:

Ständiges Dilemma: ich finde so überaus wenig Zeit zum Cur., dass ich mir gar keine Zeit zum Tagebuch nehme. Aber dies ist doch Fundament eines allerwichtigsten Capitels [sic] des Cur. Ich notiere bisweilen ein Stichwort. Aber am nächsten Tag erscheint es unwichtig, in Tatsache u Stimmung überholt. Aber die wechselnden Details des Alltags sind doch gerade das Wichtige.⁵²

As seen in the description of this dilemma, he is writing two different texts which demand two different temporalities. The “Curriculum” project is written in the past tense, with greater distance from his diary notes, only presenting that which is “important” from a later perspective. Gradually, the limits and advantages of each form became clear to him. In 1942, he writes the following as a motto for his autobiographical project: “Wir wissen nichts von der fernen Vergangenheit, weil wir nicht dabei gewesen, wir wissen nichts von der Gegenwart weil wir dabeigewesen sind. Nur von der selbsterlebten Vergangenheit können wir im späten Erinnern ein wenig – sehr wenig sicheres – Wissen gewinnen.”⁵³ Following this motto, Klemperer’s ideal historian emerges as the autobiographer. In telling the story of his own life, he is able to synthesize both positions of historian and witness: distance and proximity. When thinking about how to write the history of the Third Reich, he hopes he will survive to write autobiographically about this present, from a position of retrospect.

⁵² Entry from 10 December 1940 (*Zeugnis*, 1:565; *Witness*, 1:364). “Constant dilemma; I find so very little time for the Curriculum, that I devote hardly any time to the diary. But this, after all, is the basis of one of the most important chapters of the Curriculum. At times I only note down a catchword. But the next day it appears unimportant, the fact and the mood overtaken. But the changing details of everyday life are precisely what is most important.”

⁵³ Entry from 5 July 1942 (*Zeugnis*, 2:157; *Witness*, 2:94). “We know nothing of the distant past, because we were not there, we know nothing of the present, because we were there. Only from the past that we have experienced ourselves can we gain a little – very little that’s certain – knowledge through later recognition.”

Klemperer's desire for overview, synthesis, or coherence is also a desire for a poetic mode of writing that is able to generate larger truths. At one point Klemperer suggests that novelists are in a better position to write a "truthful" account than historians: "in den Romanen sei oft mehr Wahrheit als in der Historie."⁵⁴ He argues for the superiority of poetic forms due to his belief in the limits of an objective position that relies on second-hand accounts and documents, on the one hand, and of a subjective position that obscures the objective reality (*Sachverhalt*), on the other.⁵⁵ This is a variation of the Aristotelian statement that "poetry tends to speak of universals, history of particulars," and thus poetry is "more philosophical and more serious."⁵⁶ In this vein, Klemperer also continues a line of thinking about poetry and truth which permeated his previous scholarship. In his 1923 essay "Die Arten der historischen Dichtung," Klemperer wrote of the possibilities for telling history (*einen historischen Vorgang nacherzählen*).⁵⁷ It is impossible, he argues, to completely exclude the poetic element, "das Gestalten und Beseelen," which occurs in the process of writing. History is twice mediated: through the speaker (*der Berichtende*) and through language, which is not individual but social, "von einer Gesamtheit [dem Einzelnen] überliefert, für ihn dichtend und denkend, ihm einen Teil seiner Selbständigkeit aus der Hand windend."⁵⁸ The expression "für ihn dichtend und denkend," a line from Schiller, stays with Klemperer some twenty years later, and is cited throughout his *LTI*. In advancing the argument that

⁵⁴ Entry from 31 January 1938 (*Zeugnis*, 1:395-96; *Witness*, NA). "In novels there is often more truth than in the history written."

⁵⁵ Entry from 31 January 1938 (*Zeugnis*, 1:396; *Witness*, NA).

⁵⁶ Aristotle's statement in the *Poetics*: "For the historian and the poet do not differ according to whether they write in verse or without verse—[...] the difference is that the former relates things that have happened, the latter things that may happen. For this reason poetry is a more philosophical and more serious thing than history; poetry tends to speak of universals, history of particulars."

⁵⁷ Victor Klemperer, "Die Arten der historischen Dichtung," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 1, no. 3 (1923): 371.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

language can shape thought, Klemperer often invokes this citation in relation to his fear that he also may be “infected” by Nazi language. The metaphor of a poison also raises the question of the agency of the individual, and the desire to remain “immune.” The possibility for infection, or contamination, is one of the dangers of proximity to historical events.

In the role of the witness, Klemperer also finds a new purpose and motivation in writing. He even admits to himself in June 1942, “früher hätte ich mich gekränkt, daß ich kein Dichter bin, jetzt denke ich immerfort an das Curriculum, an das ‘Zeugnis-ablegen.’”⁵⁹ In thinking about his role as chronicler, Klemperer also reflects on the category of the witness and what it means to “live through” history. Klemperer uses the terms “Miterlebtes,” “mitleben,” “miterleben,” and “Mitlebender,” as he strives to consider what those who have lived through history can *know* of this history, a history which is still unfolding in the present. He thus questions the nature of experience—what it means to “be present” and “live” history. Notably, Klemperer’s account anticipates the rise of the “Zeitzeuge” in the postwar period, although this term was not yet in use.⁶⁰ When his friend and neighbor Ernst Kreidl is sent to Buchenwald, seemingly without reason, Klemperer reflects on the imminent danger of his situation, and the inability to *know* this danger until it is already there. The situation reminds him of a line from George Bernard Shaw’s play *Saint Joan*, in which a man sees the burning body and collapses in

⁵⁹ Entry from 9 June 1942. “Before I would have been upset that I am not a poet, now I keep thinking about the Curriculum, and about ‘bearing witness.’”

⁶⁰ For “witness,” Klemperer uses the term “Mitlebender.” In a recent volume on the “birth” of the “Zeitzeuge” after 1945, the editors discuss the rise of this term in the 1970s, especially with prominent trials such as the Eichmann trial. This term “Zeitzeuge” is perhaps best translated as “witness of a time period,” and does not have a counterpart in English. It is to be distinguished from the term “Augenzeuge” (eyewitness), as well as “survivor,” which is the common English term to reference Holocaust survivors as well as others who have survived a traumatic experience and bear witness to this experience. See Sabrow and Frei, *Die Geburt des Zeitzeugen nach 1945*.

despair, saying, “Ich habe ja nicht gewußt ..!” It is the *sight* of Joan’s burning body which finally shocks the witness. For Klemperer, this scene signals the limits of the imagination in situations of fear and violence, and the opposition of *knowing* and *imagining*:

Er hat sich das Entsetzliche nicht vorstellen können. *So buchstäblich unvorstellbar* ist mir bisher unsere Situation gewesen: man hat mir immer berichtet vom Geschlagen- u. Bespucktwerden, vom Zittern vor jedem Autogeräusch, jedem Klingeln, vom Verschwinden u. nicht Wiederkommen – ich hab es doch nicht gewußt. Ich habe Ernst Kreidls Schicksal in nächster Nähe miterlebt, u. ich hab’ es doch nicht gewußt.⁶¹

The words “I didn’t know!” later became a “refrain” in postwar Germany. Historian Robert Abzug calls the widespread phenomenon of incomprehension “double vision,” noting the “problem of imagining Nazi genocide” in both Germany and abroad. In the face of stories of Nazi atrocities, “disbelief existed side-by-side with knowledge,” and for many, “the double vision involved an abstract acceptance of what had been reported but, ...[at the same time] an extraordinarily limited ability to conceive the magnitude and detail of the horror.”⁶² In Chapter One, we saw similar reflections on “blindness” in the diary of Johann H. In his diaries, Klemperer reflects on this inability to *imagine* the violence and fear, the simultaneous familiarity with reports (*man hat mir immer berichtet*), and inability for these reports to produce knowledge (*nicht gewußt*). When reading about the history of Jews in Germany in 1942, Klemperer is shocked to realize the extent of German antisemitism, and the restriction of rights for Jews in the mid-19th century: “Dann in den 70er Jahren schon wieder starker Antisemitismus u. eigentlich die

⁶¹ Entry from 19 June 1942 (*Zeugnis*, 2:137; *Witness*, 2:82). “In Shaw’s *Saint Joan* there is a wild hunter of heretics, who breaks down in despair when he sees Joan burning. ‘I did not know...!’ He was unable to imagine the horror. Until now I had found our situation *just as literally unimaginable*: I had always been told about being beaten and spat upon, of trembling at the sound of a car, at every ring at the door, of disappearing and not coming back again—I had not known it. Now I know it, now the dread is always inside me, deadened for a couple of hours or become habitual or paralyzed by ‘So far things have always turned out well in the end’ and then alive and at one’s throat again.” Emphasis in original.

⁶² Robert H. Abzug, “Double Vision,” in *Inside the Vicious Heart: Americans and the Liberation of Nazi Concentration Camps* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 15.

ganze Hitlertheorie bereits entwickelt. Ich habe von alledem wenig gewußt, wirklich, intensiv gewußt: gar nichts, vielleicht nichts davon wissen wollen.”⁶³ This self-reflexivity of the diary, and its constant reflection on the limits of bearing witness, is a crucial aspect of the text which has often been overlooked. Klemperer’s diaries contain an engagement with the problematic of the witness, and the unimaginable nature of extreme violence. As he writes his account, he describes the challenges of testimony writing in the face of death, “near” to those who have died yet unable to know what challenges he and they face. It is this situation which leads him to think about the possibilities for a new form for writing history.

***LTI* and autobiographical collage**

As I have argued, the diaries reveal a central ambivalence: Klemperer both *distrusts* and *desires* the position of the historian, and the narrating voice which is able to speak from a position of reflected distance. Throughout the period of Nazi rule, Klemperer remains invested in a more traditional model for writing history, which requires a future point of view from which to write. He hopes and imagines that he might be this future historian making sense of the past retrospectively; however, he increasingly realizes that as a Jew surviving day by day in Nazi Germany, his survival is unlikely. He thus writes, “Gewiss: ‘1000 Jahre’ hält die Hitlerei bestimmt nicht mehr – aber selbst 1000 Tage dürfte für mich schon die Ewigkeit bedeuten.”⁶⁴ In this final section, I trace how Klemperer imagines a new mode of writing history, which he develops in the *LTI*. Ultimately, I argue, Klemperer accepts the limitations of the diary form, with its fragmentary entries,

⁶³ Entry from 27 March 1942 (*Zeugnis*, 2:56; *Witness*, 2:34).

⁶⁴ Entry from 6 August 1942 (*Zeugnis*, 2:193; *Witness*, 2:115). “The Hitler business will certainly not last ‘1,000 years’—but even 1,000 days would be an eternity for me.”

and uses the diary as a source of formal innovation for the *LTI* project. This analysis will also highlight the way the *LTI* and the diary are composed in tandem, and how Klemperer comes to terms with the limits of his perspective as witness.

In general, Klemperer remains attached to the idea of a “future history” and realizes that he must survive in order to write such a book:

Mit der richtigen Arbeit daran werde ich erst beginnen können, wenn ich die wesentlichen Autoren der [...] Partei in ihren Büchern studiere, u das bringe ich ohne Brechreiz erst über mich, wenn ich das Ganze überlebt habe, wenn ich nicht mehr Peiniger am Werk betrachte, sondern ihre Gehirne seziere. Aber inzwischen sammle ich doch immerfort, bringe ich doch jeden Tag der mich erreicht mit diesem Zukunftsbuch in Verbindung. Wie wird das Opus einmal aussehen? Ich spiele häufig mit dem Gedanken eines Dictionnaire philosophique.⁶⁵

In this depiction, Klemperer sees himself as “collecting” ideas for a future-book (*Zukunftsbuch*)—which he cannot yet fully imagine. To write this history, he, and not the Nazis, must live into the future. Like a doctor performing an autopsy, he will only be able to study Nazism properly when he can “dissect” the brains of Nazi authors. At this point, Klemperer remains unsure *what* methodology might anchor such a book. He calls the study of books “richtige Arbeit,” and thinks of his “collecting” as second-rate. But in order to write such a book, he must survive. The idea to write a work inspired by the form of Voltaire’s *Dictionnaire philosophique*, composed of individual articles, is a compromise in case he does not survive to write a finished whole.⁶⁶ “Das ist bequem und auflockernd[,] darüber kann man in jedem Augenblick wegsterben und was fertig geworden ist, [ist] doch ein Ganzes, auch fordert niemand von einem Wörterbuch

⁶⁵ Entry from 8 July 1941 (*Zeugnis*, NA; *Witness*, NA). “I will not be able to begin with the real work until I study the key authors of the Party movement in their books, and I won’t be able to do that without becoming ill until I have survived everything, when I’m no longer observing these pathetic individuals at work, but when I can dissect their brains. But in the meantime I keep collecting, and I bring every day that reaches me in connection with this future book. What will this opus finally look like?”

⁶⁶ Katie Trumpener compares the style of the *LTI* to Roland Barthes’s *Mythologies*. Trumpener, “Diary of a Tightrope Walker: Victor Klemperer and His Posterity,” 494.

Vollständigkeit absolute [sic].”⁶⁷ Klemperer’s method is a response to his precarious situation as a Jew in Nazi Germany, also reflected in the seemingly detached term “wegsterben.”

Throughout the last years of the war, Klemperer thinks about how to publish his work on National Socialism. In 1942, he imagines combining all his various projects into one. He is excited by the potential for this account, moving from self-doubt to optimism:

“Ein jeder lebt’s, nicht jedem ist’s bekannt.” War nur *ich* so blind? Ist jeder Mitlebende blind? Zugleich schüttelt mich Freude u. Angst in einem: Wenn mir nur Zeit bleibt (es müßten schon mehrere Jahre sein!) mein Curriculum zu schreiben. Welch eine Möglichkeit: jetzt die erzwungene Muße des Rückbesinnens, des erweiterten, des *Nichtfachstudiums*. Die Ergebnisse dieses Studiums, das Allgemeine in mein privates Erleben hineinarbeiten. Mischung aus: Οίδα μή εἰδέναι [ich weiß, daß (indem) ich nichts weiß] u. “nun weiß ich” u. “nun sehe ich, daß man nichts wissen kann.” Diese halb zufälligen, halb doch von mir gesteuerten (der Kugelballon!) Studien, dazu das Material[1] der LTI mit der Autobiographie, mit dem “Ich will Zeugnis ablegen!” in eins schmelzen, dem Ganzen die Erregung dieser Terrorzeit einflößen – es müßte ein ganz originelles, ein hinreißend interessantes Werk werden.⁶⁸

Although Klemperer’s diaries would not become known until long after his death, this euphoric passage anticipates the originality of his account. The syntax of the passage reveals a crucial aspect of Klemperer’s writings. This passage continually interrupts itself, combining thought-fragments and citations. He relates his (imagined future) autobiographical writings to other poetic works which thematize the limits of knowledge,

⁶⁷ Entry from 8 July 1941 (*Zeugnis*, NA; *Witness*, NA). Text modified to match the facsimile. “That is reassuring and relaxing, because one could die away in any instant and what is finished is still a whole, and also no one demands absolute totality from a dictionary.” Also note the French word order in Klemperer’s original: “Vollständigkeit absolute.”

⁶⁸ Entry from 23 August 1942 (*Zeugnis*, NA; *Witness*, NA). “If only I still have time (it would surely have to be a couple years!) to write my Curriculum. What an opportunity: now to be forced to take the time to think back on everything, to expand my non-scholarly studies. The results of this study, integrate the general into my private experiences. Combination of: Οίδα μή εἰδέναι and ‘now I know’ and ‘now I see, that one can’t know anything.’ These half random, yet still halfway consciously chosen (the hot air balloon!) studies, together with the material of the LTI and the autobiography, with the ‘I will bear witness!’ melted into one, to drench the entire thing with the tension of this period of terror—it would surely be an entirely original, a captivatingly interesting work.”

alluding to Plato and Goethe's *Faust*. Klemperer also recognizes these reflections as a crucial part of this work. The analogy of the hot air balloon is also a fitting interjection, as the balloon's course is steered by a pilot in reaction to elemental currents over which he has no control. The passage ends with anticipation for a future work, a *whole* (*Ganzes*) which might be entirely permeated by the tense affect of this period (*die Erregung dieser Terrorzeit*). This imagined future work is not the diary—whose course is half-random—but poetic history, or history constructed in a literary mode.

The idea of completing a finished “whole” haunts him, as he thinks about the possibilities for publishing this work. He returns to this question repeatedly in the diaries, wondering what he will do after the war's end. He is unsure whether he should return to writing his literary history, or whether the LTI project has potential to be published: “Die *LTI*? – Oder ist sie zu eng. Mache ich daraus Studien zur Geistesgeschichte des 3. Reichs? Oder wage ich mich an *die* Geistesgeschichte des 3. Reichs? Oder greife ich auf den Plan des Dictionnaire philosophique (du ~~nationals~~ Hitlérisme) zurück.”⁶⁹ Klemperer uses the occasion of writing enabled by the diary form to weigh his options, revealing his fears and doubts. Again, Klemperer is above all confronted with the likelihood of his death, at the same time that he maintains hope that he will write a postwar book.

In the end, Klemperer did not write a poetic history, or *the* “Geistesgeschichte des 3. Reichs.” Instead, he produced two other kinds of innovative texts. The first is *LTI*, a collection of articles on language in society modeled on Voltaire's *Dictionnaire*. The

⁶⁹ Entry from 24 October 1942 (*Zeugnis*, 2:262; *Witness*, 2:157). “I often ask myself what I shall undertake after Hitler's fall. With what shall I start? I very certainly do not have so much more time. The 18ieme has slipped into the background for me, it would also first of all have to be brought up to date. – Tackle a supplement to my Modern Prose? – Continue with the Curriculum? – Leap forward to the section, no., volume on the Third Reich? – The *LTI*? – Or ist that too narrow? Should I turn it into studies on the intellectual history of the Third Reich? Or revert to the plan of a Dictionnaire philosophique (du Hitlérisme)?”

subtitle, “Notizbuch eines Philologen” (A Philologist’s Notebook), already indicates its diary-like form. This book is a highly autobiographical collage of linguistic and cultural analysis, case studies, anecdotes, diary entries, and commentary on the diary entries. Even after surviving the war, he writes in *LTI* that this book is “Arbeit der ersten Stunde,” a still fluid, half-finished project, “halb als konkrete[r] Erlebnisbericht und halb schon [] wissenschaftliche[] Betrachtung.”⁷⁰ The book was highly successful, clearly touching a nerve in postwar society.⁷¹ His analysis also differs from other contemporary accounts such as that of Eugen Kogon (*Der SS-Staat*), because Klemperer survived as a Jew within German society.⁷² As Karlheinz Barck describes it, “The documentary precision with which Klemperer notes ways of speaking and thinking among different segments as well as on the radio and in newspapers gives his jottings the character of a collective journal.”⁷³

In addition to *LTI*, the diary, since its publication in the mid-1990s, has become Klemperer’s most well-known work. Although Klemperer largely regarded the diary form as a limitation, as merely a depository for notes, this account of daily life has become a unique and highly-valued source for the period. At the end of his *LTI*, Klemperer reflects on the danger and importance of his diary writing, recalling frequent conversations with Moritz Stühler, who doubted the value of the diary entries. He summarizes Stühler’s arguments:

⁷⁰ Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen.*: 24.

⁷¹ The *LTI* was first published in 1947 by Aufbau Verlag, and in 1975 Reclam published an edition in West Germany, with the subtitle “Die unbewältigte Sprache.” Andrea Rota traces the book’s publication success, also noting that the non-academic style and topic remained of interest in postwar Germany. Andrea Rota, “Victor Klemperer: *LTI* (1947),” in *Handbuch Nachkriegskultur : Literatur, Sachbuch und Film in Deutschland (1945-1962)*, ed. Elena Agazzi and Erhard H. Schütz (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 306.

⁷² Eugen Kogon, *Der SS-Staat* (Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer, 1947).

⁷³ Barck, “Intellectuals under Hitler,” 833.

Sie bringen sich durch Geschriebenes bloß in Gefahr. Und glauben Sie denn, daß Sie so Besonderes erleben? Wissen Sie nicht, daß abertausend andere tausendmal Schlimmeres durchmachen? Und glauben Sie nicht, daß sich für alles dies Geschichtsschreiber in Menge finden werden? Leute mit besserem Material und besserem Überblick als dem Ihrigen? Was sehen, was merken denn Sie in Ihrer Enge hier?⁷⁴

This conversation has clear parallels with the diary entry about “Mückenstiche.” But as Klemperer retells this argument in *LTI*, he focuses on the dialogue with himself which he maintained in the pages of the diary. As this passage continues, “Ich sagte mir: du hörst mit deinen Ohren, und du hörst in den Alltag, gerade in den Alltag, in das Gewöhnliche und das Durchschnittliche, in das glanzlos Unheroische hinein...”⁷⁵ His neighbor uses visual language to suggest Klemperer’s very limited perspective (he says others will have a better “Überblick,” “Was sehen Sie in ihrer Enge?”). This was certainly true, as Klemperer’s movements in the city of Dresden were increasingly restricted, until he was confined solely to the *Judenhaus* and avoided going outside for fear of arrest. Yet in this afterword to *LTI*, Klemperer styles himself as someone who “listens in,” with an ear for the ordinary and the quotidian. He uses the word *hören*, privileging the sense of hearing. As he was not able to read or study books, Klemperer gathered his evidence of the language of the Third Reich mostly through conversations or through scraps of language was able to collect, again recalling the image of Benjamin’s “ragpicker.” Although he earlier questioned his “vision” as a witness to history (“Ist jeder Mitlebende blind?”), in

⁷⁴ Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen.*: 382. “Your writing is merely putting you in danger. And do you really think that you are experiencing anything special? Don’t you realize that thousands of others are suffering thousands of times more than you are? And don’t you think that in time there will be more than enough historians to write about all this? People with better material and a better overview than you? What can you see, what can you record from your confinement here?” Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI - Lingua Tertii Imperii. A Philologist's Notebook*: 292-93.

⁷⁵ Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen.*: 382. “I told myself: you hear with your own ears, and what matters ist hat you listen in specifically to the everyday, ordinary, and average things, all that is devoid of glamour and heroism.” Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI - Lingua Tertii Imperii. A Philologist's Notebook*: 293.

thinking back on his own mode of witnessing, he here figures himself as someone who perhaps cannot *see* history, with the *overview* of a historian, but someone who *listens* to history, hearing and recording the crucial details of the language of daily life. This allowed him to notice how Nazi culture slowly began to affect those around him, and how even Jews began to unwittingly use Nazi terminology. His careful documentation of the changes in language and culture remains an important source of German society in the Third Reich.

Conclusion

Klemperer's diaries and his *LTI* offer us a unique perspective and insightful observations on German culture during this period. Yet much of the scholarship on Klemperer's diaries is focused on the content of the entries, overlooking the importance of the diary form. The diary entries reveal a self who is not only concerned with bearing witness (as indicated by the chosen title for the publications of the diaries: *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen; I Will Bear Witness*), but who also continually reflects on the conditions for giving an account. In fact, many of the repetitive, self-reflective passages were excluded from the text in the published version. Although this editorial decision surely made the text more readable, my analysis has highlighted precisely these passages, to showcase Klemperer's skepticism about the very possibility of bearing witness that he wrote into his accounts.

Klemperer is highly ambivalent about the form of his future project, the limits of the diary form, and the relation of the witness to history, as someone "near" to historical events. Read in this way, the diary provides evidence of a new kind of autobiographer-historian who seeks to engage his *present moment* as one of historical tension. His diary

writing shows the mutability of history—how it may in retrospect be endowed with plot devices, but how it is *lived* in the present tense, as fragmentary and incomplete.

Klemperer's skepticism about the ability to know history offers a key contribution to the concept of the "Mitlebender," or "Zeitzeuge," as the figure has become known in the post-Holocaust era. Klemperer's inability to write a synoptic account of this period captures the openness of history and historical time—especially history in the aftermath of crisis. His diaries and *LTI* offer us crucial reflections on what it means to bear witness in the face of war and persecution, and how individual accounts might also be written as counter-texts to monumental historical narratives.

CHAPTER 3

“Zeitgeschichte im Präsens”: Wolfgang Koeppen’s *Tauben im Gras*

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable
- T. S. Eliot¹

As Klemperer seeks to record the “mosquito bites,” the “everyday life of tyranny,” Wolfgang Koeppen’s novel *Tauben im Gras* (1951) seeks to expose a micro-level panorama from everyday life in postwar Germany. A reviewer at the time called the novel “kompakte Zeitgeschichte im Präsens,” compiled from the banality of daily life.² Unlike Klemperer, however, who is forced to use the present tense in his diary entries because he does not know how the story will end, Koeppen chooses to stage his fictional narrative in the present day. Entering into a tradition of European modernism, he uses techniques such as multilinearity and stream of consciousness to imagine interwoven storylines that present the tensions of the immediate postwar period in Germany. Whereas Klemperer is interested in how to write *history* during the Third Reich, and how to write firsthand about the history he has experienced, Koeppen experiments with a mode of writing *stories* in the wake of such catastrophe. In *Tauben im Gras*, the future looms like a threat of the next war: “man lebte im Spannungsfeld, östliche Welt,

¹ Quoted in Edouard Roditi, “T.S. Eliot: Persönlichkeit und Werk,” *Der Monat* (1948): 58.

² Axel Kaun, “Tauben im Gras. Ein Roman aus unseren Tagen von Wolfgang Koeppen,” *Weltstimmen: Weltbücher in Umrissen* 20(1951): 710.

westliche Welt, man lebte an der Nahtstelle, vielleicht an der Bruchstelle, die Zeit war kostbar, sie war eine Atempause auf dem Schlachtfeld” (TG 11/PG 2).³

Koeppen’s description of time as a short pause between catastrophic events is decidedly distinct from zero hour rhetoric of a new beginning. In one sense, the “Atempause” resonates with other tropes of waiting and waiting rooms, language central to the postwar period. The novel’s setting, as Klaus Scherpe describes it, is “a historical ‘down time’ of sorts, a pause between the last and the next world war.”⁴ There is an underlying tension to the setting for Koeppen’s postwar novel which has its origins in the war, but also in the possibility for a new war. In Koeppen’s postwar world, the past and future intersect with the present moment, exposing not only about what might have been, but also what may be. The “pause for breath” hints at the compressed, urgent nature of time in the postwar moment, and the threat of the future (and of future violence) which is felt in the present.

As Paul Saint-Amour has argued in his work on interwar modernism, the “memory and dread of aerial bombing” from the First World War created symptoms of fear and anxiety in the postwar period, shaping the urban imaginary.⁵ He describes a tension that has arisen out of anticipation rather than as an after-effect:

The temporality of mourning—a looking backward in order that one may come to live forward again—is split open and made to accommodate a more violent futurity: the dread that accompanies the future conditional arrival of the next catastrophe. This co-presence of mourning and anticipatory panic—this

³ I will refer to the German edition of the novel as TG and also cite the English translation as PG. Wolfgang Koeppen, *Tauben im Gras*, ed. Marcel Reich-Ranicki, *Gesammelte Werke in sechs Bänden* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986). All quotations from the novel reference this edition (TG) and the English translation (PG). Koeppen, *Pigeons on the Grass*, trans. David Ward (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988).

⁴ Klaus R. Scherpe, “Literary Détente: Wolfgang Koeppen's Cold War Travels,” *New German Critique* 37, no. 2 (2010): 69. Scherpe calls Koeppen “an author of literary détente,” especially in regards to his Cold War era travel writings.

⁵ Paul K. Saint-Amour, “Air War Prophecy and Interwar Modernism,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 42, no. 2 (2005): 131.

interruption of mourning by a panic that forcibly returns the mourner to the originary scene of loss—characterizes not only the experiences of victims of repeated aerial bombardments, but, in a more general sense, the uncanniness peculiar to an interwar period conscious of its suspension between a past war and a likely future one.⁶

Although Saint-Amour is describing the period after the First World War, there are resonances of this same kind of “split open” temporality, and “dread” of the future after the Second World War, albeit with important differences. Saint-Amour uses the example of two scenes in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* that reveal the nervous tension in postwar London. First, the sound of an explosion in the street causes a moment of panic among passersby, as the sound is “rewritten as signs of bombardment.” Second, there is a scene in which a commercial airplane flies overhead, writing an advertisement in the air. “Every one looked up,” as the narrator tells us, stopping their actions to stare up into the sky.

In Woolf’s novel, the tense mood of the postwar period has set Londoners on edge and has primed their imagination to rewrite ordinary sights and sounds as wartime dangers. Perhaps Koeppen had this passage in mind when he opens *Tauben im Gras* with a similar scene, describing the hum and buzz of airplanes. In this case, however, “Niemand blickte zum Himmel auf.” The Germans react indifferently to the din of planes, as if they have already forgotten the war. In a later essay for the radio station Süddeutscher Rundfunk, Koeppen discussed Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, and his description of the novel seems just as apt for his own one-day novel, substituting the Second World War for the First: “es ist die Zeit nach dem ersten Weltkrieg, und jeder Fortschritt und

⁶ Ibid., 139.

jede Sicherheit und jede Zivilisation ist fragwürdig geworden.”⁷ The setting of Woolf’s novel, as Koeppen continues, is “das von Bomben schon gestreifte London,” in which the sense of destruction is imminent: “die schreckliche Tatsache des ersten Weltkrieges und die greuliche Ahnung des zweiten und vielleicht schon des dritten, des endgültigen.”⁸ It is this same kind of “violent futurity,” to use Saint-Amour’s phrase, which captures the atmosphere of the setting of *Tauben im Gras*, a “brief pause” between world wars. This is not a zero hour, which optimistically locates itself at the onset of an opened-up future, but rather a tense period of anxiety due to uncertainty about the future.

Wolfgang Koeppen (1906-1996) is usually named—together with Arno Schmidt—as one of the “outsiders” of the postwar period.⁹ This is, at least in part, due to his own self-stylization as outsider and observer. Koeppen did not attend the gatherings of the group of writers around Hans Werner Richter, such as Heinrich Böll, Ilse Aichinger, Günter Eich, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Günter Grass, who became known as part of the network of “Gruppe 47,” although he did once (in 1951) attend a meeting of the group. Whereas the proponents of “Kahlschlag” literature claimed the need for a new, parsed-down language, Koeppen’s postwar style engaged with international trends in literary modernism under the influence of writers such as Joyce, Döblin, Proust, Faulkner and Dos Passos.¹⁰ Before the war he had already published two novels, which were then

⁷ Wolfgang Koeppen, “Über Virginia Woolfs *Mrs. Dalloway*,” in *Wolfgang Koeppen*, ed. Eckart Oehlenschläger (Frankfurt am Main: suhrkamp taschenbuch, 1987 [1956]), 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ See especially Chapter 8, “‘Das Volk hat sich gefälligst zur Kunst hinzubemühen!’ Die Zeitschriften *Akzente* und *Texte und Zeichen* sowie die großen Außenseiter Wolfgang Koeppen und Arno Schmidt” in Helmut Böttiger, *Die Gruppe 47: Als die deutsche Literatur Geschichte schrieb* (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2013). Koeppen and Schmidt were especially connected to the group through Alfred Andersch.

¹⁰ Koeppen himself defends himself against claims of these authors’ direct influence: “Aber es ist nicht bewußt, daß ich mir sagte, dies ist ein Rezept und nach diesem Rezept koche ich jetzt, sondern es war in

largely forgotten: *Eine unglückliche Liebe* (1934) and *Die Mauer schwankt* (1935), one of the last books published by the Jewish publisher Bruno Cassirer. During the Third Reich, Koeppen survived by “making himself small,” as he often put it, first in brief exile in Holland, then by working for the film industry.¹¹ With his postwar trilogy, *Tauben im Gras* (1951), *Das Treibhaus* (1953), and *Tod in Rom* (1955), he quickly became a well-known author of the postwar period, confronting postwar German society with its recent past through highly topical novels set in the present.¹²

In this chapter, I show how *Tauben im Gras* presents a microcosm of postwar German society, exposing tensions within a world which has recently witnessed an annihilating war and atomic catastrophe. Koeppen presents his readers with rich characters and scenarios that reveal the complexity of culture and society in the postwar present. In my analysis, I read the text through various lenses to showcase what Koeppen’s novel contributes to a rethinking of postwar German literary history. In introducing the novel, I highlight how Koeppen thematizes time and history, and how the

mir, und ich fand diesen Stil, wie ich ihn in meinen Büchern dann entwickelt habe.” Koeppen, “Zur Resignation neige ich sehr,” quoted in Jäger, 30.

¹¹ Starting in 1939, Koeppen worked in the film industry: starting in 1939 for Tobis-Sascha and from 1941 for Bavaria-Film-Kunst, although he never had a script made into a movie. As he tells the *Spiegel* in an interview: “Als ‘konsequenter Zivillist’ scriptete er sich beim Film durch die Kriegsjahre. ‘Es wurde glücklicherweise nie ein Film von mir gedreht, aber ich habe trotzdem schrecklich dabei verdient.’” “Zeitbericht: Atempause auf Schlachtfeld,” *Der Spiegel*, 26.12.1951. In an interview with Manfred Durzak, Koeppen describes how he survived the Third Reich, and his work in the film industry. He styles himself as “outsmarting” the Propaganda ministry—writing material just good enough to stay hired and just bad enough that none of his films were made: “Davon lebte ich. Und davon lebte ich gut, finanziell.” Quoted in Hans-Ulrich Treichel, ed. *Wolfgang Koeppen. Einer der schreibt: Gespräche und Interviews* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 183. Jörg Döring has written the most complete assessment of Koeppen’s work in the film industry to date. Jörg Döring, “...ich stellte mich unter, ich machte mich klein...”: *Wolfgang Koeppen, 1933-1948* (Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld, 2001). See also Karl Prümm, “‘Ich weiß, man kann mit den Mitteln des Films dichten.’ Kinematographisches Schreiben bei Wolfgang Koeppen,” *Treibhaus. Jahrbuch für Literatur der 50er Jahre: Wolfgang Koeppen & Alfred Döblin: Topographien der literarischen Moderne* 1(2005); Reinhard Döhl, “Wolfgang Koeppen,” in *Über Wolfgang Koeppen*, ed. Ulrich Greiner (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976); Walter Erhart, “Es fallen einem Bilder ein: Wolfgang Koeppens letzte Filme,” in *Der Bildhunger der Literatur: Festschrift für Gunter E. Grimm*, ed. Gunter Grimm, Dieter Heimböckel, and Uwe Werlein (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005).

¹² See Klaus R. Scherpe, “Literary Détente: Wolfgang Koeppen’s Cold War Travels,” *New German Critique* 37, no. 2 (2010).

text interweaves past and present in portraying an ordinary day in Munich. Second, I show how atomic imagery serves as a model for the novel's fragmentary structure and how Koeppen's engagement with theories of modern physics questions principles such as causality, order and meaning at both thematic and formal levels. Third, I argue that a crucial effect in the novel is a shifting spatial perspective, from micro to macro, from a position on the ground and from an aerial view. This technique raises questions about the nature of historical perspective, and what can be *seen* or *made visible*. Additionally, both the atomic and the aerial perspectives are linked to war, intensifying the threat of the future in the presentist setting. In exposing these two perspectives, I also show how the novel is in dialogue with scenes of ruin gazing and ruin photography of the period. In this way, I read the novel as a rubble text that self-consciously stages interactions with ruin and rubble, while also exhibiting an engagement with the concept of rubble in its formal structure.

“Wo Erde und Zeit schon gebebt haben”: the Postwar Moment

Tauben im Gras is a “Zeitroman” in the most literal sense: written and published in 1951, this year is also the setting for the novel, which weaves together over 100 fragments of stories of over 30 characters, spanning about 18-20 hours on one single day, 20 February 1951.¹³ Although the city is never named, the setting is clearly Munich—with its beer halls, its specific ties to the National Socialist past, and the strong American occupation presence. The novel's atmosphere is tense: Germany is the epicenter of postwar East-West conflicts and the feeling of the next world war looms ominously. In a foreword to

¹³ This date can be established by one newspaper heading, “ANDRÉ GIDE GESTERN VERSCHIEDEN” (TG 95). Other headlines clearly situate the story in the political context of the early 1950s.

the second edition in 1956, Koeppen describes the novel's setting as "shortly after the currency reform":

als das deutsche Wirtschaftswunder im Westen aufging, als die ersten neuen Kinos, die ersten neuen Versicherungspaläste die Trümmer und die Behelfsläden überragten, zur hohen Zeit der Besatzungsmächte. [...] Es war die Zeit, in der die neuen Reichen sich noch unsicher fühlten, in der die Schwarzmarktgewinner nach Anlagen suchten und die Sparer den Krieg bezahlten. [...] der Kopf war von Hunger und Bombenknall noch etwas wirr, und alle Sinne suchten Lust, bevor vielleicht der dritte Weltkrieg kam. (TG 9/PG vii)

In the midst of these tensions, Koeppen calls forth a large cast of characters, including occupying soldiers such as Richard Kirsch, son of a German immigrant, and the black soldiers Washington Price and Odysseus Cotton; Germans such as Emilia, a lonely heiress, and Frau Behrend, nostalgic for better days; American schoolteachers on tour; the poets Edwin, visiting to give a lecture, and Philipp, struggling to make a career; doctors Behude and Frahm; children such as Ezra, who is visiting Germany with his American father; and Heinz, whose father never returned from the war and whose mother is now dating an American soldier. Although some of the characters know one another—as mother/daughter, doctor/patient, husband/wife—these associations are only slowly revealed, creating an intricate web that stresses the circumstantial and seemingly random nature of relations.

The characters' stories are woven through a technique of dense simultaneity, with each character presented in internally focalized text segments. For example, multiple segments locate characters in the same instant in time as a stoplight changes from red to green: the poet Edwin in a car, the psychologist Dr. Behude on a bike, Emilia on foot, the American soldier Washington driving a car, all paused at the same intersection. The time of narration takes considerably longer than the few seconds of the narrated time, creating

a feeling of density and thickness of time without the tension of a central plot. Interest is generated through tensions within and between text segments, offering a lens into the problems and thoughts of the many individual characters, as well as relations between seemingly disparate characters. In this way, readers wonder what will happen to Carla, pregnant with the child of her black American boyfriend, or Ezra, who is visiting Germany with his father, while his Jewish mother would not return to the country of her birth, preferring to stay in Paris. Koeppen weaves these characters and their stories together, also showing the interrelated and disparate challenges of the period. Towards the end of the novel, these many stories converge in two main scenes. Roughly half of the characters can be located in and around a mob outside a beer hall, while the other half is in attendance at a speech given by the Anglo-American poet Edwin at the Amerika-Haus. These scenes may be considered the only “events” in the book, among other non-events of an ordinary day in postwar occupied Germany.

Koeppen uses several figures of time and history throughout the novel, reminding readers of the precariousness of peacetime. History is repeatedly figured as a “stream,” which leaves behind its “washed up” victims on the shores in the muck:

Der Strom der Geschichte floß. Zuweilen trat der Strom über die Ufer. Er überschwemmte das Land mit Geschichte. Er ließ Ertrunkene zurück, er ließ den Schlamm zurück, die Düngung, das stinkende Mutterfeld, eine Fruchtbarkeitslauge: wo ist der Gärtner? wann wird die Frucht reif sein? (TG 82/PG 70)

In some ways, this “stream” of history recalls the language used by Klemperer that events “vorbeiströmen und versinken” (rush by and sink). Klemperer’s diaries work to preserve those small events, the debris, which might otherwise disappear. In Koeppen, we find a similar attention to the margins, and to that which is washed up on the shore. This bodily

and biological imagery signals the aftermath of “history,” as the war has produced death but also fertilized the ground with this death, the bodies of the “drowned.” The excess of history cannot be contained in a single stream and therefore floods over the banks, leaving debris behind. But in this passage, the debris is not architectural, in the form of ruin or rubble, but bodily. The fertile ground stinks. Production and reproduction—the forward movement of time—necessitates death and decay. There is potentiality in this fertility, but the grotesque imagery conjures an image of the future as “stillbirth,” revealing the smell of death still omnipresent.

If history is an unpredictable and grotesque stream, Koeppen directs our attention to the margins, the refuse, those who are “washed up” on the shore, and to the remaining traces of history. Two scenes show these remains as a murky, muddy, stinking decay. First, Josef, the elderly man who is burdened with generations of German history, is one of the characters “washed up” by history, “Josef saß am Ufer des Stroms” (TG 81/PG 70). Josef follows the black American soldier Odysseus Cotton out of the bar, “auch er im Schlamm, noch immer im Schlamm, schon wieder im Schlamm” (TG 82/PG 71). Both characters seem to be stuck in the mud of history. The image of “Schlamm” also appears earlier in the text as Emilia recalls something her family once said to her, that she will “float to the top” (*schwimmst oben*): “was schwimmt oben auf einem Teich? Froschlaich, Vogeldreck, Faulholz, schillernde Farbflecke, unruhige Spektren aus Schmiere, Schlamm und Verwesung, die Leiche der jungen Liebenden” (TG 34/PG 24). Those who have survived the war are covered with the “muck” of the past, spewed out by the stream of history.

In this stream of history, the city of Munich is portrayed as being held in a precarious balance. In traveling to Germany, the famous Anglo-American poet Edwin senses something troubling emanating from the city and its history. He is afraid of the city because of what it has been through, and the city's now uncertain position on the "edge":

[die Stadt] hatte das Grauen erlebt, das abgeschlagene Haupt der Medusa gesehen, frevelige Größe, eine Parade von aus ihrem eigenen Untergrund heraufgekommenen Barbaren, die Stadt war mit Feuer gestraft worden und mit Zerschmetterung ihrer Mauern, heimgesucht war sie, hatte das Chaos gestreift, den Sturz in die Ungeschichte, jetzt hing sie wieder am Hang der Historie, hing schräg und blühte, war es Scheinblüte? was hielt sie am Hang? (TG 105-106/PG 93)

This is not a narrator's voice but a presentation of Edwin's thought, using both allegory and myths of the Western tradition to allude to the barbarism of National Socialism. The barbarians did not come from outside, but from within, from "beneath" civilization itself, and the bombing is portrayed here in mythologized terms as punishment. After falling into "Ungeschichte," the city now seems to be suspended, hanging by a thread. As the passage continues, Edwin thinks of the historical conjuncture of the present as a decisive moment:

Edwin sah in dieser Stadt ein Schauspiel und ein Beispiel, sie hing, hing am Abgrund, war in der Schweben, hielt sich in gefährlicher mühsamer Balance, sie konnte ins Alte und immerhin Bewährte, sie konnte ins Neue und Unbekannte schwanken, konnte der überlieferten Kultur treu bleiben, doch auch in vielleicht nur vorübergehende Kulturlosigkeit absinken, vielleicht als Stadt überhaupt verschwinden, vielleicht ein Massenzuchthaus werden, in Stahl, Beton und Überteknik die Vision des phantastischen Gefängnisses von Piranesi erfüllen, des merkwürdigen Kupferstechers, dessen römische Ruinen Edwin so liebte. (TG 106/PG 94)

The language of "Schweben" and "Balance" recalls the figure of an *Atempause* introduced earlier, the threat of war and destruction looming in the air. As Edwin imagines the

possibilities between *Kultur* and *Kulturlosigkeit*, he sees the images of Roman ruins and of futuristic prisons made by Piranesi. Germany's present is not a new beginning, a zero hour, but is suspended between disasters, with the threat of total disappearance looming: "hier, wo Erde und Zeit schon gebebt hatten und gleich ins Nichts brechen konnten oder ins Neue, ins Andere, in die unbekannte Zukunft, von der man nichts wußte..." (TG 106/PG 94). In this passage, Edwin's visit to Munich offers reflections on the possibilities for decline, evoked by the mention of Piranesi, who created visions of both melancholic ruins as well as nightmaric images of modern prisons. Koeppen combines imagery of ruin with ominous figures of suspension, balance, and the threat of decline and fall. Munich here is representative for the German situation, or possibly even that of Western civilization—on the brink.

The novel's other poet, Philipp, also reflects on the nature of time. While Edwin sees Munich on the "edge" of history, Philipp struggles to make sense of time's multiple temporalities and velocities: "Zugleich aber raste dieselbe Zeit, die doch wiederum stillstand und das Jetzt war, dieser Augenblick von schier ewiger Dauer" (TG 22/PG 12). It is the task of the writer, he thinks, to stand "outside" the stream of time, to take the role of the observer and to make sense of this "Jetzt."

Aber er, Philipp, stand noch dazu außerhalb dieses Ablaufs der Zeit, nicht eigentlich ausgestoßen aus dem Strom, sondern ursprünglich auf einen Posten gerufen, einen ehrenvollen Posten vielleicht, weil er alles beobachten sollte, aber das Dumme war, daß ihm schwindlig wurde und daß er gar nichts beobachten konnte, schließlich nur ein Wogen sah, in dem einige Jahreszahlen wie Signale aufleuchteten, schon nicht mehr natürliche Zeichen, künstlich listig errichtete Bojen in der Zeitsee, schwankendes Menschenmal auf den ungebändigten Wellen, aber zuweilen erstarrte das Meer, und aus dem Wasser der Unendlichkeit hob sich ein gefrorenes, nichtssagendes, dem Gelächter schon überantwortetes Bild. (TG 22-23/PG 12-13)

As a writer, the character Philipp feels called to observe and describe, but he gets dizzy from the movement of time and cannot grasp it from outside, but rather succumbs to it. By using internal focalization, Koeppen blurs the voices of narrator and character, which intensifies the dizzying effect. Occasionally, however, the “sea” of time freezes and one sees an “unspeaking” image (*nichtssagendes Bild*). Time is not uni-directional, flowing, but suspended. This passage can be read as a meta-commentary on the task of the novelist, who must see images in the infinity before him, distilling and pausing time. In this way, the segments of *Tauben im Gras* can be read as such “flashes” or “buoys” in which we encounter the novel’s characters.

The novel’s ending also plays with the notion of suspended time. The events of *Tauben im Gras* take place on one day, roughly from dawn (when Alexander awakes, and Philipp emerges from the hotel where he spent the night), to midnight. At the novel’s end, as the clock strikes midnight, the prose also shifts into present tense in short, declarative sentences: “Mitternacht schlägt es vom Turm. Es endet der Tag. Ein Kalenderblatt fällt. Man schreibt ein neues Datum. Die Redakteure gähnen. Die Druckformen der Morgenblätter werden geschlossen” (TG 218-9/PG 201).¹⁴ The novel’s last segment seems to scan across the newspapers being printed, building suspense about the “not yet” of the next world war, although it seems to be looming on the horizon: “SPANNUNG, KONFLIKT, VERSCHÄRFUNG, BEDROHUNG” (TG 219/PG 202). This last segment also

¹⁴ Koeppen is drawing on a rich source material of newspaper imagery here, such as Walter Ruttmann’s 1927 film *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*, which goes through one day of life in the city in five “acts.” Newspapers also play a prominent role in the film, most notably in the fourth act as we see the pages being printed, and headlines are flashed across the screen. Newspaper headlines are also a part of Döblin’s city montage. Koeppen mentions Ruttmann’s film in an essay on “Eisenstein und Babel,” “Filme sind wie Vampire, Träume, die sich im Gemüt festsetzen, sie können, wie die eigene Vergangenheit, erlittene Erfahrung, gelebtes Leben, zu einer großen Selbsttäuschung werden...” in Wolfgang Koeppen, “Die elenden Skribenten,” in *Berichte und Skizzen II. Gesammelte Werke in sechs Bänden*, ed. Marcel Reich-Ranicki (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 180-81.

repeats a set of phrases from the beginning of the novel, this time in the present tense, shifting from the impersonal (*man*) into the national register (*Deutschland*):¹⁵

man lebte im Spannungsfeld, östliche Welt, westliche Welt, man lebte an der Nahtstelle, vielleicht an der Bruchstelle, die Zeit war kostbar, sie war eine Atempause auf dem Schlachtfeld... (TG 11/PG 2)

Deutschland lebt im Spannungsfeld, östliche Welt, westliche Welt, zerbrochene Welt, zwei Welthälften, einander feind und fremd, Deutschland lebt an der Nahtstelle, an der Bruchstelle, die Zeit ist kostbar, sie ist eine Spanne nur, eine karge Spanne, vertan, eine Sekunde zum Atemholen, Atempause auf einem verdamnten Schlachtfeld. (TG 219/PG 202)

Kathleen Komar links this repetition of beginning and end to Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer*, which "implies an inescapable sameness," an "imprisonment" within "a setting [the characters] can neither escape nor change."¹⁶ Furthermore, I would like to draw attention to the present tense of the repeated passage, which Komar overlooks. At this moment, the novel (the narrated time) seems to have caught up with the time of telling the story. This temporality heightens the tension and the sense that we are caught in an uncertain state of suspension between wars, a time in which the future of Germany is uncertain. Edwin's meditations on the fear of collapse, and the potential for the present to return to a state of "Ungeschichte," is a constant component of the postwar atmosphere.

¹⁵ In Kathleen L. Komar, *Pattern and Chaos: Multilinear Novels by Dos Passos, Döblin, Faulkner, and Koeppen* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1983), 79. Simon Ward points out that Koeppen uses a similar distancing technique in *Jugend*, to draw attention to the time of writing, by ending the book by recalling the opening lines. Simon Ward, "Wolfgang Koeppen and the Bridge of Memory," *German Life and Letters* 52, no. 1 (1999): 101.

¹⁶ Komar argues that the striking similarities between the novels of Dos Passos and Koeppen is the similar postwar situation (of 1925 America and 1951 Germany): "Both authors are at a cultural 'Bruchstelle' that engulfs their characters, too, in a sea of change with no apparent retaining walls. Both authors feel compelled to record the fragmented quality of the reality which surrounds them." Komar, *Pattern and Chaos: Multilinear Novels by Dos Passos, Döblin, Faulkner, and Koeppen*: 79; 90.

“Eins zu Unendlich”: Microscopic Vision in *Tauben im Gras*

Die Welt ist für mich nicht nur das sichtbare,
sondern auch etwas Unsichtbares.

-Koeppen¹⁷

Many contemporary reviews of *Tauben im Gras* describe the novel's multiperspectivalism in terms of a “mosaic” or a “kaleidoscope.” A review in *Der Spiegel* describes the structure as if Koeppen “cut up” his stories with scissors, and threw them in the air: “Was niederfiel, bildet ein seltsames Muster, ein Mosaik, in den Einzelteilen sinnvoll geordnet.”¹⁸ Yet, as this reviewer points out, the apparent randomness seems to contain a densely woven scaffold, as characters and storylines connect and converge. Koeppen's modernism combines the multi-media montage of Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*—which also contains newspaper headlines, music, and inner monologue of characters in a noisy, bustling metropolis—and the “heap of broken images” of T. S. Eliot's modernist epic “The Waste Land.”¹⁹ The novel also employs a stream-of-consciousness technique indebted to the tradition of Proust and Joyce—writers whose work is also referenced explicitly in the text. However, as Marcel Reich-Ranicki points out, whereas Döblin radically expands the cityscape and its sensory richness, the movement of Koeppen's novel is towards reduction: “Nicht um ein gigantisches Fresko, das die Fülle der Zeit wiedergibt, ist er bemüht, sondern um ein raffiniert konstruiertes Kaleidoskop, um ein strenges Konzentrat, das lediglich ihre wesentlichen Merkmale

¹⁷ Heinz Ludwig Arnold, “Gespräch mit Wolfgang Koeppen,” in *Gespräche mit Schriftstellern: Max Frisch, Günter Grass, Wolfgang Koeppen, Max von der Grün, Günter Wallraff* (München: Beck, 1975), 138.

¹⁸ “Zeitbericht: Atempause auf Schlachtfeld.”

¹⁹ T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*. Line 22. “What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man, / You cannot say, or guess, for you know only / A heap of broken images, where the sun beats, / And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief, / And the dry stone no sound of water.”

verdeutlichen soll.”²⁰ Reich-Ranicki’s description of Koeppen’s concentrated prose hints at an aspect of the novel which has been largely overlooked: the way Koeppen uses the language of physics—of the microscopic and atomic—as a figure throughout.²¹ The language of physics not only functions as a kind of model for the fragmentation of the narrative, which is atomized and “exploded,” but also conjures a post-atomic imaginary, the fear of a looming atomic war and the threat of imminent destruction.²²

In interviews and essays, Koeppen places the revelations of modern physics on par with the innovations of literary modernism, discussing modern science as an important literary influence.²³ In an essay on Proust, he writes, “[die Anschauungen über die Gesetze der Dichtung] haben sich geändert, wie sich die Gesetze der Physik, unsere Vorstellungen von Raum und Zeit, geändert haben, und zwischen der neuen Physik und dem neuen Roman nach Proust gibt es Berührungen.”²⁴ This scientific worldview includes Einstein’s “cosmos,” he continues, “der dauernd ins Unendliche flieht und doch

²⁰ “He doesn’t aim to create a gigantic fresco that reflects the fullness of time, but rather a finely-constructed kaleidoscope, a strict concentration which only reveals the most essential aspects.” Marcel Reich-Ranicki, “Der Zeuge Koeppen,” in *Über Wolfgang Koeppen*, ed. Ulrich Greiner (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), 141.

²¹ The work of Elisabeth Emter and Friedhelm Marx are notable exceptions. Elisabeth Emter, *Literatur und Quantentheorie: die Rezeption der modernen Physik in Schriften zur Literatur und Philosophie deutschsprachiger Autoren (1925-1970)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995); Friedhelm Marx, “Kein Zauberwort, keine Formel. Wolfgang Koeppens Poetik der Unschärfe in *Tauben im Gras*,” in *Metapher und Modell: Ein Wuppertaler Kolloquium zu literarischen und wissenschaftlichen Formen der Wirklichkeitskonstruktion*, ed. Wolfgang Bergem, Lothar Bluhm, and Friedhelm Marx (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1996).

²² Frank Biess, “‘Everybody has a Chance’: Nuclear Angst, Civil Defence, and the History of Emotions in Postwar West Germany,” *German History* 27, no. 2 (2009). Hans Krahl, “Atomforschung und atomare Bedrohung. Literarische und (populär-) wissenschaftliche Vermittlung eines elementaren Themas 1945–1959” in *Technik als Zeichensystem in Literatur und Medien*, ed. Michael Titzmann (Tübingen: Narr, 2001). Saint-Amour also discusses the role of fear and “pre-war anxiety” after WWI, in which the fear of aerial attacks created a “collective psychosis,” conditioned “by the *eventuality* of a future conditional war as much as by the actual *event* of war.” Saint-Amour, “Air War Prophecy and Interwar Modernism,” 131.

²³ Arnold, “Gespräch mit Wolfgang Koeppen,” 130-31.

²⁴ Wolfgang Koeppen, “Marcel Proust und die Summe der Sensibilität,” in *Gesammelte Werke in sechs Bänden: Essays und Rezensionen*, ed. Marcel Reich-Ranicki, Dagmar von Briel, and Hans-Ulrich Treichel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986 [1957]), 175. Originally published in *Merkur*, 1957.

in unserem Herzen ist, Materie vom Geist durchdrungen, Geist in den Dingen.”²⁵ As we will see below, Koeppen already takes up these concepts of “Unendlichkeit,” space, and time in *Tauben im Gras*.

In *Tauben im Gras*, the novel not only thematically includes explorations of a worldview shaped by modern physics, but Koeppen implements these ideas in the novel’s “molecular,” or “microcosmic” structure. As the lens of a microscope might be adjusted to make new layers visible, Koeppen’s text moves beyond the surface, revealing an “atomic” level—images within thought, thought within action and scene. As Hansgeorg Maier writes in his review for *Die Zeit*, “Das Kaleidoskop von 1951 [...] steht zur Realität in der Relation Eins zu Unendlich.”²⁶ The narration “zooms in,” showing postwar society in its details: a shop clerk who contemptuously judges the American soldiers buying gifts for their girlfriends, an actor who is tired of playing his “feel-good” role, a religious nanny, a boy who is confused about his mother’s black American boyfriend, a psychiatrist who donates blood for extra money, a German-Jewish woman in Paris who will not return to Germany, an American schoolteacher looking for a tryst with a German poet, and many others. These are merely examples of the rich array of minor characters. By using interior monologue in the novel’s fragments, Koeppen’s prose represents consciousness, revealing a multitude of mindsets and world-views, often conveyed in interior monologue with the verbal density of poetry.

Allusions to science and technology often appear in such internally focalized passages. In this way, the novel’s representation of interiority also portrays the synchronicity of past and present. For example, during a scene in church in one of the

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Hansgeorg Maier, “Kaleidoskop 1951,” *Die Zeit*, 1.11. 1951.

novel's first episodes, the text shifts to a "collage" of associations and images from the mind of the priest: "Die Wandlung der Elemente. [...] Zertrümmerung. Einstein. Blick in Gottes Küche. Die Weisen von Göttingen. Das Atom fotografiert: Zehntausendmillionenfache Vergrößerung" (TG 16/PG 6-7). This heightened fragmentation is also a shift from story to image—or language reduced to thought-images—and it hints at the limits of what is visible and describable. Religious traditions are thrown hodge-podge alongside modern images of destruction and physics. In passages such as this which represent thought, the language is highly visual, conveying a range of iconic images that would have been accessible to contemporaries, such as "Zertrümmerung," but also the image of the atom. There is no grammar to add causality to the images, but rather simultaneity in time, groups of thoughts and thought-images. Modern science is thus not only thematized, but also offers an "exploded," atomic model for the narration. At the same time, atomic images also conjure the threat of war and destruction, what was felt to be a very real fear during this period.

Three examples from the characters of Emilia, Dr. Frahm, and Schnakenbach show how the novel presents a scientific worldview. These passages all associate a string of images and thoughts, including references to aesthetics and science. In the first episode with the character of Emilia, the young woman wakes up to realize her husband, the writer Philipp, is not home. This episode ends with a masturbation scene, beginning with Emilia's attempt to forget: "to forget what they now called reality and hard facts," six times repeating the word "vergessen," as she tries to escape her problems (TG 34/PG 23). The grammar of the sentences gradually recedes, and we are left with a densely intertextual passage presenting a long string of names, citations, and thoughts, only

periodically reminding us through the “ich” that this is a representation of Emilia’s thoughts. In this scene, Koeppen also cites the famous Molly Bloom soliloquy at the end of Joyce’s *Ulysses* with its extended sentences and stream of consciousness.²⁷ In *Tauben im Gras*, the Emilia character lies naked in front of the bookshelves, and her thoughts associate many of the great writers and philosophers of modernity: Baudelaire, Benn, Rimbaud, Heidegger, Proust, Kierkegaard, Shakespeare, Sartre, Gide. In the middle of this lengthy passage, there is a longer “thought” segment on the physicist Erwin Schrödinger:

Schrödinger *What is Life?* das Wesen der Mutation, das Verhalten der Atome im Organismus, der Organismus kein physikalisches Laboratorium, ein Strom von Ordnung, du entgehst dem Zerfall im anatomischen Chaos, die Seele, ja, die Seele, *Deus factus sum*, die Upanischaden, Ordnung aus Ordnung, Ordnung aus Unordnung [...] das Gen der Kern des befruchteten Eis...(TG 35/PG 25)

This passage mentions the key concepts “order from order, order from disorder,” from Schrödinger’s book *What is Life?*.²⁸ By embedding this brief passage about Schrödinger in a sequence including mostly writers and allusions to works of literature and philosophy, Koeppen brings different world views into contact. The themes of collapse, chaos, the soul, order and disorder, the nature of life appear throughout the text. Left unconnected and uncommented, Koeppen presents us with fragments of thought. The reader does not encounter a moralizing or an authoritative narrator, but must attempt to make sense of these juxtapositions.²⁹

²⁷ For more on Koeppen’s use of Joyce, see Maren Jäger, *Die Joyce-Rezeption in der deutschsprachigen Erzählliteratur nach 1945* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2009).

²⁸ This text was first published in 1944 in English and 1946 in German. Erwin Schrödinger, *What is Life?: The Physical Aspect of the Living Cell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944).

²⁹ Barnouw writes that the novel’s success is in part due to the fact that Koeppen’s narrator takes the “role of the witness, the one who does not decide who is guilty but who fights the forgetting of facts that constitute guilt.” Dagmar Barnouw, “Melancholy and Enchantment: Wolfgang Koeppen's Anamnesis,” *Mosaic* 14, no. 3 (1981): 38.

At the end of this lengthy and densely associative passage, the focalization shifts from Emilia's thoughts to an externalized perspective: "Erschöpfung perlte auf ihrer Stirn, jede Perle ein Mikrokosmos der Unterwelt, ein Gewimmel von Atomen, Elektronen und Quanten" (TG 36/PG 26). This "swarm" (*Gewimmel*) is both similar to and distinct from the "Gewimmel" at the beginning of Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*: "Gewimmel, welch Gewimmel. Wie sich das bewegte."³⁰ Koeppen's novel exposes a new layer of swarming commotion, shifting continually from the city to the "underworld" of Emilia's conscious. In this passage, the narrator thus zooms in and out and back in—there is a move from the chaos of thoughts and thought-associations, to an external view, then to a microscopic view, into a bead of sweat, and its chaos of atoms. The text reveals multiple layers of the text physically existing simultaneously. Like the stoplight, where time is drastically slowed and the time of narration takes over the narrated time, the novel pushes the boundaries of time and space.

A similar technique is visible in a crucial scene with Dr. Frahm, who has been asked by Carla (pregnant with the child of her black American boyfriend) to perform an abortion. As in the scene with Emilia, this passage demonstrates the chaotic, associative, and imagistic paths of thoughts, as Frahm's reflections move from the chemical and biological, to thoughts on abstraction in art, returning to the question of life and its origins. The doctor's thoughts echo the question already found in Emilia's thoughts, "What is life?" as he thinks about the Hippocratic oath, where life begins, and whether it is ethical to perform abortions.

Kater nach den Euthanasieprozessen, Mord an Geisteskranken, Mord an Ungeborenen, bei mir hängt das in gotischer Fraktur im Gang vor dem

³⁰ Alfred Döblin, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (München: dtv, 2008), 15.

Sprechzimmer, es ist etwas dunkel im Gang, und der Spruch macht sich da sehr gut, was ist Leben? die Quanten und das Leben, die Physiker quälen sich jetzt mit der Biologie, ich kann ihre Bücher nicht lesen, zu viel Mathematik Formelkram abstraktes Wissen Gehirnakrobatik, ein Leib ist kein Leib mehr, Auflösung der Gegenständlichkeit in den Bildern der neuen Maler, das sagt mir nichts, ich bin Doktor, vielleicht zu ungebildet, habe auch keine Zeit, kaum für die Fachblätter, immer wieder was Neues, ich bin müde am Abend, meine Frau will ins Kino, Film mit Alexander, ich halte ihn für einen Schnösel, aber die Frauen? Leben schon im Sperma? das Ei? (TG 64/PG 52-53)

This stream of consciousness describes a threshold in which the rapid acceleration of science threatens to become overwhelming. The trend to abstraction and the technologies of modern science are accompanied by an increasing lack of understanding. Frahm wonders where life begins, again recalling Emilia's earlier thought on the "gene" in the ovum. This reflection questions the smallest units of life in a post-atomic world. For the doctor, the abstraction of life into formulas ("a body isn't a body any more") is also associated with aesthetic abstraction, which he feels inadequately educated to understand. Frahm also thinks about how his patients, who were once prescribed medicinal teas in generations past, now want "chemical formulas" that no one can pronounce or understand, and the newest technologies which they read about in glossy magazines: "heute Ultraschall morgen was mit Atomspaltung..." (TG 65/PG 53-54). With the mention of nuclear fission, the advances of science are thus here also connected to the potentially dangerous consequences of scientific advancement. This collage of thought juxtaposes memories, feelings of self-doubt, impressions, and thoughts on the nature of life and medical ethics.

The allusion to escapist film, such as those that the doctor's wife enjoys, reminds readers that there are two options in regards to the past which has been inherited: forgetting or remembering. In Dr. Frahm's "stream" of interiority, the Nazi past is also

continually present. In this case, the doctor is haunted by the memory of Nazi medical crimes as an admonition of medical ethics. To Frahm, Carla's situation brings to mind headlines from Nazi-era propaganda for "racial purity": "VERNEGERUNG, Kriegspropaganda im Völkischen Beobachter, RASSENVERRAT" (TG 65/PG 54). Koeppen's characters often find themselves between "Zeitbewusstsein" and "Zeitvergessenheit," as Lucia Capano puts it.³¹ All three of Koeppen's postwar novels (*Tauben im Gras*, *Das Treibhaus*, *Tod in Rom*) stage interactions between the recent past and the present. Although the novel refrains from moralizing, it performs "work against forgetting," what Dagmar Barnouw calls "Koeppen's anamnesis": "This relation between different strata of time and memory serves as a metaphor for the act of anamnesis which will have to be persistent and include, against the irritation, even the pain of actors in a present, the 'unbewältigte Vergangenheit.'" ³² I argue that the use of microscopic and atomic models allows Koeppen to highlight the tensions of time and memory in postwar society. The use of atomic imagery in the novel reminds readers of both the invisible and complex nature of the presence of the past.

In addition to Emilia and Dr. Frahm, it is above all the character of Schnakenbach who represents a worldview constructed from the perspective of the chemical, scientific, and subatomic. Schnakenbach, a relatively minor yet highly symbolic character, mentioned in only seven episodes, is described as constantly tired and sleepy. As a trained chemist, he sees the world as "microphysical," made of component parts and exploding infinitely in space (TG 204/PG 187). Schnakenbach thinks about himself and

³¹ Lucia Perrone Capano, "Narrative Einzeitlichungen: Wolfgang Koeppen's *Tauben im Gras*," in *Figurationen des Temporalen: poetische, philosophische und mediale Reflexionen über Zeit*, ed. Claudia Öhlschläger (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2013), 112.

³² Barnouw, "Melancholy and Enchantment: Wolfgang Koeppen's Anamnesis," 34. Emphasis in original.

others in terms of an atomic model: “der Anfang und das Ende...Mitte und Kreis ...ein Mikrokosmos für sich mit Atomsonnen und Trabanten” (TG 204/PG 187). This description also corresponds to the structure of the decentralized novel, as Koeppen plays with the idea of infinity in each character’s thoughts, making each character “Mitte und Kreis.” Each shift to interior monologue reveals the infinite possibilities for further exploring time and space, as well as the networks and connections between individuals.

During Edwin’s lecture near the end of the novel, Schnakenbach is the first to fall asleep. For an extended passage, we enter Schnakenbach’s thoughts and meditations on his world view (*Weltbild*), which is “unmenschlich” and “völlig abstrakt,” rather than the “Weltbild der klassischen Physik, vermittelt, in der alles schön kausalgesetzlich zugeht” (TG 203/PG 186). Schnakenbach’s train of thought—naming the scientists who have reshaped his world-view such as Einstein, Planck, de Broglie, and Schrödinger—is happening synchronously with Edwin’s speech—which names Homer, Virgil, Dante, Goethe, Augustine, Anselm, Thomas, Pascal, Kierkegaard—and which is not heard by the sleepy and distracted audience. While Edwin is trying to rescue the Western European humanist tradition, Schnakenbach calls it into question: “er fand, daß das ihm überlieferte Weltbild nicht mehr stimmte” (TG 203/PG 186). This passage juxtaposes the “greats” of Western humanism with the Nobel laureates and theoretical physicists of modern science, who uncovered other, new ways of seeing the world—in particles, waves, light, space, and time. The fact that hardly anyone is really listening to Edwin suggests that no one is interested in this world view any longer, namely that of Western humanism. The alternative, an answer provided by modern science, however, is also called into question due to the threat of atomic war which pervades the text.

Towards the very end of the novel, Schnakenbach continues his meditations on human existence abstracted to “tiny dots,” as he tells his psychologist, Dr. Behude:

Eine Unendlichkeit! Aber eine Unendlichkeit zusammengesetzt aus allergeringsten Endlichkeiten, das ist die Welt. Unser Körper, unsere Gestalt, das, von dem wir denken, daß wir es sind, das sind nur lauter Pünktchen, kleine allergeringste Pünktchen. Aber die Pünktchen, die haben es in sich: das sind Kraftstationen, allergeringste Kraftstationen von allergrößter Kraft. Alles kann explodieren! Aber die Milliarden Kraftstationen sind für den kleinsten Augenblick, für unser Leben, wie Sand in diese Form geweht, die wir unser Ich nennen. Ich könnte Ihnen die Formel aufzeichnen. (TG 215/PG 198)

These words, uttered by a man drunk with sleepiness, come close to a model for the structure of Koeppen’s novel, and what it suggests about the micro-level of the characters in postwar society, volatile atoms, made up of “tiny dots.” The self is nothing but its physical components (atoms), and yet still a source of energy. Although the other characters seem to think Schnakenbach is crazy, Schnakenbach, like the poet Edwin whom everyone respects and admires, also reflects on central questions of the nature of human existence in the postwar world. Somewhat paradoxically, this passage seems to offer the answer to the earlier question “what is life?”—Schnakenbach tells the doctor that he has a “formula” for it. Dr. Behude, hearing Schnakenbach’s theories, cannot decide if it is crazy or correct: “wir kennen uns weder im Kleinen noch im Großen aus, wir sind gar nicht mehr zu Hause in dieser Welt, die Schnakenbach mir in einer Formel deuten will, wußte Edwin eine Deutung? Er wußte keine, sein Vortrag ließ mich kalt” (TG 215/PG 198). The psychologist expresses a position of postwar skepticism, that postwar individuals know less than before, and have also lost a sense of home. Both the formula Schnakenbach offers and the classical humanism represented by Edwin seem inadequate.

Pigeons in the Ruins

Along with imagery of the atomic and microscopic, Koeppen's novel proposes another model of spatiality and perspective, alluded to in the title and in the epigraph, a line by Gertrude Stein: "pigeons on the grass alas" (quoted in English in the epigraph).³³ The perspective of birds on the grass—rather than flying in the air—refers to a limited, disoriented perspective.³⁴ The view from above, or the "Vogelperspektive," is only granted to a few characters, namely the Allied soldiers Odysseus Cotton and Richard Kirsch.³⁵ Yet, as it turns out, even this high-angle view does not provide a satisfying outlook. In this section, I look more closely at scenes with the American characters to show how Koeppen stages the question of perspective, and subverts the possibility for an omniscient, high-angle gaze. I argue that this is a crucial aspect of Koeppen's "Zeitroman": The microcosmic is juxtaposed with a high-angle view no one really achieves. In addition, I want to suggest that the highly visual nature of Koeppen's text, engaging with visual material from the postwar period such as ruin photographs, is a crucial aspect of the novel's time-layering.

Koeppen's novel contains multiple scenes which note the condition of the city in ruins and the position of both the defeated and the victorious Allies in this space. In

³³ The epigraph is taken from Stein's libretto for the opera "Four Saints in Three Acts." Additionally, Koeppen may have taken the epigraph from the article in *LIFE* magazine which he mentions, which also uses this line from Stein in the brief introduction to the author: "Gertrude Stein, whose poetry ("Pigeons on the grass alas.") and prose have been a source of both inspiration and bafflement to three generations of U.S. writers, lived in France throughout the German occupation. At *LIFE*'s suggestion she undertook the trip through Germany she describes here. Stein admirers will be glad to see that both her literary style and her shrewd insight have survived the war undamaged." Gertrude Stein, "'Off We All Went to See Germany': Germans Should Learn to Be Disobedient and GIs Should Not Like Them No They Shouldn't," *LIFE*, 6 August 1945, 54. Koeppen references this article in a later essay on Gertrude Stein.

³⁴ Stein's libretto also contains the image of a "magpie in the sky," contrasting the "pigeons on the grass alas" with the "magpie in the sky."

³⁵ In a way, this parallels the mundane fact that the Allies were the only ones to gain this perspective from above, as exemplified by visual sources such as Billy Wilder's *A Foreign Affair*, which begins with an aerial view of Berlin, or Margaret Bourke-White's aerial photography of the destruction of German cities for *LIFE* magazine.

drawing attention to the ruined city, and presenting multiple subject positions, Koeppen draws attention to the interrelated histories at play in the same space and time. For example, one scene presents a bus tour with a group of American schoolteachers touring the defeated city. A disembodied voice describes the scene outside the bus window: “Das Zentrum, das Sie hier sehen, war vollständig zerstört. Fünf Jahre Aufbau demokratischer Verwaltung und Verständnis der Alliierten machten die Stadt wieder zum blühenden Mittelpunkt des Handels und des Gewerbes” (TG 50/PG 39). The pointing gesture tells the teachers of the ruin they *would have seen* five years ago, challenging them to imagine this destruction. Now, in part due to the efforts of the Allies, the voice propagandizes, these ruins are no longer visible in the city center. The text thus enacts a kind of “before and after” view of the ruins and the reconstructed city, creating a narrative of progress and productivity related to the Allied (American) presence in Germany.

This scene of victors touring the defeated city is also depicted in Billy Wilder’s 1948 film *A Foreign Affair*, with American Congressional representatives touring Berlin. Wilder used documentary footage to show iconic ruins such as the Reichstag, the Brandenburg Gate, the Wilhelmstraße, the Reich Chancellory, and the half-topped Zoo bunker in the Tiergarten. Johannes von Moltke notes how “the traveling shots of ruins in rear projection lend aesthetic weight to the comedic acting and plot.”³⁶ The camera directs our eyes to these historic images of famous and infamous sites (See Figure 3.1). I would like to also point out that three competing views are presented in this scene of the ruin tour: Colonel Plummer, who is accustomed to the ruins, seems unfazed by the monumental destruction, turning away from the view towards his audience and cracking

³⁶ Johannes von Moltke, “Ruin Cinema,” in *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle, *Politics, History, and Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

jokes while pointing out the sites. While the male representatives complacently and silently take in the sights of destruction (one man even films), Phoebe Frost—the only



Figure 3.1: American representatives tour the ruins of Berlin (Billy Wilder, *A Foreign Affair*, 1948)

woman present—becomes increasingly scandalized. The camera shows us what *she* sees in the ruins: the relations between American soldiers and German *Fräuleins*. Phoebe’s gaze (and her exaggerated expression of shock) interrupts the victory tour and the comedy takes over the images of ruins in the background. Rather than just focus on the ruined façades, Phoebe’s gaze exposes the problems of the postwar present, and what she sees as moral ruination in the failure of the non-fraternization rule.

In *Pigeons on the Grass*, the presence of the American schoolteachers also reveals what is visible or invisible to the outsiders. The narrator tells us of the teachers’ tour group, “Sie sahen nicht viel. Sie sahen so wenig vom Leben dieser Stadt, als die Stadt vom Leben der Lehrerinnen sah. Nichts” (TG 165/PG 150). Koeppen presents the teachers’ thoughts to highlight this divide between the German locals and the foreign visitors. The schoolteachers include naive 21-year-old Kay, who searches for an ideal of Romantic Germany, hoping to meet German *Dichter und Denker*; 38-year-old Katharine

Wescott, a self-confident yet pedantic feminist who takes extensive notes on everything; and 45-year-old Mildred Burnett, who feels stuck between the two other women, and feels she does not “see anything” on such trips. If this is a victory tour, only Katharine fits the role, viewing the city to “possess” it, as she thinks about how she can use this experience in teaching: “es ist eine historische Stunde, Amerika in Deutschland, die *stars and stripes* über Europa, ich habe es mir angesehen, ich habe es erlebt” (TG 51/PG 40). Although she calls the experience “historic” and is proud that she was present, the text frames her claim to “experience” in an ironic tone: merely seeing the sights doesn’t allow the teachers to truly see or experience much of Germany at all.

The perspective of “pigeons on the grass” is twice thematized directly by the characters. In the first instance, the group of schoolteachers, now on a historical walking tour, passes a main square (clearly Munich’s Königsplatz, “als Ehrenhain des Nationalsozialismus geplant”).³⁷ Miss Burnett takes note of the birds and the narrative shifts into interior monologue as she reflects on the random and coincidental nature of human history.

Miß Burnett dachte “wir verstehen nicht mehr als die Vögel von dem was die Wescott quatscht, die Vögel sind zufällig hier, wir sind zufällig hier, und vielleicht waren auch die Nazis nur zufällig hier, Hitler war ein Zufall, seine Politik war ein grausamer und dummer Zufall, vielleicht ist die Welt ein grausamer und dummer Zufall Gottes, keiner weiß warum wir hier sind, die Vögel werden wieder auffliegen und wir werden weitergehen [...]” (TG 165-166/PG 151)

³⁷ Königsplatz was redesigned during the Third Reich to be a central square for Nazi rallies. The Platz contained an “Ehrentempel,” no longer standing, and a “Führerbau” and “Verwaltungsbau,” both repurposed today. See images in Albert Speer, *Neue deutsche Baukunst* (Prag; Amsterdam: Volk und Reich Verlag, 1943). The “Führerbau” became the Amerika-Haus for several years. It is notable that Koeppen stages the novel on these palimpsestuous sites, embodying the layers of history in the city and its architecture. See also photographs in Karl Fiehler, *München baut auf: ein Tatsachen- und Bildbericht über den nationalsozialistischen Aufbau in der Hauptstadt der Bewegung* (München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, F. Eher, 1935).

In a style that also directly references Gertrude Stein's repetitive prose, the narrative again raises questions about order and disorder, chaos and chance, and the position of "pigeons on the grass alas." Miss Burnett's thoughts—in a moment of extended presence—question the telos of history, and whether world existence is coincidental (*Zufall*). The deictic "hier" is ambiguous, as it could signify the Nazis being "here," in Germany, or having been "here," in history at all. Koeppen here seems to ironize a fatalistic perspective in which history could have easily been rewritten another way. Miss Wescott, pausing her historical tour, turns and asks what is wrong, as her colleague appears to be daydreaming.

"Ich schau' mir nur die Vögel an," sagte Miß Burnett. "Seit wann interessieren Sie sich für Vögel?" fragte Miß Wescott. "Ich interessiere mich für uns," sagte Miß Burnett. "Das sind Spatzen," sagte Miß Wescott, "gewöhnliche Spatzen. Achten Sie lieber auf die Weltgeschichte." – "Das ist dasselbe," sagte Miß Burnett, "es spielt sich alles unter Spatzen ab. Auch Sie sind nur ein Spatz, liebe Wescott, und unser Spätzchen, die Kay, fällt grade aus dem Nest."- "Ich verstehe Sie nicht," sagte Miß Wescott spitz, "ich bin kein Vogel." (TG 166/PG 151)

Miss Wescott cannot understand her colleague's comments, which she understands literally, retorting "ich bin kein Vogel." Miss Burnett, however, is comparing the ordinariness of sparrows to their own place in the larger scheme of world history. To her, sparrows *are* world history, the ordinary and mundane, and they cannot know whether they are more than that.

The schoolteachers later find themselves—along with many of the other characters—at a public talk at the Amerika-Haus, given by the poet Edwin. Edwin—whose character bears resemblance to T.S. Eliot (who notably gave a talk in Munich in 1948)—planned to speak on *Geist* in the Western humanist tradition—"die Ewigkeit des

Geistes, die unvergängliche Seele des Abendlandes” (TG 45/PG 34).³⁸ While listening to the speech, Miss Wescott, who has been busy taking notes, stops writing, confused, as she recognizes parallels between the speech and her colleague’s earlier comments about birds and the precariousness of human existence:

Wie Tauben im Gras, sagte Edwin, die Stein zitierend, und so war doch etwas von ihr Geschriebenes bei ihm haftengeblieben, doch dachte er weniger an Tauben im Gras als an Tauben auf dem Markusplatz in Venedig, wie Tauben im Gras betrachteten gewisse Zivilisationsgeister die Menschen, indem sie sich bemühten, das Sinnlose und scheinbar Zufällige der menschlichen Existenz bloßzustellen, den Menschen frei von Gott zu schildern, um ihn dann frei im Nichts flattern zu lassen, sinnlos, wertlos, frei und von Schlingen bedroht, dem Metzger preisgegeben, aber stolz auf die eingebilddete, zu nichts als Elend führende Freiheit von Gott und göttlicher Herkunft. Und dabei, sagte Edwin, kenne doch schon jede Taube ihren Schlag und sei jeder Vogel in Gottes Hand. (TG 207/PG 190)

With Edwin’s mention of certain modern minds (*Zivilisationsgeister*) who see human existence as “senseless” and “apparently coincidental,” this passage alludes to French existentialism, as well as to a longer tradition opposing “culture” and “civilization.”³⁹

Edwin, whose program is to save (Christian) Western humanism, transforms Gertrude Stein’s pigeon into a Godly dove.⁴⁰ (This transformation is only possible in the German, as *Taube* can signify both “pigeon” and “dove.”) At this point in the lecture, Miss

³⁸ Eliot’s talk in Munich in 1948 was entitled “Die Idee einer europäischen Gesellschaft,” and is listed in a retrospective brochure about the Amerika-Haus in Munich alongside other talks relating to the “Zusammenschluss des Westens,” with topics on European integration and peace. *10 Jahre Amerika-Haus München*, (München, 1956). This lecture was also given in Hamburg in 1949, and seems to be unpublished in English. According to Manju Jain, it was published in German translation in *Hamburger Akademische Rundschau*, 3, 11/12 (1950), see Manju Jain, *T.S. Eliot and American Philosophy: the Harvard Years* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 329. Note also, whereas many postwar texts such as Meinecke’s *Die deutsche Katastrophe* try to preserve the heritage of German culture and “Geist,” Koeppen seems to be drawing critical attention to this revival.

³⁹ Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation. Erster Band. Wandlungen des Verhaltens in den weltlichen Oberschichten des Abendlandes*, ed. Heike Hammer, vol. 3.1, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997). Thomas Mann’s *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* also builds on this dichotomy.

⁴⁰ In 1948, the German periodical *Der Monat* (affiliated with the Congress for Cultural Freedom) published a piece on Eliot on the occasion of his Nobel Prize. The author writes of Eliot’s foresight in recognizing the collapse of civilization and an age which believed in reason and progress. Roditi, “T.S. Eliot: Persönlichkeit und Werk.”

Wescott stops writing, confused. “Sie war keine Taube oder sonst ein Vogel. Sie war ein Mensch, eine Lehrerin, sie hatte ein Amt, auf das sie sich vorbereitet hatte und immer wieder vorbereitete, sie hatte Pflichten, und sie suchte sie zu erfüllen” (TG 207-208/PG 191). Miss Wescott seems confused about her purpose and meaning, if both her colleague and this great poet compare human existence to birds, seemingly placing emphasis on random chance. The perspective of “pigeons on the grass” of the novel’s title becomes a possibility for reflecting on meaningfulness and coincidence, as well as the obstructed and grounded perspective of the characters who are like “ordinary sparrows.”

The Aerial View

In contrast to the perspective of “pigeons on the grass,” Koeppen’s novel twice stages a high-angle view over the city from the subject position of the Americans: first, with a young American Air Force pilot Richard, and second, with a black American soldier named Odysseus.⁴¹ As opposed to the disorienting perspective from within the ruins, one might imagine that the view from above creates a sense of order and orientation. This, however, is not the case. Instead, the view from above creates a space for the free play of the imagination and memory, interweaving past, present, and future.

In the postwar period, the hegemonic, topographical view from above was primarily that of the Allied victors. In April 1945, *LIFE* magazine published a multi-page spread entitled “The Battered Face of Germany,” with aerial photographs of the destruction taken by Margaret Bourke-White, giving viewers the perspective of the

⁴¹ In her work on the space of the city in the novel, Christl Brink-Friederici strangely omits the mention of an aerial view, when discussing the vertical and horizontal topography of the city. Christl Brink-Friederici, *Wolfgang Koeppen: die Stadt als Pandämonium* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990), 85.

bombers.⁴² “The heaviest destruction was wreaked on the centers of large German cities,” the article states, “which are today only dunes of rubble surrounded by gaunt windowless walls.”⁴³ The large photographs are entitled “CITIES,” “SMALL TOWN,” “TRANSPORT,” and “INDUSTRY” and are accompanied by descriptive captions that relay the success of the bombing campaign by emphasizing the strategic importance of the targets. “Mainz from the air sometimes looks like the excavated ruins of an earlier civilization, sometimes like the watered-down fragments of children’s sand castles,” resulting in a “city wasteland” yet “light” civilian casualties.⁴⁴ This caption clearly represents the position of the victors, demonstrating technological and military prowess, but also a position of moral high ground. Through the images in magazines as well as newsreels, ordinary Americans gained access to the aerial view over defeated Germany.

In August 1945, *LIFE* published an article featuring Gertrude Stein and her travels to Germany—a fact which impressed Koeppen, and which seems to have provided source material for *Tauben im Gras*. In a later radio essay, he noted his surprise that a poet would be granted such preferential treatment. “niemals war oder wird anzunehmen sein, daß ein vorübergehend erfolgreicher deutscher General etwa Else Lasker-Schüler in seinen Bomber geladen hätte, um ihr die traurige Landschaft seines Sieges zu zeigen.”⁴⁵ The article in *LIFE*, written by Gertrude Stein, features a photo taken from within the plane, showing Stein and Alice Toklas looking out the plane window, down to Germany (Figure 3.2).

⁴² See also her book, Margaret Bourke-White, “*Dear Fatherland, Rest Quietly*”; *A Report on the Collapse of Hitler’s “Thousand years”* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946).

⁴³ Bourke-White, “The Battered Face of Germany,” *LIFE*, 4 June 1945.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Koeppen later remarked astonishment that an American poet would be given such privileged treatment, and some of this surprise is evident in the portrayal of the American schoolteachers in *Tauben im Gras*. Koeppen, “Über Gertrude Steins *Autobiographie der Alice B. Toklas*,” 21.



Figure 3.2: Gertrude Stein (right) sees the Rhine from the air (1945)

As Stein writes in the article, describing their royal treatment by the American Army, “everywhere they gave us all the transport we wanted. I like that word transport, we were transported in every sense of the word.”⁴⁶ The language of the article also focuses on the actions of looking and seeing. Stein observes how during her tour, the Germans turned away from the sight of the Americans, and seemed especially disturbed to see civilian women.

I began to realize that they were all looking at Miss Toklas and myself and that some went quite pale and others looked furious. First I was puzzled and then I realized that we were probably the very first ordinary civilian women with American soldiers, not looking official just looking like American women with a group of talking soldiers, and they realized for the first time that there were going to be thousands of civilians coming there just to look as we were looking. After all Germans believe in an army, an army is an army even if it is a conquering army but civilians, just simple civilians, oh dear.⁴⁷

Stein and Toklas saw the Rhine from above, as well as Frankfurt, Cologne (“a whole spread out city without a roof”⁴⁸), and Coblenz, before continuing on to Salzburg and Berchtesgaden, and then Heidelberg, Munich and Nuremberg. Of the view from above,

⁴⁶ Stein, ““Off We All Went to See Germany’: Germans Should Learn to Be Disobedient and GIs Should Not Like Them No They Shouldn’t,” 54.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 56.

Stein wrote: “One would suppose that every ruined town would look like any other ruined town but it does not.” Munich looked “not so much ruined as dilapidated, it looked completely dilapidated, as if in a few years it would just sort of not exist” and Nuremberg looked “more nonexistent.”⁴⁹ This article clearly describes the presence of Americans—even civilian women—in Germany, looking at the Germans. In his own rewriting of such encounters in his novel, Koeppen makes it clear that the American schoolteachers don’t “see much.”

In *Tauben im Gras*, Koeppen also takes his readers into a plane above Germany, showing not the incredible devastation, but instead staging a moment of reflection on time and history. The aerial view is illustrated through the character of 18-year-old Air Force pilot Richard Kirsch, whose father Wilhelm emigrated from Germany to Columbus, Ohio before the war. Richard’s position explores the intersection of time and space first from the position of the Allies above Germany, and then later from the ground, with the more difficult and concrete realities of the obstructed and “grounded” view.⁵⁰ As Richard is first introduced, we enter his thoughts *in medias res*, thoughts about how he should feel about “them,” the Germans, from whom he feels emotionally, spatially, and temporally removed. We learn that he is literally in a position “above” Germany, from the airplane: “Die dort unten wohnten, beschäftigten Richard nicht mehr als andere alte Völker: oberflächlich” (TG 38/PG 27). As this fragment continues, the metaphor of being “above” is extended further, as he is not only young and a bit naively condescending (*herablassend*), but he is also literally looking down on the Germans: “[er] blickte herab,

⁴⁹ Ibid., 57.

⁵⁰ Billy Wilder makes a similar move, beginning his film *A Foreign Affair* in the air with an ironic citation of Leni Riefenstahl’s view over Nuremberg, and then landing in the ruined city, with the tour of the ruins mentioned above.

blickte herab auf sie in aller Tatsächlichkeit, herab auf ihre Länder, ihre Könige, ihre Grenzen...” (TG 39/PG 28). The abstractions and fairy-tale language do not map onto what is actually below him—as it is nighttime and foggy—but he imagines the space below through child-like images. This turns out to be a view of Germany as a land of the past, shaped by his father’s memories and stories and constructed from history books.⁵¹

As Helmut Puff writes in his work on “rubble models” of destroyed German cities, the position of the viewer above the model allows for a pleasurable view at the same time that the model “function[s] as a complex repository of reflections and emotions, sites where one can invoke memories of a lost past, the experience of destruction, and a future that never came to be.”⁵² This view of ruin models is similar to the aerial perspective above the ruins of Germany, in the way that it abstracts the space below, “turning [urban spaces] into a realm of pure representation.”⁵³ Unlike the ruin model, however, the view from the airplane does not allow the viewer complete visual privilege, because he cannot move in and out and around the city. Instead, the view below is flattened. Furthermore, although Puff notes that the model becomes a site of emotion and memory, this requires that viewers have an emotional attachment to the space represented. For Richard, the young American who has no personal memories within the site of the ruins, the flyover of Germany is unemotional and abstract. In fact, he prides

⁵¹ This also has parallels to the character of Ezra, a child whose ideas about Germany are shaped by the language of fairy tales. He grew up in the US with a German mother who was forced to leave Berlin because of her Jewish heritage.

⁵² Helmut Puff, “Ruins as Models: Displaying Destruction in Postwar Germany,” in *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 255.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 256. For an interesting treatment of the aerial view in Le Corbusier, see Boyer, who notes that the aerial view is the “polar opposite to the microscope, which visually explored the realm of the infinitely small, the aerial view revealed space so vast that its comprehension could not be absorbed in a single glance.” M. Christine Boyer, “Aviation and the Aerial View: Le Corbusier’s Spatial Transformations in the 1930s and 1940s,” *diacritics*, 33, no. 3/4 (2003): 100.

himself as being emotionless, “frei von Feindschaft und Vorurteilen, nicht Haß und Verachtung belasteten ihn” (TG 38/PG 28).

This scene in the fog above Germany shifts between Richard’s interior monologue and the narrator’s voice. The narrator tells us that history is two things: reified as numbers in books (a “torture” to schoolchildren), but also the ever-shifting present, something still in the process of being formed. “Geschichte war Vergangenheit, die Welt von gestern, Jahreszahlen in Büchern, eine Kindermarter, jeder Tag aber bildete auch wieder Geschichte, neue Geschichte, Geschichte im Präsens, und das bedeutete Dabeisein, Werden, Wachsen, Handeln und Fliegen” (TG 39/PG 28). Thus Richard’s position—and the abstraction enabled by the view from above—not only brings about a reflection on Germany as an “old” country, and a place of history, but his present tense indicates unwritten history (“neue Geschichte,” “Geschichte im Präsens”). History in the present is action, a process of becoming, without an orientation: “Man wußte nicht immer, wohin man flog.” The future is still in the realm of the conditional, “Erst morgen würde alles seinen historischen Namen erhalten, mit dem Namen seinen Sinn, würde echte Geschichte werden, in Schulbüchern altern, und dieser Tag, dies Heute, dieser Morgen würde einst für ihn ‘meine Jugend’ sein” (TG 39/PG 28). Richard’s unspoken thoughts explore the planes of time which intersect at this conjuncture—past, present, and future, as well as a future past.

The space in the air above Germany creates a site for imagining alternate histories—hypothetical futures past. Richard wonders in which future war he may be the one dropping bombs:

Er dachte “wenn ich etwas älter wäre, vierundzwanzig vielleicht statt achtzehn, dann hätte ich auch mit achtzehn Jahren hier fliegen, hier zerstören und hier

sterben können, wir hätten Bomben gebracht, wir hätten Bomben geworfen, wir hätten einen Weihnachtsbaum angezündet, wir hätten einen Teppich ausgelegt, wir wären ihr Tod gewesen, wir wären vor ihren Scheinwerfern in den Himmel getaucht, wo wird das einmal sein? wo werde ich ausüben, was ich lerne? wo werde ich Bomben werfen? wen werde ich bombardieren? hier? diese? weiter vor? andere? weiter zurück? wieder andere?" (TG 40/PG 29)

Richard's thoughts move from the subjunctive (wenn ich älter wäre), to future tense questions (wo werde ich?). As is common in diary writing, this passage is full of question marks, as Richard wonders about future wars and the role he will play in these future wars. Continuing this contrary-to-fact thinking, he also wonders about Wilhelm, his (absent) father, who emigrated from Germany to the United States. If he *had stayed* he might *have been* a general in Hitler's army, hanged by the Allies as a war criminal:

"Wilhelm Kirsch wäre ein toter Held oder ein General geworden" (TG 118/PG 106).

Richard and his father represent two crossing paths—Wilhelm becomes a pacifist and his son becomes a soldier in the US Army. This layering of temporal strata and use of the subjunctive to imagine other outcomes unravels history as linear or teleological, instead raising questions about the relational networks of historical time—between generations but also between nations.

Later in the novel, after Richard has landed, he walks through the city and the theme of visibility is again developed as a metaphor, as the grounded vantage point further complicates his attempt to conceive of "the Germans." He is at first disappointed by the close-up view of the destruction, as it does not compare with the "ungeheure Verwüstungen" of the photos he had seen soon after German defeat, "Aufnahmen, die er als Knabe neugierig betrachtet und über die sein Vater geweint hatte" (TG 117/PG 105). Koeppen contrasts the perspective of the curious child, who grew up American, and the father, who has personal memories of Germany and who mourns the ruination.

Koeppen's citation of these photographic images accentuates the visual dimension of the text, drawing attention to the act of looking at Germany. Koeppen contrasts the aerial view with the more complex view from within the city.

Von der Höhe, vom Flugzeug sah alles einfacher, flächiger aus, man dachte in weiten Räumen, dachte geographisch, geopolitisch, unmenschlich, zog Fronten durch Erdteile wie einen Bleistiftstrich über eine Landkarte, doch unten in der Straße, unter den Menschen, die alle etwas Albernes und Erschreckendes hatten, wie es Richard schien, lebten sie in einem kranken Ungleichmaß zwischen Trägheit und Hetze, in ihrer Gesamtheit sahen sie arm, im einzelnen doch wieder reich aus, Richard hatte das Gefühl, daß hier Verschiedenerlei nicht stimme, in der ganzen Konzeption nicht stimme, und daß diese Menschen für ihn undurchschaubar waren. (TG 118/PG 105-106)

The Germans remain untransparent to Richard, in the sense that he cannot comprehend them (*undurchschaubar*), like the scenes with the schoolteachers, in which the Americans cannot *see* Germany. He has a feeling of dissonance while walking through the streets, that his ideas about Germany and the Germans do not map onto the reality of Germany. The kind of abstract and imaginative thinking which the airplane allowed, the position "above," is no longer possible. He cannot reconcile the two modes of vision, shifting between the whole (*Gesamtheit*) and the particulars (*im einzelnen*). This is also a shift from the aerial view, which is map-like, de-populated and often militarized. Koeppen thus exposes the aerial view as inadequate, offering a correction to Richard's preconceived fairytale images of Germany through encounters on the ground.

In Richard's first encounter with Germans, he seeks out a distant relative, Frau Behrend, who is not at home. He speaks with a young woman who "talks down" to him, quite literally as she stands haughtily a few steps above him—a reversal from his earlier position "above" Germany, looking down. This reversal accentuates his new, limited perspective, further upsetting his initial confidence. He is sent to the grocer and an

exchange ensues full of confusion. The gossipy grocer seeks common (racial) ground with Richard, which – as it turns out – they do not have. In what becomes an exaggerated (and comical, to the reader) misunderstanding, Richard thinks that the elderly Frau Behrend is pregnant with the child of a black soldier, and that she perhaps had to prostitute herself for bread. The shift from the aerial view—which enables the free play of the imagination—to the close-up, reveals complexity and confusion. Thus, although Richard begins with a view from above Germany in the fog, his view is and remains obscured—the Germans remain incomprehensible (*undurchschaubar*).

The second scene in the novel that presents a high-angle view also offers reflections on time and history. In this scene, the black American soldier Odysseus Cotton, and his porter, the elderly German civilian Josef, climb a church tower and look out over the ruined city. This episode engages with ruin photography and scenarios of ruin gazing, exposing layers of history visible in the city, but also in the imaginations of the characters. Odysseus and Josef are intertwined throughout the novel—the only characters who are paired in nearly every segment. Odysseus’s name alludes not only to Homer’s *Odyssey*, but also to James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. This is only the most obvious of Koeppen’s many allusions to myth in the novel. As Hans-Ulrich Treichel argues, Koeppen’s use of myth contains two impulses:

Zum einen führt er die Funktion des Mythos ad absurdum, indem er Unbekanntes an die Stelle von Unbekanntem und Unverständliches an die Stelle von Unverständlichem setzt, und zum anderen, indem er die Welt im Spiel mit Namen und Masken mit mythischer Bedeutung gleichsam überbevölkert, um letztlich ihre Entleerung zu beglaubigen.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Hans-Ulrich Treichel, *Fragment ohne Ende: Eine Studie über Wolfgang Koeppen* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1984), 113-14.

In this way, Koeppen works against mythic thinking by taking apart the Odysseus myth and creating something new in his rewriting.

In Koeppen's novel, the foreign traveler Odysseus has a rather uneventful journey through Munich until the very end, when he is robbed and pursued by a beer hall mob. It is the body of Odysseus itself—in its black Americanness—that brings additional layers of history to the story: “vergessen das Sklavenschiff, ewig das Brandmal ins Fleisch gesengt, Afrika, verlorene Erde, Dickicht der Wälder” (TG 27/PG 17). Through these associations, Koeppen creates a web of time and meaning, connecting this man to the American South, as well as to the global history of slavery and racial inequality in the United States and Germany.⁵⁵ Earlier, in a passage with the black soldier Washington Price, the persecution of Jews is juxtaposed with segregation in the US: “Für Juden verboten” and “Für Schwarze verboten,” and Washington dreams of opening a café in which no one is unwelcome (TG 62). The text thus creates a web with these various layers of history. Odysseus and Josef are always accompanied by music emanating from the portable radio Odysseus carries with him. Koeppen repeatedly draws attention to this diegetic sound, which is often blues or jazz, surrounding Odysseus like a protective “tent.” The snippets of song lyrics woven into the text, “Night-and-day,” “Bahama Joe,” “Candy, I call my sugar candy” remind us of this ever-present music, as well as the foreignness, modernness, and blackness of Odysseus.

⁵⁵ Monika Albrecht has argued for reading *Tauben im Gras* as a postcolonial novel, unique in its treatment of “whiteness” as well as marked categories of race. Albrecht points out that critics who have called Koeppen's work racist do not distinguish between modes of narration (the voice of the narrator or character-focalized voice) and Koeppen's differentiated insights on racism in the postwar context. Monika Albrecht, “Europa ist nicht die Welt.” (Post)Kolonialismus in Literatur und Geschichte der westdeutschen Nachkriegszeit (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2008); Albrecht, “Afrika hin und her? Spurensuche zur Fremdwahrnehmung in der deutschsprachigen Literatur der 1950er Jahre,” in *Interkulturelle Texturen. Afrika und Deutschland im Reflexionsmedium der Literatur*, ed. M. Moustapha Diallo and Dirk Göttsche (Bielefeld: Aisthesis 2003).

Josef, who offered his services at the train station and then follows Odysseus throughout the city, literally and figurally bears the weight of Germany's history. He is an elderly Münchner who fought in WWI and has since been working as a porter, carrying "Gepäck der Jahrzehnte" (TG 29/PG 19). He is burdened by his front experience from WWI, he lost his sons in WWII, and his wife was killed during an air raid. Now he is working for a black American soldier who reminds him of the black soldiers he killed on the battlefields in France. The relationship between Josef and Odysseus rewrites the master-slave encounter, with the German Josef serving as a porter to a black man from America. Josef's rudimentary and servile language (broken German, in an attempt to communicate) also highlights this reversal: "Sie, Mister, ich tragen" (TG 30/PG 20), and "Mister vielleicht Bier trinken wollen? Hier sehr gutes Bier" (TG 55/PG 44).

During their meandering through the city, Josef and Odysseus climb to the top of a church tower, at Odysseus's wish. This scene is also unusually silent, as the narrator alerts us: "Das Musikköffchen schwieg. Es war eine Sendepause eingetreten." In cinematic fashion, one can imagine how the din of the city and the radio stop jarringly, and one can only hear the wind. During this moment of solemnity, a description of the city shows us what the two men see: "Sie blickten über die Stadt, über die alten Dächer, über die romanischen, gotischen, barocken Kirchen, über die Ruinen der Kirchen, über die neuerrichteten Dachstühle, über die Wunden der Stadt, die Freiflächen der gesprengten Gebäude" (TG 111/PG 99). Here Koeppen evokes a common view in ruin photography of the time, such as in the well-known images of the photo books of Richard Peter in Dresden (*Dresden: eine Kamera klagt an*, 1949) and Hermann Claasen in

Cologne (*Gesang im Feuerofen*, 1947) which have become part of the “canon” of images published with historical accounts of the war’s end (Figures 3.3 and 3.4).⁵⁶



Figures 3.3 and 3.4: left Richard Peter, sen., “Blick vom Dresdner Rathausturm nach Süden”; right, a similar angle in Munich, photographer unknown

In Koeppen’s narration of this scene, there are several important differences from such ruin photographs. Koeppen offers a highly self-reflective moment of ruin-gazing, suggesting different modes of reading history. The different perspectives offered by Odysseus and Josef also reveal the possibilities for reading the layers of time—past, present, and future—in the landscape. First, it was Odysseus who wanted to climb the tower to get this view, which seems strange to Josef. When they are in the tower, the focalization shifts from the external position looking over the city to each character: first Josef and his thoughts, and then to Odysseus. Josef thinks back to the trenches of WWI—

⁵⁶ Jens Jäger, “Fotografie - Erinnerung - Identität: Die Trümmeraufnahmen aus deutschen Städten 1945,” in *Kriegsende 1945 in Deutschland*, ed. Jörg Hillmann and John Zimmermann (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2002). Richard Peter, *Dresden: eine Kamera klagt an* (Leipzig: Fotokino Verlag, 1980); Hermann Claasen, *Gesang im Feuerofen: Köln, Überreste einer alten deutschen Stadt*, ed. Josef Rick (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1979). As Derenthal points out, there are no photo books for the city of Munich as there are for Cologne and Dresden. Ludger Derenthal, *Bilder der Trümmer- und Aufbaujahre: Fotografie im sich teilenden Deutschland* (Marburg: Jonas, 1999), 74.

his only real journey and his encounter with black soldiers. Odysseus's gaze from above reaffirms his position in the present as a victor and conqueror. "Odysseus blickte zufrieden über die Stadt. Er stand oben. Sie lag unter ihm" (TG 112/PG 99-100).

The staging of this scene engages with the classical scenario of ruin gazing as Julia Hell describes it: "scenes in which the imperial subject contemplates the metropole of a mighty empire in ruins while thinking about the future of his own empire."⁵⁷ In the classical model, as Scipio looks over the ruins of Carthage, he realizes that victory contains a "dread foreboding" of doom, that all empires must end. (This perspective is presented earlier in the novel, as Kay daydreams about Romantic German poets, "wen haben sie jetzt? sitzen auf den Trümmern Karthagos und weinen" TG 52/PG 41). The tower scene, however, diverges from this melancholic gaze and its insights about imperial rise and fall. Odysseus does not think about empire, or about his status as an American citizen, but instead he sees the city in terms of natural time, part of a long history. Odysseus imagines Munich, a city of European civilization, grown over with the thick green of the jungle. This transformation happens before his eyes: "Natürlich, auch hier war Wald gewesen, dichter Urwald, grünes Gestrüpp, Odysseus sah gewaltige Dschungeln unter sich wachsen, Gestrüpp, Farne, Lianen überwucherten die Häuser; was gewesen war, konnte immer wieder kommen" (TG 112/PG 100). The reflection on the cycles of history ("was gewesen war, konnte wieder kommen") is a natural model of history, of rise and fall. This motif returns later in the novel, in the form of a Piranesi engraving hanging in Philipp and Emilia's apartment: "In einem dunklen Rahmen hing ein Stich des Piranesi, das Gemäuer des alten Aquäduktes in Rom, eine Mahnung an

⁵⁷ Julia Hell, "Imperial Ruin Gazers, or Why did Scipio Weep?," in *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 170.

Untergang und Verfall” (TG 211/PG 194). This black American Odysseus, however, does not sense a feeling of melancholy as an imperial subject, but rather a feeling of victory—and his reaction is to laugh in the face of the ruins: “Odysseus lachte, lachte sein breites König-Odysseus-Lachen” (TG 112/PG 100).

After gazing out onto the city, Odysseus writes his name on the tower, on a medieval demon figure: “Odysseus holte einen Rotstift aus seiner Jacke und schrieb quer über den Dämonenleib stolz seinen Namenszug: Odysseus Cotton aus Memphis-Tennessee, USA” (TG 112/PG 100). In staging this gesture, Koeppen cites a widespread practice of “victory graffiti” visible across Germany, as Allied soldiers left their names and hometowns on monuments and buildings across Germany. In this case, however, Odysseus ominously writes upon a demon figure. The detailed descriptions of the gothic figure and the added historical detail that it was used to keep the devil away is not knowledge available to Odysseus, who apparently does not know the history of the city.

The historical details make the gesture of writing his name even more transgressive, because Odysseus’s use of the building—as a blank slate for his name—violates the historical and cultural value of the tower. The narrator’s description of the view from the tower, looking over the ruins, exposes layers of time and history, whereas the American view reveals conquered space. To Odysseus, the stone surface symbolically represents an artifact of white culture (“eine Hauptstadt der weißen Leute” TG 112/PG 100), and as he writes his name and hometown on the stone of the German church, an act of the victors, he feels proud.⁵⁸ The redundant repetition of his name, over and over in this passage, serves to echo this gesture. Odysseus’s position is not only that of victor, but

⁵⁸ In Homer’s *Odyssey*, Odysseus, after defeating the Cyclops, turns back to yell that it was he, Odysseus who put out his eye. He later suffers the consequences of this act of pride. Koeppen’s repetition of Odysseus’ name perhaps draws on this scene as an intertext.

that of a black man who stands victorious over the ruins of a city and civilization he sees as “white.” The name Odysseus Cotton and the mention of a state in the American South evokes other layers of time and history: slavery and colonialism, the triangular trade of slaves and cotton goods between Africa, the New World, and Old Europe.⁵⁹ These repetitions unsettle the position of victory, and draw attention to a repeated violence that threatens to return again. Koeppen unsettles this scene of ruin-gazing, adding ambiguous laughter rather than melancholic contemplation.

Ultimately, Odysseus thinks about civilization in racial terms, and about a narrative of progress but also the potential for a cyclical return to nature. Stefan Eggert reads this scene as also conveying the potential for destruction embodied in the presence of the American character:

Zeitgeschichte, Naturgeschichte und Mythos verschmelzen hier gewissermaßen miteinander in einer prophetischen Vision, die mehrmals im Roman aufgerufen wird, denn die Amerikaner sind nicht nur Sieger in Deutschland, sondern auch Herren über die apokalyptischen Kräfte der Atombombe.⁶⁰

Eggert rightfully draws attention to the layers of history and myth in the scene, and the “prophetic vision,” yet he overlooks Odysseus’s crucial *blackness*, and the way his character is paired with that of Josef. As the city transforms before Odysseus’s eyes—overgrown by jungle—Josef later experiences a similar vision. During the mob scene, in which Odysseus’s money is stolen and he panics and hits Josef, Josef sees the scene unfold like a battle scene from WWI, in which Odysseus stands in for the black soldiers he killed in France. “Vor seinen alten Augen verwandelte sich das Bild seiner Kinderlandschaft noch einmal in ein europäisches Schlachtfeld mit außereuropäischen

⁵⁹ See also Albrecht, “Afrika hin und her? Spurensuche zur Fremdwahrnehmung in der deutschsprachigen Literatur der 1950er Jahre.”

⁶⁰ Stefan Eggert, *Wolfgang Koeppen* (Berlin: Colloquium im Wissenschaftsverlag Volker Spiess, 1998), 46.

Kämpfern, fremden Reisenden, die töten wollten oder getötet wurden” (TG 159/PG 145).

Before his death, his (mis)recognition of Odysseus comes as a comfort to him, as he feels that the balance sheet of guilt has been equalized, and he feels free of his burden of history.

In both the examples of Richard and Odysseus, the space above the city allows the characters to reflect on time and history, and possibilities for the future. Richard’s flight in the clouds above Germany and Odysseus’s laughter overlooking the ruined city both demonstrate the intersection of past, present, and future, and ruminate on cycles of history. These scenes emphasize not only history’s cycles and repetitions, and the violence of these cycles of war and destruction, but also the many possibilities for writing the history which is yet to come.

Conclusion

In his famous theses “On the Concept of History,” Walter Benjamin develops a concept of historical materialism constructed in opposition to historicism. Benjamin emphasizes history’s discontinuous nature, the relation of the present to history:

Auf den Begriff einer Gegenwart, die nicht Übergang ist sondern in der die Zeit einsteht und zum Stillstand gekommen ist, kann der historische Materialist nicht verzichten. Denn dieser Begriff definiert eben *die* Gegenwart, in der er für seine Person Geschichte schreibt. Der Historismus stellt das „ewige“ Bild der Vergangenheit, der historische Materialist eine Erfahrung mit ihr, die einzig dasteht. Er überläßt es andern, bei der Hure “Es war einmal” im Bordell des Historismus sich auszugeben. Er bleibt seiner Kräfte Herr: Manns genug, das Kontinuum der Geschichte aufzusprengen.⁶¹

⁶¹ Walter Benjamin, “Über den Begriff der Geschichte (1940),” in *Erzählen: Schriften zur Theorie der Narration und zur literarischen Prosa*, ed. Alexander Honold (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007), 138.

As Benjamin describes it, the present cannot be seen as transitional, but rather through the figure of “Stillstand,” a moment that can never be eternally captured, but can only be singularly experienced. Stories cannot be told in the historicist rhetoric of “once upon a time,” but must instead be “exploded.” In language that bears striking similarity to that of Benjamin, the character Philipp describes the texture of a time felt subjectively to be both speeding by and stopping:

Zugleich aber raste dieselbe Zeit, die doch wiederum stillstand und das Jetzt war, dieser Augenblick von schier ewiger Dauer, flog dahin, wenn man die Zeit als die Summe aller Tage betrachtete, den Ablauf aus Licht und Dunkel, der uns auf Erden gegeben ist, glich dem Wind, war etwas und nichts. (TG 22)

In this passage, Philipp reflects on the task of the writer to stand outside the stream of time and observe. Although this often induces a feeling of vertigo, the sea sometimes freezes (*erstarrte*), and an image appears: “ein gefrorenes, nichtssagendes, dem Gelächter schon überantwortetes Bild” (TG 23).

This metaphor of the sea and the “Stillstand” of “Jetzt” might be read as a figure for Koeppen’s method in the novel. In *Tauben im Gras*, Koeppen presents a microcosm of postwar German society. By interweaving the lives of dozens of characters, he presents a “pandemonium” of thoughts in the form of tiny scenes, strung together. Unlike Klemperer, who desired a more coherent form with which to write the history of the postwar period, Koeppen embraces the possibilities opened up by his modernist predecessors to use fragmentary forms and internal focalization. His novel, rather than seeking closure, opens up the text to questions about the state of culture and civilization in the aftermath of the war. The present moment, as Koeppen figures it, is an “Atempause,” a brief pause held in tension by the previous war and the threat of the next war. Whereas Klemperer desires a point from which to write the history of his present

moment, Koeppen gives up on such an external standpoint or the possibility of a closed totality. His narrator moves within and between characters, exploding the text into many voices, each with a unique perspective on the past, the postwar present, and the future. Koeppen ends his novel in the present tense, suggesting that the stories of the novel have caught up with the time of their telling. Here, as well, there is no omniscient narrator—the voice of traditional history-writing and storytelling—and no retrospective gaze.

The multilinearity of *Tauben im Gras*—and the presentation of a microcosm with shifting perspectives—presents an alternate writing of history and draws attention to the micro-stories and elements of thought within each subject, as well as the layers of past and present unfolding synchronously. Koeppen also highlights the transnationalism of this present, and the way the German and American stories become bound to one another. As Capano notes, the novel’s montage and discontinuous structure produces multiple temporalities, and an “implicit critique of historiography,” with its closed dynamic of chronology and continuity.⁶² Koeppen’s novel gestures towards opening, towards expansion, in the way that he uses techniques of fragmentation and stream of consciousness to pause and expand time, drawing out the connections between past and present. This use of the present tense, and the figuration of a present moment still unfolding in time, should also be read in connection with Koeppen’s appreciation of Gertrude Stein. As he praised her contribution to literary history: “[sie] führte den Roman noch weit über Marcel Proust hinaus in unsere Zeit, die, je universaler unsere Raumvorstellung, je unendlicher unser Vergangenheits- und Zukunftswissen wird, nur noch im winzigsten, allenfalls im Augenblick zu begreifen ist.”⁶³

⁶² Capano, “Narrative Einzeitlichungen: Wolfgang Koeppen’s *Tauben im Gras*,” 121.

⁶³ Wolfgang Koeppen, “Die dritte oder vierte Rose,” *Merkur* 162 (1961): 792.

CHAPTER 4

A Future History: The Rubble Film *Berliner Ballade*

KAT: Schön, nicht?

ROTT: Wie?

KAT: Es ist schön hier!

ROTT: Wenn man die Augen zumacht!

-*Zwischen Gestern und Morgen* (1947)

Was uns fehlt, das sind die Avantgardisten, die das graue lebendige leidvolle Gesicht unserer Zeit präsentieren!

-Kabarett Direktor, in *Draußen vor der Tür* (1946)¹

The best cabaret comes out of a lost war.

-Curt Riess²

In his diary from the war's end, Erich Kästner gives his account of the defeat and postwar period which he experienced in a small town in southern Germany. One of the striking impressions he describes is the sudden reillumination of the homes that had been dark for so long (due to required *Verdunkelung* as a precaution to avoid aerial attacks). He describes what he saw while walking:

Wir blickten in die Stuben und sahen, in jedem Fensterrahmen, das nahezu gleiche lebende Bild. Überall trennte man das Hakenkreuz aus den Hitlerfahnen. Überall zerschnitt man weiße Bettlaken. Überall saßen die Bäuerinnen an der Nähmaschine und nähten die roten und weißen Bahnen fein säuberlich aneinander. [...] Farbsatte Rechtecke an den Wänden erzählten uns, wie leicht Tapeten zu verschießen pflegen und wie groß die Hitlerbilder gewesen waren.[...] Kurz und gut, es war ein lehrreicher Rundgang. Seit das Licht wieder aus den Häusern fällt, fällt auch wieder Licht hinein.³

¹ Wolfgang Borchert, *Das Gesamtwerk* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1949), 131.

² Curt Riess, *The Berlin Story* (New York: Dial Press, 1952), 121.

³ Erich Kästner, *Notabene 45. Ein Tagebuch* (Berlin: C. Dressler, 1961), 127.

In allowing passersby to look into the houses, what were dark, private, personal spaces are converted into public spaces of spectacle, a spectacle seemingly repeated *ad infinitum* (“in jedem Fensterrahmen, das nahezu gleiche lebende Bild”). Kästner describes the ubiquitous, frantic attempts to erase signs of former allegiance to National Socialism, a very literal attempt to shed the symbolic weight of the recent past by replacing the old flags with new American ones.⁴



Figure 4.1. Berlin building, photographer unknown, 1946; Figure 4.2. Photo by Hildegard Dreyer, Berlin, 1947. Images from Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

The window frames invite another reading of this passage which emphasizes a different form of moving image: film. Like a spectator in the cinema, Kästner, in the dark, observes the lives of others framed by a cinematic gaze. In describing these scenes of transforming the private home to fit the new public realities (removing swastikas, changing allegiances, etc.), Kästner’s diary points to the way in which private space and personal histories had become exposed. This phenomenon of outward exposure is also

⁴ The image of the Hitler portrait being removed, yet the wall revealing its former presence is also quoted in the rubble film *Der Ruf* (dir. Fritz Kortner, 1949). The film uses a fade to show what had been on the wall where the wallpaper is discolored.

captured in many iconic photographs from the ruins of Germany in which buildings stand spliced open, interiors exposed to the exterior world in cross-section like dollhouses (See Figures 4.1 and 4.2). What were once private spaces are now made public, with private lives and objects on display.

In this section, I explore the particular mode of vision at work in so-called rubble film. I highlight cinema's ability to direct the eyes of contemporaries to the transitional spaces of postwar Germany, while suggesting different ways of reading the layers of history which are made visible in the ruined landscape. Kästner's walk through the postwar village reveals to him a contrast between superficial signs of a new, post-fascist German society (such as the sewing of flags), and the traces of National Socialism which will not fade away as quickly. Some traces—such as those on the wallpaper—cannot be simply and instantly made to disappear. Many postwar films revealed a similar layering, or double exposure, of past and present. In this chapter, I first provide a brief overview of rubble film and its reception in German film history. I then turn to the film *Berliner Ballade* (1948) to show how this popular rubble film, based on a cabaret revue, uses a playful blend of flashbacks, montage, and mock-documentary techniques to present a “history” of the zero hour. My readings of this film highlight scenes directing viewers' attention to the ruins of Germany, as well as to the layers of history present in the postwar landscape. Although the film claims an optimistic future for Germany by using a futuristic frame of an economically successful Berlin, it also reveals the uncertainty of living in the postwar period. I show how this rubble film tries to contain the rubble and ruin within the film, insisting that it is a different kind of “Zeitfilm,” while still reminding viewers that the past remains part of the postwar present.

Rubble Films in Germany 1946-1949

In January 1947, an article in *Der Spiegel* pronounced that film audiences were tired of seeing ruins: “Man mag keine Ruinen.” The article reported on contemporary debates about “den ‘zeitnahen’ Film” with renewed German film production after the war. As the article reports, theorists and writers advocated films showing an “Abbild des heutigen Lebens,” presenting problems of “ordinary” people (*des einfachen Mannes*).⁵ At the same time, contemporary cinema audiences rejected this “Gegenwartsgehalt,” or “Lebenswahrheit,” wanting instead to forget these problems when going to the movies. This debate followed the release of Gerhard Lamprecht’s *Irgendwo in Berlin* (1947), which portrayed issues of postwar society such as psychologically troubled *Heimkehrer*, rubble landscapes, and unruly children. The terms “zeitnah” and “Gegenwartsgehalt” in *Der Spiegel* reflect viewers’ objection to the perceived “nearness” of rubble films as contributing to the oppressive nature of the postwar moment and to the events of recent history.

In 1950, writer and film critic Wolfdietrich Schnurre criticized the majority of contemporary rubble films in a polemic entitled *Rettung des deutschen Films*. Schnurre makes a distinction between “Tendenzfilme,” which have a moral goal and take on problems of the present, and “Zeitfilme,” which merely deal with the present moment on a superficial level:

der Zeitfilm bezieht seine Pseudoaktualität einzig von außen, aus der Kulisse, vom Requisit. Der Tendenzfilm dagegen wird durch eine vergeistigte Aktualität von innen gespeist. Der Zeitfilm ist deshalb heute so schädlich, weil er kostbaren dramatischen Rohstoff verschließt, weil er brennende Zeitprobleme verflacht.⁶

⁵ “Stimmen aus Parkett und Rang: Man mag keine Ruinen,” *Der Spiegel*, 4 January 1947.

⁶ Wolfdietrich Schnurre, *Rettung des deutschen Films. Eine Streitschrift* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1950), 18.

Schnurre criticizes the “neudeutsche Trümmer- und Heimkehrerschwulst” that make “misery” the main character and yet still suffer from “Happyenditis.”⁷ He writes, “selbst bei diesen Streifen bricht gegen Ende sieghaft der deutsche Filmoptimismus durch, dessen Skala vom Trümmerblümchen bis zur erneut versorgten Kriegerwitwe reicht.”⁸ Instead, Schnurre hoped to see films that took on problems of postwar Germany in a serious way, helping audiences work through challenges of the postwar present. He fought a losing battle. For the most part, moviegoers did not want to see the problems visible outside their windows and in their homes, but wanted escapism and distraction—romances, costume dramas, and adventure stories.⁹ Movie tickets were an affordable pleasure, not vulnerable to mercurial black market prices, and cinema audiences wanted to escape those difficult wartime realities.¹⁰ Filmmakers increasingly bowed to these demands. In the end, the rubble film was short lived, occupying cinema screens only during the late 1940s, replaced by foreign imports, historical dramas, and the popular *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s.¹¹

The German films produced between 1946 and 1948/1949 that take the backdrop of ruined Germany as their setting have become known as rubble films.¹² Although these

⁷ Ibid., 16, 40.

⁸ Ibid., 38-39.

⁹ See Pleyer on this topic. He compares movie attendance in 1946-1948 between escapist films imported from Britain and the US, for example *Die Madonna der Sieben Monde* (11,324,700 viewers); *Paganini* (10,405,500 viewers) with the most popular rubble films, *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen* (2,815,265 viewers); *Und über uns der Himmel* (2,300,358 viewers). Peter Pleyer, *Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm 1946-1948* (Münster: C. J. Fahle, 1965), 56-57.

¹⁰ The cinema cost about 1 Reichsmark, while a piece of butter could cost about 250 RM on the black market. See Thomas Brandlmeier, “Von Hitler zu Adenauer: Deutsche Trümmerfilme,” in *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen: Westdeutscher Nachkriegsfilm, 1946–1962*, ed. Hilmar Hoffmann and Walter Schobert (Frankfurt am Main: Deutsches Filmmuseum, 1989), 34.

¹¹ See Johannes von Moltke, *No place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Univ of California Press, 2005).

¹² Scholars usually periodize the era of rubble film 1946-1948 (Pleyer, in the first major study of rubble film) or 1946-1949 (Shandley, who includes two films from 1949 in his analysis: *Der Ruf* and *Liebe 47*).

films share a common *mise-en-scène*, they vary widely in terms of content, genre, and aesthetic innovation. Erica Carter attributes the “unease around film style” as part of the “desire for a radical break” with Nazi cinema, what is known as the “Traumfabrik.”¹³ To break from this world of the “dream factory,” rubble films focused on life in the ruins of postwar Germany. Sabine Hake summarizes the typical storyline:

Typically, in these films, a man returns home from the war and, confronted with the ubiquitous signs of destruction, is forced to make sense of his personal tragedy and, by extension, that of the German nation. In this context, the ruins visualised the desired erasure of the past and the promise of a new beginning captured in the myth of Zero Hour. Accordingly, the cityscape in ruins provided above all a *mise-en-scène* for the allegorical staging of agony, doubt, hope, and renewal.¹⁴

In terms of aesthetics, German rubble films are often lamented as inferior to contemporary neorealist pictures such as Roberto Rossellini’s *Germany, Year Zero* (1947), Cesare Zavattini’s *Bicycle Thieves* (1948), or the film noir style of Carol Reed’s *The Third Man* (1949). Thomas Brandlmeier notes that while Italian cinema was more interested in effecting social change, German rubble films often focus on German “*Innerlichkeit*,” with highly symbolic images signaling “*Tiefliegendes, Verborgenes, Verschüttetes, Vergangenes*.”¹⁵ The past returns and surfaces in a different way.

In addition to aesthetic critiques, scholars have also focused on postwar German filmmaking as an inadequate response to their recent history—with a new self

Brandlmeier notes that these films continue to about 1950/1951, seeing Peter Lorre’s *Der Verlorene* (1951) as the last rubble film. Brandlmeier, “Von Hitler zu Adenauer: Deutsche Trümmerfilme,” 34.

¹³ Erica Carter, “Sweeping Up the Past: Gender and History in the Post-war German ‘Rubble Film,’” in *Heroines without Heroes: Reconstructing Female and National Identities in European Cinema, 1945-51*, ed. Ulrike Sieglöhr (London; New York: Cassell, 2000), 94. For more on Nazi cinema and its continuities, see Hester Baer, *Dismantling the Dream Factory: Gender, German Cinema, and the Postwar Quest for a New Film Language* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009); Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Linda Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich: Illusions of Wholeness in Nazi Cinema*, Post-contemporary interventions (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

¹⁴ Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 91.

¹⁵ Brandlmeier, “Von Hitler zu Adenauer: Deutsche Trümmerfilme,” 34.

consciousness about the Allied programs of reeducation and denazification. As Robert Shandley observes in his monograph *Rubble Films* (2001), filmmakers after 1945 were “usually so emotionally involved in the hardships of life in postwar Germany that they were largely blind to other concerns.”¹⁶ This resulted in films centered on Germany’s postwar problems, failing to take on the serious challenges such as German guilt in the face of the victims of German crimes, for example. Similarly, Eric Rentschler has also indicated that postwar films tend to portray history as fate, preferring an existentialist mode to “self-reflection and exhaustive soul-searching.”¹⁷ In this way, Rentschler calls the rubble films “cinematic counterparts to the postwar era’s philosophical ‘panoramas of cataclysm,’” such as the works of Friedrich Meinecke and Karl Jaspers. The films “reaffirmed Meinecke’s belief that fate had brought to Germany a great catastrophe. They surely did not support Jaspers’ conviction that Germans needed, with all due rigor and integrity, to acknowledge and atone for Nazi misdeeds.”¹⁸ This observation is well-aligned with Schnurre’s diagnosis from 1950. Yet, as Wilfried Wilms argues, early German postwar films must also be read in the context of Allied occupation and military censorship as well as German self-censorship: “what we do and do not see in these films is also the result of active reeducation and reorientation in a tightly controlled and supervised, reemerging German public sphere.”¹⁹ In sum, there were many factors

¹⁶ Robert R. Shandley, *Rubble Films: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001).

¹⁷ Eric Rentschler, “The Place of Rubble in the Trummerfilm,” *New German Critique* 37, no. 2 (2010): 19.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁹ Wilfried Wilms, “Rubble Without a Cause: The Air War in Postwar Film,” in *German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins*, ed. Wilfried Wilms and William Rasch (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 28.

contributing to the themes taken up in early postwar German cinema—an argument Brandlmeier makes as well: “Prinzipiell herrschte die Zensur und Vorzensur.”²⁰

In the edited volume *German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins* (2008), editors Wilfried Wilms and William Rasch propose to “look again at the rubble,” as stated in Rasch’s introduction, instead of watching these films through a moralizing lens to determine whether or not they “dealt” adequately with the past. This latter mode of viewing became common after 1968, when new German filmmakers were often quick to condemn the work of the previous generation in order to stake out a new space for young German cinema. Rasch asks, “What, in other words, does the all too familiar story of German evasion, silence, and moral blindness hide from *our* sight, no matter how pure our moral pedigree may be?”²¹ The contributors to *German Postwar Films* demonstrate an interest in approaching the films of this period with new questions: for example, about the context of censorship, the presence of trauma and grief (Anke Pinkert), or the use of youth as allegory (Marc Silberman).²²

Recent scholarship has also turned to the rubble itself as an object of analysis, calling attention to the various tropes evoked by the scenes of rubble in film. As Wilms puts it, the ruins are “not just a backdrop,” but “demand to be explained.”²³ Johannes von Moltke challenges us to look at the ruin aesthetic as situated in the larger history of

²⁰ Brandlmeier, “Von Hitler zu Adenauer: Deutsche Trümmerfilme,” 36.

²¹ William Rasch, “Introduction: Looking Again at the Rubble.” in Wilfried Wilms and William Rasch, *German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins*, Studies in European culture and history (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 4.

²² Mila Ganeva’s recent article “Fashion Amidst the Ruins” should also be read in this vein, eliding the question of morality or “Vergangenheitsbewältigung” and instead looking at how women are presented in the films. Her analysis shows that even in rubble films, audiences could find “pleasure and diversion,” as fashionable actresses gave women a figure with whom they might identify, “signs of successful recovery and harmony between work and happiness.” Mila Ganeva, “Fashion Amidst the Ruins: Revisiting the Early Rubble Films *And the Heavens Above* (1947) and *The Murderers are Among Us* (1946),” *German Studies Review* 37, no. 1 (2014): 62; 70.

²³ Wilms, “Rubble Without a Cause: The Air War in Postwar Film,” 32.

cinema, considering the entwined nature of realist media, history, and historiography.²⁴ He writes, “ruins attract our interest for the specific ways in which the cinema directs our gaze toward them, for the how as much as the what of ruin representation.” Put simply, we must consider the “ruin aesthetic, formulated in the language of cinema.”²⁵ Similarly, Rentschler’s focus on “the place of rubble” allows him to situate rubble within a larger “history of rubble representation,” showing how postwar films adopt tropes of Romanticism or aesthetics of the mountain film.²⁶ Rentschler considers the moods evoked by ruins, as well as the spatiality of the spectator’s gaze, and the position of the spectator as perhaps “witness or judge,” looking out over the ruined landscape.²⁷

In the context of this dissertation, I would like to draw out a distinction between rubble and ruin—terms often conflated in both contemporary accounts and in scholarship of this period in German cultural history. Rubble films, as noted above, do not refer to a certain genre, but instead draw on a variety of filmic languages. They often portray both ruin—which points to a legible past, orienting viewers in space and time—and rubble—a more disorienting state of modern destruction. In contrast to ruins, rubble is disorienting, making one unsure of time or space. Many accounts of German *Heimkehrer* describe wandering in disbelief, trying to make sense of the rubble city in front of them. Hans Merten’s stumbling walk in the beginning of *Die Mörder sind unter uns* stages this scene of disorientation, with the canted camera angle and the seemingly unsuited music. On the other hand, shots of ruined structures in the “ruin tour” of Billy Wilder’s *A Foreign Affair* (described in Chapter Three) provide orientation in the destroyed city, and signal layers

²⁴ Johannes von Moltke, “Ruin Cinema,” in *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle, *Politics, History, and Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 410.

²⁶ Rentschler, “The Place of Rubble in the Trummerfilm,” 9.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

of a past history. As I argue, making a distinction between rubble and ruin provides an important revision to the way these materials are usually read. My analysis of the film *Berliner Ballade* in this chapter will draw out this distinction, by showing how this film not only presents rubble and ruin, but also engages with rubble culture at a conceptual level. In telling a history of postwar Berlin, the film self-reflectively poses questions about genre, medium, and form. Like Klemperer, who struggles with the possibility of writing history as a “Mitlebender,” *Berliner Ballade* represents an early attempt to write history through short and fragmentary scenes—a true engagement with rubble forms.

Berliner Ballade

After the opening credits of Robert Stemmle’s *Berliner Ballade* (1948) to an upbeat jazz tune, the music ends and a voiceover calls out “Achtung! Achtung!” over a black screen. After hearing the technical specifications and a “test tone,” the voiceover tells (fictional) viewers to take off their 3-D glasses (*Dimensionsbrillen*), because the images they are about to see are archival images “aus dem Fotomuseum,” taken 100 years ago.²⁸ The introduction to the film with its futuristic frame narrative is immediately striking for its visual and narrative originality. The opening sequence is a montage of images of a futuristic cityscape reminiscent of Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*, with modern high rises and monumental structures, dwarfing well-known sites such as the Brandenburg Gate. This is Berlin in the year 2048, as an intertitle notes, and a voiceover addresses viewers directly and informally:

Liebe Mitmenschen, das ist das Berlin, das du kennst, das Berlin, das du täglich von deinem Hubschrauber aus siehst, das Berlin des Jahres 2048. Unaufhörlich starten und landen auf dem neuen Berliner Großflugplatz die Düsenmaschinen der

²⁸ Robert A. Stemmle, “Berliner Ballade.” (Germany: Comedia, 1948).

Weltlinie New York-Moskau. Es erhebt sich an der Stelle, wo einst der sogenannte Grunewald gestanden haben soll. Aber nicht immer war Berlin so groß wie heute [...] Vor 100 Jahren, 1948, in der guten alten Zeit, sah es hier noch anders aus.

As the narrator speaks, we see a helicopter with two propellers mounted on top, hovering high above the city (Figures 4.3 and 4.4), and an airport, with the shadows of little planes coming and going. After the voiceover, the score sounds ominously and we suddenly find ourselves “back” 100 years among the ruin of 1948.



Figure 4.3 and 4.4. From the opening sequence of *Berliner Ballade* (1948)

This futuristic introduction sets the tone for the quirky film to follow. *Berliner Ballade* stands out from other rubble films for its quick pace, comedic treatment of the postwar situation, and self-aware parodying nature. The script was written by Günter Neumann, in part based on his 1947 cabaret *Schwarzer Jahrmarkt. Eine Revue der Stunde Null*, showcasing the kind of “genre-mixing” Carter describes as typical of the period.²⁹ Gunter Groll, writing for *Die Neue Zeitung* in 1950, praised the film’s use of a new cinematic language:

Es gab einen Film, der alle drei Elemente vereinigte, zeitspiegelnden Realismus, zeitlos-spielerische Heiterkeit und zeitsprengenden Traumland-Ton: “Berliner

²⁹ Carter, “Sweeping Up the Past: Gender and History in the Post-war German ‘Rubble Film,’” 94.

Ballade.” Panorama der Zeit als gleichsam heiteres Jammertal. Hier schien sich der deutsche Film aus seinen eisernen Schablonen zu lösen. Kaleidoskop einer filmischen Bildersprache, die wir seither nicht mehr vernahmen.³⁰

Groll emphasizes the film’s relation to its time—mirroring, playing with, and exploding it. He also uses the kaleidoscope metaphor common at the time to describe the fragmentary form (seen in reviews of Koeppen’s *Tauben im Gras* as well). Groll’s review emphasizes the mix of media and generic forms employed by the film. Robert Shandley argues that by using satire, the film aims “to prevent itself from becoming a rubble film.”³¹ Even in his condemnation of postwar film as generally “unterdurchschnittlich,” Schnurre makes an exception for *Der Ruf* and *Affaire Blum*, as well as *Berliner Ballade*, “einiger brillanter filmischer Einfälle wegen.”³² The film, which won the silver prize at the 1949 Film Festival in Venice, was also popular among contemporary audiences—one of the few such rubble films to achieve a box office success.

It is also clear that this mix of genres and aesthetic styles was of concern to the filmmakers. *Berliner Ballade* draws from cabaret to represent (and satirize) the present, yet it was not the only film of the period to do so. As Peter Pleyer notes, four films made towards the end of 1948 used cabaret forms: *Der Herr vom andern Stern* (Heinz Hilpert), *Der Apfel ist ab* (Helmut Käutner), *Berliner Ballade* (R.A. Stemmlé), and *Die seltsamen Abenteuer des Herrn Fridolin B.* (Wolfgang Staudte), all bearing certain similarities in style:

Ihr Geschehen besteht immer aus einer Story, die mehr oder minder häufig durch kabarettistische Sketche oder Songs unterbrochen wird; realistische und surrealistische Geschehensteile und entsprechende Dekors stehen nebeneinander.

³⁰ Gunter Groll, “Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm - Klamauk oder Welträtsel,” in *Diese Merkwürdige Zeit. Leben nach der Stunde Null. Ein Textbuch aus der “Neuen Zeitung,”* ed. Wilfried F. Schoeller (Frankfurt am Main: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 2005 [1950]), 388.

³¹ Shandley, *Rubble Films: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich*: 176.

³² Schnurre, *Rettung des deutschen Films. Eine Streitschrift*: 10.

Unterschiede bestehen allerdings im Hinblick auf die Treffsicherheit, mit der die Zustände und Äußerungen einer Zeitepoche jeweils ins Lächerliche gezogen, verspottet und in ihrem Widersinn entlarvt werden.³³

By using elements of cabaret and Brechtian distancing techniques in the film, *Berliner Ballade* plays with conventions of cinema, theater, and cabaret. Instead of one story, the film consists of a patchwork of scenes and songs, on the surface connected through the storyline of the protagonist Otto. The narrator, as Claudia Breger points out, “functions as the film’s primary agent of narrative linkage.”³⁴ In this way, he may be seen to play the role of an emcee, speaking to both the audience and the characters and leading us through the spectacle of the show. This creates coherence in an otherwise very disjointed film that contains songs, flashbacks, and dream sequences.

Cabaret, which was “never totally silenced” during the Third Reich, was exceedingly popular after the war.³⁵ Many cabarets opened soon after the war’s end, most notably the *Schaubude* and *Kleine Freiheit* in Munich, *Kom(m)ödchen* in Düsseldorf, *Rampe* in Leipzig, *Ulenspiegel* in West Berlin and *Kiki* and *Frischer Wind* in East Berlin.³⁶ Cabaret was uniquely suited to critique the contemporary cultural and political situation of occupation, as it could use humor to push the boundaries of what was sayable, and use “inside” jokes to get the message across *without* saying anything directly. Although Germans were cautious of Allied censorship, cabaret shows were

³³ Pleyer, *Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm 1946-1948*: 121.

³⁴ Claudia Breger, “Kampf dem Kampf: Aesthetic Experimentation and Social Satire in *The Ballad of Berlin*,” in *German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins*, ed. Wilfried Wilms and William Rasch (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 161.

³⁵ Hermann Glaser, *The Rubble Years: The Cultural Roots of Postwar Germany* (New York: Paragon House, 1986), 255.

³⁶ Sylvia Klötzer, *Satire und Macht: Film, Zeitung, Kabarett in der DDR* (Köln: Böhlau, 2006), 22. See also Deutsches Kabarettarchiv, “Wir sind wieder wer. Aber wer? Ausstellung 100 Jahre Deutsches Kabarett. Kabarett im Kalten Krieg (1946-1966),” http://www.kabarettarchiv.de/AusstellungPDF/Ausstellung_4.pdf.

usually supported by the occupying powers as an “instrument for enlightenment.”³⁷ The cabaret scene in Wolfgang Borchert’s *Draußen vor der Tür* can be taken as further evidence of cabaret’s popularity.³⁸ Günter Neumann, who wrote the script for *Berliner Ballade*, founded the Cabaret Ulenspiegel in West Berlin, which ran from 1946-1948, later becoming “Die Insulaner” (in reference to the “island” status of West Berlin), a cabaret radio program on the Berlin station RIAS (Radio in the American Sector).³⁹ In his autobiographical *Berlin Story*, Curt Riess describes his first encounter with Neumann in the Cabaret Ulenspiegel:

You sensed that you were hearing and seeing something that had not existed since 1933—a real, topical cabaret performance. The words and the music expressed what everybody was feeling. The words and music made fun of the things that were bothering everybody. It was charming and satisfying and sophisticated; it was keen and to the point. It was superb.⁴⁰

Riess thus links this form to Weimar-era Berlin, noting how the artists again enjoyed freedom of expression, including the possibility of cabaret to critique the Allied occupation. He quotes Neumann, who said “good cabaret had to be dangerous,” hinting that the artists were also testing the limits of what they could say and do.⁴¹ Riess, returning from exile, hints that cabaret was also something that brought people together in the postwar period—the performance expressed “what everybody was feeling.” Like cinema or theater, cabaret brought people together communally.

³⁷ Glaser, *The Rubble Years: The Cultural Roots of Postwar Germany*: 255. Zehrer notes that most postwar cabaret was characterized by a “Nie wieder!” pathos and by an emphasis on “Heiterkeit.” Klaus Cäsar Zehrer, “Aufklärungssatire versus Aufklärung: über Kabarett und Satire in der BRD,” in *Politisches Kabarett und Satire*, ed. Tobias Glodek, Christian Haberecht, and Christoph v. Ungern-Sternberg (Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2007).

³⁸ Borchert, *Das Gesamtwerk*: 136.

³⁹ For more on Günter Neumann and postwar cabaret, see Regina Stürickow, *Der Insulaner verliert die Ruhe nicht : Günter Neumann und sein Kabarett zwischen Kaltem Krieg und Wirtschaftswunder* (Berlin: Arani, 1993). Stürickow notes the overwhelmingly positive reception in the press.

⁴⁰ Riess, *The Berlin Story*: 120.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 121.

Cabaret, consisting of a series of sketches and songs, is also characteristic for the kind of short forms of the postwar period described in the introduction. It is worth repeating this passage from Schnurre, cited in the introduction, from an article on the rubble film *In jenen Tagen* (1947):

Dennoch halte ich die hier gewählte Kurzform der blitzlichhaft aufblendenenen Episode [...] für die ehrlichste, ja für die uns heute einzig gemäße Art einer Aussage über die letzten Jahre. Denn um ein Epos zu schaffen, müssen sich unsere Augen erst einmal vom Sog selbst miterlebter Details lösen können. Dazu aber sind Jahre nötig. Jeder heute unternommene Vergangenenheit zu Leibe zu rücken, wird jedoch, an der Fülle des zu Bewältigenden gemessen, noch auf weite Sicht fragmentarisch sein müssen. Warum also nicht auch hier aus der Not eine Tugend machen?⁴²

Schnurre notes that the episodic nature of the film is a result of the inability to achieve distance from recent events.

Neumann's cabaret *Schwarzer Jahrmarkt* contained a song that explicitly commented on the uncertainty about which literary and artistic traditions remain valid in the postwar period. The set presents a mix of signs reading: Existentialismus, Realismus, Romantik, Kubismus, Naturalismus, Surrealismus, Nihilismus, Expressionismus, Klassizismus (Figure 4.5). A speaker introduces the scene: "sehen Sie nun in unserem Gala-sensations- und Monstreprogramm das Labyrinth 'Thalia' oder die große Geisterbahn – mit großen abendländischen Geistern. Der Irrgarten der Kultura unter Anleitung, Aufsicht und Zensur unserer alliierten Freunde."⁴³ A "Greek chorus" laments repeatedly: "Wo ist der Ausgang? Wo der richt'ge Weg?" The main speaker of the chorus

⁴² Wolfdietrich Schnurre, "Erfindungsgabe und Improvisationsarbeit," *Der neue Film*, Nr. 4, 7 July 1947. In Hans-Michael Bock, ed. *Schatten des Krieges. Innovation und Tradition im europäischen Kino 1940 - 1950*, Hamburgisches Centrum für Filmforschung (Berlin: Absolut Medien, 2009), 105-6. Ernst Schnabel wrote the screenplay with Helmut Käutner for the film *In jenen Tagen*.

⁴³ Günter Neumann, *Schwarzer Jahrmarkt: Eine Revue der Stunde Null* (Berlin-Wannsee: Lothar Blanvalet Verlag, 1975), 151.

exclaims, “Orest! Orest! O Restbestände früherer Epochen!”⁴⁴ This humorous scene thematizes the ruins of literary and theatrical tradition left to postwar artists, and the challenge to find appropriate forms for the postwar present.



Figure 4.5. From the 1947 performance in *Cabaret Ulenspiegel*, Berlin. Photo by Harry Croner⁴⁵

This sense of an important transitional moment is often underscored in rubble film as well. *Film ohne Titel* stages a similar discussion to the “Labyrinth ‘Thalia’” between director, actor, and writer about the inadequacy of old forms and themes. As Anke Pinkert writes, “the rubble films served as an important public space where [...] affective responses, not yet solidified into identifiable meanings, were negotiated through cinematic performance and practice.”⁴⁶ Or, as Silberman stresses: “Trümmerfilme are transitional films in a temporal and thematic sense,” revealing “anxieties about endings and new beginnings, about losses and the unknown future.”⁴⁷ Erica Carter discusses

⁴⁴ Ibid., 153.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 111.

⁴⁶ Anke Pinkert in Wilms and Rasch, *German Postwar Films*: 64.

⁴⁷ Silberman in *ibid.*, 93.

rubble film as “transitional cinema in terms of its conditions of production but also at the level of textual form.”⁴⁸ This sense of creating film during a transitional period brought about scenes of commentary such as that of *Film ohne Titel* (Rudolf Jugert, 1948), its very lack of title reflecting cinema’s uncertainties about filmmaking in the postwar period; or metafilmic commentaries in *Berliner Ballade* about what kind of film we are watching.

Berliner Ballade continually switches between two modes: on one level, it purports to “document” the history of the recent past and the role of one “Normalverbraucher.” This is done through a voiceover that speaks both to viewers, and to Otto, the protagonist. On the other hand, the film borrows from and re-writes traditional generic tropes such as the story of the *Heimkehrer* and the romantic melodrama. The use of parody and comedy, borrowing from cabaret, blurs these boundaries and subverts generic conventions. In the following, I focus on the role of the voiceover, the frame narrative, and the chronicle of history in analyzing this film and its blending of genres. First, I provide a reading of Otto’s arrival in Berlin, the film’s first and most extensive ruin sequence. Second, I show how the film’s ruptured chronology tells the story of Germany’s recent past. I show how the use of cabaret allows for a mix of humor and social critique while telling the history of the postwar period. My claim is that the futuristic frame reveals a desire to tell the history of postwar Berlin with a happy end, although at the time of production during the Berlin Air Lift this future seemed precarious.

⁴⁸ Carter, “Sweeping Up the Past: Gender and History in the Post-war German ‘Rubble Film,’” 93.

Return to Ruins

The film *Berliner Ballade* has two establishing shots. First, as described above, the frame narrative locates viewers in Berlin 2048, a bustling metropolis. Second, after flashing “back” 100 years, there is a second establishing shot, panning over the rooftops of the ruined city. This sequence introduces the character of Otto Normalverbraucher (played by Gert Fröbe). During the first shots of Otto, viewers “return” to Berlin through the eyes of someone who has been absent. By giving voice to the anticipated reactions of contemporary (1948) viewers, the narrator once again makes us aware of the futuristic frame to the film: “Ai, je, werden die Kinobesucher damals gesagt haben, als sie diese Bilder sahen, ach, schon wieder ein Heimkehrerfilm! Denn solche Aufnahmen sah man damals alle Tage.” These were common images, the narrator from 2048 tells his viewers, in a defamiliarizing move which reminds the spectators that they should imagine they are watching this film as if it were archival footage. This frame creates distance between spectators and the present, projecting a futurity from which to “look back” on their historical present. Thus although the film is “zeitnah” (one of the audience critiques of postwar film), it also tries to combat the pejorative label of “Trümmerfilm” or “Heimkehrerfilm” (both terms were used at the time) through self-parodying comedy and through the frame story.

Otto’s return is portrayed as a kind of shock. He is disoriented, hardly recognizing his dear hometown and turning around 360 degrees to look from the Brandenburg Gate to the Reichstag, which now neighbors the new Soviet Memorial.⁴⁹ Through a point-of-view shot, we see what Otto sees as he takes in this new construction amidst the rubble

⁴⁹ This juxtaposition is also shown in *A Foreign Affair* (dir. Billy Wilder, 1948) and *Germany Year Zero* (dir. Roberto Rossellini, 1948).

through defamiliarized eyes. After looking at this scene of Soviet victory, Otto walks to a site honoring German victories—the Siegessäule, at the end of the Siegesallee in the Tiergarten, lined with statues. This sequence—as opposed to scenes of ruin in many other rubble films—directs attention to the symbolically laden remnants of the state and to the intersection of past and present. Prussian emblems and ruins are juxtaposed with the new Soviet memorial within this compact space in central Berlin. Mimicking the return to the past with which the film begins, we see signs commemorating the recent past embedded throughout the city, seemingly unavoidable at every corner.



Figures 4.6 - 4.7. Otto Normalverbraucher returns to Berlin (*Berliner Ballade*)

During this sequence, the camera angles are turned upward towards the sites and monuments, and through over-the-shoulder shots we assume Otto’s subjective point of view. The narrator further directs our eyes, telling us that this is contemplative ruin gazing: “Der junge Mann sah die Denkmäler der fremden Sieger, und wandte sich dann nachdenklich der Allee der eigenen Siege zu.” Otto looks up at the Victory Column, and then walks through the Tiergarten. The camera tilts down from the Golden Angel slowly to a long shot of Otto, battered and thin, as he walks towards the camera among the ruins of white marble statuary (Figures 4.8-4.9). Otto pauses to sit atop an overturned statue,

straddling the head of some once-great man. He continues to look up, and low angle shots show the statues, some of which have lost limbs, juxtaposed against the sky (Figure 4.9). In a parodic gesture, Otto gives the statues a rigid salute, even taking off his hat in feigned respect. He nods, and then the cross-cutting between Otto and the statues quickens. The frantic editing pace creates a threatening effect, and an off-screen voice calls out “Hey! Sie! Hallo!” As if the statues are speaking, Otto starts to cower, his eyes and mouth open in fear. He turns to see the source of the voice: an elderly woman who has awoken him from this trance. Her call interrupts the encounter with the ruined statues of the Tiergarten, bringing Otto from his reverie back to the postwar present. She hands him a photograph of a soldier, asking whether Otto perhaps recognizes him, introducing yet another trace of the past. Otto looks at the picture, an ordinary soldier resembling himself, sadly shakes his head and gives the photo back to the woman without saying a word. The narrator tells us, in a play on the “Siegessäule”: “Das war die am Boden zerstörte Allee der Besiegten.”



Figures 4.8 - 4.9. Otto walks through the Tiergarten

This sequence portrays a very different interaction with Germany’s ruins than other rubble films that show the towering vertical ruins of residential streets, such as *Germany Year Zero* (Roberto Rossellini, 1948) or *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (Wolfgang

Staudte, 1946). In contrast to those films, which focus on the disorientation of life in the rubble, *Berliner Ballade* takes viewers into the heart of Berlin's most symbol-laden district between the Brandenburger Tor, the Siegessäule, and the Tiergarten. These ruins are *Prussian* monuments, juxtaposed with the new Soviet memorial. The specific cultural and symbolic importance of this destruction, in contrast to the more sweeping shots of anonymous devastation across wider cityscapes, calls our focus to the ruins of a state culture bent on the glorification of militarism and war. The ruins point to a legible past, now called into question. The voiceover does not tell us *what* Otto thinks, but that he walks through this space "nachdenklich." This scene thus leaves an opening for viewers to consider the significance of this shift from *Sieger* to *Besiegte*.



Figure 4.10 and 4.11. From *Germania Anno Zero* (Roberto Rossellini, 1948)

As the scene continues, the critique of militarism is made explicit, as the soundtrack shifts to a march, with shots of Berlin street signs cut to the march's rhythm. The narrator tells us that this is all that is left as a reminder of "das Gestrige": Kaiser-Wilhelm-Straße, Bismarck-Allee, Königsallee, Kronprinzenallee, Hohenzollernplatz, Preußenpark, Grenadierstraße, Kadettenweg, Schlachtensee. At the crossroads of Victoriastraße and Bellevuestraße we return again to Otto, looking around with a strained

gaze, trying to orient himself. These street signs show how the past remains written into the cityscape. Although more obvious Nazi signs have been removed, this sequence shows other remnants of a culture glorifying Prussia's military history.

After this opening sequence in the Tiergarten, there are very few ruins shown in the film. The opening scenes signal that the film is made during the rubble period, but then moves away from such imagery. Instead of using German rubble as a metaphor for misery, outer destruction as a sign of inner torment and psychological distress (as in many other rubble films), in Stemmler's film the ruin stands in for history. By placing these ruin sequences prominently at the beginning of the film, the narrative suggests that this is an undeniable and crucial part of Germany's past and history. It is written into the landscape just as the Soviet Memorial is now part of the landscape. After this point, however, the film presents mostly domestic spaces, focusing on the life of an individual and his everyday life in the war and after.

Documenting History in the Making

To understand *Berliner Ballade*'s unique contribution to the canon of rubble film, it is necessary to look more closely at the layers of time created in the film. The film has a complex temporal structure, which uses a futuristic frame as well as many narrative breaks and detours. Rubble films often "radically disrupt the temporal continuum," as Carter describes. "Not only is there extensive use of flashbacks but they are also signaled as compulsive, involuntary bearers of affect-laden memories inaccessible to the rationality that structures linear narrative."⁵⁰ This is true of *Berliner Ballade*—a film not included in Carter's analysis but which fits her description of a "disruption of past-

⁵⁰ Carter, "Sweeping Up the Past: Gender and History in the Post-war German 'Rubble Film,'" 97.

present relations.”⁵¹ Far from a straightforward chronology, the film in fact consists of multiple leaps in time. The film begins in the year 2048, and the narrator then tells viewers they are being sent “back” a century to 1948. Even with this frame, there is some inconsistency with the film’s dates. Shandley marks the film’s time progression “from 1946 to 1948,” thus “a history of postwar Berlin told, not as lament, but rather as gradual progress.”⁵² This overlooks, however, the series of flashbacks embedded in the film. When Otto returns to Berlin in the opening sequence, he returns to his former apartment and finds it occupied. (This date presents an inconsistency: although the narrator says this is 100 years ago, it seems to actually be 1946 instead of 1948 as the rest of the story unfolds.) After having a drink with the current occupants and a toast “auf das Neue,” Otto is transported further back in time through memory: “Dabei fiel ihm das Alte ein.”

At this point, there is an extended flashback (about 8 minutes long), consisting of a series of short comedic scenes. Viewers get a quick impersonal (and comedic) summary of the first wartime years as set in this very apartment. The voiceover marks time, year by year: “1940. Es wurde gesiegt.” Otto listens to the radio with the newspaper on his lap. “1941. Es wurde evakuiert.” Otto packages valuables, and takes a painting off the wall. “1942. Es wurde dunkel.” Otto lights a candle, which illuminates a Hitler portrait on the wall. There is one more date in this fast-paced history, “1943,” which triggers sounds of bombs exploding, an air-raid siren, and glass shattering. Then Otto is finally called to military service. Although he tries to sabotage his medical test, Otto leaves for the front. Except for a quick montage of the life of the soldier, the sequence skips over the war and ends with Otto’s capture and release. With another series of jokes making fun of German

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Shandley, *Rubble Films: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich*: 177.

bureaucracy, and a brief sequence in Munich, Otto crawls under the American-Russian demarcation line and totters off, Chaplin-like, towards Berlin. The flashback ends with Otto back in the bombed-out apartment, “in seinen drei Wänden.” Like the images described in Kästner’s anecdote, Otto is a prototypical film character, as we can look in on his private life. The exterior wall of his apartment is already removed as if for a camera, like any studio set. It is only in this shot (Figure 4.12), that the image is composed to draw attention to this fact and the exposure of Otto’s life to the outside world (and to the camera).



Figure 4.12. Otto “in seinen drei Wänden”

The accelerated history of the Second World War presented in the flashback portrays Otto Normalverbraucher as a largely passive victim of historical events, reiterated by the use of passive voice in the timeline of events. Although this is Otto’s story, it could be the story of any “ordinary” German, as captured in his name.⁵³ The objects shown, such as the radio and the Hitler portrait, document the period and stand in

⁵³ This film coined the term “Otto Normalverbraucher” in Germany, roughly equivalent of the American phrase “average” or “ordinary Joe.” In the cabaret *Schwarzer Jahrmarkt*, the character was named “Häufig”: “Ich bin der Durchschnittsdeutsche, sozusagen der Normalverbraucher!” Neumann, *Schwarzer Jahrmarkt: Eine Revue der Stunde Null*: 30.

for “typical” German experiences, signaling to audiences in 1948 that they share this timeline. Pleyer notes that a typical characteristic of rubble films is the presentation of “die Ohnmacht des Individuums gegenüber den politischen, sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnissen in Gegenwart und Vergangenheit.”⁵⁴ Christiane Schönfeld captures something of this powerlessness of the individual when she describes Otto as the “‘good German’ of the film narrative, who dreams of a better life; and although facing the present and enduring everyday hardships is clearly tough, Otto struggles on and does not complain.”⁵⁵ In fact, Otto remains reticent throughout most of the film, letting the narrator speak on his behalf. However it is significant that the film does not *ignore* the Second World War—or even Nazism—but instead uses cultural shorthand such as the Hitler portrait to metonymically stand in for this past.

Shandley emphasizes that the title “Berliner Ballade” is a direct allusion to the “Berliner Blockade,” ongoing as the film was made in 1948.⁵⁶ Although the futuristic frame suggests that the story ends well, with a modern and successful Berlin, in the short term things look less certain. This is underlined by the film’s ending, as the narrator tells us that “menschliche Vernunft” returned to Germany in 1949, “wenn ich mich nicht irre.” The narrator recognizes himself as unreliable, breaking down the illusion of the omniscient speaker from the future. He would like to be able to speak with certainty and provide viewers with a happy end, but at the same time casts doubt on this prediction of Berlin’s future. The ending also presents a challenge to the audience to live up to this

⁵⁴ Pleyer, *Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm 1946-1948*: 153.

⁵⁵ Christiane Schönfeld, “Being Human: Good Germans in Postwar German Film,” in *Representing the “Good German” in Literature and Culture after 1945: Altruism and Moral Ambiguity*, ed. Pól Ó Dochartaigh and Christiane Schönfeld (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2013), 124.

⁵⁶ Pleyer notes that despite the blockade, the film was finished in the Tempelhof Studio through use of their own auxiliary power, and premiered on New Year’s Eve 1948. Pleyer, *Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm 1946-1948*: 43.

expectation and to help “reason” return to Germany. With this open ending, the film presents itself as a provisional history, still in process.

The film, using cabaret-like numbers, also contains multiple songs that comment on the postwar present. Some of them are presented as interludes or as musical numbers, and some are diegetic, presented as background music. The sentimental ballad “Wartesaal des Lebens” begins as Otto has to take his place in line at an Exchange Office in an attempt to sell or trade his scale. The filmic images then break with Otto’s story to illustrate the song lyrics, line by line:

Es wartet die Welt in langen Schlangen
Sie wartet, dass man den Hunger stillt
Es wartet der Angler was zu fangen
Es wartet der Jäger auf das Wild
Auf Regen wartet mancher trockener Garten
Damit der Obstbaum Früchte trägt
Der Film muss oft auf Sonne warten
Wir alle warten unentwegt

Im großen Wartesaal des Lebens
Da wartet jeder auf das Glück
Die meisten warten ganz vergebens
Das hält vom Warten nicht zurück
Und können wir das Glück nicht zwingen
Und liegt die letzte Hoffnung weit
Wir sind nicht aus der Ruh’ zu bringen
Bald kommt die nächste Wartezeit
[...]

The images presented are a series of mostly static shots, showing what is being described in the song lyrics. One scene even thematizes the waiting involved in filmmaking, with a shot of directors, actors, and other film staff sitting around idly by their equipment, revealing the conditions of production and thereby also the constructedness of the film.

The refrain “Im großen Wartesaal des Lebens” is a longer take, a tracking shot following

a man entering a waiting room, perhaps at a train station. The room is filled with other people, covering the floor and sleeping while seated at tables around the room. This sequence develops the metaphor of a “waiting room” for postwar Germany—an *interregnum*, commenting on the nature of time in this period as a time “between” historical periods.⁵⁷

In presenting the filmic episodes as history, the disembodied narrator often explains contemporary problems to “future” viewers in a casual, chatty, yet authoritative tone. For example, he explains the surplus of women (6 Berliner women to every 1 man), a fact that would have been well-known to viewers at the time. Likewise, he explains the food ration cards, “Sie waren schwer zu kriegen,” and fingerprinting, “Früher war das Fingerabdrücken nur für Verbrecher. Schluss mit diesem Vorrecht. Jetzt hatte jeder ein Recht drauf.” This tone reminds the audience members that they are supposed to be watching the film as if looking back from 100 years in the future. When the narrator discusses the currency reform, he again takes a mock-documentary tone, and the images shown are presented as if documentary images, shifting the focus away from Otto’s story. The narrator tells viewers: “Endlich konnte man dem Geld in der Hand wieder trauen.” Again, the past tense is part of the fictional frame: whereas in reality the narrator describes a situation that was still ongoing in the Western zones as the film was released, the past tense reminds viewers that the scenes they are viewing are historical images. As Shandley points out, “The voice-over literally pulls the spectator up into the position of a survivor of the spectacle that he is witnessing.”⁵⁸ By continually referring back to the futuristic frame, I argue, the film also draws attention to the fact that it is trying to tell a

⁵⁷ Scherpe also notes the metaphor of a waiting room, vacuum, or interregnum. Klaus R. Scherpe, ed. *In Deutschland unterwegs: Reportagen, Skizzen, Berichte, 1945-1948* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1982).

⁵⁸ Shandley, *Rubble Films: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich*: 179.

history of the present moment. The narrator occasionally marks time in Otto's story—such as a comment about the lack of goods in 1946 “in dem ersten Jahre nach dem Krieg,” or 1947, as Otto attends a “Maskenball,” and the currency reform (1948). The narrator continually speaks as if providing unknown facts, such as increased postwar criminality, the black market, and the international presence in Berlin. Thus the story recapitulates a history from 1940 to 1948, with an emphasis on the first postwar years.

A scene in Otto's apartment exhibits this faux documentary tone particularly well. As the character sleeps, the narrator keeps talking to viewers and the camera moves away from Otto so we can “look around” in the room. This breaks with cinematic convention which would keep the camera on the protagonist. The narrator is able to move around in this historical space, continually speaking as if to future viewers. In this inventory of a typical postwar room, the narrator describes the objects as if to foreign eyes, trying to create a sense of documentary realism while cracking jokes throughout. This, he tells us, is what remained after the apartment was bombed and plundered. The camera pauses to show a damaged grenade. He says, “Diese Granate aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg war leider von einer Granate aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg getroffen und ist nicht mehr als Zigarrenschneider zu gebrauchen.” The narrator also tells us that books remained: “Jetzt stand Thomas Mann vorne und Rosenberg hinten. Die Buddenbrooks hatten den Mythos besiegt.” This refers to an earlier joke during the WWII timeline, when the narrator told us that “Rosenberg stand ganze vorne,” and after a pause, “in der ersten Reihe seiner Bibliothek und und verdeckte Thomas Mann.” These comments, which interrupt Otto's story, prevent viewers from continuous identification with the sympathetic postwar protagonist, who in his “ordinariness” is largely a blank slate for such projections.

The narrator also makes metafilmic commentaries that interrupt the flow of the cinematic diegesis, commenting on the kind of film that is being made. As mentioned, he says early on that viewers will think this is a *Heimkehrerfilm*. Later, he says it is also not a romance. After Otto meets the woman of his dreams (literally, from his repeated *Konditorei* dreams) at a masked ball held in a former bunker, they walk out arm-in-arm through the ruins. The orchestral music plays loudly and they kiss. The narrator interrupts, “Otto, jetzt ist aber genug. Unser Film ist keine Liebesgeschichte. Ein Happy-End können wir jetzt hier nicht gebrauchen. Otto, lass dass, du bist nicht die Hauptperson! Otto, jetzt hats aber geklingelt, geh nach Haus! Otto! Kannst du nicht hören?” This scene can be read as a citation of *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, in which Susanne and Hans confess their love to one another, illuminated in the dark ruinscape which dwarfs the characters. This scene in *Berliner Ballade*, however, is twice subverted: first, Otto ruins the romantic moment by stepping in some kind of object in the rubble, getting his foot stuck; and second, when the narrator interrupts the scene claiming that this is *not* a love film. In *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, the ruins heighten the drama at this moment, as they are an external representation of Hans’ psychological torment. This scene is a climax in the film narrative, as Hans and Susanne become a couple. In this scene in which Otto meets his “dream wife” Eva, the shot focuses on the two figures in the dark, eliding the ruined cityscape. This scene is not especially important to the story. In fact, the film also pokes fun at marriage, as the narrator tells the audience, “in einer Zeit, in der tausende von Paaren sich scheiden ließen, heirateten sie.”

In addition to its disjointed temporal structure, *Berliner Ballade* also uses montage to show the city of Berlin as an intersection of past, present, and future. Two

main scenes use montage in this way. First, there is a scene on the tram in which Otto pulls the bell to signal he would like to get off. A uniformed man responds aggressively, taking an authoritarian stance, claiming that Otto does not have the right to do such a thing:

Wie kommen Sie dazu, zu klingeln? Sie haben überhaupt kein Recht zu klingeln. Zum Klingeln ist nur der Schaffner ermächtigt. Glauben Sie, heute kann in Deutschland jeder tun, was er will? Hier bestimme nur ich und sonst niemand. Mit Ausnahme des Führers! Des Wagenführers!

An image of a military officer standing with his hands on his hips is superimposed over the body of the man, making it very clear that this was a man who was giving orders during the war (Figure 4.13). The superimposition and the comedic script show continuity between wartime and postwar personalities and roles. This scene makes explicit a connection that most contemporary viewers probably would have made anyways: that many former officers exist within postwar Germany society, the “großer Berliner Maskenball des Alltags,” as the narrator calls it.



Figure 4.13. Former officer in train (*Berliner Ballade*)

The second scene which uses this kind of image layering is a debate between two political reactionaries staged in a bar.⁵⁹ The two men argue about military strategy, about tanks vs. aircraft and about supply routes. It is clear, however, that despite their argument, the two men have much in common, maintaining a polite address (“Kamerad”) and drinking and smoking together (and they are played by the same actor through trick photography). The bar table where they are sitting becomes a battlefield and there is a montage of bombs exploding and a bugle call and drumroll. The argument includes mention of the Schlieffen Plan, as well as “unsere Erfahrung von ’40,” and the men speak as if Germany finds itself on the verge of the next world war. The bartender pops a champagne cork and they turn briefly and look for the source of the gunshot-like noise before continuing on. Their cigarette smoke merges with that of the explosions happening on the table. When Otto, looking increasingly scared, yells “Halt!”, the situation escalates as they realize they have an audience:

MANN 1: Was spionieren Sie hier rum?
MANN 2: Sie haben überhaupt nichts zu melden. Verstehen Sie? Die Sache ist ernster, als Sie denken. Es geht hier um Sein oder Nicht sein.
MANN 1: Quatsch! Es geht ums Jetzt!
MANN 2: Blödsinn! Es geht um die Ehre der Nation!
MANN 1: Es geht gegen die Spaltung des Reiches!
MANN 2: Kommen Sie her! Es geht um die Einheit des Volkes!
[...]
NARRATOR: Der Berliner wurde hin und her gerissen.

In this discussion, Otto is literally pulled back and forth between the men, eventually becoming a casualty of the argument. Like the opening sequence with the street signs of Prussian militarism, and the montage in the train, this scene also reveals the

⁵⁹ Thomas Brandlmeier identifies the men as a communist and a Nazi. Brandlmeier, “Von Hitler zu Adenauer: Deutsche Trümmerfilme,” 37.

pervasiveness of militarism. This scene, with its montage of sound and image, suggests another layering of time, and the persistent presence of the past.

Conclusion

Berliner Ballade belongs to the group of films known as rubble films at the same time that it resists and tries to break away from this designation. Although the film begins with an establishing shot of Berlin in ruins, and a stick-thin *Heimkehrer*, it also has a frame from the year 2048 that projects a very different future for Berlin. The narrator continually reminds viewers of this frame, telling us that this is the distant past, the history of postwar Berlin. Through the many leaps in time, the film reveals the complex and precarious temporalities that constitute the postwar present—a present that is constantly caught and pulled between past and future. The use of flashback and image layering reminds viewers of the history that lies beneath the surface, and the use of cabaret-like “numbers” breaks with a conventional character and plot-based storyline. With these formal, narrative, and generic distancing techniques and the film’s self-ironic humor, *Berliner Ballade* both adheres and deviates from conventions of rubble film. The opening sequences show us ruins as part of Germany’s history, but then move away from an aesthetic mode focusing on this monumental brokenness. Instead, the film shifts playfully to the story of a “Normalverbraucher,” as bound to and intertwined with the history of his hometown and his nation. However, at a formal and generic level, the film engages with what it means to create culture from within the rubble of Berlin. Like the performers in Neumann’s cabaret, who lament the “Restbestände früheren Epochen,” wondering how to find orientation in the confusing postwar world, this film experiments

with a mixture of forms to represent history of the immediate past and the postwar present. The city of Berlin is presented as a palimpsest of historical periods, and the filmic images challenge viewers to imagine a distant future of a thriving and modern Berlin. At the same time, the film calls attention to its own constructedness as offering one possible future, asking viewers to doubt the reliability of the narrator. This is still the postwar moment as “Wartesaal,” a history still being written.

CHAPTER 5

“Bloß gut, daß Alles zu Ende war”: Arno Schmidt’s *Schwarze Spiegel*

Alas! I have passed over this desolate land! I have visited the palaces, once the scene of so much splendor, and I beheld nothing but solitude and desolation. I sought the ancient inhabitants and their works, and found nothing but a trace, like the footprints of a traveler over the sand.

-C.F. Volney, “The Ruins of Empires”¹

Arno Schmidt’s 1951 story *Schwarze Spiegel* (*Black Mirrors*) leads readers through the post-nuclear landscape of what was once Germany, only five years ago.² The story is presented through loosely connected scenes that represent the thoughts and self-dialogue of the unnamed main character, traveling by bike across the depopulated continent. These impressions reveal the extent of the devastation (as he believes himself to be the sole survivor) and offer commentary on the fate of humankind (the end of which he claims is for the best). Although the images are sometimes ghostly and macabre, the narrator maintains a sense of humor, amusing himself through playful and imaginative interactions with abandoned artifacts of the pre-catastrophic world. He stops to enter buildings and explore the remains, routinely pausing to note the beauty of the surrounding landscape as well as the vegetation which has already begun to cover the remnants of human life. The story is divided into two parts. Roughly halfway through the

¹ C.F. Volney, *The Ruins, or, Meditation on the Revolutions of Empires: and the Law of Nature*, ed. Peter Eckler (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1991 [1791]), 6.

² Unless otherwise noted, all Schmidt citations are from the Bargfelder Ausgabe (Zürich: Haffmanns Verlag, 1987). Parenthetical citations refer to this volume. I will also maintain Schmidt’s idiosyncratic punctuation. The trilogy including *Schwarze Spiegel* has been translated into English by John Woods. Schmidt, *Nobodaddy’s Children* (Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1995).

first part, the narrator decides to stop his wandering and settle and build a house, gathering materials from the wreckage of nearby buildings, barracks, and storehouses. He makes a trip to Hamburg to collect further supplies, as well as aesthetic objects such as books and artworks. For lack of a partner for conversation, much of the story consists of the narrator's "Gedankenspielerei" (213).

In the second part of the story, the protagonist encounters another survivor, a woman named Lisa who has likewise been wandering across central Europe for years. After a tense moment in which they nearly kill one another, they declare a truce and become lovers. Unlike the narrator, who has not seen another living person, Lisa has twice seen survivors, who then died under various circumstances. The atomic catastrophe, we learn through their conversations, was the result of the mutual destruction of the United States and Russia, creating "zones" of atomic wasteland and likely leaving only a few survivors scattered across the globe. Through the encounter with Lisa, we also learn more about the narrator, and even read part of his memoirs, a kind of embedded text that he presents Lisa as a birthday gift upon her request. Their domestic bliss is soon cut short, however, as Lisa decides to continue searching for other survivors, leaving the protagonist alone again. No happy end here.

In terms of its narrative presentation, the story consists largely of "fillers" (Moretti) rather than events or plot; episodes and scenes are strung together, one after the other, without driving change or moving the plot forward.³ The narrator explores an

³ Moretti takes the concept of "fillers" from Barthes, distinguishing between "turning points" and "fillers," or functions that open up the narrative, and those with a "weak" functionality, respectively. "Narration: but of the everyday. This is the secret of fillers. Narration, because these episodes always contain a certain dose of uncertainty [...]; but the uncertainty remains local, circumscribed, without long-term consequences 'for the development of the story,' as Barthes would say." Franco Moretti, "Serious Century," in *The Novel. History, Geography, and Culture*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton, 2006), 368.

abandoned house, bangs on a piano, admires the beauty of the moon and the forest, decides to build a house, visits Hamburg and wanders through the Kunsthalle, writes an outraged letter to an American professor about an article in *Reader's Digest*. Most of these episodes are presented as “snapshots,” to use Schmidt’s own terminology, stripped of psychology and unnecessary description in the author’s attempt to portray life as discontinuous and consciousness as porous and mosaic-like. The only true “event” occurs as the narrator meets Lisa in what is at first a dangerous, life-threatening encounter. After their armistice, their life together is also composed of non-events, although Lisa’s presence allows for dialogue and thus a shift in the mode of narration. However, as they part ways at the end, the narrator finds himself again “der letzte Mensch” (260).

Schwarze Spiegel stages a moment of global atomic destruction that did *not* come in the wake of the Second World War, despite the fears of many.⁴ The story has been read as a mixture of utopia and dystopia, “Wunsch- und Warnphantasie zugleich,” a futuristic forewarning to readers that this may be what the future holds.⁵ The many descriptions of nature evoke a peaceful idyll, contrasted with an image of human existence which has annihilated itself.⁶ Hartmut Vollmer describes the story as a mix of contradictions that originate in the ambivalence of the narrating subject: “Weltende und neue Existenzgründung, Menschenabkehr und Menschenhinwendung,

⁴ The fantasy of total annihilation was not only part of Nazi existentialist propaganda, but was also exacerbated by rumors in the postwar period that the United States would implement the Morgenthau Plan and raze Germany to create farmland. The Morgenthau Plan was proposed in September 1944 by Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and was quickly dismissed. See Melvin Lasky’s article for *Der Monat*, which attempts to clarify these intentions for the Germans. Melvin J. Lasky, “Die kurze Geschichte des Morgenthau Plans. Ein dokumentarischer Rückblick,” *Der Monat*, no. 10 (1949).

⁵ Hartmut Vollmer, “Glückseligkeiten letzter Menschen: Arno Schmidts ‘Schwarze Spiegel’,” in *Arno Schmidt. Das Frühwerk II.*, ed. Michael Matthias Schardt (Aachen: Alano Rader Verlag, 1987), 93.

⁶ Axel Dunker, “Im Wacholderring oder ‘Der nächste Fußpfad in Richtung Arkadien’: Arno Schmidts Erzählung ‘Schwarze Spiegel’ als Idylle,” in *Wiederholte Spiegelungen: Elf Aufsätze zum Werk Arno Schmidts*, ed. Robert Weninger (Augsburg: edition text + kritik, 2003).

Zivilisationszerstörung und Zivilisationsaufbau.”⁷ These uncertainties are reflected in the narrator’s oft-repeated phrase “gut, dass Alles zu Ende war,” which seems less convincing with each utterance.⁸ Yet these readings of the text insist on a meaning that Schmidt seems to largely reject.⁹

In this chapter, my analysis of *Schwarze Spiegel* will focus on how Schmidt’s text explores the possibilities for writing and making stories after the devastation of the Second World War. I read *Schwarze Spiegel* as a new kind of “rubble text,” both a self-conscious rejection of realist literary models, and also a serious attempt to develop a new language and form for narrative in the aftermath of catastrophe. I argue that Schmidt’s story is shaped by a disidentification with the past that sets it apart from other works of this period that focus on “Vergangenheitsbewältigung,” or a direct (and often moralizing) thematization of Germany’s recent history.¹⁰

⁷ Vollmer, “Glückseligkeiten letzter Menschen: Arno Schmidts ‘Schwarze Spiegel,’” 93.

⁸ There are nine variations of this utterance. For example: “Bloß gut, daß Alles zu Ende war” (202); “bloß gut, daß Alles ein Ende hat!” (208); “ach, es war doch gut, daß Alle weg waren...Es war doch richtig so” (210); “es ist doch gut, daß mit all dem aufgeräumt wurde !” (224); “wie gut, daß es so gekommen ist !” (231); “Und es ist gut so !” (244). See Schwier, “Bloß gut” Heinrich Schwier, *Niemand: ein kommentierendes Handbuch zu Arno Schmidts “Schwarze Spiegel”* (München: Ed. Text + Kritik, 2009), 56-57.

⁹ In fact, Schmidt seems to call conventions of meaning-making themselves into question. In this sense, the story might be compared to Samuel Beckett’s *Endgame* (1957), which likewise presents a literary attempt to imagine a setting beyond the next world catastrophe. In Adorno’s reading of *Endgame*, Beckett’s play represents the ultimate destruction that followed in the wake of the Second World War: “everything, including a resurrected culture, has been destroyed without realizing it; humankind continues to vegetate, creeping along after events that even the survivors cannot really survive, on a rubbish heap that has made even reflection on one’s own damaged state useless.” Theodor W. Adorno, “Trying to Understand *Endgame*,” in *Notes to Literature*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 244.

¹⁰ For more on Schmidt’s political position in postwar Germany, see “Arno Schmidts Nachkriegsdeutschland” in Jan Philipp Reemtsma, *Über Arno Schmidt: Vermessungen eines poetischen Terrains* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), 98-117. Reemtsma argues that Schmidt’s main critique was against Germany’s “Westbindung” and rearmament: “Die Furcht vor einem dritten Weltkrieg ist für Schmidtdas beherrschende Motiv (107). See Menke and Uelzmann for readings of political and social issues in Schmidt’s work. Timm Menke, “Flüchtlings- und Vertriebenenschicksale im Werk Arno Schmidts,” *German Life and Letters* 57, no. 4 (2004); Jan Uelzmann, “Consumption and Consummation: Domestic Tales of the Economic Miracle in Arno Schmidt’s *Das steinerne Herz*,” *German Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2013).

This chapter will have three main parts. First, I discuss the importance of Schmidt's adaption of the diary form and how the story is presented through fragmentary scenes told in first-person voice. I argue that elements of the diary are used to create discontinuity and a story that rejects a teleological trajectory. Second, I show how Schmidt draws from and parodies the genre of the Robinsonade, creating a new survivor protagonist and Friday figure as well as a new kind of "shipwreck" scenario. And third, I examine the presence of rubble and ruin in the text. As the narrator sifts through the rubble of Germany, his thoughts create a palimpsest that exposes the temporal and textual strata visible in the debris. The reader explores this landscape as well, confronted with a similar task of excavation: the dense intertextuality of the text. Through this reading of *Schwarze Spiegel*, I show how Schmidt presents us with a crucial contribution to the period of "rubble literature," offering insights into the possibilities for narrative after radical violence and destruction.

Before I turn to an analysis of the story, allow me to briefly provide some background information about Schmidt's literary career and situate this text. Like Wolfgang Koeppen, Schmidt is often considered a literary "outsider" of the postwar period. In the late 1950s, Schmidt even isolated himself geographically, moving with his wife Alice to a small house in Bargfeld in the Lüneburger Heide, where he lived until his death in 1979. His work is usually categorized with a distinction between the "early" works, written before 1960, and later work, in which he began more formal experimentation with "etymys," or sound fragments, under the influence of an intense engagement with Joyce and Freud. Schmidt's literary career did not begin until after the war, but with the publication of *Leviathan* in 1949 he was quickly recognized as one of

the most talented postwar writers, and was awarded the literary prize of the Mainzer Akademie in 1950.¹¹ Alfred Döblin, who awarded him the prize, later wrote to the new author full of praise for his work, “Sie sind auf dem richtigen Wege, ich weiß keinen von den Jungen und Jüngeren, der da mit Ihnen mitkommt.”¹² Alfred Andersch was also an early advocate of Schmidt’s work, supporting him through radio assignments and through publication in his journal *Texte und Zeichen*.¹³

Among Germany’s wider reading public, Schmidt was an endless source of controversy, quickly gaining the reputation as a difficult writer. With the 1970 publication of the massive *Zettels Traum* (1334 pages, over 10 kilograms, and printed on extra-large, A3-sized paper), this reputation was solidified in the public eye. Although Schmidt was compared to Joyce from the start of his career, Schmidt did not actually read Joyce until 1956. His literary models were from the Enlightenment and Romanticism—Wieland and Fouqué in particular, English-language writers such as Cooper and Poe, and interwar expressionists. For the most part, Schmidt “invented his own modernism,” as Friedhelm Rathjen has argued, largely without knowledge of literary modernism outside Germany’s borders.¹⁴ In a period in which many contemporary German authors were

¹¹ For an analysis of Schmidt’s reception in the press, see Stiftel, who notes the importance of Rowohlt’s publicity in the reception of the author. Ralf Stiftel, *Die Rezensenten und Arno Schmidt* (Frankfurt am Main: Bangert & Metzler, Buchhändler, 1996).

¹² The quote continues, “und von den Älteren kapierten die meisten überhaupt nichts, die können nur Adenauer wählen.” Quoted in Bernd Erhard Fischer, *Arno Schmidt in Bargfeld*, Menschen und Orte (Berlin: Edition A. B. Fischer, 2007), 10.

¹³ Because of Andersch’s publication of *Seelandschaft mit Pocahontas*, Andersch and Schmidt also fought a pornography lawsuit in 1955. For more on their work together in the medium of radio, see Ansgar Warner, “Kampf gegen Gespenster.” *Die Radio-Essays Wolfgang Koeppens und Arno Schmidts im Nachtprogramm des Süddeutschen Rundfunks als kritisches Gedächtnismedium* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2007).

¹⁴ Rathjen has published extensively on Schmidt’s knowledge of other modernist writers. See Friedhelm Rathjen, “Eine oberflächliche Vertrautheit: Arno Schmidt und die internationale Moderne,” *literaturkritik.de* Januar(2014), http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez_id=18647. Rathjen, *Inselwärts. Arno Schmidt und die Literaturen der britischen Inseln* (Scheeßel: Edition ReJoyce, 2008); *Westwärts. Arno Schmidt und die amerikanische Literatur* (Scheeßel: Edition ReJoyce, 2006); *Arno*

advocating new forms of realism, such as the terse language of “Kahlschlag” advocated especially by earlier members of Gruppe 47, or the humanistic realism of Heinrich Böll, Schmidt was developing radically new techniques: dense intertextuality, irony and word play, idiosyncratic punctuation, “mobiliz[ing] every means of expression known in the Gutenberg medium in order to clarify the modes of perception.”¹⁵ Schmidt’s first published stories in *Leviathan* (1949) and *Brand’s Haide* (1951) already exhibit his unique and innovative style.

Schwarze Spiegel was first published together with the story *Brand’s Haide* in 1951. At first it did not receive much attention from a wider public despite largely positive reviews, such as that of Hermann Kasack, who called Schmidt “der kühnste Pionier der neuen deutschen Epik.”¹⁶ In July 1952, *Der Spiegel* listed the book in a table of “Die nichtgefragten Bücher des Jahres,” with the explanation from the publisher Rowohlt that “Neue, so stark experimentell arbeitende Autoren...immer erst in jahrelanger Arbeit durchzusetzen [sind].”¹⁷ Both stories were later re-published as part of a trilogy called *Nobodaddy’s Kinder* in 1963, with the addition of *Aus dem Leben eines Fauns* (written 1953). In *Nobodaddy’s Kinder*, the three stories were also re-ordered chronologically according to their setting: “Hitler years & war; postwar and future” (*Faun*, *Brand’s Haide*, and *Schwarze Spiegel*).¹⁸ Although Schmidt told his editor it was a “comprehensive and carefully balanced trilogy,” his wife’s diary documents that the

Schmidt global. Eine Bestandsaufnahme der internationalen Rezeption 1950-2010 (München: edition text + kritik, 2010).

¹⁵ Hans-Bernhard Moeller, “Perception, Word-Play, and the Printed Page: Arno Schmidt and His Poe Novel,” *Books Abroad* 45, no. 1 (1971): 26.

¹⁶ Hans-Michael Bock and Thomas Schreiber, *Über Arno Schmidt: Rezensionen vom ‘Leviathan’ bis zur ‘Julia’* (Zürich: Haffmans, 1984), 21.

¹⁷ “Die Bestseller des Jahres und die nichtgefragten Bücher des Jahres,” *Der Spiegel*, 30 July 1952.

¹⁸ Diary of Alice Schmidt, 30 January 1953. Cited in Schmidt, *Nobodaddy’s Children*: iix. The setting for the stories is as follows: *Faun*: 1939/44, *Brand’s Haide*: 1945/46, *Schwarze Spiegel*: 1960/62. As Schmidt did, I will refer to this trilogy as the “Brand’s Haide trilogy.”

idea occurred to him after writing all three, as a convenient means to justify the “sameness of landscape” and other “rather embarrassing similarities.”¹⁹

“Tagebücher, die keiner schreiben konnte”: Schmidt’s Use of the Diary Form

The diary form was one of the “embarrassing similarities” shared by Schmidt’s early postwar stories, from *Leviathan* to *Brand’s Haide*. This did not go unnoticed by contemporary reviewers, who almost all noted Schmidt’s use of the fictional diary form and the first-person narrator. Walter Guggenheimer, after calling the stories novellas, corrects himself: “Auch sind es nicht Novellen: Tagebücher, die keiner schreiben konnte von diesen Toten.”²⁰ The reviewer for the *Darmstädter Echo* described the form as “freilich bezeichnend für unsern literarischen Zustand [...], daß die Erzählung jeweils die Form des Tagebuchs hat, also extrem subjektiv und durch Reflexion und Denkprozeß beliebig gebrochen.”²¹ Likewise, another reviewer saw Schmidt’s “broken” style as symptomatic of the period: “Was sie erzählen, ist Traumschutt, verworren, manchmal grob und ungenau, manchmal geschmeidig und gewandt, aber immer hastig und bruchstückartig, oft in Tagebuchform, weil der ruhige, lange Atem fehlt.”²² In this way, Schmidt’s postwar stories represent the refusal to write a realist novel, or epic prose (epic as characterized by “der ruhige, lange Atem”). In fact, his use of loosely connected episodes harkens back to pre-18th-century novels, to the fragmentary forms of the Romantics, as well as to Weimar modernists such as Döblin.

¹⁹ Alice Schmidt, *Tagebuch aus dem Jahr 1954*, ed. Susanne Fischer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2004).

²⁰ Walter M. Guggenheimer, “Zu den Welträndern ins Menschenlose,” *Frankfurter Hefte*, 1950 (1), 103. Quoted in Bock and Schreiber, *Über Arno Schmidt: Rezensionen vom ‘Leviathan’ bis zur ‘Julia’*: 12.

²¹ Nt., “Der Mensch auf der Flucht” *Darmstädter Echo*, 21.12.1949. Quoted in *ibid.*, 9.

²² M., “Die Beseitigung des Traumschutts,” *Der Sozialdemokrat*, 5.2.1950. Quoted in *ibid.*, 13.

As evidenced by these reviews, it was easy for contemporary readers to regard these texts as fictionalized diaries, especially during a period in which memoirs, first-person travel accounts, and diaries were ubiquitous. As I have argued in Chapter One, the diary was a paradigmatic form of the immediate postwar period, both a popular style and a means of seeking refuge and retreat during this time of upheaval, crisis, and uncertainty. As Klemperer's work shows us (Chapter Two), the diary also provided a form to create a history of the recent past as "Arbeit der ersten Stunde," written from a position of "nearness" to the past. Distinct from memoir or other autobiographical forms, the diary is a crisis genre for its fragmentary uncertainties, open-ended questions, and proximity to events, without the distance afforded by a more retrospective perspective. Accordingly, it does not aspire to produce synthesis but instead often reveals the writer's thought process. Schmidt himself, in an essay for a volume on *Das Tagebuch und der moderne Autor*, proceeds to denigrate the form at length, calling the diary "das Alibi der Wirrköpfe" and "einer der Abörter der Literatur!" before self-ironically admitting to keeping a diary himself.²³ In Schmidt's reworking of the form in his fiction, he makes use of the diary's present tense and highly subjective focalization. However, whereas the diary is usually a tool of continuity, as the subject attempts to create a sense of a continuous self, Schmidt uses the diary form to create a stylized form of discontinuity. In the following, I show how Schmidt uses these elements of the diary form—fragmentary structure, presentist temporality, and first-person voice—as he develops his new modernist style for postwar narration. This episodic and discontinuous style represents an experimentation with new structures and styles for literature in the wake of catastrophe.

²³ Arno Schmidt, "Eines Hähers: 'TUÉ!' und 1014 fallend," in *Das Tagebuch und der moderne Autor*, ed. Uwe Schultz and Günther Anders (Frankfurt am Main; Berlin: Ullstein, 1982), 116.

Especially in Schmidt's early postwar stories (from *Leviathan* to *Faun*), the citation of the diary form is explicit through dated entries and fragmentary blocks of text.²⁴ The story "Leviathan oder Die beste der Welten" (1949) begins with a letter (in English), and then includes diary-like entries, beginning with the date "14.2.45."²⁵ Readers are thus confronted with a (fictional) German diary found by an American soldier. In the *Brand's Haide* trilogy, the diary structure is slightly radicalized. Visually, the text's formatting on the page resembles that of a drama, with italicized headings and a hanging indent instead of left-justified text (Figure 5.1). Yet the italicized "headings" depart from traditional dated entries, instead consisting of words or phrases. The headings

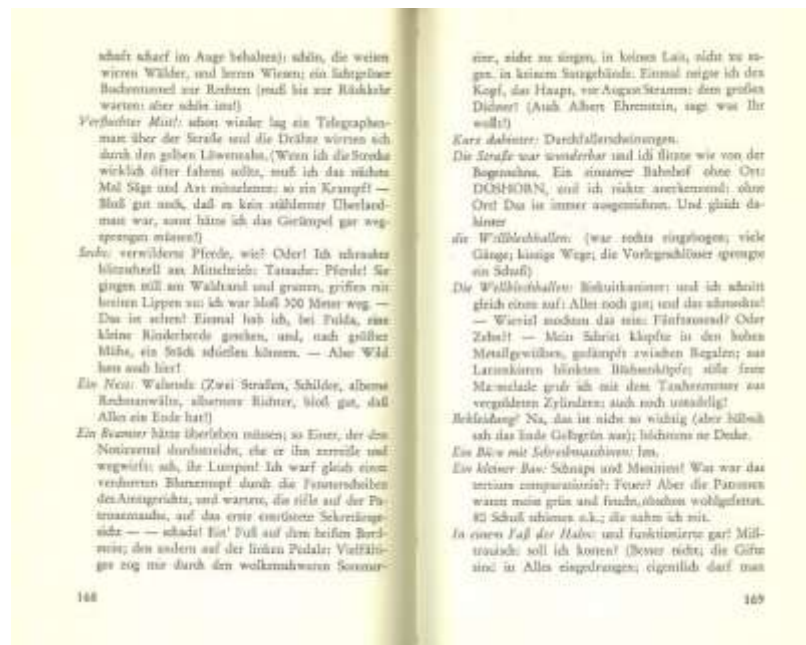


Figure 5.1. Excerpt from *Schwarze Spiegel*. First edition, in *Brand's Haide*, 1951.

sometimes offer an image, a quotation, or the narrator's speech or inner speech, leading directly into the block of text. Although the entries only rarely orient the reader in time

²⁴ As Schwier notes, seven of Schmidt's early stories begin with dates, including the three stories in *Leviathan*, as well as the three stories in the *Brand's Haide* trilogy. Schwier, *Niemand: ein kommentierendes Handbuch zu Arno Schmidts "Schwarze Spiegel"*: 45.

²⁵ The bombing of Dresden is therefore an unnamed intertext from the beginning, later mentioned in the text as the narrator sees fire on the horizon.

with a specific date as a diary would, all three of the stories in the trilogy *begin* with a date, tethering the narrative to a specific time: *Faun*, February 1939; *Brand's Haide*, 21.3.1946; *Schwarze Spiegel*, 1.5.1960. The diary in *Leviathan* is written on half a telegram pad, and *Brand's Haide* contains the added detail “auf britischem Klopapier,” humorously specifying the materiality of the text’s original manuscript and setting the scene for a period in which provisional and makeshift modes of writing are in demand.

These diary elements lend an air of concreteness to the text at the same time that Schmidt playfully modifies the diary form in his hyper-stylized fiction. All the stories in the trilogy allude to the diary form, making it recognizable, and then quickly depart from the traditional dated structure. Here is the beginning of *Schwarze Spiegel*:

(1. 5. 1960)

Lichter ? (ich hob mich auf den Pedalen) – : – Nirgends. (Also wie immer seit den fünf Jahren).

Aber : der lakonische Mond längs der zerbröckelten Straße (von den Rändern her haben Gras und Quecken die Teerdecke aufgebrochen, so daß nur in der Mitte noch zwei Meter Fahrbahn bleiben : das genügt ja für mich!) (201)

These first fragments already alert readers to several unique dimensions of Schmidt’s style and introduce central motifs of the story. In terms of style, we are presented with short scenes, often fragmentary and using parentheses to separate actions, thoughts, and descriptions. Spatially and typographically, the text is discontinuous. The unusual punctuation “– : – ” seems to extend the silence, representing the narrator’s slow gaze, as he strains his eyes in the night. The story begins with a date that situates the story in the near future at the time of publication in 1951. Thematically, the mention of the moon as well as the broken asphalt is also a typical combination of nature and ruin description—a pattern to which I will return below.

In addition to the skeletal style of the diary that has been appropriated here in the form of fragmentary entries, Schmidt also plays with the temporality of the diary in his prose. The way his fragments move chronologically forward in time parallels the stuttering forward movement of the diary form, with gaps in which minutes, days, and sometimes weeks, months, or even years are unaccounted for. As Margo Culley writes, “the diary is always in process, always in some sense a fragment.”²⁶ This stuttering temporality is a central dimension of Schmidt’s “rubble” style – as the fictional narrator seems to tell his story with little to no temporal distance from the events being narrated. The idea of a diary form is reiterated later by the narrator himself, who questions the act of writing: “Ich möchte wissen, warum ich überhaupt noch diariere; ich habe keine Lust mehr, im Sinnlosen zu stochern” (229). Not precisely calling the text a diary, the narrator creates the verb “to diarize,” also emphasizing the unplanned nature of his writing as “im Sinnlosen stochern.”

Schmidt himself discusses these issues of temporality in a series of essays on literary technique titled “Berechnungen” written in the mid-1950s.²⁷ He describes his early style in terms of a “Tagesmosaik” of reconstructed memory that mirrors our perception of the present:

man rufe sich am Abend den vergangenen Tag zurück, also die »jüngste Vergangenheit« (die auch getrost noch als »älteste Gegenwart« definiert werden könnte): hat man das Gefühl eines »epischen Flusses« der Ereignisse? Eines Kontinuums überhaupt? Es gibt diesen epischen Fluß, auch der Gegenwart, gar nicht; Jeder vergleiche sein eigenes beschädigtes Tagesmosaik!²⁸

²⁶ Margo Culley, ed. *A Day at a Time: The Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1985), 19.

²⁷ For more on Schmidt’s prose theory see Hartwig Suhrbier, *Zur Prosa-theorie von Arno Schmidt* (München: Edition Text + Kritik, 1980); F. Peter Ott, “Tradition and Innovation: An Introduction to the Prose Theory and Practice of Arno Schmidt,” *The German Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1978).

²⁸ Arno Schmidt, “Berechnungen I,” in *Bargfelder Ausgabe der Werke Arno Schmidts* (Zürich: Haffmanns Verlag, 1987), 167.

What Schmidt describes in this essay closely matches the form of diary writing, by which the diarist recalls and notes the occurrences of the previous day shortly thereafter—usually at the end of each day. This act of memory, of recalling the recent past (or “oldest present”), proves to Schmidt that our experience of time is not continuous, but is instead mosaic-like. Time cannot be imagined through metaphors of a stream or flow but must instead be fragmented, described as “musivisch” or “löcherig,” in part due to the “porösen Struktur [...] unserer Gegenwartsempfindung.”²⁹ Schmidt describes the form of such narration as a “Perlenkette kleiner Erlebniseinheiten, innerer und äußerer,” and later summarizes this style with the keyword “löchrige Gegenwart.”³⁰ The emphasis is therefore placed on both discontinuity and on presentist temporality. In an earlier version of the essay, Schmidt describes his technique as “dehydrated” prose, in which all “sekundären, schildernden Elemente” are omitted from the story (*Fabel*).³¹ In this way, Schmidt writes, his prose reflects the workings of memory: “die Ereignisse springen : grundsätzlich ergibt sich durch unsere mangelhafte Gehirnleistung mit ihrem ‘Vergessen’ eine poröse Struktur unseres Daseins : die Vergangenheit ist uns immer ein Rasterbild.”³² He describes the *Brand’s Haide* trilogy as a literary attempt to represent our “porous” being and the inadequacies and omissions of memory involved in our perception of time.

This representation of “porous presence” parallels the diary’s “web-like” or “lace-like” qualities, as Philippe Lejeune describes: “a diary is like lacework, a net of tighter or looser links that contain more empty space than solid parts.”³³ Readers of diaries,

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Schmidt, “Berechnungen,” in *Bargfelder Ausgabe der Werke Arno Schmidts* (Zürich: Haffmanns Verlag, 1987), 103.

³² Ibid. See also Tina Grahl, “Arno Schmidts Prosatheorie der Berechnungen und ihre literarische Umsetzung im Werk der 1950er Jahre” (Magisterarbeit, Karlsruher Institut für Technologie, 2012).

³³ Philippe Lejeune, *On Diary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009), 153.

Lejeune emphasizes, enter into a text which they can never fully understand because of the gap between diarist and reader: “for the person who is writing, the discrete points of reference that I [as a diarist] set down on paper hold an invisible galaxy of other memories in suspension around them. [...] no outside reader can read it the same way as the author.”³⁴ What Lejeune describes here as a quality of diaries, Schmidt recognizes as a condition of *all* texts. His work radicalizes literary form to make these gaps visible. Schmidt’s fragmentary style not only points to the divide between reader and writer, as Lejeune suggests as a main characteristic of the diary, but also to the need for imagination to fill in an “invisible galaxy of other memories.” Schmidt’s prose—as well as his punctuation, in a very visible sense—widens the gaps of the text, creating additional space for the reader’s imagination. Describing himself as an older, bitter author, Schmidt commented in an interview: “Sie können also nicht Pfirsiche und Rosen von mir verlangen, sondern nur Eicheln und Maggiwürfel—Wasser hat jeder Leser ja sowieso genug.”³⁵ It is the task of the reader, he insinuates, to create life out of his dense, “extract-like” prose. And in fact, this is one of the paradoxes of Schmidt’s writing, as Jan Philipp Reemtsma emphasizes: “daß bestimmte formale Eigentümlichkeiten (Orthographie, Satzzeichen, Kleinkapitel, Stilmittel Foto/Text, Mehrspaltigkeit usw.) als Mittel zur Lesererleichterung präsentiert werden, obwohl sie zum Ruf des ‘schwierigen Schmidt’ entscheidend beigetragen haben.”³⁶ Although Schmidt describes his technique as the most precise means of representing presence and perception, it demands

³⁴ Ibid., 181.

³⁵ “Mensch nach der Katastrophe,” *Der Spiegel*, Feb. 6 1952. In Bock and Schreiber, *Über Arno Schmidt: Rezensionen vom ‘Leviathan’ bis zur ‘Julia’*: 22.

³⁶ Reemtsma, *Über Arno Schmidt: Vermessungen eines poetischen Terrains*: 182.

more work on the part of the reader than a traditional realist mode which makes its techniques less visible.

The story *Schwarze Spiegel* is in many ways exemplary of the prose technique described by Schmidt. In fact, these early stories seem to be a kind of laboratory for developing his poetic theory. The story is told in short episodic increments, the “Perlenkette kleiner Erlebniseinheiten,” rather than in a narrative with a climax and resolution. As in authentic (non-fictional) diaries, the text moves forward in time as if the narrator does not know what will come. Additionally, the narrator usually does not relate more than the past few hours or the past day. At times it even seems as if the narrator is writing simultaneously with the narrated action. This produces a sense of proximity to the recent catastrophe, as well as the openness of the future—that the narrator does not know how the story will end. The story begins with a date (in parentheses), but after that temporal markers are only rarely inserted: “4 Wochen später,” “22. Juli 1960: Richtfest!” and “Der zweite November brach die Blätter ab.”³⁷ Furthermore, the text draws attention to the narrator’s own uncertainties. At the beginning, he is not even sure whether he has the correct date (hence the parentheses) and must wait for a lunar eclipse to confirm his calculations. Although diaries usually consist primarily of the more informal spoken past (*Perfekt*) and present tense, *Schwarze Spiegel* is largely composed in the narrative past tense (*Präteritum*), which is only occasionally interrupted by the present tense: “morgen muß ich mal Alles durchölen” (201); “Käse möchte ich wieder mal essen : Kräuterkäse; Schweizer, Edamer...” (202); “muß mich auch rasieren, morgen früh” (204); “Ich fürcht mich nicht im Dunkeln nach Haus zu gehn” (210); “die Uhr müßt’ ich auch wieder mal

³⁷ See Schwier for a table “Zum Handlungszeitraum.” Schwier, *Niemand: ein kommentierendes Handbuch zu Arno Schmidts “Schwarze Spiegel”*: 304-05.

überprüfen” (218); “morgen kommt der Fußboden rein” (219). These instances of the present tense—what Dorrit Cohn calls “tensual deviance”—remind the reader that this is a text-in-progress, not a completed whole or a retrospective account.³⁸

In addition to the use of present tense, the citations, interjections, and tangential remarks contribute to discontinuity of the text. In his prose theory, Schmidt touted the diary’s importance as “der erste Ansatz zur Bewältigung innerer Vorgänge,” and the present tense “als [das] eindringlichst[e] Tempus, das dem Leser die schnelle Identifizierung mit den Handelnden erleichtert.”³⁹ In his stories, however, Schmidt subverts any kind of identification with the narrator by using a style that draws attention to its constructedness. The temporal structure as well as the fragmentariness of the narrative are effects created to draw attention to the text’s highly subjective first-person narrator. There is no omniscient perspective from which the story is told—only one individual’s interior monologue in the first half, and then later, in the second half, interior monologue mixed with reported dialogue. The literary presentation of inner thought draws on a tradition established by Joyce and Döblin yet which decidedly finds a new form in Schmidt, what he calls in *Faun* “das ‘Tablett voll glitzernder snapshots.’”⁴⁰ The concept of “shapshots” draws attention to the vivid images presented in the text but also to the frames: we are presented with images cut off from the panorama of vision. The first half of *Schwarze Spiegel* offers no events, but only a series of scenes, all focalized through the first-person narrator. Schmidt’s first-person narrator, however, is quite different from other literary models. Although we are presented with the narrator’s

³⁸ Dorrit Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 99.

³⁹ Schmidt, “Berechnungen,” 102; “Berechnungen I,” 163.

⁴⁰ Rensei notes the lineage Joyce-Döblin-Schmidt, although at the time Schmidt had not yet read James Joyce. Georg Rensei, “Monolog eines Einzelgängers,” *Darmstädter Echo*, 28.9.1953. Quoted in Bock and Schreiber, *Über Arno Schmidt: Rezensionen vom ‘Leviathan’ bis zur ‘Julia’*: 37.

impressions, the text segments remain strangely detached, not offering the subject's emotional interiority. As Kasack described Schmidt's style: "In der Darstellung vermeidet er ebenso die psychologische Erzählweise wie die Reportage. Er gibt einen minutiösen Bericht, der aus Fetzen die Wahrheit der Wirklichkeit zusammensetzt."⁴¹ Instead of the character's psychology, we are presented with "scraps" of thought and internal and external reality. Thus although there are elements of the diary form, Schmidt's text lacks the self-reflective subject of classical diary models.

Another crucial departure from more traditional forms of a fictionalized diary is the way the narrator's body and gestures—especially his physiognomy—are continually described. Such details are not provided in authentic diary accounts but are commonly found in third-person fictional narration. This breaks from the fiction of interior monologue, forcing the reader to imagine the narrator as embodied. For example, he admires a "tastefully built" settlement, "so daß ich beifällig den Mund spitzen mußte" (204); or looking at seductive images of nearly naked women: "da mußte ich doch schlucken" (206); or while reading postcards, "So stand ich denn auf und verließ lautlos pfeifend die Situation" (208). He uses a wide range of descriptive vocabulary to describe his own reactions to the objects and sights around him: "sah denkend mit Eulenaugen" (213); "ich drückte die Stirn auf die Kniee und flocht Finger durch Zehen" (213); "Und ich dehnte die Augen und lachte nickend und ingrimmig" (219); "so hockte ich lange und müßig mit rechtsgeneigtem Kopf" (204). These vivid descriptions of the narrator require an external focalization, although this breaks with the formal conventions of a first-person interior monologue.

⁴¹ Hermann Kasack, "Ein poetischer Seismograph," *Neue Literarische Welt*, 10.1. 1952.

In summary, *Schwarze Spiegel*, like much of Schmidt's postwar prose, blends elements of both diaristic writing and fictional narration, creating a new form that is decidedly rooted in the postwar present. As Schmidt wrote in "Berechnungen," he set out to create "ein Bild meiner Zeit...wie es sich *mir* darstellt."⁴² What he creates in these early stories is an attempt at narration, at finding a form for postwar narration that is also an "image" of the time. Although this is true of all his early stories, in *Schwarze Spiegel* the futuristic post-catastrophic setting intensifies these themes, as well as the solitary voice of the narrator. By borrowing from the conventions of diary writing, Schmidt is able to create a text that offers an image—as well as a voice—of the period. Schmidt's diary fragments, or "strung-together" scenes, are a counter-model to stories with narrative arc and techniques of continuity. *Schwarze Spiegel* embraces the small unit of scene or impression as a strength rather than a weakness of narration. Additionally, the highly presentist temporality of the text mimics the temporal structure of the diary. This presentation of scenes emphasizes the proximity of the recent past, the position of the narrator in the present, and the lack of a retrospective gaze. Finally, the story is presented via an unnamed narrator—one who has survived multiple world wars. In the next section, I take a closer look at the narrator through an analysis of his relation to the figure of Robinson Crusoe.

Robinson Crusoe and *Schwarze Spiegel*

The unnamed solitary survivor of *Schwarze Spiegel* bears many parallels to Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe's shipwrecked survivor of the eponymous novel (1719). While Robinson salvages essential items such as weapons and ammunition from the *literal*

⁴² Schmidt, "Berechnungen," 104.

shipwreck, the narrator of *Schwarze Spiegel* has abandoned warehouses, barracks, art galleries and libraries at his disposal—the metaphorical shipwreck of modern civilization. Following Gérard Genette’s work on literature as palimpsest, I look at how *Robinson Crusoe* functions as a hypertext for *Schwarze Spiegel* and how Schmidt adapts the genre to his own ends in his refusal to create a Robinson-like new beginning. In discussing hypertextuality, Genette uses the analogy of the palimpsest to show how “on the same parchment, one text can become superimposed upon another, which it does not quite conceal but allows to show through.”⁴³ And just as Schmidt allows the story of Robinson to “show through,” he also interacts playfully with the material. As Genette emphasizes, “the pleasure of the hypertext is also a *game*. The porosity of partitions between genres is chiefly due to the contagious potential of the playful mode in this particular aspect of literary production.”⁴⁴ Arno Schmidt certainly stands out among authors who realize the potential for *play* with the literary canon. Schmidt cites Defoe’s classic story of shipwreck but also invests *Schwarze Spiegel* with new meaning. In my analysis, I push the “metaphorics of shipwreck” (Blumenberg) in two other ways.⁴⁵ First, I will discuss Lisa’s presence in the story as a crucial rewriting of Friday, the tamed savage; and second, in the last part of the chapter, I read *Schwarze Spiegel* with the trope of shipwreck, and show how Schmidt is interested in what is left of culture and civilization after total catastrophe. Read in this way, the narrator’s (fictional) entries are both a means to *create* and *salvage* culture from the wreckage, creating a text which becomes part of the rubble of culture left to those who may come later.

⁴³ Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 398.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 399.

⁴⁵ Hans Blumenberg, *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 18.

As a genre, Robinsonades combine biography, adventure, and travel writing, and they are most frequently written in the form of fictional autobiography: the narrating protagonist retells the fascinating, strange, and exciting events which occurred during his isolation.⁴⁶ In Defoe's novel, Robinson also keeps a diary, which—in the frame of the fictional narrative—is the basis for the novel. Robinson's journal is a way of maintaining ties to European civilization at the same time that it tracks his progress as a colonizer and tamer of the wild and primitive island. At the beginning of Chapter Five, Robinson writes that he will now share his journal with us (the readers), and the text then continues with dated entries. Within the text, he names himself and tells his story: "September 30, 1659.—I, poor miserable Robinson Crusoe, being shipwrecked during a dreadful storm..."⁴⁷ The entries continue to chronicle his daily tasks and small accomplishments, noting the weather and his health, his dreams and fears, and his reflections, often on religion and fate. Like Defoe, Schmidt uses the diary form as a means to represent the story of the survivor; however, in *Schwarze Spiegel*, there is no frame narrative and the narrator is never named. Until late in the story, the reader does not know the details of the disaster. The story begins with the narrator already "shipwrecked," only slowly revealing to the readers the nature of the catastrophe and details about his survival.

Parallels to Defoe's story are immediately apparent and Schmidt also makes the relation to the Robinson figure explicit as his narrator goes off exploring "wie Robinson mit 2 Flinten" (238). The narrator's many forward-looking comments are also reminiscent of *Robinson Crusoe*, as the narrator, like Robinson, thinks strategically about how to plan for his survival. When he discovers a cache of wood he remarks, "würde im

⁴⁶ Jürgen Fohrmann, *Abenteuer und Bürgertum: zur Geschichte der deutschen Robinsonaden im 18. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1981), 60.

⁴⁷ Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1868 [1719]), 70.

Winter brennen wie Gift” (211); and a coal discovery will provide “sorgloses Heizen für manches Jahr” (217). These considerations also hint that he is preparing for an open-ended future. With the barracks and storehouses of a former British Army Base nearby—containing canned goods, coal, firewood, water, building materials—the narrator decides to settle in this location: “gleich weit nach Hamburg, Hannover und Bremen” (215). This decision occurs halfway through the first part of the story. He chooses a spot near the woods, and claims the land in a gesture made ridiculous due to the post-catastrophic setting:

Ich erhob mich unter einem mittleren Mond; ich sagte : »Herr von Baer (oder wie der Besitzer sonst heißt) : ich danke Ihnen für die Überlassung dieser Waldstücke : ich werde hier nämlich ein Haus bauen, und nehme somit das Ganze« – ich wies ungeduldig mit der Hand um den Horizont –»in Besitz – «. (215)

In an ironic rewriting of an explorer’s claim to foreign land, this performative gesture is told as if already painted for posterity, with a half moon illuminating the scene. It is also a citation of Robinson’s own decision to settle: “I was King and Lord of all this Country indefeasibly, and had a Right of Possession.”⁴⁸ Götz Müller notes that the narrator’s desire to build a cabin in the forest and his praise of simple things places the story in a larger tradition of stories that extol the simple life, for which the Robinsonade is paradigmatic.⁴⁹ Müller also points out, however, that unlike other examples of this genre, *Schwarze Spiegel* is not presented as a utopic new beginning, but as a “*Verweigerung des Neuanfangs.*”⁵⁰

In fact, there are many decisive ways Schmidt rejects the figure of Robinson in his rewriting of the story. In the story of *Robinson Crusoe*, events accumulate as the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 101.

⁴⁹ Götz Müller, “Utopie und Robinsonade bei Arno Schmidt,” *Text + Kritik* 20, no. 20a (1986): 71.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 74. Emphasis in original.

castaway attempts to bring order to the chaotic and dangerous site of his isolation in nature. For his tireless work ethic and “industriousness,” even after his future is secured, Franco Moretti names Robinson the archetype of the bourgeois capitalist, “the working master.”⁵¹ Likewise, Jürgen Fohrmann notes the story’s didactic function, portraying hard-working individuals who make their own fate, showing readers “wie letztlich ein tugendhaftes Leben realisiert werden kann.”⁵² The rise of this genre in the 18th century, to Fohrmann, is mirrored in the rise of bourgeois subjectivity, with its emphasis on virtue and hard work, “den Versuch eines nicht-privilegierten Individuums, sich vom Objekt zum Subjekt der Geschichte zu machen.”⁵³ For Schmidt’s narrator, on the other hand, work is not the central driving force of survival and the narrator can hardly be considered an agent of history. On the contrary, there are multiple scenes that reject the figure of the Robinson-style survival, instead embracing leisure and play. Whereas Robinson tortures himself with the question of whether he is being punished by God, the narrator of *Schwarze Spiegel* enjoys the guilt-free solitude of his existence without other human beings. He enjoys the beauty of nature and the aimless travel by bicycle: “ein Fahrrad zu führen ist wunderbar ! Und diese leeren Orte noch schöner; auf der Kreuzung fuhr ich acht Kreise” (206). In one scene, he takes off his shorts and lies naked “Mitten auf der Kreuzung,” “und ließ mich ein Stündchen braten” (222). This playfulness and disregard for an economy of time is the antithesis of the Robinson existence—in which routine and schedule govern the day’s activities. Additionally, while Robinson exploits and uses nature, the narrator of *Schwarze Spiegel* only takes from the wreckage of civilization. No

⁵¹ Franco Moretti, *The Bourgeois: Between History and Literature* (London: Verso, 2013), 29.

⁵² Fohrmann, *Abenteuer und Bürgertum: zur Geschichte der deutschen Robinsonaden im 18. Jahrhundert*: 62.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 230.

trees are felled to build his house, and the idea of planting potatoes is even nauseating: “Landarbeit [ist] mir so ziemlich das Widerlichste von Allem [...]; außer Militär natürlich; Militär und Textilindustrie” (220).

This survivor of the Third World War is decidedly a new type of castaway. He rejects the capitalist ethos, which is also a progressivist narrative, instead rehearsing a nihilistic viewpoint and condemning human existence (“Bloß gut, daß alles zu Ende war...”). As Hiltrud Gnüg reminds, this supposed misanthropy and cynicism should not be taken too seriously: “[die Erzählung] behauptet doch im Sinne eines humanistischen Ethos das Ideal freier Individualität, eines Subjekts, das sich in einer wild wachsenden Natur – wie Robinson – in ihr behauptet und sie zugleich ästhetisch genießt.”⁵⁴ Gnüg sees Schmidt’s portrayal of escapism as a form of response to the mass politics and totalitarianism of the Third Reich. This is emphatically supported by the text, which contains an extended diatribe about the unthinking masses, as the narrator enumerates the ills of society to Lisa. Instead of using reason, these masses prefer “lieber durch fremde Augen falsch sehen, mit fremden Ohren übel hören, durch fremden Unverstand sich zu Narren machen lassen, als dies wenigstens lieber auf eigene Faust tun wollen” (246). Although it seems that the narrator’s survival is pure chance, he welcomes this fate as an opportunity to enjoy his earthly existence without other humans.

Additionally, whereas Robinson anxiously awaits his salvation—by God and/or rescue—the narrator of *Schwarze Spiegel* has no such hopes. He decides to live out his days as long as fate would have it, and keeps a pistol in case he decides otherwise. His attempts to contact other survivors are best represented through the futile gesture of

⁵⁴ Hiltrud Gnüg, “Warnutopie und Idylle in den Fünfziger Jahren. Am Beispiel Amo Schmidts,” in *Literarische Utopie-Entwürfe*, ed. Hiltrud Gnüg (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), 283.

writing a postcard, “Falls wirklich außer mir noch ein Mensch am Leben war. Und zufällig hierher kam. Und die Karte sah...” (207). He then addresses the card to Klopstock, “‘Gottlieb’ oder so” (207), creating a joke rather than any kind of serious attempt at communication. At another point he searches with an antenna and headphones for a sign of life: “*Ein Detektorapparat* (ich weiß : es war verrückt !) aber ich versuchte es doch. [...] Nichts” (229). Communication has become useless—yet the narrator continues to amuse himself with the antiquated objects of the world of human civilization.

Manfred Jurgensen, in his study of diaries, argues the diary should be read as “literarische Robinsonade” for its process of fictionalization as well for its dialogic nature. Jurgensen argues that the diary’s first-person narrator is both reader and writer, using the writing process to explore the self and the outside world.

Wie in Defoes Roman lassen sich Beobachtungen und Beschreibungen von Reflexionen und Vorstellungen nicht trennen; sie bleiben aufeinander bezogen. Kein Zufall, also, daß Defoe seinem Roman die Formfiktion eines Tagebuchs einverleibt. Auch diarisch gelingt der Durchbruch zum sozialen Ich erst allmählich. Es gilt, den Leser als gesellschaftliches Du, als dialogischen Partner anzuerkennen, zugleich im anderen, im “Man Friday” den Bruder, das andere Ich zu entdecken. Aus der Einöde eines auf sich selbst gestellten Ich entwickelt sich so der dialoghafte Ausbruch in eine Gesellschaft individueller Identitäten.⁵⁵

Jurgensen first notes the *mélange* of descriptive and reflective modes that characterize diary texts, as well as the gradual emergence of a social “I” who addresses a “du”—creating dialogue and a social world. I claim that Schmidt’s story enacts this same trajectory with the presentation of the character of Lisa, the female “Friday,” on two levels: creating new possibilities for narrative, and playing with the Robinson trope. In the first scene with Lisa, she is described as a savage, like a pirate or gypsy, as a

⁵⁵ Manfred Jurgensen, *Das fiktionale Ich: Untersuchungen zum Tagebuch* (Bern; München: Francke Verlag, 1979), 9.

“Wildkatze” (241), a “squaw” (242), and later, “meine Wilde” (249). The encounter begins with a misrecognition, as the narrator assumes the stranger is a boy: “*Gedanken sammeln* : also das war neu! (Ruhig werden; ganz kalt: ich kannte das Gelände, der da drüben nicht!)” (239). The narration of the encounter unfolds in short scenes: “*Jetzt sah ich den Buben ganz deutlich im Doppelglas* : hinter einem Steinhaufen lag er...” (239). This scene has been read as a Hobbesian encounter in a “state of nature,” in which the two individuals find themselves at war, or as “Adam and Eve.”⁵⁶ Lisa’s presence is a rewriting of the encounter with Friday, changing the narrative development of the story.

Following Jurgensen, if we take the encounter with Friday to represent the possibility for dialogue, for creating socially bound individuals, then Lisa represents the other for the narrator. As he first sees Lisa up close, he takes stock of her body: “*Maßlose Blicke* : Hände, Schultern, ein Gesicht. Hände schultern ein Gesicht. Augen lippen einen Mund : Du!” (240). Schmidt plays with the words, making the body parts into verbs as his eyes scan her body. The emphatic “Du!” is the recognition of the other, that he is not the only survivor. As if he has forgotten the norms of human interactions, he remembers to ask her name:

»Wie heißen Sie« fiel mir ein. »Lisa« (und ich merkte wohl, wie es sie amüsierte, daß die beiden letzten Menschen ›Sie‹ zu einander sagten; aber trotzdem) dann erzählte ich; langsam. (240)

Schmidt draws attention to language, and the formality of ordinary language now made absurd by the situation. Earlier in the story, when the narrator catches himself using the pronoun “man,” he quickly corrects himself: “was heißt <man>? Ich! Das Wort <man> kann ich eigentlich aus der Sprache streichen !” (222). The narrator’s actions and

⁵⁶ See, for example, Peter Ahrendt, *Der Büchermensch: Wesen, Werk und Wirkung Arno Schmidts: eine umfassende Einführung* (Paderborn: Igel Verlag Wissenschaft, 1995), 124.

thoughts often remind readers that routine or “normal” human behaviors and linguistic norms have become absurd. In another instance, he checks to make sure his bike is still where he left it: “stand das Rad noch da ? Ja” (210). These moments draw attention to the radical break with the past, and need for new language and a new pragmatics of everyday life. The interaction with Lisa is a meaningful opportunity to begin to converse again and to tell stories, as hinted already in this first scene with the word “erzählen.”

Boy Hinrichs dismisses Lisa’s presence as a mere interlude (“lediglich vorübergehend”⁵⁷), arguing that the only reason for the survival of the narrator is to present the story: “Das Ich ist eine Ausnahme. Seine Überlebensumstände werden an keiner Stelle benannt. Seine Existenz ist allein dadurch gerechtfertigt und notwendig, daß diese Realität mitgeteilt werden muß.”⁵⁸ In my reading of the story, Lisa’s presence is not insignificant, but rather marks a clear shift in the mode of narration, opening up the text to explore various forms of writing. In other words, there is not merely “one reality” to be shared, as Hinrichs would have it. Within the fictional story, we encounter many other kinds of text: two letters written by the narrator, one imagined exposé for a future work, excerpts from the narrator’s memoirs, as well as a collage of intertextual citations. The story both thematizes the situation of writing (“Ich möchte wissen, warum ich überhaupt noch diariere”), and at multiple points breaks the fiction of the first-person text and addresses the reader directly.⁵⁹ Describing the longevity of nature, the narrator writes that a piece of gravel “lebt länger als Sie, Herr Leser Irgendein !” (218). At another point,

⁵⁷ Boy Hinrichs, *Utopische Prosa als längeres Gedankenspiel: Untersuchungen zu Arno Schmidts Theorie der Modernen Literatur und ihrer Konkretisierung in 'Schwarze Spiegel', 'Die Gelehrtenrepublik' und 'Kaff auch Mare Crisium'* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986), 199.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 200-01.

⁵⁹ In this way, the thematization of the scene of writing bears parallels to Chapter One, in which non-literary writers also write and simultaneously often question their writing practices.

drunk in the Hamburger Kunsthalle, after citing a line from *Die Räuber*, the narrator says: “ist von Schiller, falls Sie den Stil nicht erkennen sollten !” (227). This playful mode of disrupting the fiction of the text also reminds readers of its constructedness as fiction (as well as the reader’s “task” to recognize such passing intertextual references). Or, as Reemtsma has it, “der Versuch, den Leser an sich heranzuziehen, in ihm ein Bewußtsein für die traditionellerweise prekäre Existenz des Autors zu wecken.”⁶⁰

With Lisa’s appearance, we learn explicitly that the narrator is a writer. Again, the use of the first-person voice conceals such details as the narrator’s name and biographical background, as the text consists mostly of his impressions of the external world, with very few memories or personal details. The conversations with Lisa open up the story to these modes of self-disclosure.

Sie fragte : »Warum schreibst Du eigentlich noch ? - Warum hast Du überhaupt Bücher geschrieben ?« (Antwort : Geld verdienen. Worte meine einzigen Kenntnisse. »Das ist nicht wahr ! « sagte sie empört. Habs anders versucht. Auch: es macht mir Vergnügen, Naturbilder, Situationen, in Worten zu fixieren, und kurze Geschichten so durchzukneten). (257-258)

As Josef Huerkamp notes in his analysis of the diary form in Schmidt, this scene represents a crucial moment of recognition of the narrator as writer, and in doing so “legitimizes” the text “als immanente Poetik”:

im Telos der sprachlichen Verarbeitung von Realität sind die Brüche von phantastischer Fiktion (Situation nach einem atomaren Krieg) und realer Tätigkeit (Niederschrift eines Textes) aufgehoben; vermittelt werden sie im l’art pour l’art-Programm, das den doch permanent angesprochenen Leser im fiktiven story-Zusammenhang eskamotiert. Der Schriftsteller schafft seine Texte aus intrinsischen Motivationen und verleiht ihnen die adaequate literarische Fassung, den selbstgenügsamen Tagebuchbericht.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Reemtsma, *Über Arno Schmidt: Vermessungen eines poetischen Terrains*: 182.

⁶¹ Josef Huerkamp, “Gekettet an Daten & Namen”: drei Studien zum “authentischen” Erzählen in der Prosa Arno Schmidts, *Bargfelder Bote* (München: Edition Text + Kritik, 1981), 225.

This conversation with Lisa also thematizes the problematic of the author's relation to a reader. She asks the narrator whether he ever wrote for a reader or to fulfill a sense of moral obligation.

»Für einen Leser ?« fragte ich zutiefst erstaunt; auch die ›Sittliche Aufgabe‹ war mir neu. »Ich meinte ja auch bloß – « besänftigte sie, bohrte aber sanft weiter : »aber sag mal : - ?« . »Ich hab immer begeistert Wieland gelesen: Poe, Hoffmann, Cervantes, Lessing, Tieck, Cooper, Jean Paul – das hab ich mir manchmal vorgestellt : ob die mit meinen Sachen zufrieden wären, oder Alfred Döblin und Johannes Schmidt. Aber allgemein ›Leser‹?? - Nee! !« (Sowas kenn ich nicht).

»Heldenverehrung? « ich schnob verächtlich: »Mädchen!« Wer so lange mit mir gelebt hat wie ich, der glaubt an keine heroes mehr (vielleicht einige, aber die sind sicher schon lange tot) (258)

Consequently, although Robinson's account is written for a reader, and addresses a reader as an account of survival, the fictional diaristic text of *Schwarze Spiegel* diverges from this model. Schmidt ironizes the ability of a text to be written for a reader. His narrator names his pantheon of authors in answer to Lisa's question, rejecting the notion that one would write for readers, or write with a moral purpose. As he said earlier, he writes for the pleasure of writing. Again, this revelation points to a crucial difference from the character of Robinson, who writes with an imagined connection to European civilization and with future rescue in mind. Schmidt's narrator, however, does also seem to have another goal in writing. His writing act performs a kind of preservation of culture. Like Robinson, who tries to maintain a sense of civility, the narrator wants to save culture in the aftermath of global catastrophe. In the next section, I turn to the metaphors of shipwreck to show how Schmidt presents rubble and ruin in the story.

Rubble, Ruin, and Skeletal Debris

The Robinson trope is already bound to the “metaphorics of shipwreck,” which Hans Blumenberg has identified as a paradigmatic metaphor for human existence in his essay *Shipwreck with Spectator*.⁶² It is with Nietzsche, Blumenberg notes, that the metaphor takes on an “existential” meaning: “We have left the land and have embarked. We have burned our bridges behind us—indeed, we have gone further and destroyed the land behind us. Now, little ship, look out! ...and there is no longer any ‘land.’”⁶³ This is the position of Schmidt’s narrator, who finds himself the sole survivor of the destruction of the European continent—the shipwreck of centuries of human “progress.” In the world after the next world war, there is no turning back. Yet there is a crucial difference between shipwreck at sea, and wreckage on land. Blumenberg points to the “relationship between history and nature that is at stake,” in reference to an observation made by Goethe: “vessels passing through the sea leave no trace on it; thus total events there cannot be surveyed and grasped [...] Both progress and sinkings leave behind them the same peaceful surface.”⁶⁴ On land, however, history leaves rubble and ruin in its wake.

Schmidt engages with the relation between history and nature in his portrayal of the post-catastrophic landscape of *Schwarze Spiegel*. His “castaway” rummages among the debris to scavenge items for his survival—what he needs to sustain himself both physically and intellectually. In *Schwarze Spiegel*, Schmidt not only rewrites the story of Robinson, engaging with a metaphorics of shipwreck, but he also offers a contribution to a long tradition of writing about rubble and ruin. In this last section, I combine these two elements of the story to look closely at how Schmidt represents the destruction, and how

⁶² Blumenberg, *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*: 7.

⁶³ Nietzsche, quoted in *ibid.*, 28.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

he situates himself vis-à-vis traditions of ruin contemplation. Faced with the “sinking” of not only a state, but civilization *in general*, I look at what objects remain, and how Schmidt directs our attention to their decay and ruination. This last section considers the relation of Schmidt’s early prose—especially *Schwarze Spiegel*—to the tradition of “Trümmerliteratur” and to traditions of writing about and viewing ruins. My claim is that Schmidt’s text also draws attention to textuality as ruin, and writing as a process of excavation and salvage, building culture anew from the wreckage.

On the levels of both form and content, the story *Schwarze Spiegel* considers postwar ruination and the possibilities for representing this ruin. Above I noted the expression “Traumschutt” used by a contemporary reviewer to describe Schmidt’s style.⁶⁵ Dieter Bänisch argues that Schmidt’s self-proclaimed style of “beschädigtes Tagesmosaik” reflects the historical situation of the postwar period: “die Unmöglichkeit, sich selber und die Realität draußen anders als in der Form isolierter oder isolierbarer Stücke zu erfahren.”⁶⁶ In an essay on Böll, Koeppen, and Schmidt, Reinhard Baumgart also notes the “Trümmerstruktur” of Schmidt’s prose:

Trümmerliteratur – auch Arno Schmidt hätte sich dazu bekennen können, doch kaum mit Bölls Insistenz nur auf dem Inhaltlichen des Begriffs. Daß Schmidts Prosa Trümmerstruktur hat, eine Torsoarchitektur entwirft, verrät sie schon durch ihre graphische Anordnung.⁶⁷

As Baumgart has it, Schmidt’s prose reflects *formal* aspects of rubble literature, in addition to its *themes*, as named by Böll in his famous “Bekanntnis”: “Wir schrieben also vom Krieg, von der Heimkehr und dem, was wir im Krieg gesehen hatten und bei der

⁶⁵ M., “Die Beseitigung des Traumschutts,” *Der Sozialdemokrat*, 5.2.1950. Quoted in Bock and Schreiber, *Über Arno Schmidt: Rezensionen vom ‘Leviathan’ bis zur ‘Julia’*: 13.

⁶⁶ Dieter Bänisch, “Rückzug in die Heide. Über Arno Schmidts fünfziger Jahre,” (Tübingen: G. Narr, 1985), 331.

⁶⁷ Reinhard Baumgart, “Böll, Koeppen, Schmidt - diese drei,” *Merkur* 40(1986): 558.

Heimkehr voranden: von Trümmern.”⁶⁸ Baumgart carries this comparison further, noting that while Böll’s prose retains a “Gemütlichkeit” that resists the “logic of destruction,” Schmidt’s prose reveals “die Rekonstruktion des Zersprengten mit allen erhaltenen Rissen und Klebestellen, als Collage, als Schnittfolge.”⁶⁹

Böll bedenkt Gott und die Welt, auch wenn er “nur” zu erzählen hat von einem unbehausten Paar in Köln. Schmidt dagegen zersprengt Gott und die Welt und alles, was wir über sie immer schon zu wissen glaubten, um sich dann aus den Splintern des Allernächsten, einzig Konkreten, unfeierlich Wahren ein Restidyll zu basteln, ein unangreifbares Existenz-Minimum-Paradies aus nichts als Sprache.⁷⁰

As Baumgart indicates, Böll wants to leave language and categories of meaning-making in place, even when telling simple stories about ordinary people, whereas Schmidt wants to challenge previous beliefs, and radicalize language as the only refuge left to his survivors. The observation that Schmidt’s prose contains a more radical “rubble” structure is quickly apparent—especially when compared with Böll’s style. In *Schwarze Spiegel*, we gain a glimpse of this rubble poetics as Schmidt draws our attention to the artifacts of Western civilization left behind in the wake of catastrophe. Through his unique adaptation of the rubble-like form of the diary—sifting through the debris of everyday life—Schmidt stages a new mode of ruin encounter.

In the postwar years, the general sentiment was that Germans did not want to see ruins. They rejected “rubble films” at the cinemas, preferring to be transported into fantasy worlds. They even refused to acknowledge the ruin in front of them, as Hannah Arendt claims in her “Report from Germany,” sending picture postcards of buildings that

⁶⁸ Heinrich Böll, “Bekanntnis zur Trümmerliteratur,” in *Werke*, ed. Árpád Bernáth and Annamária Gyurácz (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2007), 58.

⁶⁹ Baumgart, “Böll, Koeppen, Schmidt - diese drei,” 558.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 562.

“no longer exist.”⁷¹ Many Germans worked tirelessly to rebuild their destroyed cities and make the ruination and devastation invisible. At the same time, others pointed to the ruins, and to the lessons to be learned from considering the place of the ruin in history. In 1948, art historian Hans Vogel published a slim volume on the history of ruin in the Western European tradition entitled *Die Ruine in der Darstellung der abendländischen Kunst*.⁷² Contrary to many of his contemporaries who did not see value in ruins, Vogel argues that ruins can be a source of “Kraft und Trost,” if accepted as part of the “Schicksalsbilde der Menschheit,” and as an “Aufgabe [...] wie manches andere Dunkle und Verworrene auch; wenn wir es lernen, nicht gegen sie, sondern mit ihnen zu leben.”⁷³ Drawing from a larger tradition of ruin contemplation, Vogel appeals for a “besinnliche Betrachtung der Ruinen,” in which we seek to learn from the ruins of past civilizations.

Sie ist uns zum Symbol der menschlichen Bedrohtheit geworden, ihr dunkler Schatten mischt sich in alle Gedanken, die um die Zukunft des Menschengeschlechts gehen. Sich mit der Ruine auseinandersetzen heißt heute, in Angst und Verzweiflung oder in Liebe, Glauben und Tatbereitschaft ein neues Verhältnis zum Dasein suchen.⁷⁴

Such an appeal resonates strongly with Heinrich Böll’s “Bekenntnis,” urging authors to not be ashamed of presenting the ruin and making visible the humanity that exists behind the destroyed facades. It is in this vein that Vogel’s preface, full of the pathos of the postwar period, makes an argument for recognizing ruin as part of a European tradition—notably speaking not as a German but as a European—as a source of wisdom and a means of developing a new mode of *being* in the world.

⁷¹ Hannah Arendt, “The Aftermath of Nazi Rule. Report from Germany,” *Commentary* 10 (1950): 249.

⁷² Hans Vogel, *Die Ruine in der Darstellung der abendländischen Kunst* (Kassel: Karl Winter Verlag, 1948), 3.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Devoid of the hope attached to an Enlightenment doctrine of progress, in Schmidt's story humanity did not learn from the past. Schmidt's reference to Piranesi's ruins (in *Leviathan*) and prison drawings (in *Schwarze Spiegel*) make it clear that he has a different canon of ruin images in mind. The mention of Piranesi in *Leviathan* dwells on the idyllic natural setting for the ruins:

Ich raffte mühsam zusammen, was dergleichen noch in den Ruinen meines Wissens herumlag (Bilder Piranesis fielen mir ein : römische Ruinen in hellen und windigen Abendlichtern. Schlankgliedrige Bäumchen. Spitzhütiger Bauer treibt starkgebärdig ein Eselchen mit glatten Weinschläuchen. Kühle und Heiterkeit, Abendgold, aurum potabile. [...]) (51)

This ekphrastic passage presents an image of Piranesi's Roman ruins with an atmospheric pastoral landscape (Figure 5.2). Schmidt engages with the 18th and 19th-century Romantic images that portrayed ruins as “a *memento mori*,” a reminder “of the



Figure 5.2. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Roman ruins (1774)⁷⁵

⁷⁵ “Altra veduta degli avanzi del pronao del tempio della Concordia,” in Giovanni Battista Piranesi et al., *Piranesi: antichità romane, vedute di Roma: opere della Fondazione Antonio Mazzotta* (Milano: Mazzotta, 2000), 82.

transience of all life.”⁷⁶ Unlike his Romantic predecessors, Schmidt’s solitary survivor seems uninterested in stopping to contemplate the ruin, but wanders through a landscape of destruction and debris.

Contrary to most ruin descriptions of the postwar period, which aestheticize the towering urban ruins of Berlin, or the awe-inspiring extent of destruction of entire cities such as Dresden or Cologne reduced to a pile of bricks, Schmidt’s story sets itself apart for its descriptions of nature, for its rural setting, and for the ghostly description of a landscape still littered with both material objects and human skeletons. Without pathos, he directs our eyes to the details of intimate scenes of depopulated houses, shops, and streets. Most importantly, it is not architectural *ruin* that makes up the majority of these scenes but *destruction* and *debris*. The catastrophe was sudden, leaving behind scenes such as a wrecked car, its windows dusted over with a skeleton at the wheel (207); a “Tommy” bridge, “halb verfault, noch vom zweiten Weltkrieg her” (202); and a former post office, filled with letters that will never arrive to their addressees. These images are mostly located early on in the story, giving readers a sense of the nature and extent of destruction. The phrase “wie immer” relates that these are common images of the post-disaster world that the narrator has encountered repeatedly in his period of wandering.

As a historian or archaeologist may divide time into periods, the nuclear catastrophe created a radical *before* and *after*, as almost the whole human population was wiped from the earth, leaving traces as clues to their former lives. The narrator’s gaze often registers these impressions, the visual reminders of the past: “*Straße* noch mit harten Wagenspuren aus der Menschenzeit” (230). As implied in the word

⁷⁶ Paul Zucker, “Ruins. An Aesthetic Hybrid,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20, no. 2 (1961).

“Menschenzeit,” these are signs of a world now past. His imagination, however, invokes vivid memories, full of sound and light, traces of the past preserved textually:

Früher mochte um diese Zeit <ein Zug> hier vorbeigefahren sein : ganz fern im Norden ein leises Rollen, kam näher, orgelte tief weit und nah, schwoll polternd an mit jagenden Stößen, Lichter flossen perlenschnürrig vorbei, verschwanden im Süden : leises Rollen. Jetzt war Alles still : und schön ! früher waren auf den Asphaltbändern lautlos Autolichter geglitten : jetzt herrschte nur noch der Mond (221)

früher waren hier Lichter gewesen für den nächtigen Wanderer : las ein Mann im Kalender, spielte ein Mädchen am Schlüpfer, zählte man Geld, strahlten die mächtigen Birnen, radiotierten Meldungen »aus der Welt des Sports«. Schließen Pflüge im Scheunendunkel, Hunde standen dröhnend an Ketten, die Pappel am Wasserloch sah am Tag Enten. War. Sah. (230)

This repetition of the past tense verbs used to describe human and animal life, “war,” “sah,” is a kind of melancholic reflection of its own. The memory of the time of human life (*Menschenzeit*) illuminated with the electric light of automobiles and streetlamps is now replaced by moonlight. The dark and quiet landscape makes the narrator remember images of the populated world—all of the things such as calendars, money and radios that no longer serve a purpose. Such remarks parallel C.F. Volney’s melancholic ruin gazer, whose reverie presents a scene that has been reanimated in the imagination: “these places now so wild and desolate, were once animated by a living multitude; a busy crowd thronged in these streets, now so solitary.”⁷⁷ Volney imagines what the splendor and life of a once-great empire must have looked like and then contrasts this vividness with the “miserable skeleton,” “solitude of death,” and “silence of the grave” which he encounters in the ruins.⁷⁸ In Schmidt’s writing of this encounter with ruins, the reanimation of the dead is an ambivalent combination of melancholy and rhetoric of indifference. As with

⁷⁷ Volney, *The Ruins, or, Meditation on the Revolutions of Empires: and the Law of Nature*: 5.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

the repetition of “gut, daß alles zu Ende war,” the exclamation “Jetzt war Alles still: und schön!” is undermined by a subtle sense that something meaningful has been lost.

The gaze of the archaeologist is also used to imagine not “what was this ruin?” but *what was this supposed to become?* This observation is made in front of a “modern” ruin—the ruin of a building apparently left half-finished at the time of the catastrophe:

In der modernen Ruine : das hatte wahrscheinlich die Küche werden sollen. Das : vielleicht ein Stall ? Die Wohnräume gaben Aussicht auf die Wälder ums Ostermoor. Ging gegen Abend, und die Sonne bei Wolkenuffern; doch blieb es warmundhelle, und leuchtete nur langsam ab; Gräser und Straßenraine, zerfallendes Licht : und weit drüben ein Häherpaar pendelnd über den Forsten. (210)

Again, the ruin is contrasted with natural descriptions. Whereas the “modern ruin” is now nearly unreadable, the sun, clouds, grass, and birds are unchanged. This pastoral scene thus contrasts the disintegration of signs of human life with the beauty of the nature, which remains constant despite the eradication of human life.

With his descriptions of ruin, rubble, skeletal remains, and debris, Schmidt largely rejects the Romantic tradition of ruin contemplation as well as more recent post-WWII rubble imagery. Instead, the images of *Schwarze Spiegel* can be read in conjunction with two different traditions. First, as Schmidt’s story imagines the *future* ruins of the European continent, after the nuclear disaster of the next (Third) World War, the story should be placed among other texts and images that imagine future ruins. For example, Hubert Robert’s painting *Vue imaginaire de la galerie du Louvre en ruine* (*Imaginary view of the Grande Galerie in Ruins*, 1796), which portrays the Parisian palace partially destroyed (Figure 5.3). The painting’s foreground is strewn with overturned busts and ceramics, and in the background there is a pot cooking over an open flame. The

building's interior is exposed to the open sky and grass is beginning to grow atop the marble columns.⁷⁹ This kind of ruin imagery asks viewers to place themselves in the future, imaging the present moment as a future past.



Figure 5.3. Hubert Robert, “Vue de la Grande Galerie du Louvre en ruines” (1796)

Schmidt's post-catastrophic story does not portray the ruins of a noble or majestic empire. Instead, *Schwarze Spiegel* presents scenes of ruins and debris for which there were few images in 1951. A sense of the uncanny in Schmidt's portrayal stems from the combination of the suddenness of the catastrophe and the presence of modern debris and rubble and artifacts of a highly technological culture. Schmidt's imagined futuristic ruinscape contains descriptions of abandoned houses and buildings that bear striking resemblance to the uneasy scenes of desolation and ruination captured in the photographs

⁷⁹ This painting was favored by Hitler, and can be seen to represent his imaginary of future noble ruins, such as those he and Speer planned for the German empire. See Julia Hell, “Imperial Ruin Gazers, or Why did Scipio Weep?,” in *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

of Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre from the city of Detroit in the early 2000s.⁸⁰ These photographs all portray scenes of Detroit in ruin—not caused by nuclear destruction but economic and industrial decline leading to massive depopulation of the city. In “St. Christopher House, ex-Public Library,” many of the shelves still contain books, though others are strewn across the floor (Figure 5.4). A chair is still pulled up to a desk, and an overturned box looks as if it only fell over moments ago. In the photograph “Highland Park Police Station,” the floor is covered with photographs, wanted posters, and other documents. A corded phone receiver lies next to its base, off the hook. Schmidt, writing half a century earlier, anticipated such eerie scenes in *Schwarze Spiegel*, as he directs our attention to the suddenly abandoned world—things without owners and buildings without residents.



Figure 5.4. Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre, “St. Christopher House, ex-Public Library”

⁸⁰ Yves Marchand, Romain Meffre, and Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Ruins of Detroit* (Göttingen; London: Steidl, 2010).

Because of the rural setting, he also shows us not urban decline, but an entire world affected by the bomb.

Wie immer : die leeren Schalen der Häuser. Atombomben und Bakterien hatten ganze Arbeit geleistet. Meine Finger preßten mechanisch, unaufhörlich, an der Dynamotaschenlampe. In einer Kammer ein Toter : sein Gestank hatte Zwölfmännerstärke : also wenigstens im Tode Siegfried (nebenbei selten, daß es noch roch; war ja alles schon zu lange her). (202)

The narrator explores with a flashlight, as if excavating the ruins of an ancient civilization, opening tombs and sifting through artifacts of this formerly highly industrialized society: family photos, a piano, radios, a gramophone, a telephone booth, a post office collection box. “[E]ine Totenwüste, in ein Museum verwandelt,” as Hermann Kasack described Schmidt’s landscape.⁸¹ This is not a strange civilization, however, but rather one which the narrator knew well, and each artifact allows his imagination to run wild, as his mind “fleshes out” the stories behind the objects and skeletons: “das mag ein Dicker gewesen sein, der zufrieden am Abendwürstchen kaute; dies ein Leptosomer mit Baskenmützte und Menjoubärtchen; dort ein Trottel mit kahlem Eierkopf; hier eine christlich orientierte Jungfrau mit oder ohne Brille” (212). In his imagination, he reanimates the empty telephone booth, once visited by the inhabitants of the town: “mollige Mädchenhüften hatten über jenem staubstumpfen Polster geritten” (206). Reading the stamped postcards, he wonders whether one writer reached his Johanna before the hydrogen bomb (207). At times Schmidt’s narrator draws attention to the absurd scenes that are produced, or to the irony of images such as that of “Siegfried,” whose only heroic feat is now his strong stench. Especially the remnants of bureaucratized life seem a mockery to him: that skeletons still have official documents on

⁸¹ Kasack, “Ein poetischer Seismograph” in Bock and Schreiber, *Über Arno Schmidt: Rezensionen vom “Leviathan” bis zur “Julia”*: 21.

their bodies (“für wen wohl ?” 203). As a joke, he makes sure that his forest settlement has a house number: “12 mal 20 und B. 1107. Und ich dehnte die Augen und lachte nickend und ingrimmig : très bien ! Da habe ich also meine Hausnummer” (219).

This interaction with the remains of human life and the presentation of rubble and debris departs from traditions of contemplative ruin gazing. Traditionally, ruins imply a progressive narrative, wherein the individual in the present looks at the past for an image of the future. The notion that one can learn from the ruins, or that ruins suggest a continuous historical arc between past and present, is rejected in Schmidt’s text. Instead, nature is the only constant, and Schmidt repeatedly mentions the beauty of nature and its strength over human civilization. In this way, his essay is situated more closely to Georg Simmel’s ruin theory than that of Volney or Vogel. In “The Ruin,” Simmel describes the decline of human-made architecture as a kind of “revenge” of nature, as nature pulling everything built skywards by man forcefully back down towards the ground: “[die] nach unten ziehende, zernagende und zertrümmernde Naturgewalt.”⁸² Simmel also makes an important distinction between the ruin (*die Ruine*) and rubble (*Steinhaufen*)—the former which becomes “neue Form... sinnvoll, begreiflich, differenziert,” and the latter which is characterized by “Formlosigkeit bloßer Materie.”⁸³ In *Schwarze Spiegel*, it is largely the *debris* of human civilization that is represented, like the dereliction depicted by Marchand and Meffre.

Like the painting of the Louvre in ruins, or Piranesi’s images of Roman ruins, in which grass has already begun to grow over the stone, descriptions of nature also

⁸² Georg Simmel, “Die Ruine,” in *Philosophische Kultur. Über das Abenteuer, die Geschlechter und die Krise der Moderne. Gesammelte Essays*, ed. Jürgen Habermas (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 1983 [1923]), 120.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

permeate the story *Schwarze Spiegel*. In the five years that have elapsed since the nuclear catastrophe, nature has already begun to reclaim the land. Schmidt highlights the rot and decay—the biological decomposition of material. A bridge that has fallen into the water is “verfault” (202), and the many skeletons scattered throughout the story are all that is left of human corpses. Images of the rubble and the landscape show us how the traces of human life are fading, being overtaken by plant growth, such as a car “mit üppigem Gras auf dem Kühler!” (222) and an athletic field with grass “bis zum Gürtel” and a track “fast ganz zugewachsen” (205). In the description of a hollowed-out house and overgrown yard, the narrator notes the plant life pushing through the walls:

Draußen : Früher wars wohl adrett genug gewesen; jetzt schlotterte der Garten ums hohle Haus. Schöne starke Kiefern aber. Graue Mauern, von der graue Kräuter nickten, auch Lupinen und Wegerich. Aus grauen Mauern machte man Häuser; aus Häusern Städte, aus Städten Kontinente : wer fand sich da noch durch ! Bloß gut, daß Alles zu Ende war; und ich spuckte aus : Ende! (202)

As his eyes register this overgrown ruin and unruly garden, his first thought is that this was once tamed nature and has now been reclaimed by the vegetation. The strong trees will outlast the walls built by human hands. The scene, however, does not produce a melancholy mood as one might expect. The narrator instead expresses his contentment that everything is over.

The story’s repeated motifs include descriptions of tall grass, as well as the streets which have begun to disappear: “In 20 Jahren findet Niemand mehr Straßen auf der Welt; vielleicht erkennt man die Autobahnen noch, aber in 30 sind auch die weg” (221). These images resonate with the later comment during the narrator’s trip to Hamburg that he needs a new kind of map, “einen Großatlas mit nur physischen Karten” (225). The

political boundaries may change, walls may crumble, but the geography will remain relatively stable while the signs of human life fade away.⁸⁴ This directly opposes the goals of the National Socialists, who wanted their monumental architecture to preside over the landscape for centuries, turning slowly into noble ruins. No such monumental ruins are described in this story. The Autobahn, a prized example of National Socialist infrastructure and architecture, will also be gone within 30 years, as the narrator claims. To return to the shipwreck metaphor, and the relation between nature and history, the natural landscape is slowly swallowing the traces of human existence.

In one of his early postwar stories, Heinrich Böll also describes the ruins overgrown with nature. To those familiar with the ruins, the narrator tells us, the amount of vegetation covering the stones can be read as a chronometer of destruction.

Man konnte das Datum der Zerstörung an der Bewachsung der Trümmer feststellen: es war eine botanische Frage. Dieser Trümmerhaufen war nackt und kahl, rohe Steine, frisch gebrochenes Mauerwerk, wild übereinandergepackt, und ragende Eisenträger, die kaum eine Spur von Rost zeigten: nirgendwo wuchs ein Gräschen, während anderwärts schon Bäume wuchsen, reizende kleine Bäume in Schlafzimmern und Küchen, dicht neben dem rostigen Balg des zerbrannten Herdes, war hier nur nackte Zerstörung, wüst und schrecklich leer, als hinge der Atem der Bombe noch in der Luft. Nur die Kacheln, dort wo sie erhalten waren, glänzten in Unschuld.⁸⁵

This description of the rubble also describes the juxtaposition between “botanical” and man-made elements, showing how the vegetation growth marks time on the pile of stone. In Böll’s portrayal, we find a sincere text, filled with postwar pathos in which the rubble is “naked” and exposed, and the tiles gleam “innocently.” He contrasts a scene of jagged, jarring metal and stone with a warm depiction of nature presenting itself in domestic

⁸⁴ This thought also idealizes nature over the political realm of nation states. As Schmidt later wrote, “Die Natur, –meiner und aller Dinge Mutter – weiß nichts von Deutschland oder Frankreich. Sie machte mich zum Menschen, nicht zum Bürger.” Bargfelder Ausgabe II, I, 42.

⁸⁵ Heinrich Böll, *Der Engel Schwieg* (München: dtv, 2009), 90-91.

spaces, in bedrooms and kitchens. In contrast to Böll's description of the ruined world, Schmidt's inventory of what remains is unsentimental and formally mirrors the destruction through its fragmentation.

Schmidt also makes it clear that his relation to the ruins is not one of melancholy, or remorse for the past. In the world of *Schwarze Spiegel*, it is doubtful that these scattered skeletons and the overgrown ruins offer lessons to the future.

Tiefe Traurigkeit : Ich strich mit der Hand über das mühsam Gemauerte; mein Mund bog sich nach unten, die Füße hafteten im Dielenlosen : das war nun das Ergebnis ! Jahrtausendlang hatten sie sich gemüht : aber ohne Vernunft ! Hätten sie wenigstens durch legalisierte Abtreibung und Präservative die Erdbevölkerung auf hundert Millionen stationär gehalten ; dann wäre genügend Raum gewesen [...] ach, es war doch gut, daß Alle weg waren [...]
(210)

Although the passage begins with a gesture of mourning, as he touches the ruin of a wall built by human hands, the tone quickly shifts to bitter sarcasm. The narrator suggests that the cause of the destruction was over-population: too many humans and not enough space. Such comments could also be read as citations of Nazi "Lebensraum" rhetoric, taken to an extreme in which total living space has been created for one sole survivor. There is also a disidentification with the pre-catastrophic human population, "hatten sie sich gemüht...", as the narrator distances himself from "die Menschenzeit."

During the narrator's visit to Hamburg, Schmidt stages a more explicit moment of non-melancholia, rejecting the possibility of playing the role of ruin gazer:

Jungfernstieg : ich setzte mich in den Straßenbahnwagen, der genau vorm Kaufhaus stand, und beabsichtigte, melancholisch hinaus zu blicken; aber es gelang mir nicht, und ich stieg wieder aus : linke Hand am linken Griff; sprang in einer bösen Laune gegen die Fahrtrichtung ab, und ging hinter der gelben Blecharche herum bis zur Balustrade. - (223)

The tramcar does not provide the necessary setting for a melancholic contemplation of the ruins of Hamburg. Instead, he jumps out of the car as if it were in motion, and continues walking. This gesture also demonstrates the narrator's playful interaction with the remains of industrialized society. He is always moving through the landscape rather than pausing to reflect on history, as in the case of Volney looking over the ruins of the Roman Empire.

I have proposed that we read *Schwarze Spiegel* as a rewriting of the Robinson material, presenting the “shipwreck” of modern civilization and a sole survivor (who later meets his own “Friday”). Accordingly, it is notable that Schmidt's narrator departs from Robinson's existence as the prototypical capitalist, instead seeking pleasure in existence—in art and literature. As Hartmut Vollmer insists, “[d]as permanente Frohlocken nach des Menschen Vernichtung darf allerdings nicht dazu verführen, hier nur eine reine Misanthropie zu sehen.”⁸⁶ In other words, despite the misanthropic rhetoric, the text is not dismissive of all human creation. Likewise, Gnüg—although still calling the narrator a misanthrope—enumerates some of his pleasures:

Was dieser Misanthrop jedoch zum Leben braucht, ein Leben, das mehr als ein Überleben wäre, sind Bücher, schöne in Folio oder Quart gebundene Ausgaben, möglichst Erstausgaben, Gedenkausgaben und möglichst die von seinen Lieblingen, seiner geistigen Ahnengalerie; Cooper, Feuerbach, Wieland, Schnabel, Poe, Barockromane...⁸⁷

These dead authors have become his last friends, keeping him company during his solitary years of existence—ghosts that make life more than mere survival.

In addition to literature, the narrator also salvages visual works. In an extended scene in the first half, the narrator wanders drunkenly through the deserted Hamburg

⁸⁶ Vollmer, “Glückseligkeiten letzter Menschen: Arno Schmidts ‘Schwarze Spiegel’,” 67.

⁸⁷ Gnüg, “Warnutopie und Idylle in den Fünfziger Jahren. Am Beispiel Arno Schmidts,” 281.

Kunsthalle, choosing pictures to take back to his house in the woods. The high-percentage schnapps allows him to imagine the museum as if populated with visitors and to even hear the sounds of their footsteps. With access to all of the artworks in the Kunsthalle, he is especially drawn to the work of A. Paul Weber, exclaiming “voilà un homme !” and deeming the artist “den größten unsrer neuen Graphiker” (227). Many specific works are named in this scene, several of which he collects for his new settlement including “Das Gerücht,” which the narrator describes as “seit Leonardo die beste Allegorie,” as well as “Die große Lähmung,” “Das Ende,” and “Der Dämon.”⁸⁸ “Das Ende” is a particularly macabre image (Figure 5.5), a scene of sinking ships surrounding a large skull with a top hat and monocle—a condemning image



Figure 5.5. A. Paul Weber, “Das Ende”

⁸⁸ Schmidt probably attended Weber’s exhibition in Hamburg in 1950 in the Kunsthalle. As part of an exhibit of the Griffelkunst-Vereinigung (a group that wanted to make art affordable), Weber exhibited 25 drawings. Soon thereafter, Schmidt read part of the unpublished manuscript for *Schwarze Spiegel* on the radio and mentioned Weber. Schmidt also wrote Weber thanks on an undated postcard, “Sie sind der größte lebende Graphiker, und ich verehere Sie so sehr!” The two artists planned a collaboration, in which Weber would illustrate Schmidt’s works, but it never came to pass. Helmut Schumacher and Dorsch Klaus J., A. *Paul Weber : Leben und Werk in Texten und Bildern* (Hamburg: Mittler, 2003), 218.

of capitalism. The boats have jagged edges, sharp masts pointing skywards creating a cobweb-like look. This echoes the image presented a few pages earlier of sunken ships in the Hamburg Alster: “bei den anderen waren längst die Haltetaue durchgefaut, die Seiten eingestoßen, gesunken” (223). This brief detour through the art museum thus introduces an artist who took up political and topical themes in his interwar and postwar works—and an image that directly depicts the shipwreck and destruction that can be read as a trope in the Robinson story and in *Schwarze Spiegel*. The narrator rescues this painting, among others, by this rather obscure German artist. The narrator’s efforts to create a post-catastrophic idyll can therefore be read on two levels: First, he builds a house in the forest, in which he collects books and art for his own pleasure. Second, he also constructs a text, preserving and creating culture.

Conclusion

In his “Storyteller” essay, Walter Benjamin claims that modern individuals are increasingly losing the ability to tell stories, or exchange experiences. He portrays this loss with a particularly vivid image of the generation of men returning from the First World War:

Eine Generation, die noch mit der Pferdebahn zur Schule gefahren war, stand unter freiem Himmel in einer Landschaft, in der nichts unverändert geblieben war als die Wolken und unter ihnen, in einem Kraftfeld zerstörender Ströme und Explosionen, der winzige, gebrechliche Menschenkörper.⁸⁹

In *Schwarze Spiegel*, Schmidt portrays a similar landscape, radically changed, contrasted with constant, static nature. The narrator even comments directly on this phenomenon

⁸⁹ Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller,” in *Selected Writings, 1935-1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2002).

when Lisa asks him about science fiction writing. She imagines that it would be “unheimlich” to invent futuristic stories. Schmidt stages a metanarrative scene that comments directly on his own task at hand as a writer of such a story:

»Nicht etwa wegen der Majestät ihrer Gedankengänge« kam sie meinen präzisierenden Fragen zuvor, »sondern so : wenn Einer Ende Juni 2070 meinentwegen n schönen Abend sein läßt... « und sie schüttelte tiefsinnig verstummend den Kopf. »Nu« sagte ich behutsam : »feststehen tuts wohl heute schon, was dann für Wetter ist... « (250)

The narrator here portrays “weather” as a constant, compared to the mercurial nature of human life, and the endless possibilities for construction and destruction. The story presents a world which has radically changed. In opposition to Benjamin’s claim, however, that the ability to tell stories has diminished, the narrator’s encounter with Lisa leaves open the prospect for meaningful dialogue with the other.

Schmidt prided himself on being a “difficult” writer. In a radio interview from 1953 with Martin Walser, he was asked about his technique and the difficulty of his sentences.

WALSER: Wenn Sie das Bild einer Zeit festhalten wollen, dann tun Sie es ja hier mit Sätzen, die in dieser Zeit völlig ungewöhnlich sind, und so spricht niemand, nicht wahr, Sie geben nicht die Zeit wieder, sondern Sie sind nahezu für viele, die in dieser Zeit leben, ja sogar unverständlich.

SCHMIDT: [...] der allgemein verbreitete Irrtum beim Leser ist, weil er lesen kann, könne er auch jedes Buch lesen...das Volk, jedermann, hat sich gefälligst zur Kunst hinzubemühen.⁹⁰

Schmidt challenges his readers to salvage culture from the shipwreck, to make the effort to work “towards” art, meeting the author part way. Comments such as this were also part of Schmidt’s self-stylization as a writer, which was often perceived as snobby and arrogant. Yet they also reveal a crucial distinction between Schmidt and many of his

⁹⁰ Quoted in Helmut Böttiger, *Die Gruppe 47: Als die deutsche Literatur Geschichte schrieb* (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2013), 184.

contemporaries about how to present “das Bild der Zeit.” Schmidt’s work does not use realism, but instead calls attention to the brokenness of language, culture, and society. In calling for a new, “objective” postwar style, the publisher Walter Kahnert uses the metaphor of building a house atop the rubble:

Ebenso wie ein Baumeister, der beauftragt ist, ein neues Haus auf und aus den vorhandenen Trümmern zu errichten, zunächst einmal feststellen muß, welche verwendbaren Materialien noch vorhanden seien, so bleibt dem deutschen Dichter meines Erachtens zunächst gar nichts anderes übrig, als ähnlich zu verfahren, nämlich eine Art geistig-seelischer Bestandsaufnahme vorzunehmen.⁹¹

Kahnert’s metaphor of construction has many parallels to the shipwreck metaphor.

Schmidt’s text can also be read as a construction out of the rubble, salvaging some “usable” materials. *Schwarze Spiegel* also shows writing and reading as a process of excavation and salvage, building culture anew from the wreckage.

⁹¹ Walter Kahnert, *Objektivismus. Gedanken über einen neuen Literaturstil* (Berlin: Herbig, 1946), 7-8, 9.

CHAPTER 6

“Finding Language for the Germans”: Communication, Transformation, and Reeducation in Essays of Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt

As the war in Europe came to an end in early May 1945, Thomas Mann noted in his diary that he had mixed emotions about the capitulation: “Es ist nicht gerade Hochstimmung, was ich empfinde.”¹ He noted the jubilation that was taking place across the globe—in New York, London and Moscow—and he felt nothing to celebrate. Mann did not yet see any kind of true change in Germany, only political defeat. As he reflected in his diary, “Die Verleugnung u. Verdammung der *Taten* des Nationalsozialismus innen und außen, die Erklärung zur Wahrheit, zum Recht, zur Menschlichkeit zurückkehren zu wollen—wo sind sie?”² Mann was still waiting and watching for signs that the Germans were also ready to acknowledge the crimes of their state, and embrace “truth,” “justice,” and “humanity.” He recognized that true transformation would be a long, drawn-out process.

In this chapter, I turn to two other central figures of the immediate postwar period who engage with the “reeducation” of German society in the aftermath of defeat: Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers. Like Thomas Mann, they are not interested in a superficial transformation, or the end of a political regime, but rather the political, cultural, societal, and intellectual future of Germany. In their essays, they consider what it means to be a

¹ Thomas Mann, *Tagebücher 1944-1.4.1946*, ed. Inge Jens (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1986), 200. Entry from 7 May 1945.

² *Ibid.*

part of German society after fascism, as well as part of a larger, more global society that looks to Germany for a response to the war.

The other materials included in my dissertation mostly represent a position from “within” Germany and the position of proximity expressed in both temporal and geographical terms. Arendt and Jaspers, on the other hand, write from a more distanced perspective—Arendt, after her years of exile in the United States, and Jaspers, after surviving the Third Reich in “inner exile.” Critiquing the Allied tactics of denazification and reeducation, they offer different strategies for helping German society to transform itself. Like Mann, they are concerned with the lack of a zero hour—understood here as an opportunity to reflect on and break with the past while recognizing its importance for the future. The essays of Arendt and Jaspers became a part of the emerging postwar German public sphere, shaped by Allied concerns about questions of guilt, responsibility, reeducation and denazification.

Whereas the Allies already had a narrative of “reeducation,” which ends with a democratized populace, Arendt and Jaspers are interested in the transformation of postwar Germany as an individual *process* and as a long-term development requiring conversation and encounters with the other. They also both thematize the problematic of language, and the need for a reinvention of language in the wake of National Socialism. In correlation to this need for a new language, they call for a new kind of reflected emotionality—a crucial dimension of postwar linguistic encounters. In this way, this chapter also returns to some of the themes introduced in Chapter One with the analysis of unpublished diaries. These texts reveal the creation of scenes of dialogue, often self-dialogue, as well as experimentation with forms of expression. Arendt and Jaspers, as I

will show, are interested in the long process ahead in the shadow of such extreme violence.

In my analysis, I concentrate on three aspects of their writings. First, these writers name specific emotions or emotionalities observable in postwar German society, in an attempt to analyze the recent past and the present historical moment. Second, in doing so, they put in place a discourse about how Germans *should* feel, in an attempt to regulate the intense emotionality of postwar encounters between Germans and the victims of the Nazi state. Third, the texts themselves not only explicitly engage with emotions as such, but emotion also functions on a more implicit level, shaping the meaning of the text and its place in the postwar social realm. I pay particular attention to the tropes, themes, and discourses of emotion each author draws on, and the kind of language they model for postwar society. The texts under analysis all reflect an evidence of the intense gaze upon German society in the aftermath of the war, and the stakes of “appropriate” linguistic and emotional exchange.

The Task of Being German: Karl Jaspers and *Die Schuldfrage*

The university lecture hall is packed with students, filling every chair and bench, and standing around the edges of the room. A professor stands at the podium, light from a window illuminating his face. He first speaks about the nature of thought, and the need for wisdom, philosophy, science, and the university. He speaks in lofty language, “Only upon reaching the heights of insight, moderation, acts of kindness, only then will you claim freedom...” More concretely, he mentions the “false teaching” of the past 12 years, the demotion of reason in 1933, and the “irrational and crazed impulses” that pervaded. The students face the speaker, listening intently. One girl turns away, not making eye

contact; another student crosses his arms defensively. A few whisper to one another. One young man sits eagerly on the edge of his seat, a glimmer of a tear in his eye; another displays his missing leg and a crutch, visible signs of the recent war. The professor at the podium encourages his young audience to begin anew—to recognize the current moment not as dark, as some may see it, but as a morning that can grow into day. At some point, the majority of the students rise and leave the room. A few remain seated, and knock loudly on the tables in appreciation. The professor nods thankfully and gives them a half-smile as he leaves the room.

The scene described is the fictional encounter between a professor who has recently returned from exile, and his student audience at the University of Göttingen during his first public lecture, as depicted in the film *Der Ruf* (dir. Josef von Báký, 1949). The script was written by Fritz Kortner, who himself had only returned to Germany in 1947, and who also played Professor Mauthner, a Jewish professor who survived the Third Reich in exile in the United States. In the lecture scene described above, the range of reactions to the professor's words is shown through a slow pan across the audience. After the lecture, a young American student who has accompanied the professor from California to Germany turns to a fellow student in confusion, as the students are filing out of the room:

MARY: What's going on here? Warum gehen sie?

WALTER: Aus Protest.

She looks confused and later remarks, "Ich war verwirrt, ich habe mir ganz etwas anderes vorgestellt." Mary, a young American, was unable to understand the students' reactions to the lecture, and had not foreseen the challenges that would arise upon her mentor's return. Her confusion and frustration, as well as the eventual fate of the professor—who

dies as a result of the psychological strain of the ensuing conflict with former friends, family, and colleagues—offer a narrative of failed reconciliation and the unfinished tasks of “reeducation” and “denazification” in Germany, not to mention the private and public struggles of exiles attempting to find a place in postwar society.

This fictional scene in the lecture hall has strong parallels to the philosopher Karl Jaspers’ lectures on German guilt (*Die Schuldfrage*) delivered at the University of Heidelberg in the winter semester of 1945-46. In his introductory lecture, Jaspers spoke of the need for a change in thinking, the importance of the university, the new possibility to speak openly and freely, and the need to speak with and to listen to one another. He spoke of the Germans’ different experiences of the war, their loss of national sovereignty, and claimed that no one is without guilt. As in the lecture hall in the film, there were a variety of responses to Jaspers’ words, visible and invisible, audible and silent, hostile and supportive. One source reported that students in attendance “started laughing and scraping their feet on the floor at the mention of democracy, in connection [with] the spiritual situation of Germany.”³ In the press, the reception of *Die Schuldfrage* was “mixed,” despite wide interest in Germany and abroad.⁴ Some reviews acknowledged the constructive argument being made about self-examination and guilt, while others preferred to concentrate on the task of physical rebuilding rather than moral renewal. Jaspers wrote to Hannah Arendt that he was being attacked by both Communists and former Nazis.⁵ Mark Clark summarizes that the topic of guilt clearly “struck a raw

³ Mark W. Clark, *Beyond Catastrophe: German Intellectuals and Cultural Renewal after World War II, 1945-1955* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), 65-66.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

nerve,” and “touched on a complex of emotional issues which the Germans preferred not to deal with consciously.”⁶

As portrayed in the film *Der Ruf*, the return of exiled intellectuals to Germany was part of this “complex of emotional issues.” Although Jaspers was not in emigration, he may be counted among the true “inner exiles,” as he was not able to teach or publish, and was only able to “return” to the university in 1945. Initially, he was optimistic about rebuilding the university and helping Germany transform itself. Jaspers’ hopes, however, soon diminished as he realized the extent of the resistance to such transformation, and the obstacles within the university and within German society at large. In a letter to Martin Heidegger in 1950, Jaspers wrote of his disappointment to the reception to *Die Schuldfrage*: “Die Studenten füllten zwar die Aula, es war Sensation. Aber sie so wenig wie meine Landsleute sonst haben sich für diese Erörterungen interessiert. Mir lag damals sehr viel an meinem Versuch, der sich nach einem Jahr schon gelähmt sah.”⁷ In a later reflection from 1967, Jaspers concedes that although it was perhaps understandable that such a topic would not be popular in the immediate aftermath of the war, he had hoped that it would at least find more resonance when material conditions improved.⁸ Despite this originally mixed reception, as Robert C. Holub writes, *Die Schuldfrage* is today widely considered “the single most important intellectual contribution to coming to grips with the Nazi crimes for the first half-century following World War II, and a

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, *Briefwechsel 1920-1963*, ed. Walter Biemel and Hans Saner (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990), 199.

⁸ “Die materielle Not war damals drückend. Ich begriff, daß in dieser Lage solche Erörterungen noch nicht interessieren konnten. Aber es blieb so auch später, und bis heute ist diese Schrift nur sehr wenig zur Kenntnis genommen worden.” Karl Jaspers, “Von Heidelberg nach Basel (1967),” in *Schicksal und Wille: Autobiographische Schriften*, ed. Hans Saner (München: R. Piper & Co, 1967), 174.

foundational document for the official public stance toward the ignominies of the Nazi regime.”⁹

Jaspers, who had been ostracized during the Third Reich because of his Jewish wife, was put on the Americans’ “White List” after the war of those who were “believed to be Anti-Nazi or Non-Nazi,” and therefore could be relied upon to help with reeducation efforts.¹⁰ Jaspers’ postwar writings are the work of an engaged public intellectual, taking seriously the mission of “reeducation,” and transformation, or *Wandlung* (also the title of the journal he edited 1945-49). In *Die Schuldfrage* and other texts published 1945-1948 while he remained in Heidelberg, Jaspers established himself as one of the leading voices from within Germany.¹¹ In these essays, he wrote on the possibility for change, the future of the university, and the physical and mental tasks that lay in front of the German people in the aftermath of National Socialism.¹²

⁹ Robert C Holub, “Guilt and Atonement,” in *A New History of German Literature*, ed. David E. Wellbery (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005), 825.

¹⁰ Henric L. Wuermeling, *Die weiße Liste: Umbruch der politischen Kultur in Deutschland 1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1981), 21, 264. Jaspers’ entry reads as follows: “*Jaspers, Karl, Prof.:* [Address] Ploeck 66. Age about 65. Professor of Philosophy at Heidelberg. Dismissed in 1935 “because of his Jewish wife.” “Absolutely opposed to Nazism, though never participated in politics...” 286. Jaspers had been removed from the university in 1933, lost his position in 1937 and in 1938 was prohibited from publishing. His academic career began around the turn of the century with studies in law and medicine, then psychiatry and psychology. In 1921, Jaspers became a full professor of philosophy at Heidelberg, and in 1932 he published his three-volume neo-Kantian *Philosophie*. In the late 1920s and early ’30s Jaspers and his colleague Martin Heidegger became known for developing existential philosophy. This friendship and intellectual exchange ended with Heidegger’s support of the Nazis in 1933.

¹¹ In fact, Jaspers himself noted that he became a kind of “public marionette” [*öffentliche Puppe*], due to his unblemished record. “Ich spürte, daß ich eine öffentliche Puppe geworden war, in der ich mich gar nicht wiedererkannte.“; “niemand denkt an die Philosophie, sondern alle nur an einen Namen, der eine öffentliche Puppe ist, die sie - auch darüber sich irrend - zu brauchen meinen.” Jaspers, “Von Heidelberg nach Basel (1967),” 173, 78.

¹² In the “Geleitwort” for the first issue of the journal *Die Wandlung*, Jaspers addresses the question of memory of the past more directly: “Was und wie wir erinnern, und was wir darin als Anspruch gelten lassen, das wird mit entscheiden über das, was aus uns wird. Dort finden wir den Grund der Geschichte, dem wir gehorsam sein wollen...” In: Jaspers, *Erneuerung der Universität: Reden und Schriften, 1945/46*, Lambert Schneider Taschenbücher (Heidelberg: L. Schneider, 1986), 111. For more on Jaspers’ writings on the university, see also Jaimey Fisher, *Disciplining Germany: Youth, Reeducation, and Reconstruction after the Second World War* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007). See especially Chapter 4: “Modernity’s Better Others: Youth in Jaspers Postwar University and Wiechert’s Reconstructive Agenda.”

Die Schuldfrage lectures, published in book form in 1946, were delivered in the context of early Allied occupation of Germany and the controversial Nuremberg trials. Many Germans felt that the trials were a form of “victors’ justice” and felt collectively accused as a people.¹³ Jaspers’ *Schuldfrage* takes stock of the current political situation of Germany and offers ways of thinking through questions of guilt. As Jaspers said in an interview from 1967, through his engagement in the public sphere he tried to help “find language for the Germans” in the immediate aftermath of the war.¹⁴ *Die Schuldfrage* offers a differentiated concept of “guilt,” as well as a corresponding vocabulary, in an attempt to clarify the muddled discussion surrounding the trials. In his discussion of the question of guilt, Jaspers’ text also intervenes in the project of German postwar “reeducation,” and it is particularly this aspect of the text that I will examine more closely. Highly cognizant of the defensive stance taken by many Germans vis-à-vis Allied attempts to “reeducate” (and “denazify”) from the outside, Jaspers figures reeducation as a personal, private task to be carried out by the Germans themselves as a kind of self-transformation. Jaspers uses two main oppositions to develop his model of reeducation: first, between false collectives (such as the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*) versus a society founded upon dialogue; and second, between “good” and “bad” emotions and emotionalities. His emphasis on dialogue includes a discussion of the role of emotion in speech situations, and the way certain emotions may inhibit communication. The language of the lectures is carefully attuned to the space between the self and other, the

¹³ “Another prominent example of such diversion and displacement was the debate about ‘collective guilt,’ which, although it had near-hegemonic dominion over the early postwar cultural imaginary in Germany, has been shown to be, at least as an articulated policy, largely a myth.” Fisher, *Disciplining Germany: Youth, Reeducation, and Reconstruction after the Second World War*: 12.

¹⁴ “1945 lebte ich in der Hoffnung, als politischer Schriftsteller mit vielen anderen die Sprache zu finden für die Deutschen.” Karl Jaspers, “Karl Jaspers - Ein Selbstporträt (1966/67),” in *Schicksal und Wille: Autobiographische Schriften*, ed. Hans Saner (München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1967), 37.

political implications of the success of this interaction, and the fragility of the rapport between speaking individuals.

Throughout the lectures, Jaspers tries to not only give Germans language for discussing the question of guilt, but also to describe the new speech situations required in the aftermath of the war. In my analysis of Jaspers' particular model for reeducation, I first describe how he responds to the emotional regime and the form of community (*Gemeinschaft*) of National Socialism. In exposing Nazi society as one of false unity, he offers a new form of society for postwar Germany which is centered on dialogue and reflected emotionality. Second, I describe in more detail the particular kind of balance between thinking and feeling which Jaspers advocates. I then show how Jaspers models the kind of emotionally reflected speech he is advocating, in an attempt to perform the kind of community formed through dialogue he hopes to bring about in Germany. Last, I address the topic of guilt, and how guilt figures in Jaspers' discussion of reeducation.

In this chapter, I will also draw on the work of Stanley Cavell and his notion of the "passionate utterance," which calls attention to the perlocutionary dimension of language, or the effect brought about *by saying* something. The passionate utterance is speech that is "designed to have consequential effects on the feelings, thoughts, and actions of others."¹⁵ In this process, interpretation of the intention of the other plays a large role, although there is always the possibility of error or misunderstanding. Cavell also notes that it is not enough to *assume* (and take for granted) the public and shared nature of language. When we do so, we stop the process of working "to *make* it public, to see it shared, the first step toward which might be... to recognize when it has become

¹⁵ Stanley Cavell, "Performative and Passionate Utterance," in *Philosophy the day after tomorrow* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 177.

private” (185). This statement stresses the struggle on behalf of the speaker to communicate himself. We cannot assume a shared working of language without standing by our intentions and seeing them through. This framework is useful in the context of the speech situations described in this chapter, as the essays under analysis show the extreme stakes of speech in postwar Germany, and the importance of conversation and exchange for a process of moving into the postwar future.

In a speech from 1947, Jaspers names two options for postwar Germany: to be doomed, despised, and to disappear, or to choose the path of a spiritual “inner revolution.”¹⁶ In his speech, Jaspers notes that the latter option “will not be accomplished totally, by ‘measures of re-education,’” but rather it is “up to the individual, to every individual.”¹⁷ Only if individuals do the work of reflection and “inner revolution,” can they form a future community that does not disavow its past.

The inner revolution requires a clear knowledge of our historically developed situation—the situation of mankind and, within it, our German situation. We must not say: “Let bygones be bygones; let us look forward, not back!” For the “forward” has a chance only to the extent of our penetration, reception, and conquest of what has been.¹⁸

Jaspers’ insistence that Germany must not ignore its past in order to move forward was an unpopular argument. Jaspers was acknowledging the effect of the catastrophe of the war and the resulting defeat in Germany: “we have made our exit as a great political force—our permanent exit.”¹⁹ Similarly, in the *Schuldfrage*, he characterizes Germany’s place in the world as that of a “Pariavolk” (132, 150), arguing that it is only through

¹⁶ Karl Jaspers, “Our Future and Goethe,” in *Existentialism and Humanism*, ed. Hanns E. Fischer (New York: Russell F. Moore Company, 1952). Speech delivered 28. August 1947 upon receiving the Goethe Prize of the city of Frankfurt am Main.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 36.

honesty and openness that Germany may avoid a permanent “Pariadasein” (125).²⁰ He thus characterizes the postwar moment as a decisive turning point or threshold in which Germany’s future will be determined.

Beginning in the introductory lecture, Jaspers emphasizes that he is speaking to a highly diverse German social body without common ground: “Gemeinsam ist die Nichtgemeinschaft” (126).²¹ He recognizes a widening gulf between individuals and groups in postwar German society, and the danger in closing oneself off from others. Jaspers describes these differences extensively, and the fact of diversity and plurality of experiences, in order to make a crucial point: these differences are not emerging only now, after the war, but they were concealed during the 12 years of National Socialism. Jaspers exposes the false community of the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* as “ein[e] erzwungen[e], äußerlich[e] Gemeinschaft” (126). Although the social body 1933-1945 may have felt unified to some, the catastrophe of defeat exposed this togetherness as a falsehood, revealing the manifold differences existent between Germans. “Daß jetzt die Verschiedenheiten aufbrechen, ist die Folge davon, daß zwölf Jahre keine öffentliche Diskussion möglich war und daß auch im Privatleben alles, was Opposition war, sich auf intimste Unterhaltungen beschränkte” (127). Whereas Nazi society was characterized by a lack of open speech and discussion, grounded in the illusion of univocal unity, postwar society may be characterized by a public sphere of polyvocal exchange, in recognition of

²⁰ “Jaspers called on Germans to break with the tradition of power politics and the nation-state—to assume collective responsibility and self-consciously acknowledge that they must become a pariah people until they demonstrate the moral capacity to reenter political life.” 4 in Anson Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals Between Apocalypse and Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Rabinbach, “Karl Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage*: A Reconsideration,” in *Heidelberg 1945*, ed. Jürgen C. Heß, Hartmut Lehmann, and Volker Sellin (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996).

²¹ Karl Jaspers, “Die Schuldfrage,” in *Erneuerung der Universität: Reden und Schriften, 1945/46*, ed. Renato de Rosa (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1986). All quotations from this source are noted parenthetically.

difference. The channels of communication have therefore been restructured. Drawing this contrast, Jaspers constantly acknowledges the historical situation of Germany as the starting point—a defeated country occupied by foreign powers, and an atomized society reacting differently to this defeat.

Jaspers demonstrates in detail this crucial difference between enforced *Gemeinschaft*, which excluded many, and the true plurality of Germans, in order to set up the point of departure for his lectures. He makes it clear that coming together in dialogue will be no easy task, but that German society can only be rebuilt through recognition and admission of differences. “Die allgemeine Lage scheint uns nur durch Negation zu verbinden. Wenn wir lernen, wirklich miteinander zu reden, so doch nur im Bewußtsein unserer großen Verschiedenheit” (130). In this context, he uses the loaded word “Gemeinschaft” in reference to his proposed model for society-building through communication: “Einheit durch Zwang taugt nichts; sie verfliegt als Schein in der Katastrophe. Einmütigkeit durch Miteinanderreden und Verstehen, durch gegenseitiges Dulden und Nachgeben führt zur Gemeinschaft, die standhält” (130).²² The catastrophe of National Socialism revealed the *Volksgemeinschaft* to be a false community, and only *Miteinanderreden* can lead to a long-lasting pluralistic German community.²³

²² In his 1932 *Philosophie*, Jaspers used the term *Gemeinschaft* more extensively, although it is generally avoided in the *Schuldfrage*.

²³ See Anton Hügli, Dominic Kaegi, and Reiner Wiehl, *Einsamkeit, Kommunikation, Öffentlichkeit* (Basel: Schwabe, 2004); Christian Rabanus, “Kommunikation als praktischer Kern von Jaspers' Philosophie,” in *Existenz in Kommunikation: zur philosophischen Ethik von Karl Jaspers*, ed. Bernd Weidmann (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004); Wolfgang Röd, “Philosophiehistorie als Kommunikation: Chancen und Grenzen,” in *Einsamkeit, Kommunikation, Öffentlichkeit*, ed. Anton Hügli (Basel: Schwabe, 2004); Hans Saner, “Denkbilder im Spannungsfeld von Einsamkeit und Kommunikation. Zu den Metaphern des Philosophierens bei Karl Jaspers, Hannah Arendt und Martin Heidegger,” in *Einsamkeit, Kommunikation, Öffentlichkeit*, ed. Anton Hügli and Stiftung Karl Jaspers (Basel: Schwabe, 2004). As Reiner Wiehl points out, *Einsamkeit* is the complementary term to *Kommunikation*, and they belong together, both in public and private spheres of life. Reiner Wiehl, “Karl Jaspers: Einsamkeit, Kommunikation, Öffentlichkeit” in Hügli, Kaegi, and Wiehl, *Einsamkeit, Kommunikation, Öffentlichkeit*: 20.

Jaspers conceptualizes the task of reeducation as learning to communicate once again: “Wir wollen lernen, miteinander zu reden” (121).²⁴ Rather than the term favored by the Allied occupation, “reeducation,” Jaspers uses the term “Selbsterziehung,” emphasizing that it is not only a personal task, but a *German* task, not imposed from the outside but rather a voluntary process from within the German people and from within every individual. In fact, Jaspers never mentions the term “Umerziehung” (the German term for “reeducation”), but instead he describes difficult processes of *learning* that must be undertaken. The concept of *Miteinanderreden*, which Jaspers develops throughout the lectures, also requires certain conditions—true listening, speaking and reflected conversation—and must be *learned*.

Throughout the discussion of the state of German society in *Die Schuldfrage*, and of the need to bring people together through dialogue, Jaspers develops another opposition: that of “good” and “bad” emotions. He makes clear that rational discussion is not only about creating the physical occasion for speech—an encounter between two speakers—but additionally about creating an empathetic atmosphere in which the speech of the other is *heard* and *listened to*. The goal is speaking *with*, not *over* or *at* one another. *Miteinanderreden* is not only a rational process but also plays out on an affective and intersubjective level: “Wir müssen...mitfühlen lernen” (126). The affective dimension of communication plays a large role in creating the possibility for discussion.

²⁴ Accordingly, the most important tool to be used to bring Germans together is conversation. Jaspers had already begun to develop the concept of communication in his 1932 *Philosophie*, and it became a fundamental term in his philosophical writings. In the second volume, the chapter dealing with “Kommunikation” outlines its importance for knowing the self, reasoning, and truth-seeking. Jaspers names the question of communication one of the most central questions of being, because *Miteinandersein* is so central to the question of being. “Jedes Verlieren und Versagen in Kommunikation ist wie eigentlicher Seinsverlust. Sein ist Miteinandersein nicht nur des Daseins, sondern der Existenz, dieses aber in der Zeit nicht als bestehendes, sondern als Prozeß und Gefahr.” Karl Jaspers, *Philosophie*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Springer, 1956), 58.

In fact, he begins his speech by recognizing the atmosphere of mistrust in his audience, and by acknowledging the skepticism on behalf of the young generation of students, who may feel that nothing has substantially changed. Anson Rabinbach points out that the mere necessity of this introduction reveals quite a bit about the “moral atmosphere” of the time: “mistrust, skepticism, and the cynical belief that all that had changed since the collapse of the Nazi regime was that the occupation authorities were now imposing *their* ideological and political requirements on Germany.”²⁵

Jaspers also notes that this mistrust or skepticism has a tendency to lead to anger, to feelings of indignant defensiveness, and irritation with others. Due to the intense emotions that circulate around *Miteinanderreden*, Jaspers argues for the need to put certain feelings “on ice.”

Dazu gehört, daß wir uns nicht berauschen in Gefühlen des Stolzes, der Verzweiflung, der Empörung, des Trotzes, der Rache, der Verachtung, sondern daß wir diese Gefühle auf Eis legen und sehen, was wirklich ist. Wir müssen solche Gefühle suspendieren, um das Wahre zu erblicken, um liebend in der Welt zu sein. (121)

The strong feelings Jaspers enumerates in this passage (pride, despair, revenge, disdain, etc.) are presented as obstacles to self-criticism, truth-seeking, and seeking to be of good will, “liebend in der Welt zu sein.”²⁶ These negative emotions—with the tendency to be

²⁵ Rabinbach, “Karl Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage*: A Reconsideration,” 149; Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*, 133.

²⁶ The phrase “liebend in der Welt sein” is typical of the theological rhetoric that permeates Jaspers speech. I do not discuss this aspect of the speech here, but Anson Rabinbach has argued that the “highly theological language of guilt and innocence; justice and grace (*Gnade*); evasion (*Ausweichen*) and purification (*Reinigung*)” in the *Schuldfrage* provide moral ground for a new narrative of a pacifist and ethical Germany. Hannah Arendt “thought that some of his prewar Weberian nationalism and his Protestant piety still lingered in his desire to ‘redeem the German people.’” In the discussion of “guilt” and “purification,” and especially “metaphysical guilt,” such language is obvious. But at the same time, it is important to note that Jaspers does not argue that the whole question of guilt is left to God, or is a question postponed until a day of judgment. Therefore, although the theological language is a crucial part of this text, I am arguing that the text is not, for the most part, eschatological. On the contrary, most of his speech (with the exception of sections on “metaphysical guilt”) has to do with the concrete, physical conversations between survivors in postwar Germany, and the everyday tasks of thinking faced by each individual in the aftermath of the

all-consuming—present an obstacle to rational discussion and open-minded argument:

“Daher wollen wir nicht zornig aufeinander werden, sondern versuchen, miteinander den Weg zu finden. Der Affekt spricht gegen die Wahrheit des Redenden” (122).

Thus, from the beginning, Jaspers establishes a kind of negative emotionality which is to be avoided—that of *Rausch*, the particularly dangerous emotionality of fascism, the excess of emotion which prohibits critical reflection. Jaspers is contributing to a discourse of emotionality in which National Socialist Germany was pervaded by an emotional regime of “loud” and dangerous emotions, which created a power dynamic and real situation of fear and danger that prohibited open discussion.²⁷ In response to the past decade of “Erschütterungen” (118), Jaspers therefore makes an appeal for a turn away from emotions, or for “putting emotions on ice.” Jaspers also references an earlier speech he delivered in August 1945, in which he spoke of the *Rausch* of 1933, in which a large part of the population was “hinweggeschwemmt” (170). These are descriptions of emotionality as agentic and powerful, a force that carries people and reduces them to passive objects.

war: *now*. It is also about ethics in a very practical sense—about trust and mistrust, political tact, empathy and what “belonging” means after the *Volksgemeinschaft*. And it is also about sovereignty and political justice, in a concrete sense. Rabinbach, “Karl Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage*: A Reconsideration,” 152. Arendt quotation: Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt, for love of the world* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 216.

²⁷ Also, Benn notes this concept in his 1943 essay “Zum Thema Geschichte,” and again in his autobiographical text *Doppelleben* to refer to the feeling of history that swept him up originally: “Schicksalsrausch,” a register of language he now would no longer choose. But he also reminds his readers that Thomas Mann used similar language of “Schicksalsergriffenheit” in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*. In Gottfried Benn, *Doppelleben: Zwei Selbstdarstellungen* (Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1950), 91, 96. For more on the concept of *Rausch*, especially as related to totalitarianism, see also Árpád von Klimó and Malte Rolf, *Rausch und Diktatur: Inszenierung, Mobilisierung und Kontrolle in totalitären Systemen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006). For more on National Socialism as a perversion of “civilized” emotion, see Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals Between Apocalypse and Enlightenment*. Konrad Hugo Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Norbert Elias, *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cambridge; Oxford: Polity Press, 1996). See especially the chapter “The Breakdown of Civilization,” 299-402.

And yet, although he calls for a “suspension of feelings” in the introduction, a closer look at Jaspers’ text reveals a more ambivalent stance toward emotion, and he concedes that emotions play a crucial role in thinking about questions of guilt, and even more so in (not) speaking about these issues. In his discussion of “the guilt question,” Jaspers actually devotes a surprising amount of space to feelings. He mentions “hurt” feelings and “dark” feelings, sympathy and the inability to sympathize, trust and mistrust, moralizing emotions, pride, anger and arrogance. And beyond merely naming these emotions, this text theorizes questions of guilt and shame, and the processes of working through a difficult and traumatic past. In *Die Schuldfrage*, therefore, Jaspers describes how certain emotions can hinder listening and communicating. The desirability of emotions is judged by their reflectedness, or their potential to facilitate or impede reflection, and how they influence the ability to reasonably communicate with others. The “easy” route is to let affect guide one’s judgments, to cut off communication, and to hold stubbornly to one’s opinions. The difficult, but necessary, route involves constant contemplation, questioning and reflection. “Wir müssen die Bereitschaft zum Nachdenken wiederherstellen gegen die Neigung, alles gleichsam in Schlagzeilen plakatiert schon fertig zu haben” (121). It may have been “easy” for some to not think and accept what was “fertig plakatiert,” but here Jaspers uses National Socialism as a cautionary tale for the effects of taking the easy route: for not thinking on one’s own.

Like the description of *Rausch*, Jaspers also speaks of “loud” emotions and talk, which are also to be avoided. In such aggressive speech, there is a danger that the noise of the successful (and “those who survive”) drowns out the voices of the less powerful.

Here, also, he continues to reference the challenges of post-fascist society as the context for his lectures:

Im Gang der Dinge scheint stets der Überlebende recht zu haben. Der Erfolg scheint recht zu geben. [...] Darin liegt die tiefe Ungerechtigkeit der Blindheit für die Scheiternden, für die Ohnmächtigen, für die, welche durch die Ereignisse zertreten werden. So ist es jederzeit. So war der preußisch-deutsche Lärm nach 1866 und 1870, der den Schrecken Nietzsches erregte. So war der noch wildere Lärm des Nationalsozialismus seit 1933. (123)

Tone of voice, emotionality, and power dynamics shape an atmosphere that may foster or may impede communication.

Although Jaspers urges his audience to tone down emotions, and to resist “loud” emotions, he also warns repeatedly of the dangers of silence, and what may be couched behind silence. *Miteinanderreden* requires speech, and forms of non-speech present the biggest danger to communication (125). Hannah Arendt noted, “Jaspers is as far as I know, the first and only philosopher who ever protested against solitude, to whom solitude appeared ‘pernicious’ and who dared to question ‘all thoughts, all experiences, all contents’ under this one aspect: ‘What do they signify for communication?’”²⁸ This emphasis on communication, and protest against solitude and silence, is foundational to *Die Schuldfrage*. To Jaspers, a composure that is “proudly silent” may at first seem justified, as a possible last attempt at defiance, but ultimately indicates a weakness masked as strength.

Aus solcher Haltung [eine, die stolz schweigt] erwächst eine Stimmung, die im heimlichen, ungefährlichen Schimpfen sich entladet, die in herzloser Kälte und wütiger Empörtheit, in der Verkniffenheit des Ausdrucks zur unfruchtbaren Selbstverzehrung führt. Der Stolz, der sich fälschlich für männlich hält und in der Tat ausweicht, nimmt das Schweigen noch als Kampfhandlung, als letzte in der Ohnmacht bleibende Kampfhandlung. (125)

²⁸ Hannah Arendt quoted in Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*, 139.

This passage is striking not only for the way Jaspers describes the potential intensity of silence, but for his incisive adjectives and crescendo of negativity to describe the end result of such silence. What may begin harmlessly ends with unproductive self-absorption. Jaspers continues to argue that while pride takes itself to be “masculine” (and thereby virtuous, or virtuous according to a certain Wilhelmine model of honor and pride), it is actually a form of retreat. To Jaspers, discussion is the truly difficult form of proceeding, and silence is an evasion of this confrontation of the self which can only go so far.²⁹ Only after discussing questions of guilt, and purification through reparations (“Weg der Reinigung durch Wiedergutmachung” 210), may silence be “unagressiv” (211).

Jaspers is making an argument for the cognitive nature of our emotions, and the possibility to discover and change them through thinking. Rather than trust emotions as given (especially negative emotions, “dunkle Gefühle“), we must recognize them as contingent and mediated: “Gefühle sind nicht wie vitale Gegebenheiten einfach da. Sondern sie sind vermittelt durch unser inneres Handeln, unser Denken, unser Wissen. Sie werden vertieft und geklärt in dem Maße als wir denken” (134). Emotions arise in the process of acting, thinking and knowing. In this figuration, feelings and thinking should also be in dialogue: the communication that happens at the intersubjective level—discussion among individuals with radically different experiences—should also be carried out within the subject. In this kind of self-reeducation, one should question emotion and take stock of how it is transformed through actions, thoughts, and knowledge.

²⁹ This is also an attack on the traditional emotional norms of repressed affect and “civilized” emotion as non-emotion. See Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994).

Drawing upon the tropes of “Durchhellung” or *Klärung*, (beginning with “dunkle Gefühle”) he describes a process of emotional self-examination (“Selbstdurchhellung,” 163, 196). In order to demonstrate this argument, or show how such reflection might be carried out, Jaspers himself enacts the kind of dialogue he is promoting in his lectures. As mentioned above, he explicitly identifies the postwar atmosphere of mistrust and skepticism, and the tendency to react defensively to efforts by the Allies to “reeducate.” It might seem to his audience that Jaspers, (with his “White List” past), is speaking from a position of moral superiority. Aware of this potential challenge, Jaspers tries to position himself not as a mediator between the Allies and the Germans, along a hierarchy between the “victors” and the “defeated,” but from *within* the German social body, as a German who is himself faced with these same tasks. In the foreword he describes his position “als Deutscher unter Deutschen...als Mensch unter Menschen“ (114). In continually speaking of “unsere Situation” from the subject position “wir Deutsche” he performs himself as part of this particularly German project. Although he works for and with the Allies towards “reeducation,” he is also critical of some of the Allied policies, rejecting their mode of “reeducation” and proposing a different kind of “Selbsterziehung” that begins as an individual process and is carried out through speaking with one another and with oneself.

In trying to create a speech situation of *Miteinanderreden*, there are moments when Jaspers directly anticipates or addresses the feelings and thoughts of his audience. Although the form of the text is a lecture, and not a conversation, there are moments that rhetorically anticipate the voice and response of the other. At one point, Jaspers speaks directly to his audience, admitting that some of them may feel “personally touched”

(*persönlich getroffen*) in the course of the lectures, that they may experience a roller-coaster of emotions (*mitschwingen, gegen mich fühlen*). “Verzeihen Sie mir, wenn ich beleidige. Ich will es nicht” (124). By anticipating the emotional reactions of his audience, he is also trying to make his listeners conscious of the moments in which their own feelings interfere with their processes of clear thought and discussion, and the way that they as speakers cannot always control the reception of their words. This kind of careful discussion, conscious of what Cavell would call its perlocutionary effects, is the kind of reeducation of feeling that Jaspers seems to have in mind. These lectures are about how to interrogate the self, and to become cognizant of the ways emotions can become blockades, or how they may motivate certain thoughts. Finally, this awareness allows one to strive for a detached position from which to listen to the speaking other, and thus truly be able to *hear* the voice of the other, without the barriers of self-pity, arrogance, anger, or pride. In doing so, I argue, Jaspers shows his audience how to distance themselves from their emotions, to analyze their own emotions and recognize them as contingent.

This enactment of *Miteinanderreden* is perhaps most visible in the sections on collective guilt. To contemporary audiences, this was the most controversial of the four guilt categories.³⁰ The question of collective guilt lurks behind the entire text. In his classification of guilt, Jaspers distinguishes between 1) criminal guilt, 2) political guilt, 3) moral guilt, and 4) metaphysical guilt. According to this schema, Jaspers divides affective forms of guilt (marked by shame, conscience) from the first two forms of guilt

³⁰ Norbert Frei has argued that although the Allies spoke concretely of specific individuals and crimes to be punished, the Germans heard (out of guilt) a thesis of “collective guilt”: “Vieles spricht daher dafür, daß es sich bei alledem in erster Linie um Konstruktionen des deutschen Kollektivbewußtseins - vulgo: des schlechten Gewissens – handelte.” Norbert Frei, “Von deutscher Erfindungskraft oder: Die Kollektivschuldthese in der Nachkriegszeit,” *Rechtshistorisches Journal*, no. 16 (1997): 632.

(determined by another party). Although he doesn't make this distinction explicit (between affective and non-affective guilt), he does point out that because feelings *may* accompany criminal and political guilt, Germans may confuse moral guilt with these objective forms.

This point of confusion is crucial to the text, and the *feeling* of guilt is a question Jaspers is repeatedly forced to address. In fact, this point seems to threaten his rather neat categorization of guilt.³¹ In delineating these terms, Jaspers makes it clear that only individuals can be found guilty of crimes and punished for those crimes: "Verbrecher ist immer nur der einzelne" (143), "Ein Volk als Ganzes kann nicht schuldig und nicht unschuldig sein" (144-5). Although the first two categories of guilt (criminal, political) can be judged by an outside party (a judge, or the victorious powers, respectively), Jaspers emphasizes that the last two forms of guilt (moral, metaphysical) are purely a private matter. They are related to what Jaspers theorizes as a distinctly *individual* realm: shame and conscience. In the case of moral guilt, "Die Instanz ist das eigene Gewissen" (136), and in the case of metaphysical guilt, "Instanz ist Gott allein" (137). In fact, he even says of political guilt, "diese Haftung als solche trifft nicht die Seele" (162). In this sense, Jaspers is attempting to clarify confusion about German guilt. He is saying that political guilt and criminal guilt are objectively determined by an outside authority (court of law, judge, in this case the Allied powers), and that this category should not be accompanied by an affective form of guilt ("die Seele"). At the end of the section on collective guilt, however, he turns to address the *feeling* of shared responsibility, and in doing so demonstrates the difficulty of clarifying both emotions and collectives.

³¹ See also Hannah Arendt, "Collective Responsibility," in *Amor Mundi: Explorations in the Faith and Thought of Hannah Arendt*, ed. James w. Bernauer (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987).

In the section entitled “The German questions” (*Die deutschen Fragen*), Jaspers names two “events” of the immediate postwar period that have made the question of “guilt” most obvious, and which also seemed to accuse the Germans as a collective whole: first, the famous “finger-pointing” of 1945 with the Allied publication of photographs of Bergen-Belsen, and second, the Nuremberg trials. He writes that the photographs of the concentration camps, hung with the headline “Das ist eure Schuld!” brought about an “Unruhe der Gewissen,” “Entsetzen,” and ultimately a defensive reaction amongst those who were shocked at the accusation and who were unsure where the finger was pointing (149).³² In regards to the Nuremberg trials, Jaspers writes that the Germans feel hurt (*gekränkt*), a reaction that he feels is understandable (despite the fact that individuals were on trial, not the German nation as a whole):

Jeder Staatsbürger ist in dem, was der eigene Staat tut und leidet, mithaftbar und mitgetroffen. Ein Verbrecherstaat fällt dem ganzen Volk zur Last. In der Behandlung der eigenen Staatsführer, selbst wenn sie Verbrecher sind, fühlt sich daher der Staatsbürger mit behandelt. In ihnen wird das Volk mit verurteilt. Daher wird die Kränkung und Würdelosigkeit in dem, was die Staatsführer erfahren, vom Volke als eigene Kränkung und Würdelosigkeit empfunden. Und daher die instinktive, zunächst noch gedankenlose Ablehnung des Prozesses. (153)

Although he has tried to keep political guilt (the connection of Germans to their state through citizenship) and moral guilt separate, both of these sections acknowledge the feelings that arise through any declaration of guilt. What Jaspers fails to make explicit here is that individuals also identify emotionally with the concepts of national honor and shame. The category of political guilt is not a cold, objective fact, but an emotionally laden concept that spills over into private settings and into concepts of private shame and guilt.

³² For more on reactions to these images, see Ulrike Weckel, *Beschämende Bilder: deutsche Reaktionen auf alliierte Dokumentarfilme über befreite Konzentrationslager* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012).

Jaspers finds himself in a difficult position of trying to invalidate the collective guilt thesis, while arguing that, in a way, all Germans may (and, implicitly, *should*) feel some kind of guilt. First, he tries to explain why Germans *feel* guilt after the war, although they may not be criminally guilty. To help explain this phenomenon, he uses the analogy of a family member who has committed a crime: one *feels* “something like complicity,” or shared guilt (*Mitschuld*), for the deeds of family members, a feeling that cannot be objectivized (176). We feel “mitgetroffen” and we feel the need to right this wrong (*es wiedergutzumachen*) (176). He extends this analogy to the German people, who feel “Mitbetroffenheit” because of their common language, traditions and origins. The tendency to feel complicit (*mitverantwortlich fühlen*) is not rational, but derives from an enduring bond to being German (*Deutschsein*), which for Jaspers is defined as “das Leben in der Muttersprache” (178). This repetition of the prefix “mit,” as in *Miteinanderreden*, reinforces the social aspect of guilt.

Jaspers chooses his words carefully when he speaks of collectives. He writes that “Deutschsein” is a task rather than a fact (*nicht Bestand, sondern Aufgabe*), in the attempt to avoid generalizing categorizations (*Verabsolutierung*) (177). In this section as well, he rehearses the process of self-identification for his audience, showing how one may avoid the trap of collective identification: “Ich bin zuerst Mensch, ich bin im besonderen Friese, bin Professor, bin Deutscher, bin mit anderen Kollektiven nahe, bis zur Verschmelzung der Seelen, verbunden, näher oder ferner mit allen mir fühlbar gewordenen Gruppen” (177). This kind of self-description, which moves from the universal (*Mensch*) to the local (*Friese*) and to one’s career (*Professor*) rehearses a kind of self-identification that recognizes one’s belonging to multiple groups, and fluidity between groups. He notes that

one may at times *feel* closer to others (Jews, Dutch, English) than one's own people, and one may feel closer to some Germans than to others:

Ich fühle mich näher den Deutschen, die auch so fühlen [mitverantwortlich] – ohne daraus eine Pathetik zu machen – und fühle mich ferner denen, deren Seele diesen Zusammenhang zu verleugnen scheint. Und diese Nähe bedeutet vor allem die gemeinsame, beschwingende Aufgabe, nicht deutsch zu sein, wie man nun einmal ist, sondern deutsch zu werden, wie man es noch nicht ist, aber sein soll. (178)

In these passages, Jaspers is also recognizing the challenges of post-fascist society, in terms of belonging, thinking in terms of collectives, inclusion and exclusion. He returns to the tropes of “Umschmelzung” and “Wandlung” that permeate the whole essay (“deutsch zu werden, wie man es noch nicht ist”) as a kind of task of postwar reeducation. This passage also notes that there is a community of those who feel *mitverantwortlich*, to whom Jaspers feels closer than those who deny feelings of guilt or responsibility. It is especially moral guilt which is implied here, the shared guilt of human solidarity and empathy.

However, in the small subsection, “Das eigene Bewußtsein einer Kollektivschuld,” Jaspers recognizes that the boundaries between affective and non-affective forms of guilt, individual and collective, become blurred in praxis. This passage also stands out from the rest of the essay, as Jaspers himself admits,

Es scheint, daß ich als Philosoph nun vollends ins Gefühl abgeglitten bin und den Begriff verloren habe. In der Tat hört die Sprache auf, und nur negativ ist zu erinnern, daß alle unsere Unterscheidungen, unbeschadet dessen, daß wir sie für wahr halten und keineswegs rückgängig machen, nicht zum Ruhebett werden dürfen. (178)

It is at this point that Jaspers' text and argumentation seem to break down. When he writes that he has “slid off” into emotion, he also marks this point as the limit of language. He has been describing the non-rational affective identification with one's

country, and the effects of this feeling of belonging, which seem to elude the previous categories and delineations of four separate forms of guilt.

Thus, although Jaspers has been trying to discredit a thesis of collective guilt, he ends up describing the guilt of all—which he distinguishes from *collective* guilt. By the end of the lectures, Jaspers returns to what he declared already in the introduction: that everyone who survived is guilty, in some form or another. In the section on metaphysical guilt he cites an earlier speech delivered in August 1945,

Wir Überlebenden haben nicht den Tod gesucht. Wir sind nicht, als unsere jüdischen Freunde abgeführt wurden, auf die Straße gegangen, haben nicht geschrien, bis man auch uns vernichtete. Wir haben es vorgezogen, am Leben zu bleiben mit dem schwachen, wenn auch richtigen Grund, unser Tod hätte doch nichts helfen können. Daß wir leben, ist unsere Schuld. (170)

The guilt described here is that of all survivors. He says that too many Germans did not react with rage (*Empörung*) to what was happening around them, but rather chose to continue living as before, “als ob nichts geschehen sei” (171). Those who chose to react with powerless rage—even if only inwardly—began the process of *Verwandlung* in recognition of guilt. Thus this question of an emotional reaction towards the injustices, crimes and inhumanity of National Socialism is one kind of litmus test for beginning the process of thinking about guilt.

In conclusion, Jaspers’ *Schuldfrage* highlights the imperative to open up channels of conversation among Germans, and in doing so to carefully balance emotion and reason. Feeling may no longer be an unreflected and all-consuming event, but rather feelings must be questioned and analyzed. Through discussion, Germans may recognize the role played by response in the questions of guilt and responsibility. By answering to questions—posed by the self or by others—individuals become agents, able to reflect

upon the questions of their place in German history, the present moment, and Germany's future. Jaspers recognizes the high political and moral stakes in these postwar and specifically post-fascist conversations, and he hopes for German society that they may practice a form of *Selbsterziehung* and *Selbsterhellung*, rather than be "reeducated" from the outside. The future of the postwar German social body, he argues, rests on the ability to carry out these conversations with respect to the experiences of the other. In speaking to others about guilt, Germans take on responsibility, whether on a political, moral, or metaphysical level. Jaspers sees a positive transformation only possible as an effect of working-through one's emotions, and the mix of guilt, shame, contempt, anger, sadness and despair that may accompany such discussions. In the end, it is the question of guilt that may provide the foundation for Germany's future, not as a "Pariavolk," but as a people that may once again be a part of humanity.

Melancholic Ghostliness: Hannah Arendt's *Report from Germany*

Und da kam mir plötzlich das ganze sogenannte wirkliche und gegenwärtige Deutschland wie ein böser verrückter Spuk vor.

-Hannah Arendt, Letter to Karl Jaspers³³

Following the defeat of Germany in 1945, philosopher Karl Jaspers and his former student Hannah Arendt resumed correspondence and quickly began a frequent exchange of ideas and work. Jaspers' *Schuldfrage* cites Arendt's essay on "Organized Guilt" (one of only two sources cited) and Hannah Arendt opens the *Origins of Totalitarianism* with

³³ Arendt to Jaspers, 4 Oktober 1950. Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers, *Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers: Briefwechsel 1926-1969*, ed. Lotte Köhler and Hans Saner (München: Piper, 1985), 194.

a quote from Jaspers.³⁴ Aside from various other essays and articles published in the first few years after the war, Hannah Arendt concerned herself chiefly, and most notably, with a study of totalitarianism. In 1949, after finishing her monumental *Origins of Totalitarianism (Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft)*, she returned to Germany for the first time since the end of the war. After this visit, she wrote an essay entitled “The Aftermath of Nazi Rule: Report from Germany,” published 1950 in the American Jewish journal *Commentary*. This text has become known for its rather scathing descriptions of the German population and Germans’ “lack of response,” both verbal and emotional, in the aftermath of the war.³⁵ Based on encounters during her six-month visit, she describes German self-pity, apathy, evasiveness, indifference, silence, and “refusal to face and come to terms with what really happened” (254). Arendt’s essay not only anticipates the claims of the Mitscherlichs’ analysis of the German “inability to mourn,” but it also serves as a kind of “afterword” to the *Origins* in its descriptions of the effects of totalitarian rule.³⁶ Whereas Jaspers concerns himself chiefly with rethinking “reeducation” in *Die Schuldfrage*, in this essay Arendt also considers the processes of

³⁴ See Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, “Existentialism Politicized: Arendt’s Debt to Jaspers,” *The Review of Politics* 53, no. 3 (1991).

³⁵ Ludwig-Hoffmann uses this essay as evidence of the “‘Sprachlosigkeit’ der Deutschen.” Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, “Besiegte, Besatzer, Beobachter: Das Kriegsende im Tagebuch,” in *Demokratie im Schatten der Gewalt: Geschichten des Privaten im deutschen Nachkrieg* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010).

³⁶ Atina Grossmann has pointed out that this essay anticipates Alexander and Margarethe Mitscherlich’s 1967 *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern*, especially in Arendt’s explicit mention of an “absence of mourning for the dead. Atina Grossmann, “Trauma, Memory, Motherhood,” in *Reflections on religion, justice, sexuality and genocide, Lessons and Legacies* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2003). See also Jakob Norberg, “Perspectives on Postwar Silence: Psychoanalysis, Political Philosophy, and Economic Theory,” *German Politics and Society* 29, no. 4 (2011). Norberg, referring to Arendt and the Mitscherlichs, argues that these critiques of German silence accompanying the “*Wirtschaftswunder*” fail to recognize the communicative dimension of the market. The connection to the *Origins of Totalitarianism* is also stated in Arendt’s brief biography accompanying the original “Report” in *Commentary*. Young-Bruehl reads the “Aftermath” article as an “addendum” or a “sequel” to *Origins* in Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, “Origins of Totalitarianism,” in *A New History of German Literature*, ed. David E. Wellbery, Judith Ryan, and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004). Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt, for love of the world*: 244.

“denazification,” what it truly means to try to “undo” twelve years of Nazi rule, and what challenges have been inadequately confronted by official (Allied) programs and policies.³⁷ Both Jaspers and Arendt reflect on language and the situation of speaking to one another after the war.

In this section, I briefly delineate the structure of the essay and Arendt’s main claims, and then focus on her descriptions of the encounters between Germans and exiled Jews returning to Germany. Beyond Arendt’s intense critical observation of the German population, there is another layer to this text: the implicitly autobiographical aspect that describes encounters between Arendt and her German interlocutors, and the accompanying style which adds the impassioned voice of the author.³⁸ One of Arendt’s main observations in her “Report” is that language can no longer reach Germans in the wake of the war because they are out of touch with reality. She writes that “they are living ghosts, whom speech and argument, the glance of human eyes and the mourning of human hearts, no longer touch” (254). I would like to draw attention to the claims she makes about the nexus of language and emotion (speech/argument, human eyes/human hearts) in the aftermath of totalitarian rule. The image of “living ghosts” serves as an extended metaphor in this essay, as it also reflects a crucial ambivalence towards the agency or passivity of the German population—affected by but also involved with their totalitarian past. The question that remains after the war is how the Germans will respond

³⁷ As Iris Pilling emphasizes in her essay on Arendt’s postwar writings, Arendt identifies a missing anger [*Zorn*] in Germany, which would have made denazification unnecessary. See Iris Pilling, ““Der fehlende Zorn des Volkes”: Überlegungen Hannah Arendts zur Nachkriegszeit,” in *Heidelberg 1945*, ed. Jürgen C. Heß, Hartmut Lehmann, and Volker Sellin (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996).

³⁸ Rensmann also importantly points out the influence of the autobiographical in the later essays of Arendt and Adorno, which exhibit the deep imprint left by their time spent in postwar Germany. These autobiographical writings present “a fascinating dialogue between subjective experience and theoretical abstraction.” Lars Rensmann, “Returning from Forced Exile: Some Observations on Theodor W. Adorno’s and Hannah Arendt’s Experience of Postwar Germany and Their Political Theories of Totalitarianism,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 49(2004): 190.

(in terms of speech and/or action) to this past. As in Jaspers, this has to do with the aspect of “response” in responsibility, as opposed to silence and inaction. The “Report,” serving as a kind of complementary piece to the *Origins*, reveals the physical and psychological effects of totalitarianism, and the challenges to communication in postwar Germany, a necessary foundation for rebuilding society from the ruins.

The “Report” published in *Commentary* was written based on impressions Arendt collected during her return to Germany August 1949 – March 1950, her first visit after the war. Her travels, therefore, were not only personally significant as the event of return from exile (although not permanent return), but she was also traveling on behalf of the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction. It should also be noted that the essay was originally written for a Jewish American audience. The first paragraph of the essay hints at the mixed emotions involved in such a visit, commenting on the “horror” and “wrath” of European peoples who once again must consider the possibility of “liv[ing] together with Germans in the same territory” (248). These sentiments also extend to those in exile, imagining their return (or actually returning) to Germany, after “experienc[ing] the murderous demographic politics of Germany” (248). Thus, the essay is introduced with the explicit mention of extremely emotional encounters, broken communities and the legacy of hate and other strong emotions in Germany, as well as more broadly in Europe.

The article, divided in two parts, reflects a combination of Arendt’s roles during her visit: first, a more personally inflected account based on her experiences in Germany, and second, a more distanced critical analysis of the failures of the Allies in dealing with the “German problem.” In the first section, Arendt begins by describing the “general

picture of catastrophe,” the “*nightmare* of Germany in its physical, moral, and political ruin” (248-9). She quickly shifts her attention to the people she encountered in the ruins of Germany, and their lack of response to this “nightmare of destruction and horror” (249). In the second half of the essay, Arendt’s report moves away from the interpersonal realm, shifting to an assessment of the postwar period 1945-49. Arendt identifies and elaborates on three main (unsuccessful) objectives of the Allies in these early years of occupation: denazification, the revival of free enterprise, and federalization. Although she recognizes that these failures “are certainly not the cause of present conditions in Germany,” she is convinced that “they have helped to conceal and thus to perpetuate moral confusion, economic chaos, social injustice, and political impotence” (256). Arendt devotes most of this section to discussing denazification: its hypocrisies, injustices and mistakes.³⁹

The essay is permeated by motifs of the ruin and rubble, as if Arendt wants to continually remind her readers of the link between the visible, physical, outer “aftermath of Nazi rule,” and inner destruction and brokenness. The opening sentences speak of a “devastated land” where history is “buried in rubble” and the population is “demoralized and exhausted” (248). In this manner, she makes the ruins a constant setting for her essay, visually situating her readers in this landscape of destruction:

“Germany’s destroyed cities” (248), “*nightmare* of Germany in its physical, moral, and political ruin” (249), “nightmare of destruction and horror” (249), “amid the ruins” (249), “they walk through the rubble” (249), “reaction to the ruins” (249), “the realities of Nazi crimes, of war and defeat, still visibly dominate the whole fabric of German life” (250), “reality of the destruction” (251),

³⁹ On the difficulty of “denazification” in terms of deciding guilt and innocence, see also Hannah Arendt, “Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility,” in *Essays in Understanding*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1994), 125. “The number of those who are responsible *and* guilty will be relatively small. There are many who share responsibility without any visible proof of guilt. There are many *more* who have become guilty without being in the least responsible.”

“grimness of the landscape”(251), “equality of destruction” (251), “the ruins of a thousand years of their own history” (254), “real are the ruins” (254), “the most horrible physical destruction” (254), “show one around the ruins” (255), “the names of the streets that are gone” (255)

The essay weaves such descriptions of the landscape with reported conversations and assessments of postwar German society. In doing so, the trope of the ruin (and destruction) is extended as a way of thinking about the extent of the aftermath, and sets a scene for a discussion of her true topic: the German people as human ruins, speechless and emotionless.

One crucial aspect of this ruinous state is the inability of the Germans to confront reality, or to distinguish between fact and fiction. This theme is not only found in the “Report,” but also in the preface to the *Origins of Totalitarianism*. To comprehend what has happened in the aftermath of the unprecedented phenomenon of totalitarianism, Arendt writes in the preface, Germans must confront reality.

[Comprehension] does not mean denying the outrageous, deducing the unprecedented from precedents, or explaining phenomena by such analogies and generalities that the impact of reality and the shock of experience are no longer felt. It means, rather, examining and bearing consciously the burden which our century has placed on us—neither denying its existence nor submitting meekly to its weight. Comprehension, in short, means the unpremeditated, attentive facing up to, and resisting of, reality— whatever it may be.⁴⁰

In the “Report,” she repeatedly states that the Germans are unable to stand up to this reality. The image of the Germans as “living ghosts,” as well as the description of the “*nightmare* of Germany” also suggests that they have become de-humanized, and live in an eerie relation to the real, physical world (254, 249).

⁴⁰ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1951), viii. See also Julia Hell, “Remnants of Totalitarianism: Hannah Arendt, Heiner Müller, Slavoj Žižek, and the Re-Invention of Politics,” *Telos: A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought* 136(2006).

In one particularly pointed remark, as evidence for the shocking and incomprehensible indifference of the German population, Arendt writes, “Amid the ruins, Germans mail each other picture postcards still showing the cathedrals and market places, the public buildings and bridges that no longer exist” (249). And “while Germany has changed beyond recognition—physically and psychologically—people talk and behave superficially as though absolutely nothing had happened since 1932” (252). These comments are offered as evidence that the Germans are in a state of “un-reality.” In further development of this point, she writes that their way of speaking with an “undertone of satisfaction” is yet another “device for escaping reality” (251), and later, that “busyness has become their chief defense against reality” (254). Through constant reminder of the visual setting of postwar Germany (rubble, ruin, destruction), Arendt opposes her own relation to the ruins—and therefore, to the reality of the present past—with the indifference and evasion of the Germans.⁴¹ This “indifference” also points towards the lack of emotion. She writes that she wants to cry out, “But this is not real—real are the ruins” (254). The gesture of the essay is like a violent shake, in an attempt to reveal the dead and the complete destruction, in short: the magnitude of the “aftermath” to be dealt with—physical, moral and political. Or, to relate this essay to the *Origins* preface once again, Arendt’s position accepts the “impact” and “shock” of reality and experience to be dealt with and wants to make this visible.

⁴¹ Granted, the Germans Arendt is observing as “indifferent” have been living in and amid the ruins for four years when she arrives. In his analysis of travel writing to the Third Reich, Oliver Lubrich points out that visitors’ observations are at times more incisive and insightful, in part due to their “suddenness.” While locals experience change as “gradual transition and escalation, for visitors, the change was abrupt and shocking.” Oliver Lubrich, ed. *Travels in the Reich, 1933-1945: Foreign Authors Report from Germany* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).

An underlying implication in the essay is that the concept of “denazification” is inadequate in this context. The term implies that a society can be “de-nazified,” that National Socialism is something that can be removed from a people and/or a mindset. However, what Arendt shows is that the aftermath of the war reveals a totally damaged society. Social relations have broken down to the extent that speech cannot “touch” the Germans (254). Above all, the essay argues that totalitarianism has damaged the ability to speak and feel, and, in turn, to be touched or moved by language. The capabilities of speaking and feeling are presented as entangled—and the inability to use language to express emotion reveals a deeper destruction and breakdown than is visible in the “mere” physical ruination of the country. Arendt’s response to the efforts of denazification is to point out these damages and show, on a societal level, the challenges to reinstating speech and emotion, to wake Germans from their “ghostlike” state. If German society should once again be able to function socially and politically, these capacities must once again be restored.⁴²

This discussion of the role of speech in society is taken up and developed in Arendt’s later philosophy, for example in her writings on speech as an element of action—that which makes human beings humans. As she writes in *The Human Condition* (1958), “Speech and action reveal this unique distinctness [human plurality]. Through them, men distinguish themselves instead of being merely distinct; they are the modes in

⁴² Victor Klemperer, in his analysis of the language of the Third Reich, “LTI,” also discusses the persistence of some terms past 1945. He notes that some may disappear “und erst im Geschichtsunterricht späterer Zeiten [...] auftauchen. Und so wird es auch mit dem schwerstwiegenden Entscheidungswort unserer Übergangsepoche gehen: eines Tages wird das Wort Entnazifizierung versunken sein, weil der Zustand, den es beenden sollte, nicht mehr vorhanden ist. Aber eine ganze Weile wird es bis dahin noch dauern, denn zu verschwinden hat ja nicht nur das nazistische Denkgewöhnung und ihr Nährboden: die Sprache des Nazismus.“ Victor Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen*. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2007), 8.

which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical objects, but *qua* men.”⁴³

She continues, “A life without speech and without action [...] is literally dead to the world; it has ceased to be a human life because it is no longer lived among men.”⁴⁴

Although she does not use the term “ghost” here, she returns to the idea of a life which is “literally dead to the world,” because it does not have speech and action. Again, “With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world.”⁴⁵

In this model, language combined with action opens up the self to others and to the rest of the world. In *The Human Condition*, she draws attention to the Latin root of the term “interest”:

something which *inter-est*, which lies between people and therefore can relate and bind them together. Most action and speech is concerned with this in-between, which varies with each group of people, so that most words and deeds are *about* some worldly objective reality in addition to being a disclosure of the acting and speaking agent.⁴⁶

Arendt emphasizes not only the importance of word and deed for being human, but also for being a part of the human *world*, for being part of society.⁴⁷ Action must be accompanied by speech, or we are “performing robots” instead of humans (178). Speech makes us subjects, actors, identifies our intentions, and reveals us to be unique persons.

Thus, for Arendt, the fundamental possibility for politics rests on the ability to have space for discussion and speech, and to return to the “Report,” capabilities that she

⁴³ Hannah Arendt, “Action,” in *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 176.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁴⁷ See also Lisa J. Disch, “On Friendship in ‘Dark Times,’” in *Feminist interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, ed. Bonnie Honig (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995). Disch points out that the metaphor of “dark times” (which Arendt takes from Brecht) “describes the occlusion of the public realm by a kind of rhetorical eclipse that makes it impossible to take a principled stand without its being distorted by a dense filter of ideological propaganda” (288). Disch continues to unfold this metaphor for Arendt’s work, and the “dark times not principally as a loss of light, but as a closure of the ‘interspaces between men’ through which light passes into the public arena” (298).

feels have been destroyed in the twelve years of Nazism. When Arendt writes near the end of the essay that “Totalitarianism kills the roots” (269), it reinforces the earlier claim that “the experience of totalitarianism has robbed them [the Germans] of all spontaneous speech and comprehension” (253). In both sentences, totalitarianism is the active subject, violently negating the possibilities for democratic thought. Accordingly, these “roots” seem to be the possibility for open and honest discussion and debate, as well as political voice.⁴⁸ For Arendt, the ability to think is tied to the ability to express oneself.⁴⁹ Indeed, one of the largest accusations in the “Report” is that Germans have become mute, as the full quotation shows: “the experience of totalitarianism has robbed them of all spontaneous speech and comprehension, so that now, having no official line to guide them, they are, as it were, speechless, incapable of articulating thoughts and adequately expressing their feelings” (253). The inability to speak spontaneously is here explicitly tied to the emotional dimension of expression. Non-spontaneous speech is that which is guarded, calculated, and draws upon formulas.

⁴⁸ This follows Villa’s analysis of Arendt’s conceptualization of the public sphere as a place for open-ended debate between equals, and her valorization of political talk for its own sake. Dana Villa, “Introduction: the development of Arendt’s political thought,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, ed. Dana Villa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁴⁹ Later, in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, she critiques Eichmann’s inability to think outside of clichéd language, linking language and thinking. “But the point here is that officialese [*Amtssprache*] became his language because he was genuinely incapable of uttering a single sentence that was not a cliché.” The longer one listened to him, the more obvious it became that his inability to speak was closely connected with an inability to *think*, namely, to think from the standpoint of somebody else. No communication was possible with him, not because he lied but because he was surrounded by the most reliable of all safeguards against the words and the presence of others, and hence against reality as such.” “And that German society of eighty million people had been shielded against reality and factuality by exactly the same means, the same self-deception, lies, and stupidity that had now become ingrained in Eichmann’s mentality. These lies changed from year to year, and they frequently contradicted each other; moreover, they were not necessarily the same for the various branches of the Party hierarchy or the people at large. But the practice of self-deception had become so common, almost a moral prerequisite for survival, that even now, eighteen years after the collapse of the Nazi regime, when most of the specific content of its lies has been forgotten, it is sometimes difficult not to believe that mendacity has become an integral part of the German national character.” Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1963), 48; 49; 52. For more on the topic of Nazi language and thinking, see also John Wesley Young, “From LTI to LQI: Victor Klemperer on Totalitarian Language,” *German Studies Review* 28, no. 1 (2005).

In assessing the current state of “speech” in Germany, Arendt mentions the use of clichéd language, vagueness of language, the inability to distinguish fact and opinion, and even “public stupidity” (253).⁵⁰ This is the opposite of a language which is spontaneously and immediately *expressive*, to use the spatial metaphor of a transport of an emotion from the “heart” into speech. Totalitarianism, by ruining speech, seems to have broken down the ability to express feelings—and even to feel. When emotions cannot be thought or expressed through language, there is a silence, an absence of emotion because it is not talked about. To say that Germans cannot adequately put thoughts or feelings into words reveals another, more dramatic, destruction left in the wake of the war, and it is this ruin to which Arendt wants to call attention.

Another aspect of the legacy of totalitarianism, part of the ability to speak and think, is “the incapacity or unwillingness to distinguish altogether between fact and opinion” (252). Under National Socialism, in which an “insane environment... was the only tangible reality,” Germans developed an attitude of skepticism, unable to “trust one’s own senses” (259). “With the downfall of Nazism, the Germans found themselves again exposed to facts and reality” (253). As a result, Arendt notices that Germans have a “habit of treating facts as though they were mere opinions” (251). It is this skepticism about the truth content of speech that Arendt says “makes discussion so hopeless” (251). She remarks with pointed humor that it is impossible to carry a “reference library along everywhere” (251). The “lies of totalitarian propaganda are distinguished from the normal lying of non-totalitarian regimes in times of emergency by their consistent denial

⁵⁰ These claims bear striking similarity to those of Victor Klemperer in his *LTI*, a fascinating study of the language of the Third Reich, including contemplations about whether it will survive beyond 1945. Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen*. See also Young, “From LTI to LQI: Victor Klemperer on Totalitarian Language.”

of the importance of facts in general: all facts can be changed and all lies can be made true” (252). The kind of language and the skeptical position one had to adopt towards language under totalitarian rule is part of the reason Germans have been “robbed” of speech. The continuation of Nazi thinking, here, is the tendency to mistrust reality to the extent that nothing is a fact, and anything could be a slogan likely to change tomorrow.⁵¹ Arendt also makes clear that it is not merely indoctrination, but a different kind of thinking which has survived the Nazi regime: the skepticism that every account has bias.

This claim about the ability to distinguish between fact and fiction is not only made in the “Report,” but also in the *Origins*. Here, this claim is connected to the breakdown of society but also the capacities of thinking on behalf of the subject as a consequence of worldless “loneliness.” Julia Hell has pointed out that Arendt develops the concept of “loneliness” in the *Origins*, not only as the existential loneliness of modern mass society, but a specific instance as a result of totalitarianism:

In its extreme, totalitarian form, loneliness ruins both social relations and the relation to the self, it ruins experience and thought. The ideal totalitarian subject is not the convinced Nazi or Communist “but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e., the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (i.e., the standards of thought) no longer exist.”⁵²

Although Hell cites here from the *Origins*, Arendt also demonstrates this same breakdown of social relations in the “Report,” and uses a similar juxtaposition of fact/opinion (252), and facts/reality (253). This inability to confront the world and

⁵¹ Again, Klemperer makes a very similar argument about this tendency to mistrust language, and the presumed “Lügengehalt” of many Nazi sources. Klemperer, *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen*: 63. Jaspers also alludes to the phenomenon of mistrust and skepticism in *Die Schuldfrage*. He writes in his introduction that many students who lived through the Third Reich will think, “Es klingt plötzlich alles ganz anders; die Szene hat gewechselt; der Gang der politischen Ereignisse stellt die Dozenten als Puppen heraus, einmal diese, einmal jene; als Organe der Macht sagen sie ihr Verslein her; ob sie so oder so reden, keinem ist zu trauen; wes Brot ich eß, des Lied ich sing- das gelte auch von den Professoren.” Jaspers, *Erneuerung der Universität: Reden und Schriften, 1945/46*: 117.

⁵² Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 474, quoted in Hell, “Remnants of Totalitarianism: Hannah Arendt, Heiner Müller, Slavoj Žižek, and the Re-Invention of Politics,” 82.

attempt to comprehend it is connected to the ability to think in terms of such distinctions. Because this ability has been lost (again, this is another kind of “destruction” the essay exposes), Arendt describes the failed attempts at communicating with the Germans she encounters.

At this point I would like to turn to the other layer of this essay, in which Arendt reveals the breakdown of social relations through her own frustrating attempts at conversation and dialogue during her travels. The fabric of her essay is an interweaving of reported conversations with her own analysis—conversations she has chosen to make her argument about the Germans. Cavell’s notion of the “passionate utterance” is particularly useful in describing these speech occasions, which become confrontations from which Arendt draws her conclusions about postwar Germany.⁵³ The “Report” demonstrates the demands put on speech during postwar discussions, and the stakes of communication, and the role of emotion in speech. In the conversations described in “The Aftermath of Nazi Rule” we clearly find a case of speech as confrontation and speech as passionate exchange. Speech itself is weighed heavily, and there is intense pressure put on language to make utterances appropriate to the relationship of the speakers. As Cavell puts it, “That speech is not everything is true; that speechlessness may be forced, and that speech is sometimes difficult, is something else.”⁵⁴

Arendt describes her encounters with Germans not only as those of an exile returning to Germany, but specifically as a *Jewish* exile returning to Germany. Here, she also speaks to the Jewish readership of *Commentary*, who likely identify with the presentation of mixed feelings in returning to Germany. Arendt retells conversations and

⁵³ Cavell, “Performative and Passionate Utterance.”

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 179.

conversational patterns as if they fit a certain type of encounter: that of Jews returning to Germany after the war. The first encounter she mentions is described with irony and slight mocking as an “experiment”⁵⁵:

Indifference, and the irritation that comes when indifference is challenged, can be tested on many intellectual levels. The most obvious experiment is to state *expressis verbis* what the other fellow has noticed from the beginning of the conversation, namely, that you are a Jew. This is usually followed by a little embarrassed pause; and then comes—not a personal question, such as “Where did you go after you left Germany?”; no sign of sympathy, such as “What happened to your family?”—but a deluge of stories about how Germans have suffered (true enough, of course, but beside the point). (249)

Arendt avoids the first-person voice here (as well as throughout the essay), and uses passive constructions which highlight the general applicability of such encounters.⁵⁶ This was her experience, but it could have been that of another: “when indifference *is* challenged,” and this “*can be tested*,” later: “anybody who brings up this topic...” (250). When she shifts into the second-person in this passage, she not only refers indirectly to herself, but to Jewish readers imagining this encounter themselves: the visible fact “that *you are a Jew*.” She notes that her Jewishness is visibly noticeable “from the beginning of the conversation.” The hypothetical (unanswered) questions Arendt had expected (or hoped for) are also in the second person, thus interpellating other Jewish exiles among her readers (“where did *you* go,” “what happened to *your* family”). Thus the Jewishness of the interlocutor is—according to Arendt—always an underlying component of the

⁵⁵ In a tone typical for this essay (and Arendt’s work in general), she slightly mocks this hypothetical interlocutor in the “experiment,” “if the object of this little experiment happens to be educated and intelligent...” Gaus brings up the fact that her mocking tone of Eichmann caused a stir, as it was thought to be not serious enough. Günter Gaus, “Hannah Arendt (28. Oktober 1964): Was bleibt? Es bleibt die Muttersprache,” in *Was bleibt, sind Fragen: Die klassischen Interviews*, ed. Hans-Dieter Schütt (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 2001), 328. Elizabeth Young-Bruehl has identified her “ironic mode that always marked her greatest disappointments”. Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt, for love of the world*: 218.

⁵⁶ With two exceptions: “An otherwise quite normally intelligent woman in Southern Germany told *me*...” (251), “*I* do not know why this should be so...” (254), emphasis added. This may also be a result of her slightly “germanicized” English, and the tendency in German to use impersonal pronouns and passive constructions.

conversation, and something that she makes explicit in her “experiment” in order to gauge the reaction of her German interlocutor. The fact that Arendt does *not* get the expected response (personal questions, sympathetic questions) proves to her the thesis that Germans are “indifferent.” Although she describes the “experiment” in a mocking tone, there is an understood disappointment and frustration, possibly even hurt, that she does not find more sympathetic replies.⁵⁷

In this same issue of *Commentary*, the journal’s editor Elliot Cohen has a piece entitled “What do the Germans Propose to Do?”, a transcript of a speech he delivered in West Berlin at the Rathaus Schöneberg on the relations between Germans and Jews after the war. In this speech, Cohen uses the first person plural to speak on behalf of Jews returning to Germany. His accusations of German silence and inability to react to the horrors of the war are strikingly similar to those of Arendt, as he identifies a “vacuum of sentiment: a vacuum of expressed feeling and articulated thought.”⁵⁸

We do not know because you of Germany have not told us, by any substantial word or act, what is actually in your hearts. Actually, there is silence, as of a grave. From one quarter the silence is particularly eloquent and ominous: where are the words of fellow-sympathy, anguish and introspection, of diagnosis and healing, of regeneration and wisdom, that some of us expected from your men of religious thought and spiritual leadership, from your scholars, from your historians and poets and novelists on this colossal historic tragedy?⁵⁹

Cohen had not only hoped to hear a response from “ordinary Germans,” but especially in the public realm, from religious leaders, intellectuals or writers. As he speaks about the general lack of response from Germans, he makes a noteworthy remark to his audience,

⁵⁷ She later commented on her investment in these discussions: „ich bin heute viel weniger beteiligt, als ich es damals noch war.“ 327. Gaus, “Hannah Arendt (28. Oktober 1964): Was bleibt? Es bleibt die Muttersprache.”

⁵⁸ Elliot E. Cohen, “What Do the Germans Propose to Do? An Address to the German People,” *Commentary* 10(1950): 226.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 225.

“I need not tell you the whole democratic world watches.”⁶⁰ He calls for Germans to begin this conversation, because for Jews, “the shock and the sense of hurt is too vast and too great.”⁶¹ I bring this speech to bear upon Arendt’s contribution because it presents us with similarities in descriptions of postwar German silence, and yet important differences in style and approach.

Cohen’s explicit mention of the frame for these conversations—*the whole world is watching*—also demonstrates the stakes for this dialogue, and the expectations. He uses a visual metaphor: everyone is *watching*, there is a desire to *see* certain responses. But he also says that the Germans have not *told* anyone what is in their *hearts*. The world has not *heard* from the Germans (“we have listened, listened intently—in vain”⁶²). Cohen describes the texture of the silence coming from Germans as “eloquent and ominous,” because of the lack of both emotional response (sympathy, anguish), but also cognitive work (introspection, diagnosis, healing). Thus Cohen is describing the speech and the emotions he feels are *owed* to Jews in the aftermath of the war. Cohen asks, “where are the words?” Like Arendt, he points to a lack of speech with emotional consequences (Jews are hurt by this silence), and the lack of speech about emotions (what is in your hearts?).

In her contribution to the same issue (published as the leading essay before Cohen’s), Arendt does not describe her personal feelings (different from Cohen, who is speaking to a German audience, and who continually uses the “we,” and describes “hurt” feelings). In the telling of her visit, Arendt moves from anecdotes and reported speech to general claims, and occasionally steps back to make larger historical observations and

⁶⁰ Ibid., 226.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 225-6.

national comparisons. Although this first half of the essay has a personal dimension, rooted in her own experiences during her return, it remains largely in the register of scholarly analysis, moving from descriptions of the Germans to an attempt at diagnosing and seeking to understand their behavior.⁶³ Yet on nearly every page there are reported situations that place Arendt physically in encounters with Germans.

When interviewed later about this visit, Arendt mentioned the “good intentions” she had when returning to Germany (“Ich kam mit sehr gutem Willen”⁶⁴). She also described her rather confrontational style of discussion: “Ich habe mich mit Leuten auseinandergesetzt; ich bin nicht sehr freundlich, ich bin auch nicht sehr höflich, ich sage meine Meinung.”⁶⁵ This somewhat antagonistic approach is evident in many passages in the “Report,” and the conversations Arendt selected to include in the essay also reflect this conflict. (Although she mentions that she had surprisingly good encounters during her visit to Berlin, only a few lines are granted to this side of her experience.)

Arendt’s essay continually shows the affective dimension to the language expected, uttered, or not uttered in postwar Germany. Emotion (and its absence) is a repeated topic of Arendt’s impressions. But beyond this is also Arendt’s own emotional reaction. As she enumerates her accusations (inability to feel, apathy, lack of emotion, failure to face what happened), the sheer accumulation of claims—as well as tone—reveal this second layer to the text. In the following passage, which comes early in the essay, she lists in three sentences at least ten characteristics of the German “lack of response”:

⁶³ She identifies certain material challenges (overcrowded universities), as well as immaterial (the inability to distinguish between facts and opinions).

⁶⁴ Gaus, “Hannah Arendt (28. Oktober 1964): Was bleibt? Es bleibt die Muttersprache,” 326.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

A lack of response is evident everywhere, and it is difficult to say whether this signifies a half-conscious refusal to yield to grief or a genuine inability to feel. [...] And the indifference with which they walk through the rubble has its exact counterpart in the absence of mourning for the dead, or in the apathy with which they react, or, rather, fail to react, to the fate of the refugees in their midst. This general lack of emotion, at any rate this apparent heartlessness, sometimes covered over with cheap sentimentality, is only the most conspicuous outward symptom of a deep-rooted, stubborn, and at times vicious refusal to face and come to terms with what really happened. (249)

This passage contains almost all of the claims Arendt continues to repeat, and elaborate through example in the rest of the essay: lack of both emotional and linguistic response, or an inappropriate emotionality of speech. The above paragraph above also contains this pattern of moving between an observational gaze (“apparent heartlessness”) to interpretation (“symptom of a deep-rooted...”).

The tone of the essay is crucial to Arendt’s assessment of postwar German society, and Germans’ inability to think and feel in a way that reflects the reality of devastation and ruin. In most secondary scholarship referencing this essay, Arendt’s assessments of postwar Germany are taken as “sound-bites,” certainly due in part to the fact that her shocking superlatives and generalizations are easily quotable and appropriated to support various arguments about Germans’ inability to feel, speak, or deal with the past. But the general tone of the essay, also read within the context of other publications, is highly significant and is a decisive part of what the essay *does*. It becomes clear that the many examples of failed conversation provided are based in a very personal confrontation with conditions in postwar Germany. The way Arendt narrates her encounters with Germans—interwoven with such incisive conclusions about the “inability to feel”—add an important aspect of an essay about feeling and non-feeling. In

reading, it becomes clear that it is not only the emotion of the Germans being described, but the author's own emotions lie just beneath the surface of the text.

As a response to critique of the *Origins*, Arendt herself addresses the question of her writing style: "This has been praised as passionate and criticized as sentimental. Both judgments seem to me a little beside the point."⁶⁶ In her own defense, she provides the analogy of a historian writing on the topic of poverty:

The natural human reaction to such conditions is one of anger and indignation because these conditions are against the dignity of man. If I describe these conditions without permitting my indignation to interfere, I have lifted this particular phenomenon out of its context in human society and have thereby robbed it of part of its nature, deprived it of one of its important inherent qualities.⁶⁷

In her analysis of totalitarianism, her style became apparent to readers because she was describing a phenomenon occurring "not on the moon, but in the midst of human society."⁶⁸ Arendt argues that her style—with its impassioned undertones—is more objective than one withholding all emotion, a style which seems to condone what is being described.⁶⁹ She is also pointing out the inextricable nature of thinking and feeling, speaking and feeling—even in argumentative and essayistic texts. While this "Reply" describes this method of writing, it can be seen at work in her writings.

In an essay on Arendt's "tactlessness," Simon Swift points out that her style is often overlooked, although it may be essential to understanding her message.⁷⁰ Swift takes Arendt's "angry style," "heartlessness," or "tactlessness" to be a "rhetorical mode

⁶⁶ Hannah Arendt, "[The Origins of Totalitarianism]: A Reply," *The Review of Politics* 15, no. 1 (1953): 78.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁶⁹ She continues, "Thus the question of style is bound up with the problem of understanding which has plagued the historical sciences almost from their beginnings. I do not wish to go into this matter here, but I may add that I am convinced that understanding is closely related to that faculty of imagination which Kant called *Einbildungskraft* and which has nothing in common with fictional ability." *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Simon Swift, "Hannah Arendt's Tactlessness: Reading Eichmann in Jerusalem," *New Formations* 71(2011).

that runs through her work.”⁷¹ He notes that most Arendt scholarship overlooks “the force and perlocutionary effects of her writings,” and he makes a case for understanding her style as “performance” and “calculated lack of heart and [...] cultivated anger.”⁷² In writing in such a way, Arendt brings to the fore the “relation between politics and feeling.”⁷³ Following Swift, I would also like to point out another performative layer at work in the “Aftermath” essay. Whether all the effects of such a style are “calculated” (an extreme reading), Arendt herself admitted her “not very friendly” and direct approach when speaking with others. This lack of tact is clear in the confrontations described in the “Report.” Tact, as Swift writes, drawing upon the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer (*Truth and Method*), is about that which is left unsaid: “tact implies knowing how to preserve distance in speech and gesture, while gesturing towards a form of connectedness that shouldn’t, in truth, be spoken.”⁷⁴ But in the ruins of Germany, Arendt wants to break the silence, to hear words she has not yet heard. She wants also to break down the distance, in the sense of *sich nähern*, or an *Annäherung*, wanting to provoke (to touch) her interlocutors to discussion and response. Unfortunately, this style of speaking also creates defensiveness on the part of the Germans with whom she is speaking; they seem unable to react to these provocations, except through self-defense.

⁷¹ After the publication of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Gershom Scholem accused Arendt of a lack of “Herzenstakt” in a letter from 23. June 1963: “Warum also, [] hinterlaesst Ihr Buch dennoch solch Gefuehl der Bitterkeit und Scham, und zwar nicht ueber das Referierte, sondern ueber die Referentin? [...] Es ist der herzlose, ja oft geradezu haemische Ton, in dem diese, uns im wirklichen Herzen unseres Lebens angehende Sache, bei Ihnen abgehandlet wird. ... Mit dem Stil der leichtherzigkeit, ich meine das englische flippancy, den Sie nur allzu oft in Ihrem Buche dafuer aufbringen, habe ich keine Sympathie.[...] Gaebe es wirklich bei solchem Anlass nicht Platz fuer das, was man mit dem bescheidenen deutschen Wort Herzenstakt nennen duerfte? Sie koennen darueber lachen, ich hoffe Sie tun es nicht, jedenfalls mir ist es darum ernst.“ Hannah Arendt and Gershom Gerhard Scholem, *Der Briefwechsel*, ed. Marie Luise Knott and David Heredia (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 2010), 429-30.

Swift, “Hannah Arendt’s Tactlessness: Reading Eichmann in Jerusalem,” 81.

⁷² Swift, “Hannah Arendt’s Tactlessness: Reading Eichmann in Jerusalem,” 82.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

In her correspondence with Jaspers about this issue of *Commentary*, Jaspers contrasts Arendt's style with that of Cohen, which he finds "embarrassing":

Wenig gefallen haben mir die Bemerkungen Elliot Cohens: das ist eine Form des Umgangs, des taktischen Umgangs von Großmacht zu Großmacht...Darauf antwortet wohl niemand anders als wider argumentierend. Die Taktlosigkeit und Unverschämtheit der Deutschen dort (und so oft sonst) liegt auf der Hand. Aber darauf paßt, wie mir scheint, entweder ignorierendes Sichnäher, vernünftig fragen – oder heiliger Zorn: Aber dieses ruhige „Verhandeln“ ist mir als Ton peinlich.⁷⁵

In Jaspers' reaction to Cohen's piece, as well as Arendt's essay, it is clear that tone is at the heart of these highly emotionally laden conversations and arguments. The risk, as Jaspers points out here (and in *Die Schuldfrage*), is that one's conversation partner only responds "wider argumentierend." Yet this also seems to be the response Arendt has received during her travels in Germany. The many conversations she describes seem full of defensive reactions, evasion, complaint, or superficialities.

In a public setting governed by social norms, tact functions as the careful relation between speech and silence, preserving distance between the speaking bodies. But neither Jaspers nor Arendt wants to preserve silence. They see silence and forgetting as dangerous obstacles to an acknowledgement of collective guilt (Jaspers) or collective responsibility (Arendt).⁷⁶ However, Jaspers' speech functions tactfully and cautiously, conscious of when his words may be creating distance with his audience, or alienating them to further silence. Arendt, on the other hand, seems to choose a different, anti-tactful, tactic. In one way of interpreting the essay's provocative style, she may even provoke out of the hope that inciting any kind of feeling may also incite deeper reflection.

⁷⁵ Letter Jaspers to Arendt, 7 January 1951. Arendt and Jaspers, *Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers: Briefwechsel 1926-1969*: 197.

⁷⁶ For a definition and genealogy of Arendt's concept of "responsibility" and "collective responsibility," see Annabel Herzog, "Hannah Arendt's Concept of Responsibility," *Studies in Social and Political Thought* 10(2004).

In her later essay “On violence,” Arendt describes the necessity of “being moved” in order to think and respond “reasonably”:

Absence of emotions neither causes nor promotes rationality. [...] In order to respond reasonably one must first of all be ‘moved,’ and the opposite of emotional is not ‘rational,’ whatever that may mean, but either the inability to be moved, usually a pathological phenomenon, or sentimentality, which is a perversion of feeling.⁷⁷

This emphasis on “reasonable response” also resonates with Jaspers’ discussion of the relation between feeling and rationality. If we relate this passage to her earlier experiences in Germany—during which she accused the Germans of being unfeeling—it seems that the Germans were unable to be *moved*. To Arendt, they clearly demonstrated the “pathological phenomenon” of indifference and “general lack of emotion” observed during the visit. And as an author, Arendt feels compelled to participate in the topic she is writing about—her anger, and her speech, is a response to this lack of feeling.

Yet although there are certainly passages that are “angry” and seem tactless, these moments are occasionally balanced by taking a step back, and leaving room to reevaluate her harsh conclusions. Jakob Norberg has identified in this piece two competing accounts that “coexist uneasily within one report.”⁷⁸ Namely, that the reactions of the Germans (or lack thereof) are due to a defensive strategy, or, alternatively, that the reactions are an effect of totalitarian rule. I argue that although Arendt explicitly names one explanation to German behavior (totalitarianism), she does not assert that this accounts for all phenomena of postwar Germany, in the various forms of silence, apathy, inability to articulate thoughts, etc. Nor does her essay seek to explain German behavior through one

⁷⁷ Hannah Arendt, “On Violence,” in *Crises of the Republic*, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1972, p. 161. Quoted in Swift, “Hannah Arendt’s Tactlessness: Reading Eichmann in Jerusalem,” 89.

⁷⁸ Norberg, “Perspectives on Postwar Silence: Psychoanalysis, Political Philosophy, and Economic Theory,” 9.

all-encompassing phenomenon. For example, Arendt also names Allied mistakes (the “guilt” finger of the Buchenwald photographs, denazification efforts). It is important to point out the use of ambivalent terms and the general structure of the essay, which hint at the difficulty she has in providing an overall explanation for the behavior of the Germans. In the passage above describing the German “lack of response,” although her tone is slightly contemptuous, there is a certain amount of equivocalness in her wording: “difficult to say whether...or”... “apparent heartlessness,” “incapacity or unwillingness.” In these ambivalences, she leaves open whether it is a conscious (even malicious?) gesture on the part of the Germans, or a consequence of totalitarian rule, or result of some other explanation.⁷⁹

In this way, although there is perhaps an “uneasy coexistence” of accounts, Arendt also makes this uncertainty explicit, and her tone highlights these frustrating contradictions. Working through these various factors is a part of trying to comprehend the “aftermath of Nazi rule.” Although it is clear that Arendt is—on a personal level—shocked and frustrated with the reaction of the Germans, she leaves room for a reevaluation of the disappointing encounters between the Allies and the Germans:

The melancholy story of post-war Germany is not one of missed opportunities. [...] When all is said, the twofold question remains: What could one reasonably expect from a people after twelve years of totalitarian rule? What could one reasonably expect from an occupation confronted with the impossible task of putting back on its feet a people that had lost the ground from under it?⁸⁰

These questions also point to the failed interactions between “a people” (the Germans), and “an occupation” (the Western Allies). Arendt places herself as a mediator between

⁷⁹ Part of this ambivalence is also the extreme exceptionality she grants to Berlin (254-256). In this section, she not only acknowledges that there are “many Germans whom this description does not fit,” but also considers Berlin an exception within Germany.

⁸⁰ Arendt, 268.

the two, looking critically but also somewhat sympathetically at both sides. The attempt to “denazify” Germany failed, mostly due to the fact that “denazification” occurred in the form of “help from the outside” rather than “indigenous forces of self-help” (269). She sees the failure in Germany as being a failure to be moved, to act and respond to the war. But not just any response, as she writes in the preface to the *Origins*:

We can no longer afford to take that which was good in the past and simply call it our heritage, to discard the bad and simply think of it as a dead load which by itself time will bury in oblivion. The subterranean stream of Western history has finally come to the surface and usurped the dignity of our tradition. This is the reality in which we live. And this is why all efforts to escape from the grimness of the present into nostalgia for a still intact past, or into the anticipated oblivion of a better future, are vain.⁸¹

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to return more explicitly to the autobiographical level of the essay. Throughout, Arendt’s critical gaze is directed towards the response of the Germans, rather than on her own personal feelings or reactions to this trip. In a letter to Jaspers on 4 October 1950, however, she sends Jaspers the text and wonders how he will react. She hopes that he will not mistake her sadness for bitterness: “Das letztere [her “Deutschlandreport”] – was Sie wohl sagen werden? Ich habe mich bemüht, gerecht zu bleiben, und ich wünschte, Sie könnten sehen, daß ich mehr traurig als erbittert bin.”⁸²“Ihr Deutschland-Bericht hat mir ohne Einschränkung gefallen,” Jaspers responds on 7 January 1951, “In der Tat keine Erbitterung, sondern verborgene Trauer. Sehen der

⁸¹ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*: ix.

⁸² Arendt and Jaspers, *Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers: Briefwechsel 1926-1969*: 194.

Wirklichkeiten und Deutungen – natürlich kein Impuls für die Deutschen, denn das ist auch nicht Ihre Sache, wäre mehr die meinige, und auch ich bin ratlos...”⁸³

Over a decade later, in an interview with Günter Gaus, Arendt commented that the experience of return in 1949 was one of violent emotion (*eine große Erschütterung*), and hearing the German language once again was an indescribable joy (*Das hat mich unbeschreiblich gefreut*).⁸⁴ She continued, “And today, now that things are back on track, the distance I feel has become greater than it was before, when I experienced things in that highly emotional state [*in dieser Erschütterung*].”⁸⁵ The German term *Erschütterung* expresses not only the intensity of emotion—emotion deeply felt—but it is also linked to negative emotions associated with the experience of an emotional event. As she acknowledges in this interview, her return to Germany was happy—in connection with the German language—but also overwhelming and emotionally complex. Perhaps Jaspers’ description of a feeling of “verborgene Trauer” that comes through the essay comes from Arendt’s descriptions of a melancholic atmosphere in Germany, or her multiple mentions of the “sad story” of postwar Germany. It is also laden with expectations, and the disappointment of hopes unfulfilled during her return.

In his analysis of Arendt’s return to Germany and its effect upon her later work, Lars Rensmann argues that the disappointment of returning to Germany challenged the way Arendt was able to theorize modernity, democracy, totalitarianism, and its relation to German cultural heritage. He notes that for Arendt (as well as Theodor W. Adorno), the return to Germany was initially accompanied by “a sense of hope for the possibilities of

⁸³ Ibid., 197.

⁸⁴ Gaus, “Hannah Arendt (28. Oktober 1964): Was bleibt? Es bleibt die Muttersprache,” 327.

⁸⁵ Ibid. Hannah Arendt, “What remains? The Language Remains’: A Conversation with Günter Gaus,” in *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994), 15.

the country's political and moral renewal, and a sense of belief in the cultural and human resources for such renewal."⁸⁶ As Rensmann points out, both Arendt and Adorno acknowledged the anti-democratic traditions in Germany after their return, becoming more critical of the state of postwar German society despite their own deep subjective ties with the German intellectual and cultural tradition, not to mention the German language.

In the "Aftermath of Nazi Rule," Arendt refers to the "sad story" and the "melancholy story of post-war Germany" (268, 256). She calls the state of the country a "nightmare," covered "with a cloud of melancholy" and refers to the Germans as "living ghosts." In doing so, she highlights that the ruin and rubble extend past the visual realm, and also into each individual. In the aftermath of the war, the ability to communicate with one another has broken down, and the Germans, made skeptical of language, have lost the ability to speak through concepts of "truth," "reality," and "fact." Additionally, Arendt describes a population that has, for the most part, chosen the role of passivity (suffering), silence, and evasion; rather than action, speech, and response (responsibility). In this "nightmare" state, Germans cannot be touched or moved, and their words also fail to retain the necessary integrity and relation to reality to be able to face what has happened and come to terms with the past. Her essay, on the other hand, demonstrates strong prose which serves to break the silence, the lack of speech and lack of feeling. It is perhaps this level of the essay that tries to enact the task of facing up to the reality at hand. Her emotional style seeks to expose the ghostly conditions in Germany, and speak loudly to the complex constellation of challenges to be faced in the aftermath of the war.

⁸⁶Rensmann, "Returning from Forced Exile: Some Observations on Theodor W. Adorno's and Hannah Arendt's Experience of Postwar Germany and Their Political Theories of Totalitarianism," 178.

CONCLUSION

Three years before publishing *Tauben im Gras*, Wolfgang Koeppen had silently written one other book: *Jakob Littners Aufzeichnungen aus einem Erdloch*.¹ In this controversial and complex text, Koeppen revised the manuscript of a Jewish survivor from Munich, Jakob Littner, who immigrated to the United States soon after the war. Agreeing to have the text reworked, Littner left his manuscript, entitled *Mein Weg durch die Nacht*, in the hands of the publisher Herbert Kluger. Kluger, who knew Koeppen from the early 1930s, arranged for the two authors to meet, and for Koeppen to serve as “ghostwriter” for Littner’s account.² The end product was a mix of edited autobiographical passages with added fictionalized sections. Neither Koeppen nor Littner was satisfied. In 1992, when Suhrkamp republished the book with the label “Roman,” they also revealed Koeppen’s identity as ghostwriter. Understandably, this text of unusual provenance elicited debates about who may write literature of the Holocaust, under what circumstances, and how such texts should be labeled and discussed.³

¹ First published as Jakob Littner, *Aufzeichnungen aus einem Erdloch* (München: H. Kluger, 1948).

² Jörg Döring, “...*ich stellte mich unter, ich machte mich klein...*”: Wolfgang Koeppen, 1933-1948 (Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld, 2001), 260.

³ See, for example Ruth Klüger, “Zeugensprache: Koeppen und Andersch,” in *Deutsche Nachkriegsliteratur und der Holocaust*, ed. Stefan Braese, et al. (Frankfurt; New York: Campus, 1998). In an essay on “Zeugensprache,” Ruth Klüger notes the disturbing use of the first-person voice by a German, speaking through a Jewish figure. For Klüger, the fact that the book contains expressions of opinion, which cannot be taken to be those of a Jewish survivor but instead a non-Jewish German, are misleading. If the book is read as an autobiographical account, “so handelt es sich schlicht um Lüge, nicht um Fiktion.” See also “Jakob Littner’s Palimpsest” in Jerry Schuchalter, *Poetry and Truth: Variations on Holocaust Testimony*, (Oxford; New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

In addition to raising questions about the ethics of Holocaust representation, *Littners Aufzeichnungen* is significant for another reason, particularly within the context of this dissertation's consideration of postwar German literature. Indeed: Koeppen's first postwar work involved adapting a memoir for publication. Memoir, the writing of the self, and the question of aestheticizing traumatic experience are thus at the very heart of Koeppen's postwar productivity. As Jörg Döring has shown through side-by-side comparisons of Koeppen's version and the original manuscript, Koeppen's reworking of the text often included a kind of transposition from an account written retrospectively to short fragments written in a diary-like form, often in the present tense, as if the writer does not know whether or not he will survive.⁴ For readers, this creates suspense and draws attention; as Döring stresses, this retrospective technique of diarization was to make the story feel authentic and believable, at a point when many Germans felt that the horror stories from the concentration camps must be exaggerated. By recasting Littner's memoir as diary-like fragments, Koeppen was able to relay a sense of temporal nearness and authenticity.⁵

Koeppen, called upon to revise a memoir for a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, interjected new formal and structural modes into the text. This technique complicates what it means to bear witness and to tell the story of the recent past. In this case, the "autobiographical pact" (Lejeune) has been broken, as the "I" voice does not and cannot correspond to the apparently autobiographical figure, speaking as a survivor. Read as a novel, Ruth Klüger argues, the book is no longer a "lie," as it would be if marketed as an

⁴ Döring, "...*ich stellte mich unter, ich machte mich klein...*": Wolfgang Koeppen, 1933-1948.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 280.

autobiographical text, but “fiction,” “eine Art Dokumentarroman.”⁶ But the reworking of Littner’s text also represents a kind of learning laboratory for Koeppen, as techniques developed in *Aufzeichnungen* continue to appear in his later postwar fiction. Although he did not explicitly use the diary form in his postwar texts—unlike, for example, Arno Schmidt—Koeppen still experiments with fragmentary prose, juxtaposing splintered segments of stories in his postwar novels. Koeppen’s ghostwriting can be understood as a kind of precursor to work he does in the novel *Tauben im Gras*, although he there presents a mosaic of very different stories.

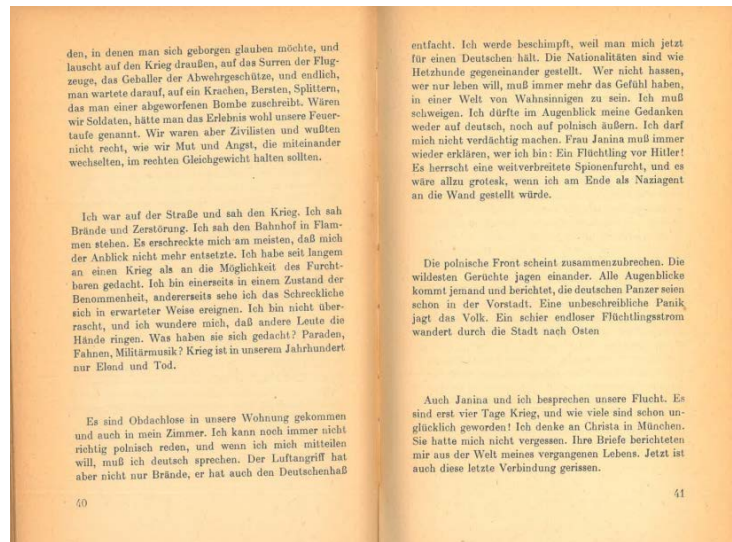


Figure 7.1. First edition, *Jakob Littners Aufzeichnungen aus einem Erdloch* (1948)

As I have shown throughout the dissertation, the proximity to a traumatic recent past demanded new forms for representing the present as history. During this time of great historical, cultural, political, and social change, individuals often reflected on what it means to be living through history, a history which is in process, and which cannot yet be narrated as finished. Victor Klemperer described this challenge most eloquently, as he used his diary writing to explore a new form in which to write the history he lived

⁶ Klüger, “Zeugensprache: Koeppen und Andersch,” 177.

through, while acknowledging the limits of such an account. He developed a new form that embraced the fragment and the diary-like observation to present history-in-the-making. His *LTI*, as well as his diaries, show a highly reflective means of writing history as both witness and historian. Wolfgang Koeppen and Arno Schmidt sought more radically innovative techniques of representation, experimenting with narrative structure, time scheme, and language as they explored the possibility of telling a story about postwar Germany. Their modernist works suggest that the postwar story is best told in fragments, bringing together multiple stories, in the case of Koeppen, or a diary-like stream of consciousness, in the case of Schmidt. This process of experimentation often entailed a rejection of literary conventions and models in an attempt to stake out a new space and develop techniques of expression suited to the postwar moment of rupture and crisis.

As I have shown throughout this dissertation, the unprecedented violence of this period, and the massive amount of death and destruction from the war forms an unavoidable background to these reflections. This set of circumstances—Germany in a state of both rubble and ruin—produced cultural forms that enabled one to make sense of the present moment in a new way, evidence of early attempts to grapple for meaning, language, and orientation in a world of incredible rupture. I have proposed the term “rubble texts” to describe the cultural objects produced during the period 1943-1951 that engage with the present moment of Germany in ruins. I argue that these varied materials are often characterized by a concern for time and temporality, as well as by a self-reflective consideration of what it means to bear witness to this moment of historical rupture.

During this period, contemporaries used terms such as ruin and rubble largely interchangeably. In my analysis, however, I make several important distinctions between a tradition of ruin contemplation and ruin imagery, and the metaphors, aesthetics, and form of “rubble.” Ruin provides orientation in time and space, allowing viewers to imagine what was and what may be, whereas rubble suggests a state of disorientation and large-scale destruction. Both ruin and rubble were present in the landscapes of postwar Germany, and it was a challenge to contemporaries to make sense of this legacy.

Additionally, I also use the concept of rubble to interrogate what it means to create texts that use “rubble” in their very form. The varied materials discussed in the six dissertation chapters all engage with what it means to inhabit a world characterized by disorientation and disintegration—a world of both ruin and rubble. These objects of visual and textual culture demonstrate an aesthetics of “rubble” on multiple levels: at the level of narrative, perspective, as well as space and time. They also often call into question the nature of inheritance, and previous aesthetic conventions. This is perhaps best exemplified by the trope of shipwreck in the story *Schwarze Spiegel* by Arno Schmidt, which raises questions about what it means to create and salvage culture in the aftermath of world catastrophe. Schmidt not only describes macabre scenes of destruction and death, but he also uses a radically fragmented form, exploding literary convention and playfully experimenting with new literary techniques. Wolfgang Koeppen also explores the possibilities for telling a story about postwar German society by using techniques of multilinearity and simultaneity. He draws attention to challenges of perspective, most directly through the image of *Tauben im Gras*, alerting readers that this

is not a story told “from above,” but rather “from below,” from within the ruins, often with a near-sighted and obstructed view.

In terms of narration, I have also argued that diaries written at the end of the war exhibit a structure that can be read as paradigmatic for this period. The daily entries represent a small and limited space of experience, and move haltingly forward in time. As opposed to memoir, they cannot tell a story from start to finish, but only parts of stories, anecdotes and scenes. In my introduction, I cite a contemporary diarist who notes the “Brüchigkeit der Form” in diary texts, the fragility and fragmentation of form offered by this writing practice. Perhaps more than any other individual, Victor Klemperer reflects continuously on the challenge of the diary form, and the difficulty of comprehending history as a “Mitlebender.” He uses the diary to explore new formal possibilities for writing history in the present. In film as well, contemporary theorists noted this “nearness” to events and details, and the difficulty of telling a story about the recent past. *Berliner Ballade*, as I argue, demonstrates the desire to tell the history of postwar Berlin in an optimistic tone, yet the many ruptures, flashbacks and montage scenes acknowledge the presence of the past and the difficulty of telling history from a position of proximity to events.

This dissertation makes several contributions to the study of German literary and cultural production of this period. First, I situate this project as a revision of the “Stunde Null” as inadequately narrow in scope, looking instead forward and backward from 1945 to Germany’s “rubble years” 1943-1951. I point to the multiple coexisting metaphors of time during this period, and above all, to the concern with temporality and history. And second, in this context, I introduce the concept of “rubble texts” as an essential part of

postwar German literary history. I propose the concept of “rubble text” to analyze a convergence of form and content that exemplifies this temporal and historical uncertainty, exploring what it means to bear witness to postwar Germany as a landscape of both orientating ruin and disorienting rubble.

APPENDIX

Annotated Bibliography Published Diaries written in Germany 1943-1951

Andreas-Friedrich, Ruth. *Der Schattenmann: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen 1938-1945*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1983. First published in English in 1946, and German, 1947.

———. *Schauplatz Berlin: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen 1945-1948*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986. First published as *Schauplatz Berlin. Ein deutsches Tagebuch*. München: Rheinsberg Verlag, 1962.

Andreas-Friedrich (1901-1977) was a journalist and writer involved in the resistance group “Onkel Emil,” which helped shelter and hide individuals persecuted by the Nazis. Her diary has become very popular, especially as a source for Berlin during this period, although the authenticity of the diary entries has been questioned.

Anonyma. *Eine Frau in Berlin: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen vom 20. April bis 22. Juni 1945*. München: btb Verlag, 2008. First published in German Genf/Frankfurt: Verlag Helmut Kossodo, 1959.

The author of this bestselling diary is now known to be Marta Dietschy-Hillers (1911–2001), a journalist and writer who had spent time in the Soviet Union before WWII. Her diary is centered on the weeks in Berlin during the defeat and early Soviet occupation, with detailed descriptions of mass rape, highly self-reflective passages, and details about the war’s end in Berlin.

Bachmann, Ingeborg *Kriegstagebuch: Mit Briefen von Jack Hamesh an Ingeborg Bachmann*. Edited by Hans Höller. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010.

Bachmann’s diary consists of only a few pages written during the war’s end in late summer 1944 – June 1945, also describing her early encounters with Allied soldiers and letters from the British soldier Jack Hamesh.

Block, Elisabeth *Erinnerungszeichen: die Tagebücher der Elisabeth Block*. Edited by Peter Miesbeck and Manfred Treml. Augsburg: Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte, 1993.

Block’s (1923-1942[?]) diary consists of notes rather than literary entries. From the perspective of a young girl, she describes her Jewish family’s integration into

Bavarian community, in which they were increasingly excluded and lost their rights. The last notes are from the camp Piaski near Lublin. The editors describe the book as particularly important for regional (Bavarian) history.

Boor, Lisa de. *Tagebuchblätter aus den Jahren 1938-1945*. München: Biederstein Verlag, 1963.

De Boor (1894-1957) was engaged in various pedagogical circles and was active in anthroposophy—forbidden by the Nazis. After the war, she published poems and stories. Her diary, published after her death, was apparently written without intention of publication, and describes the years of persecution by the Nazis written as events unfolded rather than in retrospect. The diary is comprised of many short entries ranging from a couple of sentences to a couple of short paragraphs.

Boveri, Margret. *Tage des Überlebens: Berlin 1945*. München: Piper, 1985. First published R. Piper: München, 1968.

Boveri (1900-1975) was a journalist who worked for major German newspapers including Berliner Tageblatt, Frankfurter Zeitung, as well as Das Reich during the war. Her diary of the war's end is very insightful, and contains reflective commentaries on the original entries from the time of its publication.

Freund, Elizabeth. *Als Zwangsarbeiterin 1941 in Berlin: die Aufzeichnungen der Volkswirtin Elisabeth Freund*. Edited by Sachse Carola. Berlin: Akademie, 1996.

Elisabeth Freund (1898-1982), of Jewish background, worked as a forced laborer in Berlin. She was from upper-middle class background, worked as an author and photographer.

Fromm, Bella. *Als Hitler mir die Hand küsste*. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1994.

Diary first published in English in 1943, chronicles the period 1930-1938 when Fromm was at the center of Berlin social life. Fromm was a journalist and well-connected in Berlin social circles. Of Jewish background, she left Germany and immigrated to New York in 1938.

Granzow, Klaus. *Tagebuch eines Hitlerjungen: Kriegsjugend in Pommern, 1943-1945*. Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1986.

Granzow notes in his foreword that he gave this diary at age 17 to a girl from Saxony, and the book was returned years later to him. He was shocked and ashamed to read his text, and felt that it was a “typical document of his generation.” For its documentary value, he writes that he left the text “as it was.”

Hahn, Lili. “—bis alles in Scherben fällt”: *Tagebuchblätter 1933-1945*. Köln: Literarischer Verlag A. Braun, 1979.

The perspective of a young journalist in Frankfurt. She was not allowed to publish during the Third Reich because her mother was Jewish. Diary first published in English as *White Flags of Surrender*.

von Hassell, Ulrich. *Die Hassell-Tagebücher 1938-1944. Aufzeichnungen vom Andern Deutschland*. Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1988.

Account of German resistance member Ulrich von Hassell (1881-1944), killed by the Nazis as part of the 20th of July plot. Peter Hoffmann has pointed to gaps and corrections in the diary when compared with originals in Bundesarchiv Koblenz.

Höcker, Karla. *Beschreibung eines Jahres: Berliner Notizen 1945*. Berlin: Arani, 1984. First published 1947.

Höcker (1901-1992), a writer and musician, describes the war's end in Berlin.

Jantzen, Eva, and Merith Niehuss. *Das Klassenbuch: Chronik einer Frauengeneration, 1932-1976*. Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 1994.

A group of women from Thüringen started a diary (*Rundbrief*) in 1932 after their Abitur, sending notebooks back and forth from Mexico to Canada to Greece and between the two divided Germanys. Eva Jantzen was one of the students, and when she received the diary again in 1984, she had it published.

Juvet, René [Numa Tétaz]. *Ich war dabei... 20 Jahre Nationalsozialismus 1923-1943. Ein Tatsachenbericht*. Zürich/New York: Europa Verlag, 1944.

More a report, year-by-year, than a diary. Juvet was a businessman with Swiss nationality who grew up in Germany and worked for a Munich company. Left for Switzerland in 1943.

von Kardorff, Ursula. *Berliner Aufzeichnungen*. München: dtv, 1994. First published Frankfurt am Main: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 1962.

Von Kardorff (1911-1988) was a German journalist. Her diary was composed in 1947 out of diaries, letters, and memories. A new edition in 1992, with analysis of the original manuscript, has revealed many editorial changes to make her account look more sympathetic. Her entries are focused on her private identity and her family's situation and fate during the war. Von Kardorff generally portrays herself and her friends as victims, first of the Nazis and then of the Allies.

Kellner, Friedrich. *“Vernebelt, verdunkelt sind alle Hirne”: Tagebücher 1939-1945*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011.

Kellner (1885-1970) was a legal advisor to the court in the small town of Laubach, and a Social Democrat strongly opposed to the Nazis. He began writing at the beginning of the war for documentary purposes, also clipping newspaper articles and commenting on them. Kellner's diary has already received attention

after its recent publication for its striking details, and for his bravery in terms of content.

Klemperer, Victor. *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten. Tagebücher 1933-1941; 1942-1945*. Edited by Walter Nowojski and Hadwig Klemperer. 2 vols. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1996.

Klemperer's diaries are considered extraordinary among sources from the period of National Socialism in Germany. As a Jew in a so-called "mixed marriage" he was able to survive the war living in Dresden. His diaries contain notes for his intellectual projects, as well as detailed observations on the language, culture, and society of Germany in the Third Reich. Klemperer was a lifelong diarist and the volumes from the Weimar Republic and GDR period have now also been published.

König, Joel [Ezra BenGershôm]. *Den Netzen entronnen. Die Aufzeichnungen des Joel König*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967. Also published as *David: Aufzeichnungen eines Überlebenden*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1980.

Joel König was the son of a rabbi who grew up with a strong sense of German identity. He was 17 when the war broke out. In 1944 he was able to escape to Hungary, eventually arriving in Israel. His account is that of a young boy who only gradually realizes the serious situation of Jews in Germany.

Köpp, Gabi. *Warum war ich nur ein Mädchen? Das Trauma einer Flucht 1945*. München: Herbig, 2010.

Gabi Köpp fled the eastern provinces of the former German Reich in early 1945, and was raped as a 15-year-old girl by Soviet soldiers. This experience traumatized her and she only felt she could speak of it in her diary.

Kuby, Erich. *Mein Krieg. Aufzeichnungen aus 2129 Tagen*. München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1975. Republished as *Mein Krieg : Aufzeichnungen 1939-1944*. München: Knesebeck & Schuler, 1989.

Kuby's (1910-2005) diary details his time as a soldier, written apparently without fear of censorship. He styles himself as a brave and heroic individual, and uses the diary to feel superior to those around him. The published edition is acknowledged to be "verdichtet" – in the adaption and reduction of pages to about half the manuscript.

Razumovsky, Maria, Dolly Razumovsky, and Olga Razumovsky. *Unsere versteckten Tagebücher, 1938-1944: drei Mädchen erleben die Nazizeit*. Wien: Böhlau, 1999.

Three sisters kept diaries as teenagers during the Third Reich (Mascha, *1923; Olga *1927; Dolly *1926), and published the books as they were written in 1999. Their family was of Russian origin in Austria since the end of the 18th century, and the girls lived a privileged life on an estate in a Czech village (Schönstein).

They went to school in Vienna. Because of a Viennese Jewish grandmother, they were categorized as “Mischlinge 2. Grades” by the Nazis. The diary excerpts are from March 1938 – New Year’s 1944/1945.

Rinser, Luise. *Gefängnistagebuch*. München: Zinnen-Verlag, 1946.

Rinser (1911-2002), a life-long diarist and author, kept these notes while imprisoned in 1944, accused of treason. The book was well received at the time of its publication in 1946.

Manes, Philipp. *Als ob’s ein Leben wär: Tatsachenbericht Theresienstadt 1942-1944*. Berlin: Ullstein, 2005.

Manes, a Jewish Berlin fur trader, kept a diary during two years in Theresienstadt. He began his diary in 1939, mostly for his children, who left Germany, to describe life in Nazi Germany. He was deported in 1944 and died in Auschwitz. The diary was hidden by a fellow prisoner in Theresienstadt and was sent to Manes’ daughter in England.

Menzel, Matthias. *Die Stadt ohne Tod. Berliner Tagebuch 1943/45*. Berlin: C. Habel, 1946.

Menzel, a doctor and psychologist in Berlin Zehlendorf, describes the last years of the war. He chronicles major events at the war’s end from a more distanced perspective, with little self-reflection, describing the desire of Berliners to hold on to signs of bourgeois normality. Somewhat apologetically, he tries to portray himself in a positive light. Menzel wrote for *Das Reich* under the name Karl Willy Beer.

Nathorff, Hertha. *Das Tagebuch der Hertha Nathorff: Berlin-New York Aufzeichnungen, 1933 bis 1945*. Edited by Wolfgang Benz. München: Oldenbourg, 1987.

Herta Nathorff (1895-1993), a doctor in Berlin, describes the persecution of Jews in Germany and immigration from Germany to the United States in 1939. She thought of the diary as notes for a later book publication, but later allowed for the publication of the diary as such. Her account is unique for its details about life in exile.

von Studnitz, Hans Georg. *Als Berlin brannte. Diarium der Jahre 1943-1945*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963.

Von Studnitz (1907-1993) was a conservative writer and journalist from Schlesien. He joined the Nazi party in 1933 and worked for various German newspapers, mostly as a foreign correspondent for the Auswärtiges Amt. After a brief internment, he continued a career in journalism after the war.

Walb, Lore. *Ich, die Alte—ich, die Junge: Konfrontation mit meinen Tagebüchern 1933-1945*. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1997.

Walb, born 1919, a life-long diarist, re-read and confronted her younger self in her diaries from this period. Her analysis of this former self is a kind of therapy and coming-to-terms with her previous enthusiasm for National Socialism and racism. The published diary includes her later analysis of her own account, noting her omissions and also what she has since forgotten/remembered. An extraordinarily self-reflective account with psychological self-analysis.

Wassiltschikow [Vassiltchikov], Marie. *Die Berliner Tagebücher der „Missie“ Wassiltschikow 1940-1945*. Berlin: Siedler, 1987.

“Missie” (1917-1978), as a privileged Russian princess, describes the war’s end from a unique perspective. She worked in the foreign office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) with members of the German resistance (20 July plot). From August 1944, she lived in Vienna and worked as a nurse until the war’s end. The diaries were edited for publication by her brother after her death.

Weglein, Resi. *Als Krankenschwester im KZ Theresienstadt: Erinnerungen einer Ulmer Jüdin*. Edited by Silvester Lechner and Alfred Moos. Stuttgart: Silberburg, 1988.

Weglein, born 1894, was deported to Theresienstadt in 1942. She describes the conditions there and her work as a nurse.

Weinert, Erich. *Memento Stalingrad. Ein Frontnotizbuch*. Berlin: Verlag Volk und Welt, 1951.

Weinert (1890-1953), who had been a communist in Soviet exile, worked for the Soviet propaganda during the war. The diary was published in the Soviet sector.

Anthologies

Bähr, Hans Walter, ed. *Die Stimme des Menschen: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen aus der ganzen Welt, 1939-1945*. München: R. Piper Verlag, 1961.

This volume includes excerpts from well-known to unknown individuals, from over 30 countries.

Breloer, Heinrich, ed. *Geheime Welten: deutsche Tagebücher aus den Jahren 1939 bis 1947*. Frankfurt: Eichborn, 1999.

A shorter selection of diaries from Breloer, *Mein Tagebuch* (see below).

———. *Mein Tagebuch. Geschichten vom Überleben 1939-1947*. Köln: Verlagsgesellschaft Schulfernsehen, 1984.

Breloer compiled this anthology while working on a film documentary project on diaries. It includes perspectives of soldiers, women on the “home front,” as well as those persecuted under National Socialism.

Bronnen, Barbara. *Geschichten vom Überleben: Frauentagebücher aus der NS-Zeit*. München: C.H. Beck, 1998.

A collection of excerpts from women’s diaries from 1933-1945 representing a spectrum of backgrounds and political beliefs, including victims, resistance members, refugees, as well as *Mitläuferinnen*, young students, daughters of party members. Excerpted authors include some of the published diaries such as Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, Margret Boveri, and Luise Rinser.

Hirschfeld, Gerhard, and Irina Renz. “*Vormittags die ersten Amerikaner*”: *Stimmen und Bilder vom Kriegsende 1945*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2005.

Like Kempowski’s *Echolot*, this book presents the last months of the war, January-May 1945, day-by-day with excerpts from diaries, letters, and photographs. Each month also contains a timeline of events.

Kempowski, Walter. *Das Echolot: ein kollektives Tagebuch, Januar und Februar 1943*. München: A. Knaus, 1993. Also: *Das Echolot: Fuga furiosa: ein kollektives Tagebuch, Winter 1945*. München: A. Knaus, 1999; *Das Echolot: Barbarossa '41: ein kollektives Tagebuch*. München: Knaus, 2002; *Das Echolot: Abgesang '45: ein kollektives Tagebuch*. München: Knaus, 2005.

Kempowski’s *Echolot* project consists of four parts (10 volumes). He uses a collage technique to present the war’s end day-by-day with material from both well-known and unknown persons representing the whole political spectrum. This biography project became the basis for his immense collection of diaries, letters, and family photographs and albums, now housed in the Akademie der Künste in Berlin.

Schäfer, Hans Dieter. *Berlin im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Der Untergang der Reichshauptstadt in Augenzeugenberichten*. München: Piper, 1985.

Divided thematically, this book offers perspectives on the deportation of Jews, foreign workers, Russian occupation, air raids, and entertainment.

Thimme, Roland. *Schwarzmondnacht : authentische Tagebücher berichten 1933-1953*. Berlin; Teetz: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2009.

With an emphasis on the Potsdam region, this book compiles diaries documenting National Socialism, defeat, and Soviet occupation. The third chapter concentrates on the experience of women during this time.

zur Nieden, Susanne. *Alltag im Ausnahmezustand: Frauentagebücher im zerstörten Deutschland, 1943 bis 1945*, Der Andere Blick. Berlin: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1993.

This volume combines an analysis of women's diaries with a second section containing close analyses of individual diaries.

Literary Diaries

Becher, Johannes R. *Tagebuch 1950, Auf andere Art so große Hoffnung*. Berlin: Aufbau, 1951.

Doderer, Heimito von. *Tangenten: Tagebuch eines Schriftstellers, 1940-1950*. München: Biederstein, 1964.

Hartlaub, Felix. *Das Gesamtwerk: Dichtungen. Tagebücher*. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1955. Diary published 1950 as *Tagebuch aus dem Kriege*.

Jünger, Ernst. *Strahlungen*. Tübingen: Heliopolis-Verlag, 1949.

Frisch, Max. *Tagebuch 1946-1949*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1960.

Kantorowicz, Alfred. *Deutsches Tagebuch*. München: Kindler, 1959.

Kaschnitz, Marie Luise. *Tagebücher aus den Jahren 1936-1966*. Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 2000.

Kästner, Erich. *Notabene 45. Ein Tagebuch*. Zürich: Atrium Verlag, 2012. First published Berlin: C. Dressler, 1961.

Lange, Horst. *Tagebücher aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Edited by Hans Dieter Schäfer. Mainz: v. Hase & Koehler, 1979.

Nebel, Gerhard. *Bei den nördlichen Hesperiden. Tagebuch aus dem Jahr 1942*. Wuppertal: Marées Verlag, 1948.

Nossack, Hans Erich. *Die Tagebücher, 1943-1977*. Edited by Gabriele Söhling and Norbert Miller. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997.

German Diaries in English Translation

Andreas-Friedrich, Ruth. *Berlin Underground, 1938-1945*. Translated by June Barrows Mussey. New York: Holt, 1947. Also published London: Latimer House, 1948.

———. *Battleground Berlin: Diaries, 1945-1948*. New York: Paragon House, 1990.

- Anonymous. *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City: A Diary*. New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2005. First published London: Secker & Warburg, 1955.
- Bielenberg, Christabel. *The past is myself*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1968. Also published as *When I was a German, 1934-1945: an Englishwoman in Nazi Germany*.
- Fromm, Bella. *Blood and Banquets: a Berlin Social Diary*. New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1942.
- Kardorff, Ursula von. *Diary of a Nightmare: Berlin, 1942-1945*. New York: John Day, 1966.
- Klemperer, Victor. *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. Translated by Martin Chalmers. 2 vols. New York: Modern Library, 1999.
- Studnitz, Hans-Georg von. *While Berlin burns: the diary of Hans-Georg von Studnitz, 1943-1945*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965.
- Vassiltchikov, Marie. *The Berlin Diaries. 1940-1945*. London : Chatto & Windus, 1985. New York: Knopf, 1987.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Unpublished Diaries

Deutsches Tagebucharchiv, Emmendingen, Germany (DTA)

- 44 Walter S.
- 45 Christa H.
- 56 Carla B.
- 104 Cornelia S.
- 154 Annemarie P.
- 175 Christa R.
- 185 Edeltraud G.
- 340 Maxi-Lore E.
- 548 Luise H.,
- 968 Hedwig G.
- 1002 Luise S.
- 1047 Charlotte.
- 1303 Else T.
- 1775 Maria K.

Walter Kempowski Archive, Biographienarchiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin (WKA)

- 34 Hildegard W.
- 1271 Susanne B.
- 1676 Diana J.
- 2583 Irmgard K.
- 3135 Lisbeth F.
- 3237 Evamaria K.
- 3697 Hertha von G.
- 3715/2 Magdalena K.
- 3825 Walther K.
- 3876 Elfie W.
- 3983 Gert von E.
- 4121 Ingrid B.

4308 Hanna S.
4364 Wilhelm K.
4914 Erika B.
5747 Johann H.
5314 Elisabeth v. F.
5439 Helga F.
5958 Agathe M.
6673 Gerhard M.
6718/1 Anonymous

II. Filmography 1949-1951

Not an exhaustive list. Refers to only films discussed in this dissertation.

A Foreign Affair (Billy Wilder, Paramount, 1948)
Berliner Ballade (Robert A. Stemmle, Comedia, 1948)
Film ohne Titel (Rudolf Jugert, Camera-Film, 1947-8)
Germany Year Zero (Roberto Rossellini, Tevere/Union Générale Cinématographique, 1948)
In jenen Tagen: Geschichte eines Autos (Helmut Käutner, Camera-Film, 1949)
Irgendwo in Berlin (Gerhard Lamprecht, DEFA, 1946)
Liebe 47 (Wolfgang Liebeneiner, Filmaufbau, 1949)
Die Mörder sind unter uns (Wolfgang Staudte, DEFA, 1946)
Der Ruf (Josef von Báký, Objektiv, 1949)
Zwischen gestern und morgen (Harald Braun, NDF, 1947)

III. Published Sources

———. *10 Jahre Amerika-Haus München*. München, 1956.
———. "Die Bestseller des Jahres und die nichtgefragten Bücher des Jahres." *Der Spiegel*, 30 July 1952, 32-33.
———. "Mensch nach der Katastrophe." *Der Spiegel*, 6 February 1952, 31-32.
———. "Stimmen aus Parkett und Rang: Man mag keine Ruinen." *Der Spiegel*, 4 January 1947.
———. "Zeitbericht: Atempause auf Schlachtfeld." *Der Spiegel*, 26 December 1951.

- Abzug, Robert H. "Double Vision." In *Inside the Vicious Heart: Americans and the Liberation of Nazi Concentration Camps*, 3-42. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Adelson, Leslie A. "DAAD Faculty Summer Seminar 2012: The Futures of Interdisciplinary German Studies." *German Studies Review* 35, no. 3 (2012): 511-20.
- . "Futurity Now: An Introduction." *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 88, no. 3 (2013): 213-18.
- Adorno, Theodor W. "Trying to Understand Endgame." In *Notes to Literature*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- Agamben, Giorgio. "On Shame and the Subject." In *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. New York: Zone Books, 1999.
- Ahrendt, Peter. *Der Büchermensch: Wesen, Werk und Wirkung Arno Schmidts: eine umfassende Einführung*. Paderborn: Igel Verlag Wissenschaft, 1995.
- Albrecht, Monika. "Afrika hin und her? Spurensuche zur Fremdwahrnehmung in der deutschsprachigen Literatur der 1950er Jahre." In *Interkulturelle Texturen. Afrika und Deutschland im Reflexionsmedium der Literatur*, edited by M. Moustapha Diallo and Dirk Göttsche, 101-59. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2003.
- . "*Europa ist nicht die Welt.*" (*Post*)Kolonialismus in Literatur und Geschichte der westdeutschen Nachkriegszeit. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2008.
- Andersch, Alfred. *Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung: ein Beitrag zur Analyse der literarischen Situation*. Karlsruhe: Verlag Volk und Zeit, 1948.
- Anonymous. *A Woman in Berlin: Eight Weeks in the Conquered City: A Diary*. New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2005.
- Arendt, Hannah. "Action." In *The Human Condition*, 175-247. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.
- . "The Aftermath of Nazi Rule. Report from Germany." *Commentary* 10 (1950): 342-53.
- . "The Aftermath of Nazi Rule: Report from Germany." In *Essays in Understanding*, edited by Jerome Kohn. New York: Harcourt, 1994.
- . *Besuch in Deutschland*. Translated by Eike Geisel. Nördlingen: Rotbuch Verlag, 1993.
- . "Collective Responsibility." In *Amor Mundi: Explorations in the Faith and Thought of Hannah Arendt*, edited by James w. Bernauer, 43-50. Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987.
- . *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Viking Press, 1963.
- . "Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility." In *Essays in Understanding*, edited by Jerome Kohn, 121-32. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1994.

- . *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1951.
- . “[The Origins of Totalitarianism]: A Reply.” *The Review of Politics* 15, no. 1 (1953): 76-84.
- . “‘What remains? The Language Remains’: A Conversation with Günter Gaus.” In *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954*, edited by Jerome Kohn. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994.
- Arendt, Hannah, and Karl Jaspers. *Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers: Briefwechsel 1926-1969*. Edited by Lotte Köhler and Hans Saner. München: Piper, 1985.
- Arendt, Hannah, and Gershom Gerhard Scholem. *Der Briefwechsel*. Edited by Marie Luise Knott and David Heredia. Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 2010.
- Arnold, Heinz Ludwig. “Gespräch mit Wolfgang Koeppen.” In *Gespräche mit Schriftstellern: Max Frisch, Günter Grass, Wolfgang Koeppen, Max von der Grün, Günter Wallraff*, 109-41. München: Beck, 1975.
- Aschheim, Steven E. *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer: Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Times*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.
- Assmann, Aleida, and Ute Frevert. *Geschichtsvergessenheit - Geschichtsversessenheit: vom Umgang mit deutschen Vergangenheiten nach 1945*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1999.
- Bachmann, Ingeborg *Kriegstagebuch: Mit Briefen von Jack Hamesh an Ingeborg Bachmann*. Edited by Hans Höller. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010.
- Baer, Hester. *Dismantling the Dream Factory: Gender, German Cinema, and the Postwar Quest for a New Film Language*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2009.
- Bänsch, Dieter. “Rückzug in die Heide. Über Arno Schmidts fünfziger Jahre.” 326-65. Tübingen: G. Narr, 1985.
- Barck, Karlheinz. “Intellectuals under Hitler.” In *A New History of German Literature*, edited by David E. Wellbery, 830-35. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005.
- Barer, Robert. *One Young Man and Total War. From Normandy to Concentration Camp, a Doctor's Letters Home*. Edinburgh: Pentland, 1998.
- Barndt, Kerstin. “Layers of Time: Industrial Ruins and Exhibitionary Temporalities.” *PMLA* 125, no. 1 (2010): 134-41.
- Barnouw, Dagmar. “Melancholy and Enchantment: Wolfgang Koeppen’s Anamnesis.” *Mosaic* 14, no. 3 (1981): 31-48.
- Bartov, Omer. “The Last German.” *The New Republic*, 28 December 1998, 34-42.
- Baumgart, Reinhard. “Böll, Koeppen, Schmidt - diese drei.” *Merkur* 40 (1986): 555-64.
- Benjamin, Walter. “The Storyteller.” In *Selected Writings, 1935-1938*, edited by Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2002.
- . “Über den Begriff der Geschichte (1940).” In *Erzählen: Schriften zur Theorie der Narration und zur literarischen Prosa*, edited by Alexander Honold, 129-40. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2007.

- Berlant, Lauren. "Critical Inquiry, Affirmative Culture." *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 2 (2004): 445-51.
- Biess, Frank. "'Everybody has a Chance': Nuclear Angst, Civil Defence, and the History of Emotions in Postwar West Germany." *German History* 27, no. 2 (2009): 215-43.
- . "Feelings in the Aftermath: Toward a History of Postwar Emotions." In *Histories of the aftermath: the legacies of the Second World War in Europe*, edited by Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller, New York: Berghahn Books, 2010.
- Blumenberg, Hans. *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997.
- Bock, Hans-Michael, ed. *Schatten des Krieges. Innovation und Tradition im europäischen Kino 1940 - 1950*, Hamburgisches Centrum für Filmforschung. Berlin: Absolut Medien, 2009.
- Bock, Hans-Michael, and Thomas Schreiber. *Über Arno Schmidt: Rezensionen vom "Leviathan" bis zur "Julia."* Zürich: Haffmans, 1984.
- Böll, Heinrich. "Bekenntnis zur Trümmerliteratur." In *Werke*, edited by Árpád Bernáth and Annamária Gyurácz, 58-62. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2007.
- . *Briefe aus dem Krieg 1939-1945*. Edited by Jochen Schubert. 2 vols. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2001.
- . *Der Engel Schwieg*. München: dtv, 2009.
- Borchert, Wolfgang. *Das Gesamtwerk*. Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1949.
- Borgsen, Werner Volland Klaus. *Stalag X B Sandbostel: zur Geschichte eines Kriegsgefangenen- und KZ-Auffanglagers in Norddeutschland, 1939-1945*. Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1991.
- Böttiger, Helmut. *Die Gruppe 47: Als die deutsche Literatur Geschichte schrieb*. München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2013.
- Bourke-White, Margaret. "The Battered Face of Germany." *LIFE*, 4 June 1945.
- . *"Dear fatherland, rest quietly": A Report on the Collapse of Hitler's "Thousand Years."* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946.
- Boveri, Margret. *Tage des Überlebens: Berlin 1945*. München: Piper, 1985.
- Boyer, M. Christine. "Aviation and the Aerial View: Le Corbusier's Spatial Transformations in the 1930s and 1940s." *diacritics*, 33, no. 3/4 (2003): 93-116.
- Brandlmeier, Thomas. "Von Hitler zu Adenauer: Deutsche Trümmerfilme." In *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen: Westdeutscher Nachkriegsfilm, 1946-1962*, edited by Hilmar Hoffmann and Walter Schobert, 33-61. Frankfurt am Main: Deutsches Filmmuseum, 1989.
- Brecht, Bertolt. *Gesammelte Werke*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967.
- Breger, Claudia. "'Kampf dem Kampf': Aesthetic Experimentation and Social Satire in *The Ballad of Berlin*." In *German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins*,

- edited by Wilfried Wilms and William Rasch, 157-74. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Breloer, Heinrich. *Geheime Welten: deutsche Tagebücher aus den Jahren 1939 bis 1947*. Frankfurt: Eichborn, 1999.
- , ed. *Mein Tagebuch. Geschichten vom Überleben 1939-1947*. Köln: Verlagsgesellschaft Schulfernsehen, 1984.
- Brink-Friederici, Christl. *Wolfgang Koeppen: die Stadt als Pandämonium*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990.
- Brockmann, Stephen. "German Culture at the 'Zero Hour'." In *Revisiting the Zero Hour 1945: The Emergence of Postwar German Culture*, edited by Stephen Brockmann and Frank Trommler, 8-40. Washington, DC: American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 1996.
- . "German Literature, Year Zero: Writers and Politics, 1945–1953." *Department of Modern Languages* (1997), http://repository.cmu.edu/modern_languages/8. Accessed 29 July 2014.
- Buchbender, Ortwin, and Reinhold Sterz. *Das andere Gesicht des Krieges: deutsche Feldpostbriefe, 1939-1945*. München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1982.
- Buruma, Ian. *Year Zero: A History of 1945*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2013.
- Butler, Judith. *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005.
- Capano, Lucia Perrone. "Narrative Einzeitlichungen: Wolfgang Koeppen's *Tauben im Gras*." In *Figurationen des Temporalen: poetische, philosophische und mediale Reflexionen über Zeit*, edited by Claudia Öhlschläger, 107-22. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2013.
- Carter, Erica. "Sweeping Up the Past: Gender and History in the Post-war German 'Rubble Film'." In *Heroines without Heroes: Reconstructing Female and National Identities in European Cinema, 1945-51*, edited by Ulrike Sieglöhr. London; New York: Cassell, 2000.
- Cavell, Stanley. "Performative and Passionate Utterance." In *Philosophy the day after tomorrow*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Claasen, Hermann. *Gesang im Feuerofen: Köln, Überreste einer alten deutschen Stadt*. Edited by Josef Rick. Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1979.
- Clark, Mark W. *Beyond Catastrophe: German Intellectuals and Cultural Renewal after World War II, 1945-1955*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006.
- Cohen, Elliot E. "What Do the Germans Propose to Do? An Address to the German People." *Commentary* 10 (1950): 225-28.
- Cohn, Dorrit. *The Distinction of Fiction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.

- Culley, Margo, ed. *A Day at a Time: The Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present*. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1985.
- Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1868 [1719].
- Demetz, Peter. *After the Fires: Recent Writings in the Germanies, Austria, and Switzerland*. San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1986.
- Derenthal, Ludger. *Bilder der Trümmer- und Aufbaujahre: Fotografie im sich teilenden Deutschland*. Marburg: Jonas, 1999.
- Deutsches Kabarettarchiv. "Wir sind wieder wer. Aber wer? Ausstellung 100 Jahre Deutsches Kabarett. Kabarett im Kalten Krieg (1946-1966)." http://www.kabarettarchiv.de/AusstellungPDF/Ausstellung_4.pdf. Accessed 29 July 2014.
- Disch, Lisa J. "On Friendship in 'Dark Times.'" In *Feminist interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, edited by Bonnie Honig, 285-312. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.
- Döblin, Alfred. *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. München: dtv, 2008.
- Döhl, Reinhard. "Wolfgang Koeppen." In *Über Wolfgang Koeppen*, edited by Ulrich Greiner, 163-85. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976.
- Donahue, Neil H. "At the Heart of the Matter: Deliberations on Crisis in the Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1933-1945." In *Literarisches Krisenbewusstsein: ein Perzeptions- und Produktionsmuster im 20. Jahrhundert*, edited by Keith Bullivant and Bernhard Spies, 105-27. München: Iudicium, 2001.
- Döring, Jörg. "...ich stellte mich unter, ich machte mich klein...": *Wolfgang Koeppen, 1933-1948*. Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld, 2001.
- Dunker, Axel. "Im Wacholderring oder 'Der nächste Fußpfad in Richtung Arkadien': Arno Schmidts Erzählung 'Schwarze Spiegel' als Idylle." In *Wiederholte Spiegelungen: Elf Aufsätze zum Werk Arno Schmidts*, edited by Robert Weninger, 99-115. Augsburg: edition text + kritik, 2003.
- Dusini, Arno. *Tagebuch: Möglichkeiten einer Gattung*. München: Fink, 2005.
- Eakin, Paul John. *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Eggert, Stefan. *Wolfgang Koeppen*. Berlin: Colloquium im Wissenschaftsverlag Volker Spiess, 1998.
- Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process*. Oxford; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994.
- . *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Cambridge; Oxford: Polity Press, 1996.
- . *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation. Erster Band. Wandlungen des Verhaltens in den weltlichen Oberschichten des Abendlandes*. Edited by Heike Hammer. Vol. 3.1, Gesammelte Schriften. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997.

- Emter, Elisabeth. *Literatur und Quantentheorie: die Rezeption der modernen Physik in Schriften zur Literatur und Philosophie deutschsprachiger Autoren (1925-1970)*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995.
- Erhart, Walter. "‘Es fallen einem Bilder ein’: Wolfgang Koeppens letzte Filme." In *Der Bildhunger der Literatur: Festschrift für Gunter E. Grimm*, edited by Gunter Grimm, Dieter Heimböckel and Uwe Werlein, 313-27. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2005.
- Eshel, Amir. *Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Fallada, Hans. *Der Alpdruck*. Berlin: Aufbau, 2014.
- Fiehler, Karl. *München baut auf: ein Tatsachen- und Bildbericht über den nationalsozialistischen Aufbau in der Hauptstadt der Bewegung*. München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, F. Eher, 1935.
- Fischer, Bernd Erhard. *Arno Schmidt in Bargfeld, Menschen und Orte*. Berlin: Edition A. B. Fischer, 2007.
- Fisher, Jaimey. *Disciplining Germany: Youth, Reeducation, and Reconstruction after the Second World War*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007.
- Flatley, Jonathan. *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Fohrmann, Jürgen. *Abenteuer und Bürgertum: zur Geschichte der deutschen Robinsonaden im 18. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1981.
- Fothergill, Robert A. "One Day at a Time: The Diary as Lifewriting." *Auto/biography Studies* 10 (1995): 81-91.
- Frei, Norbert. *1945 und wir*. München: C.H. Beck, 2005.
- . "Von deutscher Erfindungskraft oder: Die Kollektivschuldthese in der Nachkriegszeit." *Rechtshistorisches Journal*, no. 16 (1997): 621-34.
- Fritzsche, Peter. *Life and Death in the Third Reich*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2008.
- . *The Turbulent World of Franz Göll: An Ordinary Berliner Writes the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.
- Fullbrook, Mary. *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence Through the German Dictatorships*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. Translated by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marhsall. London: Continuum, 2004.
- Ganeva, Mila. "Fashion Amidst the Ruins: Revisiting the Early Rubble Films And the Heavens Above (1947) and The Murderers are Among Us (1946)." *German Studies Review* 37, no. 1 (2014): 61-85.

- Gaus, Günter. "Hannah Arendt (28. Oktober 1964): Was bleibt? Es bleibt die Muttersprache." In *Was bleibt, sind Fragen: Die klassischen Interviews*, edited by Hans-Dieter Schütt. Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 2001.
- Genette, Gérard. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.
- Glaser, Hermann. *The Rubble Years: The Cultural Roots of Postwar Germany*. New York: Paragon House, 1986.
- . *Kulturgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. München: C. Hanser, 1985.
- Gnüg, Hiltrud. "Warnutopie und Idylle in den Fünfziger Jahren. Am Beispiel Amo Schmidts." In *Literarische Utopie-Entwürfe*, edited by Hiltrud Gnüg, 277-90. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982.
- Grahl, Tina. "Arno Schmidts Prosatheorie der Berechnungen und ihre literarische Umsetzung im Werk der 1950er Jahre." Magisterarbeit, Karlsruher Institut für Technologie, 2012.
- Groll, Gunter. "Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm - Klamauk oder Welträtsel." In *Diese Merkwürdige Zeit. Leben nach der Stunde Null. Ein Textbuch aus der "Neuen Zeitung"*, edited by Wilfried F. Schoeller, 388-90. Frankfurt am Main: Büchergilde Gutenberg, 2005 [1950].
- Grossmann, Atina. *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- . "Trauma, Memory, Motherhood." In *Reflections on religion, justice, sexuality and genocide*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2003.
- Hake, Sabine. *German National Cinema*. London; New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Hartog, François. *Régimes d'historicité: présentisme et expériences du temps*. Paris: Seuil, 2003.
- . "What is the Role of the Historian in an Increasingly Presentist World?" In *The New Ways of History: Developments in Historiography*, edited by Gelina Harlaftis, 239-52. London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010.
- Heidegger, Martin, and Karl Jaspers. *Briefwechsel 1920-1963*. Edited by Walter Biemel and Hans Saner. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990.
- Heisler, Barbara Schmitter. *From German Prisoner of War to American Citizen: A Social History with 35 Interviews*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2013.
- Hell, Julia. "Imperial Ruin Gazers, or Why did Scipio Weep?" In *Ruins of Modernity*, edited by Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle, 169-92. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- . "Remnants of Totalitarianism: Hannah Arendt, Heiner Müller, Slavoj Žižek, and the Re-Invention of Politics." *Telos: A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought* 136 (2006): 76-103.
- Herzog, Annabel. "Hannah Arendt's Concept of Responsibility." *Studies in Social and Political Thought* 10 (2004): 39-52.

- Hinchman, Lewis P., and Sandra K. Hinchman. "Existentialism Politicized: Arendt's Debt to Jaspers." *The Review of Politics* 53, no. 3 (1991): 435-68.
- Hinrichs, Boy. *Utopische Prosa als längeres Gedankenspiel: Untersuchungen zu Arno Schmidts Theorie der Modernen Literatur und ihrer Konkretisierung in "Schwarze Spiegel," "Die Gelehrtenrepublik" und "Kaff auch Mare Crisium."* Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986.
- Hirschfeld, Gerhard, and Irina Renz. "Vormittags die ersten Amerikaner": *Stimmen und Bilder vom Kriegsende 1945*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2005.
- Hocke, Gustav René. *Das europäische Tagebuch*. Wiesbaden: Limes, 1963.
- . "Deutsche Kalligraphie oder: Glanz und Elend der modernen Literatur." *Der Ruf. Unabhängige Blätter der jungen Generation* 1, no. 7 (1946).
- . *Im Schatten des Leviathan: Lebenserinnerungen 1908-1984*. München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2004.
- Hoffmann, Stefan-Ludwig. "Besiegte, Besatzer, Beobachter: Das Kriegsende im Tagebuch." In *Demokratie im Schatten der Gewalt: Geschichten des Privaten im deutschen Nachkrieg*, 25-55. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2010.
- Hoffmann, Wilhelm. *Nach der Katastrophe*. Stuttgart: Lithos Verlag, 2001 [1946].
- Holub, Robert C. "Guilt and Atonement." In *A New History of German Literature*, edited by David E. Wellbery, 824-30. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005.
- Honorf, Klaus. *Ende und Anfang: Photographen in Deutschland um 1945: Katalog zur Ausstellung des Deutschen Historischen Museums vom 19. Mai bis 29. August 1995*. Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 1995.
- Horton, Aaron D. *German POWs, der Ruf, and the genesis of Group 47: the political journey of Alfred Andersch and Hans Werner Richter*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.
- Huerkamp, Josef. "Gekettet an Daten & Namen": drei Studien zum "authentischen" Erzählen in der Prosa Arno Schmidts, Bargfelder Bote. München: Edition Text + Kritik, 1981.
- Huff, Cynthia. "Reading as Re-Vision: Approaches to Reading Manuscript Diaries." *Biography* 23, no. 3 (2000): 504-23.
- Hügli, Anton, Dominic Kaegi, and Reiner Wiehl. *Einsamkeit, Kommunikation, Öffentlichkeit*. Basel: Schwabe, 2004.
- Hunt, Lynn. *Measuring Time, Making History*. New York, NY: Central European University Press, 2008.
- Huyssen, Andreas. "German Painting in the Cold War." *New German Critique* 37, no. 2 (2010): 209-27.
- Jäger, Jens. "Fotografie - Erinnerung - Identität: Die Trümmeraufnahmen aus deutschen Städten 1945." In *Kriegsende 1945 in Deutschland*, edited by Jörg Hillmann and John Zimmermann, 287-300. Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2002.

- Jäger, Maren. *Die Joyce-Rezeption in der deutschsprachigen Erzählliteratur nach 1945*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2009.
- Jain, Manju. *T.S. Eliot and American Philosophy: the Harvard Years*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Jarausch, Konrad Hugo. *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Jarausch, Konrad Hugo, and Michael Geyer. *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003.
- Jaspers, Karl. "Die Schuldfrage." In *Erneuerung der Universität: Reden und Schriften, 1945/46*, edited by Renato de Rosa, 113-213. Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1986.
- . *Erneuerung der Universität: Reden und Schriften, 1945/46*, Lambert Schneider Taschenbücher. Heidelberg: L. Schneider, 1986.
- . "Karl Jaspers - Ein Selbstporträt (1966/67)." In *Schicksal und Wille: Autobiographische Schriften*, edited by Hans Saner, 15-38. München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1967.
- . "Our Future and Goethe." In *Existentialism and Humanism*, edited by Hanns E. Fischer, 35-64. New York: Russell F. Moore Company, 1952.
- . *Philosophie*. 2 vols. Berlin: Springer, 1956.
- . *The Question of German Guilt*. Translated by E. B. Ashton. New York: Dial Press, 1948.
- . "Von Heidelberg nach Basel (1967)." In *Schicksal und Wille: Autobiographische Schriften*, edited by Hans Saner, 164-83. München: R. Piper & Co, 1967.
- Judt, Tony. *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*. New York: Penguin Press, 2005.
- Jünger, Ernst. *Strahlungen*. Tübingen: Heliopolis-Verlag, 1949.
- Jurgensen, Manfred. *Das fiktionale Ich: Untersuchungen zum Tagebuch*. Bern; München: Francke Verlag, 1979.
- Kahnert, Walter. *Objektivismus. Gedanken über einen neuen Literaturstil*. Berlin: Herbig, 1946.
- Kasack, Hermann. "Ein poetischer Seismograph." *Neue Literarische Welt*, 10 January 1952.
- Kästner, Erich. *Notabene 45. Ein Tagebuch*. Berlin: C. Dressle, 1961.
- Kaun, Axel. "Tauben im Gras. Ein Roman aus unseren Tagen von Wolfgang Koeppen." *Weltstimmen: Weltbücher in Umrissen* 20 (1951): 707-11.
- Kern, Stephen. *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983.
- Kershaw, Ian. *The End: Hitler's Germany, 1944-45*. London; New York: Allen Lane, 2011.

- Klemperer, Victor. "Die Arten der historischen Dichtung." *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 1, no. 3 (1923): 370 - 99.
- . *Die romanischen Literaturen von der Renaissance bis zur französischen Revolution*. Edited by Victor Klemperer, Helmut Hatzfeld and Fritz Neubert. Wildpark-Potsdam: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion M.B.H., 1924.
- . *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years*. Translated by Martin Chalmers. 2 vols. New York: Modern Library, 1999.
- . *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten: Tagebücher 1942-1945*. Edited by Walter Nowojski and Hadwig Klemperer. 2 vols. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1996.
- . *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI - Lingua Tertii Imperii. A Philologist's Notebook*. Translated by Martin Brady. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- . *LTI. Notizbuch eines Philologen*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2007.
- . *Die Tagebücher (1933 - 1945). Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Edited by Walter Nowojski. Berlin: Directmedia Publishing, 2007.
- Klimó, Árpád von, and Malte Rolf. *Rausch und Diktatur: Inszenierung, Mobilisierung und Kontrolle in totalitären Systemen*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006.
- Klötzer, Sylvia. *Satire und Macht: Film, Zeitung, Kabarett in der DDR*. Köln: Böhlau, 2006.
- Kluge, Alexander. *30. April 1945: der Tag, an dem Hitler sich erschoss und die Westbindung der Deutschen begann*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2014.
- Klüger, Ruth. "Zeugensprache: Koeppen und Andersch." In *Deutsche Nachkriegsliteratur und der Holocaust*, edited by Stefan Braese, Holger Gehle, Doron Kiesel and Hanno Loewy, 173-81. Frankfurt; New York: Campus, 1998.
- Koepnick, Lutz. "Culture in the Shadow of Trauma?" In *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, edited by Helmut Walser Smith, 711-29. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Koeppen, Wolfgang. "Die dritte oder vierte Rose." *Merkur* 162 (1961): 790-93.
- . "Die elenden Skribenten." In *Berichte und Skizzen II. Gesammelte Werke in sechs Bänden*, edited by Marcel Reich-Ranicki, 231-35. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986.
- . *Jakob Littners Aufzeichnungen aus einem Erdloch: Roman*. Edited by Alfred Adolph Estermann. Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2002.
- . "Marcel Proust und die Summe der Sensibilität." In *Gesammelte Werke in sechs Bänden: Essays und Rezensionen*, edited by Marcel Reich-Ranicki, Dagmar von Briel and Hans-Ulrich Treichel. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986 [1957].
- . *Pigeons on the Grass*. Translated by David Ward. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988.

- . *Tauben im Gras*. Edited by Marcel Reich-Ranicki, Gesammelte Werke in sechs Bänden. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986.
- . “Über Gertrude Steins *Autobiographie der Alice B. Toklas*.” In *Wolfgang Koeppen*, edited by Eckart Oehlenschläger, 19-24. Frankfurt am Main: suhrkamp taschenbuch, 1987 [1956].
- . “Über Virginia Woolfs *Mrs. Dalloway*.” In *Wolfgang Koeppen*, edited by Eckart Oehlenschläger, 14-18. Frankfurt am Main: suhrkamp taschenbuch, 1987 [1956].
- Kogon, Eugen. *Der SS-Staat*. Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer, 1947.
- Komar, Kathleen L. *Pattern and Chaos: Multilinear Novels by Dos Passos, Döblin, Faulkner, and Koeppen*. Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1983.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Translated by Keith Tribe. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
- . *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing history, Spacing concepts*. Edited by Todd Samuel Presner. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- . *Vergangene Zukunft: zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985.
- . *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000.
- Krah, Hans. “Atomforschung und atomare Bedrohung. Literarische und (populär-) wissenschaftliche Vermittlung eines elementaren Themas 1945–1959 ” In *Technik als Zeichensystem in Literatur und Medien*, edited by Michael Titzmann, 83–114. Tübingen: Narr, 2001.
- Lasky, Melvin J. “Die kurze Geschichte des Morgenthau Plans. Ein dokumentarischer Rückblick.” *Der Monat*, no. 10 (1949): 7-17.
- Lejeune, Philippe. *On Diary*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009.
- Lejeune, Philippe, and Victoria A. Lodewick. “How Do Diaries End?” *Biography* 24, no. 1 (2001): 99-112.
- Lettau, Reinhard, ed. *Die Gruppe 47. Bericht, Kritik, Polemik*. Neuwied; Berlin: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1967.
- Littner, Jakob. *Aufzeichnungen aus einem Erdloch*. München: H. Kluger, 1948.
- . *Journey through the night: Jakob Littner's Holocaust memoir*. Translated by Kurt Nathan Grübler. New York: Continuum, 2000.
- Lubrich, Oliver, ed. *Travels in the Reich, 1933-1945: Foreign Authors Report from Germany*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Lühe, Irmela von der. “‘Kommen Sie bald als ein guter Arzt’ - Die ‘große Kontroverse’ um Thomas Mann (1945).” In *Engagement Debatten Skandale. Deutschsprachige Autoren als Zeitgenossen*, edited by Joanna Jablkowska, 305-20. Lodz, 2002.
- Maier, Hansgeorg. “Kaleidoskop 1951.” *Die Zeit*, 1 November 1951.

- Mann, Erika. "Don't Make the Same Mistakes." In *Zero Hour. A Summons to the Free*, edited by Stephen Vincent Benét, Erika Mann, McGeorge Bundy, William L. White, Garrett Underhill and Walter Millis. New York; Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1940.
- Mann, Thomas. "Ansprache im Goethejahr 1949." In *Essays VI 1945-1950. Werke - Briefe - Tagebücher*, edited by Herbert Lehnert, 670-88. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2009.
- . "Brief nach Deutschland." In *Essays VI 1945-1950. Werke - Briefe - Tagebücher*, edited by Herbert Lehnert, 72-82. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2009.
- . *Essays VI 1945-1950*. Edited by Herbert Lehnert. Vol. 19.1, Werke - Briefe - Tagebücher. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2009.
- . "Germany and the Germans." In *The Yale Review*, 1946.
- . *Tagebücher 1944-1.4.1946*. Edited by Inge Jens. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1986.
- Mann, Thomas, and Inge Jens. *Tagebücher: 1944-1. 4. 1946*. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1986.
- Marchand, Yves, Romain Meffre, and Thomas J. Sugrue. *The Ruins of Detroit*. Göttingen; London: Steidl, 2010.
- Marx, Friedhelm. "Kein Zauberwort, keine Formel. Wolfgang Koeppens Poetik der Unschärfe in *Tauben im Gras*." In *Metapher und Modell: Ein Wuppertaler Kolloquium zu literarischen und wissenschaftlichen Formen der Wirklichkeitskonstruktion*, edited by Wolfgang Bergem, Lothar Bluhm and Friedhelm Marx. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1996.
- Menke, Timm. "Flüchtlings- und Vertriebenenschicksale im Werk Arno Schmidts." *German Life and Letters* 57, no. 4 (2004): 427-39.
- Moeller, Hans-Bernhard. "Perception, Word-Play, and the Printed Page: Arno Schmidt and His Poe Novel." *Books Abroad* 45, no. 1 (1971): 25-30.
- Moeller, Robert G. *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Moretti, Franco. *The Bourgeois: Between History and Literature*. London: Verso, 2013.
- . "Serious Century." In *The Novel. History, Geography, and Culture*, edited by Franco Moretti, 364-40. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton, 2006.
- Müller, Gerd. "Die Literatur der Bundesrepublik und der deutschsprachigen Schweiz." In *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, edited by Viktor Zmegac, 385-590. Königstein: Athenäum, 1984.
- Müller, Götz. "Utopie und Robinsonade bei Arno Schmidt." *Text + Kritik* 20, no. 20a (1986): 71-91.

- Naimark, Norman M. *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Nebel, Gerhard. *Bei den nördlichen Hesperiden. Tagebuch aus dem Jahr 1942*. Wuppertal: Marées Verlag, 1948.
- Neumann, Günter. *Schwarzer Jahrmarkt: Eine Revue der Stunde Null*. Berlin-Wannsee: Lothar Blanvalet Verlag, 1975.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life." In *Untimely Meditations*, edited by Daniel Breazeale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Norberg, Jakob. "Perspectives on Postwar Silence: Psychoanalysis, Political Philosophy, and Economic Theory." *German Politics and Society* 29, no. 4 (2011): 1-20.
- Nussbaum, Felicity. "Toward Conceptualizing Diary." In *Studies in Autobiography*, edited by James Olney, 128-40. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Ott, F. Peter. "Tradition and Innovation: An Introduction to the Prose Theory and Practice of Arno Schmidt." *The German Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1978): 19-38.
- Peitsch, Helmut. *"Deutschlands Gedächtnis an seine dunkelste Zeit": zur Funktion der Autobiographik in den Westzonen Deutschlands und den Westsektoren von Berlin 1945 bis 1949*. Berlin: Sigma Bohn, 1990.
- . *Nachkriegsliteratur 1945 - 1989*, Schriften des Erich Maria Remarque-Archivs. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2009.
- Peter, Richard. *Dresden: eine Kamera klagt an*. Leipzig: Fotokinoverlag, 1980.
- Pilling, Iris. "'Der fehlende Zorn des Volkes': Überlegungen Hannah Arendts zur Nachkriegszeit." In *Heidelberg 1945*, edited by Jürgen C. Heß, Hartmut Lehmann and Volker Sellin, 159-72. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996.
- Piranesi, Giovanni Battista, Raffaella Resch, Domenico Pertocoli, and Mazzotta Fondazione Antonio. *Piranesi: antichità romane, vedute di Roma: opere della Fondazione Antonio Mazzotta*. Milano: Mazzotta, 2000.
- Pleyer, Peter. *Deutscher Nachkriegsfilm 1946-1948*. Münster: C. J. Fahle, 1965.
- Prümm, Karl. "'Ich weiß, man kann mit den Mitteln des Films dichten.' Kinematographisches Schreiben bei Wolfgang Koeppen." *Treibhaus. Jahrbuch für Literatur der 50er Jahre: Wolfgang Koeppen & Alfred Döblin: Topographien der literarischen Moderne* 1 (2005): 68-85.
- Puff, Helmut. "Ruins as Models: Displaying Destruction in Postwar Germany." In *Ruins of Modernity*, edited by Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Rabanus, Christian. "Kommunikation als praktischer Kern von Jaspers' Philosophie." In *Existenz in Kommunikation: zur philosophischen Ethik von Karl Jaspers*, edited by Bernd Weidmann. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004.

- Rabinbach, Anson. *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals Between Apocalypse and Enlightenment*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- . “Karl Jaspers’ *Die Schuldfrage*: A Reconsideration.” In *Heidelberg 1945*, edited by Jürgen C. Heß, Hartmut Lehmann and Volker Sellin, 149-58. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996.
- Rathjen, Friedhelm, ed. *Arno Schmidt global. Eine Bestandsaufnahme der internationalen Rezeption 1950-2010*. München: edition text + kritik, 2010.
- . “Eine oberflächliche Vertrautheit: Arno Schmidt und die internationale Moderne.” *literaturkritik.de* (2014), http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez_id=18647. Accessed 29 July 2014.
- . *Inselwärts. Arno Schmidt und die Literaturen der britischen Inseln*. Scheeßel: Edition ReJoyce, 2008.
- . *Westwärts. Arno Schmidt und die amerikanische Literatur*. Scheeßel: Edition ReJoyce, 2006.
- Reemtsma, Jan Philipp. *Über Arno Schmidt: Vermessungen eines poetischen Terrains*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006.
- Reich-Ranicki, Marcel. “Der Zeuge Koeppen.” In *Über Wolfgang Koeppen*, edited by Ulrich Greiner, 133-50. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976.
- Rensmann, Lars. “Returning from Forced Exile: Some Observations on Theodor W. Adorno's and Hannah Arendt's Experience of Postwar Germany and Their Political Theories of Totalitarianism.” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 49 (2004): 171-93.
- Rentschler, Eric. *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- . “The Place of Rubble in the Trummerfilm.” *New German Critique* 37, no. 2 (2010): 9-30.
- Richter, Hans Werner. *Der Ruf: eine deutsche Nachkriegszeitung*. Edited by Hans Schwab-Felisch. München: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1962.
- . “Literatur im Interregnum.” *Der Ruf* 1, no. 15 (1947): 10-11.
- Riess, Curt. *The Berlin Story*. New York: Dial Press, 1952.
- Robin, Ron Theodore. *The Barbed-Wire College: Reeducating German POWs in the United States during World War II*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.
- Röd, Wolfgang. “Philosophiegeschichte als Kommunikation: Chancen und Grenzen.” In *Einsamkeit, Kommunikation, Öffentlichkeit*, edited by Anton Hügli, 135-50. Basel: Schwabe, 2004.
- Roditi, Edouard. “T.S. Eliot: Persönlichkeit und Werk.” *Der Monat* (1948): 49-63.

- Rota, Andrea. "Victor Klemperer: LTI (1947)." In *Handbuch Nachkriegskultur: Literatur, Sachbuch und Film in Deutschland (1945-1962)*, edited by Elena Agazzi and Erhard H. Schütz, 304-06. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013.
- Rüttinger, Denise. *Schreiben ein Leben lang: die Tagebücher des Victor Klemperer*. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2011.
- Sabrow, Martin, and Norbert Frei. *Die Geburt des Zeitzeugen nach 1945*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012.
- Safranski, Rüdiger. *Romantik: eine deutsche Affäre*. München: Hanser, 2007.
- Saint-Amour, Paul K. "Air War Prophecy and Interwar Modernism." *Comparative Literature Studies* 42, no. 2 (2005): 130-61.
- Saner, Hans. "Denkbilder im Spannungsfeld von Einsamkeit und Kommunikation. Zu den Metaphern des Philosophierens bei Karl Jaspers, Hannah Arendt und Martin Heidegger." In *Einsamkeit, Kommunikation, Öffentlichkeit*, edited by Anton Hügli and Stiftung Karl Jaspers, 51-70. Basel: Schwabe, 2004.
- Schäfer, Hans Dieter. "Horst Langes Tagebücher 1939-1945." In *Tagebücher aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, edited by Hans Dieter Schäfer. Mainz: v. Hase & Koehler Verlag, 1979.
- Scherpe, Klaus R. *Die rekonstruierte Moderne: Studien zur deutschen Literatur nach 1945*. Köln; Weimar; Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1992.
- , ed. *In Deutschland unterwegs: Reportagen, Skizzen, Berichte, 1945-1948*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1982.
- . "Literary Détente: Wolfgang Koeppen's Cold War Travels." *New German Critique* 37, no. 2 (2010): 95-106.
- Schmidt, Arno. "Aus dem Leben eines Fauns." In *Bargfelder Ausgabe, Werkgruppe I*. Zürich: Haffmanns Verlag, 1987.
- . "Berechnungen." In *Bargfelder Ausgabe der Werke Arno Schmidts*, 101-06. Zürich: Haffmanns Verlag, 1987.
- . "Berechnungen I." In *Bargfelder Ausgabe der Werke Arno Schmidts* 163-68. Zürich: Haffmanns Verlag, 1987.
- . "Eines Hähers: 'TUÉ!' und 1014 fallend." In *Das Tagebuch und der moderne Autor*, edited by Uwe Schultz and Günther Anders, 129 S. Frankfurt am Main; Berlin: Ullstein, 1982.
- . *Nobodaddy's Children*. Translated by John E. Woods. Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1995.
- Schmidt, Alice. *Tagebuch aus dem Jahr 1954*. Edited by Susanne Fischer. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2004.
- Schnurre, Wolfdietrich. *Rettung des deutschen Films. Eine Streitschrift*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1950.

- Schönfeld, Christiane. "Being Human: Good Germans in Postwar German Film." In *Representing the "Good German" in Literature and Culture after 1945: Altruism and Moral Ambiguity*, edited by Pól Ó Dochartaigh and Christiane Schönfeld, 111-37. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2013.
- Schrödinger, Erwin. *What is Life?: The Physical Aspect of the Living Cell*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944.
- Schuchalter, Jerry. *Poetry and Truth: Variations on Holocaust Testimony*. Oxford; New York: Peter Lang, 2009.
- Schulte-Sasse, Linda. *Entertaining the Third Reich: Illusions of Wholeness in Nazi Cinema*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Schumacher, Helmut, and Dorsch Klaus J. A. *Paul Weber : Leben und Werk in Texten und Bildern*. Hamburg: Mittler, 2003.
- Schwier, Heinrich. *Niemand: ein kommentierendes Handbuch zu Arno Schmidts "Schwarze Spiegel."* München: Ed. Text + Kritik, 2009.
- Scott, Joan W. "The Evidence of Experience." *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 773-97.
- Semmler, Rudolf. *Goebbels - The Man Next to Hitler*. London: Westhouse, 1947.
- Sepp, Arvi. "Die Politik des Erinnerns. Aktuelle Anmerkungen zur autobiografischen Zeitzeugenschaft in den Tagebüchern Victor Klemperers." In *Literatur im Krebsgang: Totenbeschwörung und Memoria in der deutschsprachigen Literatur nach 1989*, edited by Arne De Winde and Anke Gilleir, 77-92. New York; Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008.
- Shandley, Robert R. *Rubble Films: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001.
- Sherman, Stuart. *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and English Diurnal Form, 1660-1785*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Simmel, Georg. "Die Ruine." In *Philosophische Kultur. Über das Abenteuer, die Geschlechter und die Krise der Moderne. Gesammelte Essays*, edited by Jürgen Habermas. Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 1983 [1923].
- Sinor, Jennifer. "Reading the Ordinary Diary." *Rhetoric Review* 21, no. 2 (2002): 123-49.
- Smith, Sidonie, and Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.
- Sommer, Andreas Urs, Dagmar Winter, and Miguel Skirl. *Die Hortung: eine Philosophie des Sammelns*. Düsseldorf: Parerga, 2000.
- Speer, Albert. *Erinnerungen*. Berlin; Frankfurt am Main: Propyläen Verlag; Ullstein, 1969.
- . *Neue deutsche Baukunst*. Prag; Amsterdam: Volk und Reich Verlag, 1943.
- Stein, Gertrude. "'Off We All Went to See Germany': Germans Should Learn to Be Disobedient and GIs Should Not Like Them No They Shouldn't." *LIFE*, 6 August 1945, 54-58.

- Stiftel, Ralf. *Die Rezensenten und Arno Schmidt*. Frankfurt am Main: Bangert & Metzler, Buchhändler, 1996.
- Suhrbier, Hartwig. *Zur Prosatheorie von Arno Schmidt*. München: Edition Text + Kritik, 1980.
- Swift, Simon. "Hannah Arendt's Tactlessness: Reading Eichmann in Jerusalem." *New Formations* 71 (2011): 79-94.
- Treichel, Hans-Ulrich. *Fragment ohne Ende: Eine Studie über Wolfgang Koeppen*. Heidelberg: Winter, 1984.
- , ed. *Wolfgang Koeppen. Einer der schreibt: Gespräche und Interviews*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995.
- Trumpener, Katie. "Diary of a Tightrope Walker: Victor Klemperer and His Posterity." *Modernism/modernity* 7, no. 3 (2000): 487-507.
- Uelzmann, Jan. "Consumption and Consummation: Domestic Tales of the Economic Miracle in Arno Schmidt's *Das steinerne Herz*." *German Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2013): 180-97.
- Vaget, Hans Rudolf. *Thomas Mann, der Amerikaner: Leben und Werk im amerikanischen Exil, 1938-1952*. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2011.
- Villa, Dana. "Introduction: the development of Arendt's political thought." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt*, edited by Dana Villa, 1-24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Vogel, Hans. *Die Ruine in der Darstellung der abendländischen Kunst*. Kassel: Karl Winter Verlag, 1948.
- Vollmer, Hartmut. "Glückseligkeiten letzter Menschen: Arno Schmidts 'Schwarze Spiegel'." In *Arno Schmidt. Das Frühwerk II*, edited by Michael Matthias Schardt, 55-98. Aachen: Alano Rader Verlag, 1987.
- Volney, C.F. *The Ruins, or, Meditation on the Revolutions of Empires: and the Law of Nature*. Edited by Peter Eckler. Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1991 [1791].
- von Moltke, Johannes. *No place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema*. University of California Press, 2005.
- . "Ruin Cinema." In *Ruins of Modernity*, edited by Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle, 395-417. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Walser, Martin. *Das Prinzip Genauigkeit: Laudatio auf Victor Klemperer*, Edition Suhrkamp. Sonderdruck. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996.
- Ward, Simon. "Wolfgang Koeppen and the Bridge of Memory." *German Life and Letters* 52, no. 1 (1999): 97-111.
- Warner, Ansgar. "*Kampf gegen Gespenster*." *Die Radio-Essays Wolfgang Koeppens und Arno Schmidts im Nachtprogramm des Süddeutschen Rundfunks als kritisches Gedächtnismedium*. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2007.

- Watt, Roderick H. ““Landsersprache, Heeressprache, Nazisprache?” Victor Klemperer and Werner Krauss on the Linguistic Legacy of the Third Reich.” *The Modern Language Review* 95, no. 2 (2000): 424-36.
- Weckel, Ulrike. *Beschämende Bilder: deutsche Reaktionen auf alliierte Dokumentarfilme über befreite Konzentrationslager*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012.
- Weisenborn, Günther. *Memorial*. Wien: K. Desch, 1959.
- Weyrauch, Wolfgang, ed. *Tausend Gramm. Sammlung neuer deutscher Geschichten*. Hamburg; Stuttgart; Baden-Baden; Berlin: Rowohlt Verlag, 1949.
- Wilms, Wilfried. “Rubble Without a Cause: The Air War in Postwar Film.” In *German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins*, edited by Wilfried Wilms and William Rasch, 27-44. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Wilms, Wilfried, and William Rasch. *German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Wuermeling, Henric L. *Die weiße Liste: Umbruch der politischen Kultur in Deutschland 1945*. Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1981.
- Wurm, Carsten. “Die Autobiographik.” In *Deutsche Erinnerung: Berliner Beiträge zur Prosa der Nachkriegsjahre (1945-1960)*, edited by Ursula Heukenkamp, 239-94. Berlin: E. Schmidt, 2000.
- Young, John Wesley. “From LTI to LQI: Victor Klemperer on Totalitarian Language.” *German Studies Review* 28, no. 1 (2005): 45-64.
- Young-Bruehl, Elisabeth. *Hannah Arendt, for love of the world*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.
- . “Origins of Totalitarianism.” In *A New History of German Literature*, edited by David E. Wellbery, Judith Ryan and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Zammito, John. “Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History.” *History and Theory* 43, no. 1 (2004): 124-35.
- Zehrer, Klaus Cäsar. “Aufklärungssatire versus Aufklärung: über Kabarett und Satire in der BRD.” In *Politisches Kabarett und Satire*, edited by Tobias Glodek, Christian Haberecht and Christoph v. Ungern-Sternberg, 82-112. Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2007.
- Zucker, Paul. “Ruins. An Aesthetic Hybrid.” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20, no. 2 (1961): 119-30.
- zur Nieden, Susanne. *Alltag im Ausnahmezustand: Frauentagebücher im zerstörten Deutschland, 1943 bis 1945*. Berlin: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1993.
- . “From the Forgotten Everyday Life of Tyranny: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer.” In *Marginal Voices, Marginal Forms: Diaries in European Literature and History*, edited by Rachael Langford and Russell West, 147-55. Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999.