Punk Avant-Gardes: Disengagement and the End of East Germany

by

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The *Ostpunk* Avant-Garde: a Cold War Culture

In 2005, an exhibition opened in the Prenzlauer Berg. Called *Ostpunk! too much future*, it

occupied three stories of an abandoned factory, and papered bare-brick walls and

utilitarian corridors with photographs, dioramas, and display cases. The exhibit's topic

was East German punk, and its curators offered an argument for East German punk's

idiosyncrasy in their exhibition catalog:

> Punk in West-Europa war ein popkulturelles Phänomen mit politischen Ursachen.
> Punk in der DDR dagegen war ein politisches Phänomen mit popkulturellem
> Hintergrund.[1]

The distinction depends upon the classification of Western European punk forms as

primarily *cultural,* rather than *political*. Playing a zero-sum theoretical game, Boehlke

and Gericke reconstrue *Westpunk* and *Ostpunk* as mirroring one another: similar, and

replete with analogous structures, but with the relationships of influence between their

corresponding parts (their political and their cultural tendencies) reversed. One punk was

concerned with "material shortfalls" and "elementary freedoms," while the other's

marginal "artistic reaction" targeted a "satiated consumer society." And for all that it

mobilizes pop-cultural elements, punk's East German iteration remains an essentially

"political phenomenon." For Boehlke and Gericke, the art/life boundary reasserts itself

through a comparison of Punk forms which hierarchizes as it divides. Though they

hesitate to deny Western punk all traces of its politicality—it does have "politische[]

Ursachen," just as East German punk has a "pop-cultural background"—a clear differentiation is made between the essentially political and the ephemerally pop-cultural. Case closed: Eastern punk differs from its Western forebear because its essence, not just its appearance, is political.

Where Boehlke and Gericke describe clear-cut differences between the political and the pop-cultural, between Western and Eastern punk forms, this dissertation instead identifies ambiguities. Unsatisfied with the conclusion that punk constituted a political problem for its various East German audiences—since staggering arrest records, intensive surveillance efforts, and ten years of Stasi punk theory confirm that it did—this project instead aims to investigate *how* this came to be. At stake in such an investigation are two simple questions: how was punk culture transferred across the most heavily policed border in the world, and why was it held to pose such a threat to the civic and symbolic order of East Germany?

Pragmatically speaking, such questions are easily answered. The avenues of punk's transfer across borders were manifold, but certainly finite. Radio broadcasts of syndicated BBC programming by RIAS, and radio content originating in West Germany, entered East German households in the same way that other content on so-called *Westradio* and *Westfernsehen* did: over the air waves. Circulating tape recordings, press clippings, and self-published fanzines amongst themselves, hundreds of East German youths struck by their initial encounters with Western (and West German) punk music and fashion constituted ad hoc circles of those in the know. These individuals frequently adopted the requisite style of dress, Anglicisms, and musical sensibilities to go along with their pursuit of new recorded, sewn, or written punk materials.[2] Beyond this, they

organized concerts under the aegis of the Evangelical churches' open youth work, or

offene Jugendarbeit, whose foundational tenets provided performance or meeting spaces

and other resources to young East Germans who couldn't access them through the usual

channels of school clubs, mass organizations, or workplace associations.[3]

This dissertation holds that the two questions have one answer. Punk's

transferability to cultural contexts on both sides of the Iron Curtain *and* its outsized

impact on aesthetics and culture policy in both East and West Germany resulted from

punk's inheritance and reauthorization of a central cultural problem: the unresolved

legacy of the avant-garde. As a culture of the Cold War, punk revivified debates about

art, life, politics, and the avant-garde by serving as the center of a transnational debate

about punk's meaning as a youth culture. At the same time, by drawing upon some avant-

garde practices and rejecting others, punks refused to entirely inherit, or entirely reject,

the avant-garde tradition through which punk's critics frequently sought to understand it.

This dissertation shows that examining the punk phenomenon raises pressing questions

about the political meaning of aesthetics, and in particular of the avant-garde, in Cold

War Europe. Furthermore, such an examination prompts us to rethink our long-held

notions about the impermeability of the Cold War's constitutive boundary, the German-

German border, and to re-consider the geopolitical division of Germany as it was

transgressed and reimagined by punk's socially marginal, but symbolically powerful

protagonists.

Punk Avant-Gardes

As early as 1978, punk's first scholarly interlocutor, Dick Hebdige, linked punk's cut-up aesthetic and "profane and terminal" representational rationale to the techniques of the classical avant-gardes. Hebdige's work, which was rooted in that of the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies, developed a semiotics of working-class youth subcultures that drew in equal measure on Gramscian analyses of hegemony and the high-structuralist Barthes of *Elements of Semiology*. In the history of subcultural signification which Hebdige and his Birmingham colleagues had to offer, postwar youth subcultures drew upon the recontextualization and creative assembly of sartorial elements past and present in order to fashion themselves for one another and their elders. For this analysis, social class—crosscut by racial, ethnic, and geographic affiliations—provides the primary category of affiliation and distinction in play when it comes to subcultural meaning-making. For Hebdige, punks—who sat at the end of a long trajectory of subcultural history—had some tactics in common with the avant-garde, and may even have shared some art-school bonafides with neo-avant-garde practitioners in the art schools and studios of creative England, but were far more the product of a long-ongoing articulation and contestation of barriers between social classes than the inheritors of a rarified, "high"-artistic tradition like the avant-garde.

Tricia Henry's *Break All Rules!*, offered a similar analysis of punk's representational strategies. She, too, remains skeptical of punk's avant-garde imprimatur, and ultimately pessimistic about its broader transformative ambit. Henry does compare punk rhetoric to Dada, Constructivist, and Futurist modes of expression, emphasizing the work of recontextualization that is in play. And she notes that while "none of these [punk] writers or artists elaborate on the connection between punk and the avant-garde,

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certain relationships are clear."[4] But she does not develop these analogies into a full-fledged account of punk's direct relationship to the avant-garde. In fact, after observing that a lack of clarity on this point exists within punk texts themselves, she declares that punk cannot be considered an avant-garde practice:

> [w]hile punk shares many revolutionary tactics with the avant-garde, and in some cases expresses a conscious alliance with it, it is categorically distinct. [...] Punk did not set out to instigate an interdisciplinary artistic movement. The historical avant-garde, on the other hand, is defined in part by its interest in establishing an interdisciplinary approach to art.[5]

I do not find this conclusion convincing. Invoking intentionality ("did not set out to instigate") to distinguish punk from previous avant-gardes, Henry denies punk the character of an interdisciplinary movement on the basis of an imputed motive—an assessment at odds with her otherwise compelling genealogy of punk style. This disconnect persists throughout Henry's book. In her introduction, she admits that "despite the varying styles involved [with punk, surrealism, and dada], they all have one thing in common: they put familiar objects into unfamiliar relationships, changing meaning by shifting context."[6] And in a previous essay, she explicitly compares certain punk gestures—notably, the scream—to the techniques of the German expressionists.[7] Despite this diagnosis of a poetological affinity, Henry ascribes the two a different essence, or *raison d'etre*: "While the primary concern of the avant-garde is artistic rebellion, the primary concern of punk, like other youth subcultures (teds, mods, greasers, hippies, etc.) is social rebellion." Even more plainly, "Though the two concerns are closely intertwined and often inseparable, the avant-garde is most self-consciously artistic, while punk is most self-consciously proletariat."[8] This distinction also relies on the imputation of intention. Though she acknowledges that both the artistic and the class-political

imperative may be present in one punk subject, or one punk utterance, for Henry, the distinction is sufficiently clear to separate punk from the avant-garde.

Other commentators are of a different mind about punk's relationship to the avant-garde. For example, *Please Kill Me*, Legs McNeil's and Gillian McCain's landmark oral history of punk, stocks its "prologue" with testimony from members of Andy Warhol's factory social circle, and from members of the Velvet Underground.[9] Similarly, Dick Hebdige emphasizes the personal relationships some early punks (and pre-punk artists who served as advisors, producers, and musical or sartorial inspiration for self-identifying punks) had to the avant-garde art of their day:

> David Bowie and the New York punk bands had pieced together from a variety of acknowledged "artistic" sources—from the literary avant-garde and the underground cinema—a self-consciously profane and terminal aesthetic. Patti Smith, an American punk and ex-art student, claimed to have invented a new form, 'rock poetry', and incorporated readings from Rimbaud and William Burroughs into her act.[10]

Using personal connections and autobiographical details—and particularly art-school training—to highlight the relationships early punks had to practitioners of avant-garde art, Hebdige documents a relationship between self-identifying punks and the institutions and individuals who carried the avant-garde torch. Connections are therefore made at the level of representational technique and compositional practice which are not far off from Henry's identification of an Expressionist element to punks' self-display. Avant-gardes past, avant-gardes present—punk shared its history and its forms with both, and sometimes even shared the same spaces.

Punk Avant-Gardes and Taste

Though Tricia Henry and Dick Hebdige acknowledged technical affinities, and argue for some shared influences, their accounts of punk's relationship to the avant-garde hesitate to theorize punk *as* an avant-garde. Furthermore, each is reluctant to devote extensive time to the analysis of punk forms as avant-garde forms in an art-historical, rather than loosely class-antagonistic context. Henry's disinterest in punk's intermediality has already been identified as a shortcoming of her otherwise insightful volume. Along with her bifurcation of punk's and avant-gardes' ambitions as proletarian and artistic, respectively, this disinterest is a primary reason that her focus on punk's social situation as an avant-garde practice (or set of practices) is minimal.

A number of more wide-ranging criticisms have been raised in the years since *Subculture*'s publication in 1979. More recent reflections on the state of the discipline of punk theory have attempted to revise Hebdige's work for use by scholarship after the postmodern turn, eschewing what has been diagnosed as Hebdige's and the Birmingham model's Marxist mechanicism and structuralist approach. Even Dylan Clark, for whom punk exists in the present tense as it "articulate[s] a social form that anticipates and outmanoeuvres the dominance of corporate capitalism," suggests that "Dick Hebdige's ... 'communication of a significant *difference*' can no longer serve as a cornerstone in the masonry of subcultural identity."[11] Clark makes this a historical point, rather than a methodological one. But it captures a widespread belief, in the field of punk studies and subculture theory, in the increasing inadequacy of semiotic explanations of punk. And where Clark grants that "'subculture has in many ways become incorporated as a set trope of the culture industries which retail entertainment, clothing, and other commodities,"[12] a state of affairs with implications for both participants in subcultures

and those who study them, others go much further in their calls for an overhaul of the way in which punk culture is approached.

Geoff Stahl, writing in *In/Visible Culture*, proposes that subculture studies of the kind undertaken by Hebdige, Stuart Hall, and their Birmingham contemporaries tend, by privileging the category of class and emphasizing the conflictuality of signification, to "essentialize" subcultures. Eschewing the margin-vs-mainstream stability that the category of social class afforded the Birmingham scholars, Stahl adopts an alternative model which draws on the work of Pierre Bourdieu for its vocabulary:

> Tastes, alongside dispositions, preferences and affinities, all systems of classification and organization, are terms used throughout to denote social activities and attitudes that influence as much as they are influenced by the spaces where they reside. They suggest a rhetorical move away from rigidly vertical models that rely upon universals such as class and enable a nuanced examination of individual identity and group dynamics and how they are articulated (often unevenly) to large scale cultural arenas.[13]

For the purpose of situating subcultural practices within political, cultural, and economic contexts which are increasingly theorized as post-national, post-modernist, and globalized, such a taste-based model makes a lot of sense. In the introduction to *Distinction*, Bourdieu already made the case quite ably:

> Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed.[14]

Birmingham's antagonism between classes becomes, in a subcultural theory based on the principles of taste, a distinction between groups. To be sure, Bourdieu himself implicitly reintroduces the category of class as an outcome of the formation of aesthetic taste, contending that "art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences."[15] And

classes both dominant and subordinate populate the readings on offer in *Distinction*. But here, social distinction emerges as a coefficient of aesthetic judgment—not, as Birmingham's critics would suggest is the case for the subcultural theory of the 1970s, a stable and unchanging state of affairs which impinges upon all productions and valuations of culture and is unchanged by them.

While I am unsure that the Birmingham approach is either as staid or unyielding as its more recent critics have suggested it is, my analysis of punk in East Germany draws inspiration from Bourdieu's consideration of taste in two important ways. First, I agree wholeheartedly that distinctions between the "autonomous" art Bourdieu calls sacred, or sacralized art, and quotidian culture are frequently complicit in the division of people into groups of the cultured and the uncultured. Secondly I agree with his assessment, which has much in common with the conclusions drawn by many theorists of the avant-garde, that "the avant-garde defined itself in a quasi-negative way, as the sum of the refusals of all socially recognized tastes."[16] The production of taste doubles as the production of the tasteful; within this constellation of critical judgments and their social impacts, protagonists of avant-garde culture produce culture which is precisely calibrated to disrupt, displace, invert, reimagine, or bracket paradigms of taste as they exist and produce distinctions between the sacred and the profane, the sublime and the quotidian.

When I conduct my analyses of punk in this dissertation, I rely on historically contextualized close readings of individual texts, and in some cases on readings of their reception as inarticulate or vulgar, in order to discern where punk was situated in the East German public sphere and in its public spaces. By conducting close readings, I look to develop an account of the poetics of punk's challenge, rather than a sociology of punk's

emergence.[17] My approach is therefore distinct from Bourdieu's more broadly-sourced, diachronic, and macropolitical approach to thinking about the politics of culture—just as it is distinct from that analytic method which is offered by either the Birmingham scholars or their Bourdieu-influenced critics. However, my own thinking about East Germany's cultures of aesthetic judgment, about its creation and perpetuation of social distinctions in the forty-year process of articulating and refining the norms of an ideal working-class culture, and about its punks owes a debt to Bourdieu's insistence upon the imbrication of aesthetic categorizations with social ones.

Recent books published in the field of GDR studies, like Laura Bradley's *Cooperation and Conflict*[18] or Mark Fenemore's *Sex, Thugs, and Rock 'n' Roll*,[19] have drawn upon Bourdieu's analytic categories to explain social distinction and cultural production in East Germany. These books work carefully to avoid adapting Bourdieu's categories *tout court*, and take stock of the differences between their own results or conclusions and Bourdieu's. This makes sense, as Bourdieu himself cautioned that the East German context was quite differently constituted from the French one which formed the basis for *Distinction*. In a lecture entitled "The 'Soviet' Variant and Political Capital," Bourdieu proposed that political capital and academic capital, rather than economic and cultural capital, were counterposed to one another in the East German case. Indeed, a "specifically political capital of the Soviet type...would no doubt enable us to conduct a representation of social space capable of accounting for the distribution of powers and privileges, as well as of lifestyles." Of pressing relevance for the case of East German *punk*, though, is Bourdieu's observation that

> in order to account for the particularity of the German case, notably the somewhat gray and uniform tone of its forms of public sociability, one should take into

account not the Puritan tradition so much as the fact that the categories capable of furnishing cultural models have been depleted by emigration and especially by the political and moral control which, because of the egalitarian pretensions of the regime, is exerted on external representations of difference.[20]

The development of new or modified Bourdieusian analytic categories to fit the East German context is not my goal, here; such an endeavor lies outside the scope of this project. However, Bourdieu's attention to the competition for primacy between holders of different kinds of capital does provide, at a high level of abstraction, a point of departure for the kinds of formal analysis I perform in this contribution. As a result, we might continue his line of inquiry after all. Decisions of distinction were made about punk as a function of evolving practices of criticism, censorship, and policework. By paying attention to how these decisions were articulated, by whom, and how punks both predicted and responded to them, we might arrive at a provisional understanding of the mechanics of what Bourdieu calls the political and moral control exerted on external representations of difference.

Formal Properties of Punk

Though my analysis illuminates broader patterns of tolerance and censure in East German culture policy, and reconstructs conflicts between holders of political and cultural capital, these "external representations of difference" form the starting point for my analysis. Greil Marcus has paid attention to the formal properties of punk, and insisted upon punk aesthetics' constitution of, and constitution by, the social milieux of the US and UK in the late 1970s. *In Lipstick Traces: a Secret History of the 20th Century*, he declares that the Sex Pistols' 1976 single "Anarchy in the U.K."

> distilled, in crudely poetic form, a critique of modern society once set out by a small group of Paris-based intellectuals. First organized in 1952 as the Lettrist

International, and refounded in 1957 at a conference of European avant-garde artists as the Situationist International, the group gained its greatest notoriety during the French revolt of May 1968, when the premises of its critique were distilled into crudely poetic slogans and spray-painted across the walls of Paris, after which the critique was given up to history and the groups disappeared. The group looked back to the surrealists of the 1920s, the dadaists who made their names during and just after the First World War, the young Karl Marx, Saint-Just, various medieval heretics, and the Knights of the Round Table.[21]

Marcus correctly points out that he is not the first to make this connection. In fact, punks themselves, and their first critics in newspapers, trade magazines, and editorial columns, acknowledged the intellectual bequest of the avant-gardes. But if those critics, and subsequent commentators like Hebdige and Henry, identify avant-garde textures without going so far as to admit that punk might be avant-garde, Marcus dispenses with caution and aligns punk, as a *project* rather than ensemble of strategies, with the avant-garde, Marxism, and heresy. Working historically in the grandest of fashions, Marcus situates punk at the end of a trajectory of influence which makes punk the guarantor and heir to critical traditions predating mass media, capitalist organization, and moveable type. And if Henry and Hebdige hedge about intention, Marcus sketches a critical, truth-to-power-speaking ambition for punk whose target is as large as modernity itself. Quoting Lefebvre, Marcus imagines punk as a revitalization of the classical avant-gardes' radical critique: "'to the degree that modernity has a meaning, it is this: it carries within itself, from the beginning, a radical negation—Dada, this event which took place in a Zurich cafe.'"[22]

Hebdige and Henry identify points of tactical contact between punk and the avant-gardes, suggesting a genealogical connection or relationship of influence. Marcus suggests that punk and the 20th-century avant-gardes share a common ambition: the restructuring of the world and the destruction or reorganization of the means of

production of culture. Specifically, Marcus ties punk's iconoclasm to its destabilization

of institutions: of the recording and fashion industries, of the historiography and genre

theory of rock, of the consumer culture that buttressed the advanced capitalist

organization of everyday life into the distinct, mutually supportive spheres of work and

leisure. Thus,

> the way in which punk sound did not make musical sense made social sense: in a
> few short months, punk came together as a new set of visual and verbal signs,
> signs that were both opaque and revelatory, depending on who was looking. By
> its very unnaturalness, its insistence that a situation could be constructed and then,
> as an artifice, escaped—the graffiti now creeping up from wrecked clothes onto
> faces, into slashed, dyed hair and across holes in the hair that went into the
> skull—punk made ordinary social life seem like a trick, the result of
> sadomasochistic economics.[23]

With this formulation, Marcus lays all his analytic cards on the table. His most basic

assessment of punk critique relies entirely on the vocabulary of critical theory, and his

book is peppered with references to the Frankfurt School and to Adorno's theories of

mass culture and consumption: "in a way, punk was most easily recognizable as a new

version of the old Frankfurt School critique of mass culture . . . the old critique of mass

culture now paraded as mass culture, at the last as protean, would-be mass culture." And

in his excursus on punk as an avant-garde, ambition is critical: "if punk was a secret

society, the goal of every secret society is to take over the world."[24]

With the metaphor of a secret society, Marcus remobilizes the martial vocabulary

with which avant-garde practices have been theorized, in both the Anglo-American

context and the German, since their very inception. What Lenin himself adopted as the

cornerstone of his organizational theory—the repositioning of the military vanguard

within his ontology of class struggle as the small organizing force which would galvanize

broader revolutionary practice[25]—became, for theories of avant-garde art, a cognate

theory. As in Leninist revolutionary theory, what was at stake for the avant-gardes and

their early theorists, who frequently numbered among their practitioners as well, was the

transformation of a broader state of affairs (in this case, of the institution of art and its

position in capitalist political economy) through the intervention of a small, forward-

thinking group—a secret society. And though Renato Poggioli rightly points out that the

concept of an artistic *avant-garde* actually predated Lenin's work with the concept in the

political sphere, Matei Calinescu suggests that "the avant-garde, seen as a spearhead of

aesthetic modernity at large, is a recent reality, like the word that, in its cultural meaning,

is supposed to designate it."[26] In this view, avant-gardes and the theories springing up to

account for them are coeval—both products of a specific set of institutional

circumstances, and of a specific time and place in the history of Western art.

To summarize: three theorists of the avant-garde—Poggioli, Calinescu, and Peter

Bürger—have offered monograph-length accounts of its development and significance as

a property of critical discourse. And for all three, the historical avant-gardes represented,

with their negationist stances and their appropriating, inverting, vulgarizing, or

reimagining of current styles, a series of attempts to overwhelm or suspend the

(bourgeois) norms separating the production and consumption of art from the rest of life

as semi-autonomous activities.

More generally, Calinescu suggests, avant-gardes of all periods implicated

themselves in processes of renewal or progressive transformation. Avant-garde thinkers

understood themselves to be "ahead of their time," and positioned themselves in

opposition, in the present day, to "forces of stagnation, the tyranny of the past . . . [and]

old forms and ways of thinking."[27] In a word, avant-gardes are unorthodox. And on this

point, Peter Bürger agrees. Contrasting aestheticist (putatively autonomous) art with avant-garde artistic practice, he suggests that the protagonists of avant-garde forms in the early 20th century sought to "eliminate art as an institution," and by doing so, to strike a blow against the quietist consequences of art's institutionalized status.[xxviii]

This is not the only point on which Bürger and Calinescu agree. Each theorist considers at length avant-gardes' own institutionalization by precisely those market forces and autonomizing practices against which they positioned themselves from the outset. Given the classical avant-gardes' largely positive critical and museal reception, Bürger argues that avant-garde "provocation cannot be repeated indefinitely."[xxix] Less pessimistically, Calinescu concludes that in the 1960s, the very concept of the avant-garde faced a crisis whose origins could be traced to the tendency to self-abnegation contained within every avant-gardiste gesture as a part of its very theoretical structure.[xxx] As Hal Foster would later put it, for both critics, and many other theorists, the avant-garde, as a phenomenon was both "punctual and final."[xxxi] Over time, its impact is lost, as its stylistic innovations and rearrangement of viewer/subject dynamics become familiar elements of aesthetic experience, and the assault which avant-gardes initially mount on the standards and practices of non-avant-garde art are incorporated by an adaptable marketing culture as new techniques by which artworks (and products) can distinguish themselves from one another in a market context.

Building upon these theorists' accounts of the avant-garde's inefficacy as time wore on, but speaking specifically about the punk case, Marcus also concedes the increasing numbness that greets even the most radical moves: "Today, after more than a decade of punk style, when a purple and green Mohawk on the head of a suburban

American teenager only begs the question of how early he or she has to get up to fix his or her hair in time for school, it's hard to remember just how ugly the first punks were."[32]

Hebdige, Henry, Marcus, Bürger, Calinescu, and Poggioli therefore all admit that punk's story has a clear lesson: radical representational techniques cannot remain radical forever. Marcus comes closest to ascribing punk a continued disruptive force and critical power, but even his analysis presents punk's negationist intervention as fleeting moments and provisional performative *tableaux*, identifying post-punk *traces* rather than offering a clear account of the institutional changes actually wrought. Nevertheless, unlike Henry and Hebdige, Marcus insists on describing punk's avant-garde inheritance in essential, rather than ornamental terms. By doing so, he adds a consideration of punk's critical force and art-historical status to a docket filled with considerations of its efficacy as a means by which working-class kids distinguished themselves from their parents, and made themselves legible to one another.

Some conclusions can now be offered about punk in its relationship to the historical avant-gardes and the theoretical accounts that have been developed of them. Within the Anglo-American context where Henry and Hebdige largely conduct their readings of avant-gardiste punk techniques, ongoing debates about high culture (autonomous art) and low culture (cultural products fit for mass consumption), and about the blurring of boundaries between them, characterized then-contemporary studies of avant-gardes after the war. Similarly, the historically-minded theoretical work of Bürger and Calinescu, the deep skepticism with which it regards postwar avant-garde forms— has much in common with 1970s and 1980s discussions of postmodernist aesthetics

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which paid special attention to the collapsing of aesthetic categories, the blurring of genres and styles, and the erasure of distinguishing criteria in the face of Pop Art, architectural postmodernism, and postmodernist poetry and prose.[33]

Expanding the scope of art criticism in this way has its advantages. But by subsuming specific avant-garde practices and their history under broader historiographies of advanced capitalist accumulation (Jameson), or the transition to decentralized urbanism (Mike Davis), or the development of new, post-positivist and post-modernist modes of experience and knowledge (Lyotard), one loses the specific historical horizon which avant-garde practices initially had. To be sure, these theories do recognize the historical avant-gardes' responsiveness to crises which transcended the borders of artistic production: the deformation of subjectivity and experience, the instrumentalization of artistic autonomy. But in theorizing the neo-avant-gardes of the mid-20th century at a sufficiently high level of remove so as to be able to perceive a trans-bloc process of postmodernization, one frequently loses sight of the postwar avant-gardes' specific art-historical and political contexts. Accordingly, the global or general thinker surrenders to abstraction a vital element of many postwar avant-gardes' poetics: their thematization of the horrors of the Second World War and the ongoing division of the world into two camps. This certainly was true throughout Europe, where as early as 1946, postwar avant-gardes struggled with the emergent geopolitics of the Cold War. And it was truer in Germany than anywhere else. If *German* punk was an avant-garde—and Marcus is right: it was—then it took shape under political, economic, and art-historical circumstances which conditioned its reception as an avant-garde practice.

The Avant-Garde and Punk in Germany, East and West

If considerations of punk's development in the Anglo-American context have largely been of two minds about its avant-garde bona fides, the issue takes on a different complexion when it comes to Germany, where direct competition by two mass media public spheres for the attention of a single Germanophone (pan-German) audience exerted enormous pressure on producers and theorists of art, and burdened questions of aesthetic form or style with explicit political significance. Despite the avant-gardes' longstanding importance for German art and letters, and their predominance in inter-War debates about aesthetics, both German states struggled to incorporate emergent postwar avant-gardes into their respective (national) public spheres. Furthermore, the *classical* avant-gardes' art-historical and political importance continued to be hotly debated, in both German zones of occupation and throughout Western and Eastern Europe, until well into the 1980s.[34] Thus neither "avant-garde" problem—the valuation of emerging postwar avant-garde forms, or the interpretation of the legacy of the classical avant-gardes—was an exclusively German issue.[35]

But the avant-garde's history as a topic for Germanophone cultural criticism, combined with Germany's unique jurisprudential role within postwar Europe as the Second World War's aggressor state, made the two Germanies' incorporation of the historical and postwar avant-gardes into their emerging (and, to a certain extent, shared) public spheres a unique case within a broader pattern of analogous processes. As Richard Langston has written, "while the history of Nazism was a uniquely German burden in the second half of the twentieth century, the ways in which the Federal Republic's avant-gardes intervened in postwar modernity's push away from the past was not."[36]

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Langston's work focuses on the Federal Republic of Germany, and therefore also on the difficulties presented (and faced) by the West German postwar avant-gardes as they re-deployed "violent" aesthetic principles drawn from their pre-war forebears in a new, post-fascist context. But the specifically German aspects of the avant-garde's legacy factored into the complicated reception which the pre- and postwar avant-gardes received in the GDR as well.[37] In East and West, the avant-garde retained the status of an unresolved critical and theoretical problem for thinkers, and did so well into the 1970s. The legacy and future of the avant-garde had great significance for conceptions of aesthetic life in postwar Germany. Given the divergence of Eastern and Western viewpoints on questions of form and aesthetic partisanship,[38] when punk made its first appearances around 1976, it impacted the Germanophone public spheres very differently from the way it had those of Britain and the United States.

Punk was hotly debated in the pages of West German weeklies and newspapers, and considered in East German publications as diverse as the *neues Leben* and the *Weltbühne.* (The dissertation's first chapter traces this reception.) But as had been the case with the classical avant-gardes of the pre- and inter-War periods, initial expressions of shock gave way to dismissive treatments of punk's aesthetic transience and political incoherence, and to triumphal predictions of punk's absorption into multi-national label conglomerates' repertoires, with the inevitable citation of commercial viability as proof positive of punk's having been inauthentic and insincere from the start. According to these accounts, from its very inception, punk's rhetorical and political incoherence corresponded directly to the inarticulateness of its most visible protagonists, and its cooptation by the fashion and record industries was a function of its political impotence,

rather than a cause of it. Like the avant-gardes and neo-avant-gardes before it, punk had been born dead.

Many commentators in both East and West Germany reduced punk's critical and cultural significance by emphasizing its fleeting prominence, theoretical contradictions, and supposed cooptation—a strategy also central to the theories of the avant-garde in circulation in Europe and the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite this, many West German interpreters of punk contextualized their analyses within broader debates about the meaning of the avant-garde in either German national culture. Indeed, punk's place within art and within culture was debated in every article written about punk in West Germany, and in every measure taken to understand or (later) to combat it. Situating punk's appearance in the West German media against the historical backdrop of the German Autumn and its violent polarization of generations, he writes that "Punk did not want an anti-fascist position. It wanted positions that had nothing to do with fascism." Separating punk's aesthetic innovations from its status as a class-political or subcultural phenomenon in a manner directly at odds with Henry's approach, Shahan's project explores how "punk injected aesthetic volatility, chaos, into the theoretical-political projects of students and the exclusively violent political project of German terrorism by continuously scrambling these bits of cultural representation."[39] Shahan ventriloquizes for punk an explicitly avant-garde sensibility. Its recombination of elements of political debate and pop culture was an intervention into debates about German history after fascism, even if West German punks refused to make punk a vehicle for expressing specific, determinate political ideas.

Such was punk's reception in the German Autumn. Shahan's contribution is

important because it shows how refusing to adopt an explicit, programmatic political positionality inured West German punks from being included in, and being co-opted or defeated with, the then-sputtering radicalism and social agendas of the post-1968 moment. Tracing West German punk's textual afterlife, Shahan shows how punk's non-interventionist chaos left a lasting art-historical impact in West German writing. His analysis offers an important alternative to popular histories of punk which reproduce the *punctual and final* thesis and explain how the *Neue Deutsche Welle* divided and conquered West German punk's musical productivity by dividing the salable bands from those who couldn't be marketed, pushing some to the margins while bringing others to the fore.

In contrast, the German Democratic Republic did not have a market economy. East German punk, the subject of this dissertation, emerged in a place where print and broadcast public spheres were heavily impacted by a culture of self-censorship or prior restraint. Furthermore, access to the means of producing media—books, tapes, records—could only be achieved through direct interaction with culture politicians who judged the acceptability of content and form by consulting dicta established at the highest levels of government, and shaped in accordance with those larger social transformative processes administered by the East German state, under Soviet mandate. Punk's entrance into East Germany therefore placed it within a media landscape, and an art-historical context, radically different from any found in the West. And for punk, the radical difference of the East German art-historical context was most obvious in the secondary, nigh-suppressed status held by the avant-garde. Drawing upon Lukács's lionization of realist representation, East German culture politicians had developed a proletarian aesthetic that

would, in their estimations following Lenin, serve as the proverbial cog in the machine of progress. But in doing so, they appropriated the transformative ambitions held by practitioners and theorists of the classical avant-garde, describing their emergent concept of partisan art in terms of a vanguardist practice. In the militarized language of Socialist Construction, the vanguard and the avant-garde worked in close proximity within a normative, prescriptive aesthetic. This aesthetic was as explicitly and programmatically political as it was formally staid and evacuated of the experimentalism (decried as formalism) which had, in criticism and theory since the advent of self-identifying avant-gardes, come to define the movements. Proscribing the excesses of form, outbursts of violent speech and representation, and eclecticism which had been the hallmark of the historical avant-gardes, East Germany's culture policy nevertheless ascribed to East German culture a transformative mandate whose conception relied, at least in part, on an ontology of art's social status and social obligation which the historical avant-gardes had developed in the first place.

In the West, the narrativization of avant-gardiste praxis as eminently co-optable and susceptible to market forces could marginalize a punk avant-garde as easily as it did any other. But this dissertation is concerned with what transpired in a public sphere where an idiosyncratic definition of all East German culture as representing the *true* political-aesthetic vanguard governed all artistic production. East German punks' forging of explicit links between themselves and their peers across the Wall, with non-punk avant-garde artists and writers in East Germany, and with the protagonists of the classical avant-gardes did not occur in a public sphere where marketability and the lowest common denominator were the other terms against which punk positioned itself. Rather,

in the East punk posed its challenge to a literary and artistic culture that understood *itself* as an avant-garde. This dissertation theorizes punk as an avant-garde problem for a dominant culture whose gatekeepers had seized the category of the avant-garde for themselves. Such theorization breaks new ground in the study of punk's avant-garde status by examining a limit-case, where traditional roles were reversed, and all our analytic categories need thoroughgoing examination.

Procedure of the Argument

This dissertation argues that East German punk drew on German and European avant-garde forms to develop an *aesthetics of disengagement* that was radically at odds with other postwar art forms and theories of art. As the Cold War's borderlines solidified from the 1940s into the 1970s, critical debates in divided Germany and throughout Europe focused upon questions of aesthetic *engagement*—the artistic taking of sides in the context of bloc-against-bloc antagonism, and culture's potential to intervene in the geopolitics of mutually assured destruction. Against these transnational debates and the artistic norms they produced, punks throughout Europe developed *disengaged* representational strategies which resisted the very terms of authorial partisanship laid out for Cold War culture. This dissertation conducts theoretically informed close readings of punk texts in a variety of visual, print, and aural media. Drawing extensively on original archival documents, it augments these readings by reconstructing how East German cultural critics, social theorists, and intellectuals of the Stasi responded to punk—whether in public, in published articles, or in the privacy of classified memoranda. "Punk Avant-Gardes" shows how punks remobilized tactics and textures used by the historical avant-

gardes in East and West—*detournement*, ambiguity, inversion, vulgarity—strategies from the very same cultural formations whose innovations (and failures) were at the center of every debate on *engagement*. Studying this sub-cultural appropriation of such avant-garde strategies allows us to read with understanding the break-down of Cold War politics and aesthetics, united around the idea of engagement.

Rather than offer a chronology of punk's travails in East Germany, the dissertation offers closer readings of individual punk texts (and contexts). This is for two reasons. First, there are already accounts for a general audience of punk's arrival and development in both East and West Germany. Researchers can consult autobiographies,[40] document volumes and interview collections,[41] and decades-spanning chronological accounts.[42] Second, I agree with Cyrus Shahan that making a new sense of punk and its political valence requires paying close attention to punk's formal strategies within punk texts and punk practices. Band biographies and genre histories play a vital role in the study of punk; punk's historians, popular and scholarly, have made the present study possible. But close reading, critical exegesis, and careful attention to detail can identify tactical affinities and aesthetic genealogies that more wide-ranging, chronologically bound studies necessarily overlook.

Each chapter of this dissertation focuses on one punk strategy, or one cluster of texts or practices, to reveal in detail *how* punks signified their own alterity, or constructed textual or ideological affinities. The result recovers an aesthetic of punk which will help us better understand the course punk's history took as complex avant-garde response. The first chapter focuses on punk's reimagination of a key figure for East German aesthetics, that of the New Socialist Man. Chapter 2 explores punk's role as a structuring principle

for the autobiographical, poetic, and Stasi-reportage work of an important organizer and member of the East Berlin punk scene. Both of these chapters pay close attention to how a variety of representational practices formally articulate a *disengaged* punk aesthetic. Chapters 3 and 4 explore how East German punk manipulated highly established notions of space and time to position itself as a *disengaged* and ostentatiously marginal group, unbound from dominant orderings of East German territory and Communist history.

      Chapter 1, "The New Punk Man," reconstructs early receptions of punk's arrival in East Germany via radio and television broadcasts, and its initial appropriation by East German youths. Analyzing early assessments of East German punk published in the FDJ's *neues Leben* and the Ministry for State Security's (Stasi's) first responses to punk's meaning and form, the chapter traces the emergence of the class-based reception of punk. Linking these nascent analyses to East German theories of the New Man and human perfectibility, the chapter shows that the GDR's early punk theory fell back on a longstanding body of criticism used to polemicize against "formalist" artistic strategies. Punk's appearance was considered a credible threat to the efficacy of socialist culture and socialist representational strategies for which the New Man figure was a crucial component. Finally, the chapter argues that East German criticisms of punk music and style harkened back to the Expressionism debates of the inter-War period, and to the political critiques of the avant-garde which were part of them. Early East German critiques of punk display the importance of the principle of *engagement* for SED aesthetic theory and culture policy. As an ensemble of *disengaged* artistic practices, punk contradicted a central tenet of East German aesthetics in an ostentatious and intolerable way.

Chapter 2, "Satellit Sascha," studies Sascha Anderson, a prolific writer and singer with ties to the East- and West Berlin punk scenes and the Prenzlauer Berg cohort of postmodernist-deconstructionist poets. Anderson was also a longtime unofficial collaborator (IM) with the Ministry for State Security, writing numerous reports on his own punk activities and those of his friends and acquaintances. Engaging with Anderson's prodigious poetic output in addition to some of his writing as an IM and his controversial autobiographical volume *Sascha Anderson* (2002), this chapter reconstructs Anderson's authorial subject-position through a series of close readings that shift the debate about Anderson from reductive arguments about the *a priori* illegitimacy of a so-called "Stasi-poet" to a more nuanced understanding of his work as a process of negotiation, rather than a simple performance of either complicity or dissidence. I read Anderson's texts—his reports for the Stasi as well as his prose and poetry—as collaborating in the fashioning of a single persona or figure, that of Anderson-the-punk, whose ostentatious diffidence and noncommittal activism are seen, in their contradictoriness, to exemplify East German punk's aesthetics of disengagement.

Chapter 3, "It's Punk Time!" analyzes East German punk's enunciation of an alternative temporality within, and against, the progressivist time-concept that prevailed in the GDR. Reconstructing the futurism of the SED state's auto-historiography, and demonstrating the degree to which East German political projects and cultural theories were shaped by a forward-thinking (or futurist) sense of time's passage inherited from the Russian Revolution, this chapter then analyzes a series of songs to demonstrate how punk counterposed its own no-future time-concept to the futurist temporality in broader circulation. Just as the constructivist movement and other Soviet avant-gardes had

articulated temporalities which modified the Revolutionary time-concepts in circulation

after 1917, East German punk inaugurated "punk time" within and against SED socialist

time, the temporal paradigm that the SED upheld to the very end of the GDR. Punk

scholarship has concluded that Western punks' cries of "no future" make sense against

the backdrop of youth unemployment and stagnant wages. This chapter tracks how this

Western articulation of anti-futurist dissatisfication was translated to fit the situation

across the Wall.

Chapter 4, "DDR von Unten: Punk Space," examines East German punks'

conceptions and occupations of social space. Against normative uses of space which

emphasized purposive activity and industrial production, punks developed their own

ways of being in, using, and appropriating the industrial urban landscapes they occupied.

This chapter juxtaposes Stasi theories of space in relation to the integrity of the German-

German border and police, and Stasi reports which analyze how punks endanger space-

usage norms and disrupt the normative circulation of bodies, goods, and work within and

between East German cities, factories, and homes. Punks produced "punk spaces" which

contradicted and unsettled prevailing special codes, while at the same time disengaging

these sites—whether factory floors, residences, or thoroughfares—from the larger spatial

fabric into which they had been imbricated. By reconstructing punks' successes (and

failures) in disengaging spaces from others of which they were a part, this chapter argues

that from the late 1980s and into the early 1990s, the integrated, productive, interpretable,

and policeable space of East Berlin became a post-punk space in which punks' persistent

and confusing presence unsettled commerce, industry, and traffic. Stasi emphases on

border security and party pronouncements about the inviolability of East German

territory circumscribed the GDR and insisted on its distinctness from the West. Tracking punks' disruption of spatial norms, and offering a provisional body poetics, this chapter illuminates both the tenuousness of official orderings of Cold War space and the profound impact punks had on their environment.

The conclusion, **"Das gab es alles mal bei uns,"** briefly recapitulates the argument to show how this dissertation offers a theory of the postwar life of the avant-garde, and of the nature and meaning of a distinct, transnational Cold War Culture whose influence reached from Los Angeles to Moscow. Punk's adaptability to different contexts resulted from its tactical flexibility. Though avant-gardes' marketability was a well-worn trope of both scholarly and trade criticism, in market contexts where such theories reigned, punks bragged about their own art's potential to generate filthy lucre. In East Germany, a formally restricted avant-garde heritage enjoyed pride of place in culture policy. There, *engagement* on behalf of a narrowly construed (Communist) political progress was a requirement of a carefully policed public sphere. Adapting its tactics to its context, East German punk imagined its intervention as one that was no intervention at all, developing an aesthetic of disengagement which confounded the overdetermination of art as politics. Accordingly, East German punks publicly staged political disinterestedness and, in their songs and books and on their bodies, modeled a detachment from ordered space and sensible time that was just as profound.

Punk's art-historical consciousness was just as developed as its critique of its own place in social history. Crying "no future," the Sex Pistols staged a jester's intervention into the languid, self-satisfied discussions of imperial decline which characterized British political discourse of their time. Presented with an entirely different set of circumstances,

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East German punks drew upon punk's toolkit of representational brickbats to stage their own disengagement from history, responsibility, and space and time. Performing *disengagement* in a political context defined by social obligation and the rhetoric of concerted efforts toward advancement, East German punks made public their own self-recusal from programmatic politics. Through a careful examination of their representational strategies, this dissertation shows how that staging of disengaged subjectivity was linked, paradoxically, to avant-garde practices whose adumbration of *engaged* subjectivity had been their calling card.

Notes to the Introduction

[1] See Michael Boehlke and Henryk Gericke, *Ostpunk! too much future* (Berlin: SUBstitut, 2007). This particular piece is available only at the exhibition's permanent website, http://www.toomuchfuture.de.

[2] In an autobiographical piece, Michael Horschig tracks this trajectory. See Horschig, "In der DDR hat es nie Punks gegeben." *Wir wollen immer artig sein. Punk, New Wave, Hiphop, und Independent-Szene in der DDR von 1980 bis 1990.* Eds. Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister. (Berlin: Schwarzkopf und Schwarzkopf, 2004) 30-70.

[3] Ehrhart Neubert provides an account of the formation and goals of the *offene Jugendarbeit* in his standard work, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR*. See Neubert, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR 1949-1989* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1998) 184-187. In addition, Anne Stiebritz offers a critique of the historiography of what she calls the "myth" of the *offene Jugendarbeit*, though it is a somewhat problematic one. Specifically, she suggests that state and church goals were less categorically or practically distinct than has largely been assumed; as Rüdiger Loeffelmeier points out, her studies of specific church-state interactions in Thuringia is compelling, though the universality—or conclusivity—of these findings remains an open question. See Stiebritz, *Mythos 'Offene Arbeit' Studien zur kirchlichen Jugendarbeit in der DDR*. (Jena: Edition Paideia, 2010); see also Loeffelmeier, Rev. of *Mythos 'Offene Arbeit,'* by Anne Stiebritz. *Erziehungswissenschaftliche Revue* 10.3 (June 2011). Web. Available at <http://www.klinkhardt.de/ewr/annotation/978394185401.html>

[4] See Tricia Henry, *Break All Rules! Punk Rock and the Making of a Style.* (Ann Arbor, MI; London: UMI Research Press, 1989) 5.

[5] See Henry, *Break All Rules!* 117.

[6] See Henry, *Break All Rules!* 3.

[7] See Tricia Henry, "Punk and Avant-Garde Art." *Journal of Popular Culture* 17.4 (Spring, 1984) 30-36. Henry's chapter on zines in *Break All Rules!* expands on this analysis, as well.

[8] See Henry, *Break All Rules!* 6.

[9] This sets the stage for later punks' accounts of the Velvet Underground's profound influence on their compositional habits and ambitions, while also locating some of punk's intellectual precursors in the Silver Factory of the 1960s, a place whose institutional historian, Richard Watson, suggests "provided an extraordinary point of Sixties intersection. (Only Max's Kansas City connected Uptown and Downtown so broadly.)" See Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, *Please Kill Me: the Uncensored Oral History of Punk*. (New York: Grove, 1996) 3-32; Richard Watson, *Factory Made: Warhol and the Sixties*. (New York: Pantheon, 2003) xv.

[10] See Hebdige, *Subculture* 27-28. He continues: "Similarly, [among British punks,] there were connections (via Warhol and Wayne County in America, via the art school bands like the Who and the Clash in Britain) with underground cinema and avant-garde art."

[11] See Dylan Clark, "The Death and Life of Punk, the Last Subculture." *The Post-subcultures Reader*. Eds. David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl. (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2003) 224.

[12] See Clark, "The Death and Life of Punk" 230.

[13] See Geoff Stahl, "Still 'Winning Space?' Updating Subcultural Theory." *In/Visible Culture* 2 (1999). Web. Accessed 10th February, 2012. < http://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/issue2/issue2.htm>

[14] See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Trans. Richard Nice. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984) 6.

[15] See Bourdieu, *Distinction* 7.

[16] Bourdieu continues by enumerating what these refusals are: "refusal of the middle-of-the-road taste of the big shopkeepers and parvenu industrialists, the 'grocers' pilloried by Flaub That doeert and others as one incarnation of the 'bourgeois,' and, especially, perhaps, at present, the petite bourgeoisie, led by their cultural pretension to the products of middle-brow culture or the most accessible products of legitimate culture (such as light opera or the easiest boulevard theatre), which are immediately devalued by their new audience; refusal of bourgeois taste, i.e., the typically right-bank luxury taste, which has some accomplices among the artists; and, finally, refusal of the teachers' 'pedantic taste,' which though opposed to bourgeois taste is, in the eyes of the artists, merely a variant of it, disdained for its heavy, pettifogging, passive, sterile didacticism, its 'spirit of seriousness,' and most of all for its prudence and backwardness." See Bourdieu, *Distinction* 294.

[17] Insofar as it attempts to understand musical composition and performance as a historical and social practice, and to study it in its relationship to the social environment its practitioners inhabit, my work therefore follows recent trends in music studies and new musicology which insist on the social situation of music. Among others, Vanessa Agnew, Kevin Korsyn, Tia Denora, and Jacques Attali offer exciting studies which point in this direction. See Florence Feiereisen and Alexandra Merley Hill, *Germany in the 'Loud' Twentieth Century: an Introduction*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Tia Denora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Jacques Attali, *Noise: the Political Economy of Music*, Trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985); Vanessa Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus: the Power of Music in Other Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Kevin Korsyn, *Decentering Music: A Critique of Contemporary Musical Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[18] See Laura Bradley, *Cooperation and Conflict: GDR Theatre Censorship, 1961-1989*. (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2010).

[19] See Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs, and Rock 'n' Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany*. (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2007).

[20] See Pierre Bourdieu, "The 'Soviet' Variant and Political Capital." Trans. Gisele Sapiro and Brian McHale, Ed. Brian McHale. *Practical Reason*. (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998) 17.

[21] See Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989) 18.

[22] See Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* 24.

[23] See Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* 68.

[24] See Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* 70-73.

[25] See V.I. Lenin, "The Reorganization of the Party." *Lenin, Collected Works* II. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965) 29-39, esp. 31.

[26] See Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant Garde*. Trans. Gerald Fitzgerald. (Harvard, MA: Belknap, 1968 [Rev. 1981]) 5. See also Matei Calinescu, *Faces of Modernity: Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch.* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1977) 119.

[27] See Calinescu, *Faces of Modernity* 121-122.

[28] Adducing Marcuse's "Affirmative Character of Culture" and the Marxist critique of the simultaneous truth and falsity of religion, Bürger argues that "in bourgeois society, art has a contradictory role: it projects the image of a better order and to that extent protests against the bad order that prevails. But by realizing the image of a better order in fiction, which is semblance (*Schein*) only, it relieves the existing society of the pressure of those forces that make for change. They are assigned to confinement in an ideal sphere." It is this convenient compartmentalization, Bürger argues, against which the historical avant-gardes positioned themselves; for the sake of undermining this barrier, avant-garde practitioners embrace the "principle of the sublation of art in the praxis of life." See Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Trans. Michael Shaw, Fwd. Jochen Schulte-Sasse. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 50, 51.

[29] See Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* 52. He continutes: "The provocation depends on what it turns against: here, it is the idea that the individual is the subject of artistic creation. Once the signed bottle drier has been accepted as an object that deserves a place in a museum, the provocation no longer provokes; it turns into it opposite. If an artist today signs a stove pipe and exhibits it, that artist certainly does not denounce the art market but adapts to it. Such adaptation does not eradicate the idea of individual creativity, it affirms it, and the reason is the failure of the avant-gardiste intent to sublate art."

[30] See Calinescu, *Faces of Modernity* 124. "'[T]he death of the avant-garde' (an extremely apt expression) cannot be confined to any one moment in this century—such as before or after the last World War—simply because the avant-garde has been dying all along, consciously and voluntarily." No lapsarian historiography of the avant-garde, Calinescu's account differs from Bürger's by reading the avant-gardes' contradictoriness and inefficacy as a programmatic intervention as a *success*, rather than a *failure*—as a verification of the preservation of capitalism's antinomies within the theoretical structure of avant-garde movements. So: "If we admit that Dada's nihilism expresses an 'archetypal' trait of the avant-garde, we can say that any true avant-garde movement (older or newer) has a profound built-in tendency ultimately to negate itself.

[31] See Hal Foster, *Return of the Real: the Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996) 10. Foster: "Along with a tendency to take the avant-garde rhetoric of rupture at its own word, this residual evolutionism leads Bürger to present history as both *punctual and final*. Thus for him a work

of art, a shift in aesthetics, happens all at once, entirely significant in its first moment of appearance, and it happens once and for all, so that any elaboration can only be a rehearsal." Emphasis in the original.

[32] See Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* 73.

[33] The literature on postmodernism, and in particular on the blurring of the categories of high and low, is vast. For a helpful introduction to the problems encountered by postmodernist theories of popular music, see Andrew Goodwin, "Popular Music and Postmodern Theory." *The Postmodern Arts: An Introductory Reader.* Ed. Nigel Wheale. (London; New York: Routledge, 1995) 85-89. An excellent catalog whose numerous contributions highlight key moments in the art history of post-modernism is Glenn Adamson and Jane Pavitt, eds. *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion, 1970-1990.* (London: Victoria & Albert, 2011).

[34] For the East German case, the classical avant-gardes' problematic status will be addressed in detail in this dissertation's first chapter, "The New Punk Man." For a history of the avant-garde in postwar West Germany, see Jost Hermand, "Das Konzept 'Avantgarde'," *Faschismus und Avantgarde.* Eds. Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand. (Königstein: Athenäum, 1980)

[35] A number of fine volumes have been dedicated to tracking the classical avant-gardes' complex legacy in both Eastern and Western Europe. Numerous contributions to Piotr Piotrowski's edited volume, *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe, 1945-1989* make clear that the concept of the avant-garde saw its position plotted between the politicized poles of Modernism, Realism, Culture, and Politics from 1945 until the disappearance of state socialism in Eastern Europe in 1989/1990. The avant-garde's history, its meaning, and its practice, all remained "in play" as negotiable and central aspects of cultural theory and culture policy in Eastern Europe; a common theme is that critical responses to postwar vanguardist art were informed by theories of the pre-war avant-gardes' significance, and vice versa. See Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe, 1945-1989.* Trans. Anna Brzyski. (London: Reaktion, 2009). For the case of Western Europe, the classic theoretical treatment of the avant-gardes' practical and theoretical relevance after the war, both as an archival source for contemporary artistic practice and as an art-historical problematic is Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*; other works which adduce an even broader variety of examples than Bürger's, which are mainly French and German, are Matei Calinescu's *Faces of Modernity*; Benjamin Buchloh, *Neo-avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975* (MIT Press, 2003); and Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: the Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* .

[36] See Richard Langston, *Visions of Violence: German Avant-Gardes after Fascism.* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008) 10.

[37] See David Bathrick, *The Powers of Speech: the Politics of Culture in the GDR* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995) 99-107.

[38] For a provocative account of partisanship's evolution as a concept of military theory which traces partisanship's changes over time and theorizes partisans as irregular subjects whose capacity to act differs from that of regular soldiers, pirates, corsairs, and other bellicose entities, see Carl Schmitt, *Theorie des Partisanen.* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2006) *passim*. The provenance of Schmitt's text is of historical importance, as he wrote it during the ideological division of the world into the two antagonists of the Cold War. But its relevance to our consideration of aesthetic subjectivity and authorial partisanship is also clear. Taking a different approach to partisan subjectivity than theorists of artistic engagement like Adorno and Sartre would take at around the same time (see chapter 1), Schmitt ascribes to the partisan the power to introduce into military situations a confounding unpredictability: "[he] disrupts, from an underground, the conventional, regular play on the public stage. He changes, by dint of his unpredictability, the dimensions not only of tactical, but also strategic operations of the regular armies. Relatively small groups of partisans can, by exploiting conditions on the ground [*Bodenverhältnisse*], suppress [*binden*] large masses of regular troops" (73).

[39] See Cyrus Shahan, "Punk Poetics and West German Literature of the Eighties." Diss. (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 2008)11-12.

[40] See Angela Kowalczyk, *Negativ und Dekadent. Ost-Berliner Punk-Erinnerungen.* (Norderstedt: Books-On-Demand, 2001) on East German punk, and Eva Bude, *Verpisst euch! Sex and drugs and hardcore-punk.* (Hamburg; Leipzig; Wien: Europa Verlag, 2005) on the experiences of a West Berlin punk.

[41] See Gilbert Furian and Nikolaus Becker, *Auch im Osten trägt man Westen: Punks in der DDR – und was aus ihnen geworden ist.* (Berlin: Tilsner, 2000). See also Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister, *Mix mir einen Drink: Feeling B. Das Ende einer Legende.* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2002); and Anne Hahn, Frank Willmann, and Montezuma Sauerbier, *Satan, kannst du mir noch mal verzeihen: Otze Ehrlich,*

Schleimkeim, und der ganze Rest (Mainz: Ventil, 2008). For a fictional work which nevertheless compiles factual data from a number of sources, see Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende deine Jugend! Ein Doku-Roman über den deutschen Punk und New Wave*. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001). Finally, two works on the New German Wave [*neue deutsche Welle*], a genre with a number of conceptual and personnel-based ties to German punk, offer well-organized, clear popular histories of punk in West Germany which situate it within the broader context of West German popular music and entertainment. See Frank Apunkt Schneider, *Als die Welt noch unterging: von Punk zu NDW*. (Mainz: Ventil, 2007); and Hollow Skai, *Alles nur geträumt: Fluch und Segen der neuen deutschen Welle* (Innsbruck: Hannibal, 2009).

[42] See Heinz Havemeister and Ronald Galenza, *Wir wollen immer artig sein: Punk, New Wave, Hip Hop, und Independent-Szene in der DDR von 1980 bis 1990*. (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2005); see also Bernd Lindner and Mark M. Westhusen, *Von Müllstation zu Größenwahn: Punk in der halleschen Provinz*. (Halle/Saale: Hasen-Edition, 2007).

Chapter 1: The New Punk Man and Cold War Cultures of Disengagement

This chapter theorizes punk style—an ensemble of representational practices centered around vulgarity, *detournement*, radical collage, and apocalyptic rhetoric—as having been characterized by the performance of *disengagement*. Punk constituted a radical countermeasure to East German aesthetics, and hit GDR cultural theory where it hurt: at the nexus of art and politics, where the progressive politics and material efficacy of representation were theorized under the sign of *engagement*. First, readings of contemporary texts documenting punk's arrival in England and the United States, and then in West Germany and the GDR, will show how punk produced from its very inception *disengaged* texts and representations of *disengaged* actors. Punks re-modeled and overrode the engaged, committed persona known as the New Man, a figure of great importance for East German cultural production and critical theory. The very earliest responses to punk published in East Germany make clear that purposive, progressive *engagement* was thought to be under attack in punk texts. To reconstruct the Cold War cultural context within which these fears made sense, several earlier representations of the New Man in the work of the playwright Heiner Müller are analyzed. Finally, having identified the specific target of punk's *disengaged* intervention as the New Man, the broader terms of the (transnational) debate about *engagement* into which punk intervened will be sketched, and its stakes outlined.

Punks Appear: the West

The punk was a public and visibly sick personage whose degradation of visual and hygienic norms was plain to see, and seemingly needed no interpretation. Because punk was neither a unified movement, a purely national phenomenon, nor a textual practice confined to one medium, punk's style and substance have been preserved in many places. As Cyrus Shahan has argued, the punk aesthetic had such an impact because of its ready adaptability to new medial contexts.[1] In songs, interviews, album art and collages, self-made periodicals (zines), and photographs, punks named themselves for the first time, fashioning a punk subject out of musical performance, novel fashion, and vulgar lyricism. Punk figures' appearances in the tabloids, the culture pages, and on television in Britain and the United States provide a starting point for thinking through the punk's initial articulation as a typical figure: a visually identifiable member of a group with a distinct name and rhetoric.[2]

As a word, "punk" has a fairly short history.[3] It first appeared as a critical term in the pages of *Creem*, when Lester Bangs sneeringly compared the Stooges to Grand Funk Railroad,

> . . . who never make fools of themselves the way that Stooge punk does, what with his clawing at himself, smashing the mike in his chops, jumping into the crowd to wallow around a forest of legs and ankles and god knows what else while screaming those sickening songs about TV eyes and feeling like dirt and not having no fun 'cause you're a fucked up adolescent, horny but neurotic, sitting around bored and lonesome and unable to communicate with yourself or anybody else.

Configured here for the first time by Bangs and Pop, the *punk* is an isolated, prostrate animal[4] with no revolutionary ambitions. A hymnal of ennui and languor, Pop's songs strike at what's come before: "[w]e got a groovy, beautifully insular hip community, may be a nation, budding here, and our art is a celebration of ourselves as liberated individuals

and masses of such—the People, dig?"[5] For Bangs, the "insular hip community" disrupted by the Stooges has an element of utopian expectation to it; "budding," "may[be] a nation," it is the optimistic art of progressivism and social change.[6] The position Bangs has Iggy model is not merely antisocial, the conduct of a drug-user or criminal. The punk wants to be dominated, not to throw off the yoke of tyranny. But rather than retreat into inaction, or fall silent, the Stooges's punk publicizes his degradation of pop composition and rock politics, disclosing a detachment from music-as-progressive-politics to the very audiences that insisted on such a conception of music.[7]

Bangs's contribution of an early name for punk provided later writers with a readymade theory of the artform. For instance, in his article below the fold of the *Mirror*'s "Filth" leader, Russell Miller wrote that "the essence of punk is anarchy and outrage. So the bands and their followers dress and behave in a manner calculated to shock or disgust—like wearing safety pins through their ears, noses, or even their cheeks." Rather than from the objects themselves, the shock and disgust arise from their context-inappropriate use: from their *detournement* in punk representation.[8] A safety-pin is not, in itself, filthy. But it becomes a vile sight when used to pierce human skin rather than the fabric for whose pinning it was originally intended. Sid Vicious's and Johnny Rotten's attire was not merely ragged beyond the boundaries of good taste or hygienic expectations. It also provided a proving ground for the punk art of recontextualization—as well as for states' attorneys looking for obscenity test cases[9]—by offering up a space where the interplay of design and presentation, of clean lines and dirty cloth, of effluvium and health, could produce semiotic pyrotechnics. Like the Dadaists' and Surrealists' collage whose principal tactics it inherited, a punk's fashionable self-presentation could

enact the spatial confluence of the out-of-place or the simultaneity of the out-of-time. The resignifying play of punk's *detournement*, or *Zweckentfremdung*, disrupted meaningfulness and purpose themselves, privileging chaos and disarray over order and function.

British and American punk made headlines as a vulgar commotion by recontextualizing swastikas and yoking them to ostentatious pronouncements of no-future nihilism. But though its representational repertoire was as tied to the Kingsroad and the Harrow School of Art as to trash-strewn back alleys and underemployment, punk was largely received in this trans-Atlantic Anglophone public as the latest working-class youth culture in a long line of them. If the West German context provided punk with just as many opportunities to shock onlookers with vulgar displays,[10] it also provided a new context in which punk could prompt renewed debates about the interpretation of culture, the analysis of social class, and the efficacy of avant-garde signification. As the German Autumn of 1978 took full effect, outbursts of RAF violence brought discussions of stratification, security, and Cold War conflict back to the forefront of political discourse. The punk bands forming in Düsseldorf, West Berlin, Stuttgart, and Hamburg therefore found themselves at the center of debates about violence, signification, and security which had much more immediate urgency for cultural critics, policymakers, and Cold Warrior journalists in West Germany than they ever had in Britain.[11] The categories of class, youth culture, and subculture deployed in punk's reception in West Germany were familiar from punk's reception in the United States and Britain. This stands to reason; punk came to West Germany in the form of American and British recordings and television performances, and West German journalists and critics familiarized themselves

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with their Anglophone counterparts' interpretations of punk. But as punk came to East Germany over the radio and television airwaves and in the form of reports on the new phenomenon filed by GDR journals' American correspondents, an East German punk theory began to take shape which both resembled and differed from its Western counterpart.

Punks Appear for East Germany

A 1977 article in *neues leben*, "Mode aus dem Müll," cites the unemployment numbers in Britain in order to explain punk's appearance there.[12] While this attempt to coordinate punk's appearance with unemployment is familiar, the suggestion that punk is a product of *advanced capitalism*—rather than a problem of specialized industrial organization in general, or some sort of perennial generational conflict—is new. The punk's tenuous position within-and-without the cartelized music industry is read as mirroring his status as a product which capitalism has necessarily produced, but which offers a radical critique of capitalism: "Ohne Zweifel entsteht die Punk-Bewegung zunächst als oppositionelle Bewegung gegen die Verschlechterung der Lage vieler Jugendlicher im Kapitalismus." Driven to his deviance, the *nl*'s punk is no less a product of class inequity in Britain than Western observers had considered him to be. But a few things are different. First, as the *nl* has already made clear, only a country- (or system-) specific situation can produce a figure like the punk. His class's predicament produces punk, for punk is his response to it.

But as far as punk's political potential is concerned, the *neues leben* takes a pessimistic view:

die Isoliertheit dieser Bewegung vom organisierten Klassenkampf und die Unklarheit der meist sehr jungen Anhänger über die Ursachen ihres Elends, Wege und Ziele des anti-imperialistischen Kampfes führte zu kleinbürgerlich-anarchistischen Vorstellungen. [. . .] Die politische Verwirrung der Punks zeigt sich darin, daß sie Hakenkreuze tragen, um zu schockieren, um zu demonstrieren, daß sie sich über alle politischen Tabus hinwegsetzen.

Rather than constitute a catalyst, one of the (presumably impending) revolution's precursors or engaged protagonists, the punk is instead a misled youth. His specific problem, with respect to effective class politics, is that he lacks the appropriate and revolutionary knowledge of his situation, and therefore the ability to assume a principled partisan stance. Uncoupled to any correct or scientific revolutionary movements, the punk movement is unpurposive.[13]

Another article on punk, published in the *Weltbühne* in November of 1981,[14] develops this imputation of purposelessness even further, even as the emphasis is renewed on the classed origins of punk. Charles R. Allen, a New York correspondent, structures a critique of punk around a review of Penelope Spheeris's documentary about Los Angeles punks, *the Decline of Western Civilization*. Allen begins by asserting that

Voller Stolz sehen . . . sich [Punks] als Nachfolger der Skinheads aus den Slums englischer Städte, die als Hilfstrupps der faschistischen National Front immer wieder an der Auslösung von Rassenunruhen in London beteiligt sind. Sie sind arm wie die Kirchenmäuse, Produkte der Gesellschaft. Arbeitslos und entwurzelt, entstammen sie den Kreisen des Lumpenproletariats und Kleinbürgertums.[15]

Allen's analysis draws upon the *neues leben* account written nearly four years earlier, working class-analytically to deem the punk a product of his environment—of late capitalist crisis. But though Allen's concepts are familiar from *neues leben*, his use of them draws as much from Dick Hebdige as from the *neues leben*'s classical Marxist social theory: social environment, self-presentation, lumpenproletariat, youth, scene (rendered by Allen as *Gegenkultur-szene*).[16] But Allen perverts Hebdige's historiography,

which theorizes relationships between subcultures in terms of conflicts and alternatives, to then make an argument which proceeds in terms of influence and succession.

After describing the *Decline* punks' appearances and citing the ruinous urban conditions that the Germs inhabited, and that Fear preserved in song, Allen ends his article with a dire warning:

> Unter den entsprechenden Umständen könnte sich nämlich in Amerika aus den Reihen der Punks ein moderner Typ jener menschenverachtenden, hemmungslosen Schlagetots entwi[c]keln, die aus Hitlers SA und SS leider nur allzugut in Erinnerung sind.[17]

Allen's piece assumes that for an East German reader, the most pressing questions about punk involve its ties to neo-fascist agitation. However, his jeremiad asks that reader to navigate a complex set of logical associations. Historically, punk's ideological content is multiply-sourced. The British skinheads of the National Front were punk's direct precursors, but even the ideology they bequeathed to punk had a pair of ultimately German referents in the SA and the SS. In the present, punks pose a threat to America, where capitalist crisis (implicitly analogized to the collapse of Weimar Germany, in this scenario) has produced a widespread *Gossen-nihilismus*. No indication is given that punk could appear in East Germany. However, watchfulness is necessary—the reading *wir* of the East German public sphere must not take punk lightly.

Allen's brief note appeared in *Weltbühne*, the successor publication to one of the most important theoretical journals in the history of the European Left. As a result, the review participates in a broader theoretical conversation about culture and its meaning for working-class politics; Allen is concerned not just with interpreting punk's signs, but identifying its political importance. In Allen's account and in Hebdige's, punk is legible

only when considered in relation to the articulation of social class in the late capitalist context.

But Hebdige is concerned with punk's relationship to subjectivity and self-styling, while Allen decisively assigns punk a determinate social meaning related to its void of ideological content. Unencumbered with a "tieferen kritischen Sinn," Allen suggests, punk is empty and nihilistic enough to be instrumentalized and turned to neo-fascist ends. The German past reappears in the States, conveniently (mis)recognizable in the Nazi iconography punks wear. With its recourse to both British and East German social theory when explaining an American film to a GDR audience, Allen's essay offers an early account of punk's symptomaticity with respect to capitalist crisis. Furthermore, his Weimar-New York analogy raises the stakes of interpretation. In the conflictual framing of Allen's politics, punk is, with its bellwether relationship to the late capitalist *Decline of the West*, a genuine Cold War Culture—an eminently political cultural phenomenon, theoretically empty but politically portentous.

Punk remained a topic of debate, as punk's presence in the shared Germanophone public sphere wore on into the early 1980s. Punk also sparked entirely separate discussions about national security and fifth-column activities, and about the significance of style in the context of political agitation. In keeping with their long-standing practice of monitoring the West German media, the officers of the Ministry for State Security (MfS) collected press clippings on punk from the magazines and newspapers they read. One article, "Die Punker vom Prenzlauer Berg," appeared in an August 1982 issue of the West Berlin illustrated *TIP* and offered a few profiles of East Berlin punks, while also publishing photographs of them, their apartments, and the places they made their scene

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(including the S-Bahnhof Greifswalder-Straße). *TIP* focuses on the novelty of the featured individuals' viewpoints and lifestyles, and not on providing broader institutional context—beside a perfunctory nod to the fact that punk was deemed intolerable—for their primary subjects' actions. The article therefore yields little by way of analysis or explanation.

Looking at the reception of this article by the MfS, however, attests to the danger its subject matter—the Prenzlauer punks' presence in East Berlin—and the article itself were thought to pose. Regarding the article's accuracy, the officers write, "In diesem Bericht werden, untermauert von Bildern, Aussagen von bzw. über Punks der Hauptstadt der DDR aneinandergereiht und einer eigenständigen Wertung unterzogen." The report's documentation then serves as the basis for locating the *Anhänger* of the punk scene it describes. For Stasi analysts concerned with identifying the "culprits" the article characterizes and charging them with vandalism and public defamation,"[18] the *TIP*'s most strategically important aspect is its capacity to identify the offenders. But the article is also assigned a propagandistic value:

> Der Bericht ist geeignet, die Jugendpolitik der SED in Mißkredit zu bringen, indem eine gewisse Ohnmacht der Partei- und Staatsführung gegenüber der Punkererscheinungen suggeriert wird, Punker selbst in ihrer anormalen Lebensauffassung bestärkt werden und zur Konfrontation mit den gesellschaftlichen Normen animiert werden.[19]

From this article, and from the *neues leben*'s contribution, emerges the concern that punks, though dismissable as unorganized (and therefore politically inefficient) rabble, are nevertheless *wirksam* insfoar as they impact the environments they inhabit, whether in the West or in the East, and their appearances threaten to "animate" onlookers to

(in)action. Punks may not have a concrete politics, but they have an undeniable significatory power.

That an individual's appearance could inspire, motivate, or indeed "animate" observers to make a decision, or to engage in a given activity, has a clear pragmatic basis. East German youths saw punks in Western media and heard their music on Western radio,[20] and then began to dress and speak like them. The *TIP* article documents this causal relationship in plain language: "Schon seit '77, als die 'Pistols' gerade die Titelseiten der englischen Musikpresse ausfüllten, geisterten vereinzelt Punks durch Köpenicks Altstadt."[21]

But the transformative power punks supposedly exerted on the East German public sphere, and the fears their East German critics harbored about that power, had as much to do with how punks contradicted expectations for art as it did with the pragmatics of German-German border security. On some level, punk was purely an issue of border security. Punks' waste-bedecked, disaffected, unpurposive appearances represented a border-crossing, the intrusion of a putatively Western phenomenon into East German public space.

But beyond transgressing the East German border, this importation of Western punks' representational strategies into specifically East German situations—a process by which punk went from Savile Row, New York, and Düsseldorf to Erfurt and the Prenzlauer Berg—disrupted the processes by which the New Socialist Man was represented. In their music and on their bodies, punks reversed and subverted of numerous elements of the New Man figure. Understanding how the New Man was theorized, and reconstructing his importance for East German social theory, explains why

punk was held to pose such a threat to social order and sheds some light on the

boundaries of acceptable representational practice in East Germany, with particular

respect to the representation of appropriate socialist subjectivity.

The New Man: Theory, Practice

In *Literature and Revolution* (1924), Leon Trotsky asked whether cultural

production can not only help predict the coming of a new kind of human being, but bring

it about:

> In what way, on what grounds, and in the name of what, can art turn its back to
> the inner life of present day man who is building a new external world, and
> thereby rebuilding himself? If art will not help this new man to educate himself,
> to strengthen and refine himself, then what is it for?[22]

Posed in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, these questions make clear that art's

transformative, pedagogic function is inextricable from state socialism's material

organization of life and work.[23] As socialist culture, art instills values and represents the

"inner life" of the New Man as he makes himself and his environment through labor. Art

and life, culture and work—at their intersection, the New Man becomes himself, and

comes to know himself. In his closing flourish, Trotsky once again constellates art, the

just organization of life, and the new man:

> Social construction and psycho-physical self-education will become two aspects
> of one and the same process. All the arts—literature, drama, painting, music and
> architecture—will lend this process beautiful form. More correctly, the shell in
> which the cultural construction and self-education of Communist man will be
> enclosed, will develop all the vital elements of contemporary art to the highest
> point.[24]

By the time of the GDR's founding, Trotsky's politics had long been consigned to the

dustbin of socialist history. But what about the New Man of whom Trotsky was a

principal early theorist? For state socialist governments, theorizing the potential power

and likely contours of the New Man remained a crucial element of the revolutionary

process—one without which the Communists' redistribution of resources would fail. The

inchoate New Man was recognized in historically given figures—in cases like

Stakhanov's, or Yuri Gagarin's, or, to take an East German example, Ernst Thälmann's.

And when these men were heralded as such, their personal histories became

metonymically intertwined with human destiny.[25] Their extraordinary accomplishments

gave rise to new expectations and at the same time herald their fulfillment.

But the New Man was not just a preoccupation of SED labor theorists or cadre

morale officers. He was also an important inevitability for East German artists, whose

mandate included "shap[ing] the ideas of the new and the progressive in the new

Germany." According to Ulbricht and his culture minister Johannes R. Becher, in

socialist art moral norms and appropriate actions could be modeled in a given text by

characters faced with situations drawn from the everyday of post-fascist reconstruction.

Within the frame of a painting, or over the course of a literary plot, a clearly recognizable

New Man's mettle could be tested as he encountered difficulties corresponding to those

facing the working-class audiences whom GDR art interpellated as such. As Wolfgang

Emmerich records, *Neues Deutschland* described artists as responding to Walter

Ulbricht's demand "for the shaping of the New Man, of the activist, of the hero of

socialist construction" by thematizing three things: "1. New life on the land [after the

Bodenreform redistribution of agricultural and industrial property], 2. The construction of

industrial centers, [and] 3. The reconstruction of Berlin. . ."[26] From the pride with which

the artistic representation of concrete, everyday situations is greeted here, early

impressions emerge of the Bitterfeld Way theories for which the art-life proximity—and more specifically, the artist-worker proximity—would be of central importance.

This nascent culture-policy privileged a very specific kind of realism that made manifest the logic of the New Man and the theory of the social-material power of his representation. When represented realistically, predicaments drawn from the everyday of socialist reconstruction provide a backdrop against which the exemplary actions of an individual are thrown into sharp, didactic relief. So, at least, runs the theory. An analysis of some widely read (and criticized) texts which grapple with the problem of the New Man's nature and constitution shows that while the New Man's values—nationalist resolve, labor productivity, activism, self-cultivation—all submitted nicely to theoretical identification and prescriptive enumeration, in the sphere of actual artistic practice, the New Man's coming resolved itself somewhat less comfortably.

New Men, Arisen from Ruins

A comprehensive survey of the thematization of the New Man in *all* East German art would extend far beyond the scope of this project. Two works by Heiner Müller regarding the New Man, however, represent some of his most searching and formally daring postulations. Though not *typical* formulations of the New Man problematic, they do adumbrate its contours with great sophistication. These are *der Lohndrücker*, a 1956/57 *Produktionsstück* written with Inge Müller[27]; and the 1972 play *Zement*, adapted from Gladkov's novel of the same name. In each text, the New Man's appropriate representation (and thus creation) remains an unsolved problem inherited from the pre-War period.

These texts have a number of common themes. First, fascist (or, in the case of *Zement*, imperialist) violence serves as both a traumatizing limit of Müller's protagonists' experience and a personal legacy that each must negotiate. Second, in both works the reconnection of individuals commences amidst ruins, and a socialist fabric occurs through the resumption of (industrial) production. And finally, bureaucratic inefficiency and the disconnection of leadership from on-the-ground circumstances are thematized in each text.[28] Across differences in tone, source material (each play draws upon an important intertext, from a different medium, for its thematic material), and structure, the texts both explore the characterization of the New Man.

Der Lohndrücker tells the story of Hans Garbe, a Stakhanov-like figure whose lionization by GDR commentators and canonization as an activist hero of industrial labor allows Müller's text to recontextualize the pathos of self-sacrifice common to most accounts of the Garbe figure by adding the critical, antagonistic frame of the *Lehrstück* style to the proceedings. As David Bathrick notes, here, "the Garbe figure (his name is Balke) is anything but a positive hero."[29] Indeed, his unpleasant personal history as a denouncer under fascism is played off against his self-sacrifice for the sake of productivity—and, because he repairs an oven that threatens to stop the plant's operation for good, for the possibility of further production. In one scene Schorn, a cadre mate who remembers Balke from before the war, confronts him about his past. In contrast to himself, imprisoned by the fascists, "Dich [Balke] haben sie nicht eingesperrt," he says accusingly. "Du warst der Denunziant." Balke answers by outlining his modest efforts at sabotage, and reminding Schorn of the predicament he was in:

> **Balke** Was heißt da Denunziant. Ich war in der Prüfstation. Da hatten sie mich hingestellt, weil sie mich hereinlegen wollten, zwischen zwei Aufpasser. Bei

den Handgranaten aus eurer Abteilung waren die Schlagstifte zu kurz. Ich ließ sie durchgehen oder legte sie zum Ausschuß, je nachdem, wo die Spitzel standen. Das riß aber nicht ab. Ich war auch dafür, daß man den Krieg abkürzt, aber mir hätten sie den Kopf abgekürzt, wenn's ohne mich herauskam.

Schorn *kalt:* Vielleicht.
Schweigen.
Was war da für ein Streit in der Kantine heute mittag?

Balke Das ging gegen mich. Lohndrücker, Arbeiterverräter und dergleichen.
Pause.

Schorn Sag es mir, wenn sie dir Schwierigkeiten machen.
Pause.

Balke Was gewesen ist, kannst du das begraben?

Schorn Nein.[30]

Though the text affords Balke ample space to defend his past under fascism, no evaluation of the truth of his actions is provided—and the silence which precedes Schorn's diffident rejoinder, "Maybe," leaves the impact of Balke's defense uncertain. The pauses which punctuate their further conversation amplify this uncertainty, ambiguating Schorn's offer of his help (Is it made purely to break the silence? Importantly, he does not say he will intercede) and pointing up the suddenness with which Schorn answers Balke's ensuing question. Though slow to judge the veracity of Balke's account of his life in the fascist factory, Schorn quickly admits that neither Balke's actions—nor, on a larger scale, the historical fact of fascism—can lie well and truly buried.

It is thus all the more significant when later on, upon Balke's repair of the broken oven, Schorn comes to his defense: "Balke ist nicht für sich selber in den Ofen gegangen." Whatever individualistic sense of self-preservation Schorn may earlier have imputed to Balke, and whatever skepticism he may still have about Balke's story, here he asserts Balke's integration into the productive fabric of the collective. In this scene, he is just as quickly rebuffed—Balke shouts at Karras, another cadre member, "Und wenn ich

mit den Zähnen mauern muß, mit dir nicht."[31] But in the play's final scene, an exchange

between Balke and Karras highlights a shift from the self-preserving passivity which

even Balke admits has characterized him, to a suppression of the self, and its irritation

with Karras:

> **Balke** Ich brauch dich, Karras. Ich frag dich nicht aus Freundschaft. Du mußt mir
> helfen.
> **Karras** *bleibt stehn:* Ich dachte, du willst den Sozialismus allein machen. Wann
> fangen wir an?
> **Balke** Am besten gleich. Wir haben nicht viel Zeit.

Balke's subordination of his conflict with the other workers to the needs of the plant

points up the degree to which his activism—present all along, as the impulse which drove

him to the heroic work forming the basis for the Garbe legend—overrides his other

concerns. If the character's fascist pre-history admits of a less than perfect past, with all

the attendant baggage of opportunism that attends it, then his suppression of petty

interpersonal issues in the name of efficiency and progress indicates a very clear

development. The past, Schorn has confirmed, will not lie buried, and this extends to the

fascist period as well as the fractious foundational phase of East German socialism. But

the future, the New Balke recognizes, needs to be built anyway.

    Zement, an adaptation for the stage of Gladkov's Soviet classic, shares a number

of details with *der Lohndrücker*. For instance, the great project at the heart of *Zement*—a

production collective's rehabilitation of a cement-works in the aftermath of the First

World War's devastation of the Russian countryside—presents an emergent situation

comparable to *Lohndrücker*'s plant malfunctioning. In both plays, a fraught and strained

relationship between different worker factions and management tiers must be overcome

for production to progress and for physical labor to resume. But whereas Balke of *der*

Lohndrücker negotiates a new labor situation by himself, as an outsider whose zeal and accomplishments distinguish him from his more sedentary (and myopic) comrades, *Zement*'s Gleb Tschumalow returns to his home from military service as a labor organizer without a workforce, or a factory:

> **Tschumalow** Was habt ihr aus dem Werk gemacht, ihr Hunde.
> **Sawtschuk** Was fragst du mich, Held. Wer braucht meine Hände.
>   Ein Ziegenstall ist dein Zementwerk. Frag
>   Die Schwätzer in der Exekutive. Frag
>   Die Weiber im Fabrikkomitee.
>   *Lacht.*   Das Werk.
>   Schweig, eh ich dir den Hals umdreh, Tschumalow,
>   Bruder, mit meinen arbeitslosen Händen.
> **Tschumalow** *Helm ab.*
>   Willkommen in der Heimat, Bolschewik.

Removing the helmet that is the token of his military service, Tschumalow's bitter, sarcastic aside reveals how difficult it is to reassume the political role which his service had temporarily suspended. While he was at war, the cement-work had, like his wife and child, remained idyllic and unchanged. But upon his return, the cement-work has been destroyed, with any chance of its reconstruction interdicted by bureaucracy. And what is more, his wife—Dascha Tschumalowa—has armed herself with communist politics and rejected his domineering attitudes about their relationship. Tschumalow's fragmentary town, riven by gender and class conflicts, and by actual physical destruction, thus becomes the scene of a self-reclamation project that parallels the restitution of the factory. A dejected soldier dispossessed of his work and home, and eventually even his child Njurka, who has died in the interim, Tschumalow spasmodically threatens violence throughout the first portions of the play. Against Dascha, he threatens a rape; he threatens former comrades from the factory with a shooting. But though his early attempts to reopen the cement-works are foiled by indifference, by and large, his monomaniacal

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dedication pays off. He wins former workers to his cause by defending the area against a band of bourgeois soldiers. A (re)foundational myth, intercut with the scatology and pathos of prose passages drawn from Greek myth, emerges from the lively and chaotic traffic of the plot.

In one sense, Tschumalow's role as a self-possessed catalyst for change, who adapts to his new situation and overcomes the challenges to restoring the cement-works, is clear. His reintegration sees immediate results as the workers acknowledge the common purpose they share with Tschumalow. Even Ivagin, the convinced Communist born to the bourgeoisie, finds ways to work with him to repel the bourgeois forces led by Iwagin's brother. But Tschumalow's perspective expands as well. No ready-made paragon, he must *become* the efficacious New Man. In an early scene, he responds to Iwagin's invocation of the "Kampf um die Befreiung der Menschheit" by reducing the scale of ambition:

> **Tschumalow** Lassen Sie sich Zeit, Genosse, mit der Menschheit. Fürs erste haben wir genug zu tun mit uns selber.[32]

But in a later scene, where another figure criticizes the New Economic Plan, comparing it to capitalism's reanimated corpse—"Der Spuk ist nicht vorbei. Der Leichnam schmatzt."—Tschumalow takes her to task in spirited fashion. "Das ist kein Rückzug," he retorts, "und wir sind kein Staub. Die Revolution braucht eine Atempause. Wir tragen die Welt auf den Schultern seit 17. Wer noch. Wir können keine großen Sprünge machen. Und die Geschichte redet uns mit Sie an seit die Gewehre schweigen. Unser Preis für zwei Schritt vorwärts ist ein Schritt zurück."[33] Tschumalow's initial "we," spoken to Iwagin, is limited to the local population of rebuilders. But here he seizes the plural "we" of his class; and whereas before he was loathe to deal in abstractions like "die Befreiung

der Menschheit," now he places himself, and his class, in a commanding relationship to history. And yet, though Tschumalow preaches patience, going so far as to ironically ascribe a gradualism to Communist efforts in order to justify the NEP, the woman's critique stands. In the challenging, didactic system of the play, both sides of the argument are articulated at their strongest, and Tschmalow, no paragon, is not sufficiently developed to decide the question one way or the other. He pays homage to the historical momentuousness of the Communist project in one breath, and paws crudely at Polja's breasts in the next. Tschumalow is a New Man, but the striations of his transformation make themselves visible in his continued chauvinism.

Balke and Tschumalow recapitulate the political transformation the New Man would presumably undergo as part of his becoming. Both integrate themselves into a productive collective, both subordinate their own needs to those of the greater reconstructive project, both come to recognize the importance of compromise. But if the protagonists in Müller's critical theatre remain agnostic about their intrinsic worth as men, so too must the critical audience which (so the theory runs) the text interpellates. The politicality of Müller's pieces is bound up with the New Men whose development they thematize. The pieces provide examples of exemplary behavior and self-sacrifice, as the culture policy of the day would have hoped. But they also present multiple viewpoints without deciding between them, making the New Men they thematize difficult to evaluate or emulate. *Zement* and *Lohndrücker* concern themselves with their immediate historical predicament, and address difficult questions about the social integration of the collective that immediately complicated reconstruction in East Germany. But beyond this, Müller's texts also intercede in the ongoing debate over the new man. They pose difficult

questions about whether or not the remnants of previous ideological positions—

Tschumalow's contempt for women and dubious acceptance of Dascha's participation in

the social life of the collective, or Balke's complicity with fascism—will ever truly be

aufgehoben.

The production of the New Man provides Müller's plays with an avenue for

representing East Germany's recent history, and its continued impact on interpersonal

relations during the period of socialist reconstruction. While Müller's texts' agnosticism

about the New Man's qualities is articulated in their plots' lack of resolution—both end

looking forward, with a long road ahead and no clear progress measured—the sure

futurity and optimism of the New Socialist Man complex could also be suspended in

other ways. When the New Man's principal aspects are recovered from Müller's

problematization, it becomes clear that punk attempted such a suspension. Punk's "no-

future" mantra and certainty that "du wirst sterben!" deadened the promise and possibility

which defined the New Man. Furthermore, the punk's inefficient regrouping of objects in

ways which degrade their original purposes (safety pins through the ears, bicycle chains

as belts) put the overall body on display as an art-object, rather than putting it to work.

This laxity and chaotic self-styling embody the furthest possible thing from the New

Man's ordered, efficient, and productive inhabitation of his environment.[34]

Engagement: a Cold War Problem

Heiner Müller, the New Man, the punk, the policeman—authors, personages,

ideal-types, critics, conceptual problems. This final section brings the punks and the New

Man together through the concept of aesthetic *engagement*, an idea about the social

function of art which positioned the New Man problematic as a central feature of East German art and letters, and of the East German public sphere. However, *engagement*'s conceptual inverse—*disengagement*, the performance of art's social purposelessness or afunctionality—proves no less important here.

At the level of methodology (class-based analysis) or ontology (economic relationships held to determine cultural ones), the critiques of punk ventured by Stasi writers and the *Weltbühne*'s American correspondent overlapped with Western analyses of punk developed by scholars at Birmingham's Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies. But the East German readings of punk were pitched radically differently, to address analytic and critical priorities which diverged sharply from those formulated in the West. These had to do with the different ideas about art's nature and purpose that held sway in the two distinct parts of Germany. Understanding why punk was received in East Germany as insufficiently political—or, rather, understanding why *this particular criticism* was made of punk, when other, arguably more damning ones were available— requires understanding *engagement*, the target of punk's aesthetic work.

In 1965, shortly before the premiere of *die Vermittlung*, Peter Weiss published a short prose piece called "10 Arbeitspunkte eines Autors in der geteilten Welt."[35] The opening lines clarify that politics, rather than artistic technique are at issue: "Jedes Wort, das ich niederschreibe und der Veröffentlichung übergebe, ist politisch, d.h. es zielt auf einen Kontakt mit größeren Bevölkerungsgruppen hin, um dort eine bestimmte Wirkung zu erlangen."[36] Achieving a *Wirkung*—an effect—is the goal of Weiss's artistic practice. And the world's division, which Germany's division represents [*darstellen*], means that what Weiss writes "gerät unmittelbar in den Brennpunkt der Opinionen" (14). But that

focal point is constituted by two German public spheres, not one. With two reception-contexts available for each of his German works, different limitations confront him in each. In the West, where "no boundaries are drawn" as far as aesthetic experimentation is concerned, "advances in the social" are subject to close control.[37] By contrast, what matters in East Germany is the practical function of an artwork.[38] This dichotomous positioning of art in the respective Germanies, which he theorizes as a "contradiction," leads Weiss to wonder whether he can abandon the non-committal and comfortable "third way" approach he had outlined for himself to this point: "kann ich meine eigene Ungewißheit, meine Ambivalenz überwinden und in meine Arbeit bewußt die politische Wirkung einbeziehen, die sich bisher nur passiv äußerte?. . ."[39] Efficacy becomes the desideratum of artistic practice; and the author's choice to *commit* himself—to abandon ambivalence and uncertainty, to *choose*—is what will make transformative art possible. Aesthetic *engagement* is at issue.[40]

But Weiss's decision, and the *engagement* discernable in his major works of the Cold War period, do not fit the conception of *engagement* which organized SED policymakers' expectations for art in East Germany, or which authorized the New Man theme as a central topic for artistic representation in the East German public sphere. The plain institutional facts of East German socialism—a state-held monopoly over the means of literary and artistic production being foremost among them—meant that a particularly robust, widely disseminated, and carefully monitored definition of *engagement* held sway. As Weiss puts it, East German art was to serve a "practical function"—advancing socialist reconstruction.[41] This instrumentalist conception owes both its existence and its vocabulary to a position most famously held in Germany by Georg Lukács during the

Expressionism debates of the inter-War period, but was also typical of the Zhdanovite aesthetic theory developed in the USSR immediately after the Second World War. This theory of East German literature's function was embedded in a broader conceptual network of utilitarian thinking about art held throughout the Soviet sphere of influence.

(Eastern) Marxist thinking about culture integrated art into the broader social fabric as a set of practices through which historical progress and industrial reconstruction could be represented, and the New Man's form presaged. For East German critics and culture-politicians, determining the correctness of representation's *engagement* with reality was a fairly uncomplicated matter. Properly *engaged* art dealt with political reality by incorporating concrete, recognizable situations into its thematic repertoire and by charting the right path forward for social and anthropological development. And through decades of debate over authorial voice and perspective, the importance of artists' proximity to actual industrial labor processes, the acceptability of certain subject matters, and the advantages of "realist" representation over formal experimentalism,[42] two things remained constant: absolute state monopolies over the means of the mass production of culture in East Germany,[43] and policymakers' expectation that artworks *engage* themselves—that is, concern themselves in a productive rather than overcritical manner with the pressing topics of socialist progress.

A typical formulation of this optimistic expectation is Walter Ulbricht's 1958 contention that art "kann Großes leisten, um die Menschen zu echtem Patriotismus, im Geiste des Friedens, der Demokratie, und des Fortschritts zu erziehen."[44] But when his discussion of art's task grows normative and prescriptive, rather than grandly descriptive,

the abstract and general are quickly subordinated to the pragmatic and the specifically

national:

> Es ist die Aufgabe [der Künste], den Werktätigen die Werke unserer großen
> Meister wie die realistischen Werke der Künstler anderer Völker zu vermitteln
> und die Ideen des Neuen, des Fortschrittlichen im neuen Deutschland zu
> gestalten. Die Helden des Aufbaus zeichnen sich dadurch aus, daß sie für das
> Wohlergehen unseres Volkes, für die Stärkung unserer Deutschen
> Demokratischen Republik leben und schaffen.[45]

Rather quickly, particularism asserts itself. The well-being of *our* people—not the well-

being (or freedom) of the balance of mankind—takes over for the more abstract "die

Menschen," who had been the beneficiaries of the earlier formulation.

As a definition of *engaged* art, this is prescriptive and normative. The specific

political intercession an artwork makes must be unambiguous, and particular. Art's

contribution is to East Germany in particular. At the level of both policy and rhetoric, the

closure of the SED *engagement*-concept became infamously apparent in 1965, when a

crackdown was spurred by the release (and subsequent banning) of controversial films

whose thematizations of political issues like the fascist past and worksite inefficiencies

were deemed overcritical and politically unsupportable.[46] At that time, Alexander Abusch

(the former Minister for Culture) bundled a critique of "lebensunwahre" technique with a

broader indictment of contemporary East German art as pursuing several "sichtbar

gewordene Irrwege in der künstlerischen Theorie und Praxis."[47]

From Abusch's critique, and Ulbricht's words, emerges a conceptually narrow

engagement that entailed legitimation and support-rallying, and whose borders had to be

policed. Even after the 1965 freeze's impact on literature, film, and popular music

seemed to tail off in the early 1970s (until the Biermann expulsion touched off further

debate), Helmut Peitsch notes that the censors' laxity on formal questions was, in fact,

deceptive: "Die allmähliche Freigabe der Techniken klassisch-moderner Literatur durch die offizielle Theorie des sozialistischen Realismus—zusammen mit ihrer allmählichen Publikation bis Mitte der siebziger Jahre—war verbunden mit der Begrenzung von Kritik."[48] In this way, *engagement*—as a critical desideratum, as a social practice, as a commitment to change—was, for East German critics, a theoretical concept comparable to *obscenity* in America, of which Justice Potter Stewart famously said "I know it when I see it."

Though it was used to blackball artworks like *Spur der Steine* or *Das Kaninchen bin Ich*—films that it would be hard to argue weren't in some sense *engaged*—the SED's was nevertheless an aesthetics of *engagement*, with a specific terminological and theoretical basis. In other words, the rubric by which policymakers judged art emphasized *engagement* and not some other quality. With its emphasis on anthropological improvement, progressivist history, and "lebens[]wahre" (life-true) representation, Abusch's and Ulbricht's critical vocabulary organizes a theory of art with a clear conceptual history.[49] And its key term—*engagement*—prompted critical debates that transcended national borders.

But even if the SED negotiated *engagement*'s meaning within a larger transnational process, East German *engagement*-criticism was largely topical and specific. For instance, in a commentary on the first 5-Year-Plan (1951), Walter Ulbricht offers a very clear definition of the social task facing art:

> Es ist die Aufgabe [der Künste], den Werktätigen die Werke unserer großen Meister wie die realistischen Werke der Künstler anderer Völker zu vermitteln und die Ideen des Neuen, des Fortschrittlichen im neuen Deutschland zu gestalten. Die Helden des Aufbaus zeichnen sich dadurch aus, daß sie für das Wohlergehen unseres Volkes, für die Stärkung unserer Deutschen Demokratischen Republik leben und schaffen.[50]

This is a particularist's formulation: the exigencies of socialist reconstruction determine the criteria by which *engagement* is judged. At issue are the nuts-and-bolts of *Aufbau* and the representation of the progressive in the new (East) Germany, not a general sense of progress. It is difficult to see the forest for the trees. This *engagement* concept is already applied to the specific context within which East German *engaged* art is supposed to operate; as a result, we lose a clear sense of the terms and stakes of *engagement*. Accounting for the reticence with which punk's incursion into the New Man discourse was received, however, requires greater theoretical clarity than examining exclusively East German criticism can provide. Happily, two key contributions to the postwar debates about *engagement*—one from France, and one from West Germany—offer some critical terms for a provisional theoretical account of punk's challenge to *engagement*. The first, an essay by Sartre, offers an explanation of what *engagement* is. The second, an essay by Adorno, might offer an explanation of what *disengagement* is.

Engagement as Self-Positioning within Global Conflict: Sartre

Jean-Paul Sartre's 1947 essay *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* poses three fundamental ontological questions about art: "What is writing? Why does one write? For whom?" *Engagement*, the essay's critical desideratum, is the product of the interaction between three things: texts' ontological status with respect to their contexts, authorial intention, and the relative positioning of artist and audience.[51] Sartre returns to this triangular problematic throughout his extended, historically-minded, and frequently phenomenological exploration of the political situation of writing. In one passage, this interrelatedness becomes especially clear. Having first distinguished the non-significative

representational play of poetry, sculpture, and music from the significative activity of writing prose,[52] Sartre argues that for the prose-writer,

> to speak is to act; anything which one names is already no longer quite the same; it has lost its innocence . . .[b]y speaking, I reveal the situation by my very intention of changing it; I reveal it to myself and to others *in order* to change it. I strike at its very heart, I transfix it, and I display it in full view; at present I dispose of it, with every word I utter, I involve myself a little more in the world, and by the same token I emerge from it a little more, since I go beyond it towards the future.[53]

Here, Sartre goes beyond establishing a merely indexical or referential relationship between the committed written word and that which it is used to discuss or represent. Instead, *revelation*—the display of the hidden, the clarification of the obscure—is operative. Rather than merely reproducing an undesirable state of affairs, the author exerts transformative control over his context in the process of representing or disclosing it. By configuring the writer-world dynamic in this way, Sartre not only recovers the ethical force of Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, but attributes a goal-oriented futurity to all committed writing.

In light of this, when it comes to realist writing, commitment is not a choice between having an impact or not. Since Sartre holds that no "impartial picture" can be drawn of the real, because "naming is already a modification of the object," it follows that the author's function is always that of mediation[54]—of becoming the middle term, one who is part of the world he represents, and because he represents and transforms it, also part of what it should and will become. From this—and from his contention that by disclosing injustices which otherwise go unrecognized, committed artworks impel their readers to transform their circumstances[55]—a rough understanding of *engagement* can be developed. Committed writerly practice is *engaged* with its context because the *engaged*

author, as a mediator between existent world and world-to-be, is interlocked with, coupled-to, intercursively related with his subject matter and audience. He is not, as putatively "autonomous" artists are, abstracted from his world. He regards it, he is in it and of it, he looks to alter its relationships of domination and to change it. Engagement, for Sartre, is an aesthetically constituted commitment to altering the world, which entails an acknowledgment of one's own place in it. It is both a practice of representation and also a practice of self-positioning. Engaging oneself—locating oneself as a mediator who alters the world by representing it—precedes and permits creating an engaged artwork. Sartre's concept of engagement therefore not only includes those qualities of futurity and agitation which are identifiable in an artwork, but the stance or position assumed by the artist who produces it.

But engagement is not party-political, or at least not dogmatically so. In Sartre's estimation, an author takes an engaged stance not on behalf of one particular conception of how either mankind or freedom is to be nurtured, but on behalf of mankind in the abstract, and of freedom in the abstract. Engagement's socialist aspect is characterized by its openness, rather than its concrete or closed nature. As Sartre himself parses it:

> We must take up a position *in our literature*, because literature is in essence a taking of position. We must, in all domains, both reject solutions which are not rigorously inspired by socialist principles and, at the same time, stand off from all doctrines and movements which consider socialism as the absolute end. In our eyes it should not represent the final end, but rather the end of the beginning, or, if one prefers, the last means before the end which is to put the human person in possession of his freedom.[56]

Socialism is the path, rather than the goal. For Sartre, a more abstractly conceptualized "freedom" is paramount. Though socialism's tenets describe how progress toward freedom might be made, socialism cannot be celebrated and realized for its own sake.

The SED leaders explicitly identified socialism as the absolute end of cultural production; this is at cross-purposes with Sartre's assessment. And though they share many of Sartre's concerns about human progress, the integration of art and life, and the disclosure of social ills, the SED leaders' specific formal criteria and particularistic conception of human progress are much narrower than Sartre's more general formulation. If SED criticism agrees that realist technique and the representation of socialist progress are aspects of *engaged* artworks, and not just of good ones, then Sartre's broader theorization can help us to understand why this is such an important classification. By understanding the ethical, political, and ontological weight that the category of *engagement* carries, we can come to understand why such an investment was made in lionizing this category of aesthetic judgment above others.

In Conclusion: Beyond Cold War Engagements

At the 59th annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Lauren Berlant gave a keynote speech entitled "Affect, Noise, Silence, Protest: Ambient Citizenship" in which she considered fantasies of *immediate* speech, speech without the "filter" of mass mediation. Berlant asks some searching questions:

> What does it mean to want to be with the noise of the political, rather than the speech of it? What does it mean to think of the political as something overheard? What does it mean when, as in silent protest, people enter the public sphere in order to withhold from it the very material—speech oriented toward opinion— that animates its world-making and world-building effectivity?[57]

Sartre's, Abusch's, Ulbricht's, Weiss's, and Zhdanov's conceptions of communicative intervention—changing the world through speech and representation—share a notion of purposive action-through-speech which is precisely calibrated to the stakes of the Cold

War. When reconstruction and historical progress are the only things which can put distance between shaken policymakers and the devastation of the Second World War, art—like all other processes of production—must be integrated into the pursuit of progress. Its intervention must be programmatic and futuristic. It must collaborate in disclosing and fashioning the New Man, and offer model representations of industrial production and social integration.

What Berlant's questions bring into view is the possibility of *withholding* action-through-speech, of refusing the very terms of efficacious publicity while remaining in public view. This mode of self-disclosure—being with the noise of the political, rather than the speech of it—involves signifying nothing, yet refusing not to signify. *This* is punk's efficacy, and *this* is the reason for its mixed reception that was equal parts sympathetic and critical. An ostentatious recusal, being with the noise rather than the speech of the political, constitutes a rejection of the terms of programmatic agitational speech which occurs through the scrambling of signifiers and the presentation of *detourned* elements of political speech.

Berlant's elegant formulation bears a strong resemblance to the account of *engagement* Theodor W. Adorno offered in his famous 1962 radio address on the topic.[58] Taking issue with Sartre's "shallow" distinction between "writers and literati" [ie between prose writers and writers of non-significatory texts], Adorno rejects the notion that *engagement* entails communicating a conceptual meaning.[59] "In terms of theory," he writes, "commitment should be distinguished from tendentiousness, or advocacy of a particular partisan position." Agreeing with Sartre, he notes that "committed art in the strict sense is not intended to lead to specific measures, legislative acts, or institutional

arrangements."[60] But if committed art is not programmatic, what is its efficacy? What distinguishes it from non-committed art? Adorno's answer recalls Berlant's invocation of silent protest, and Weiss's diagnosis of the Cold War's immense pressure as well: "the current deformation of politics, the rigidification of circumstances that are not starting to thaw anywhere, forces spirit to move to places where it does not need to become part of the rabble. At present everything cultural, even autonomous works, is in danger of suffocating in cultural twaddle; at the same time the work of art is charged with wordlessly maintaining what politics has no access to."[61]

While Adorno's account encompasses both blocs—the rigid circumstances aren't thawing anywhere—it certainly applies to the East German case, where Adorno's diagnosis of the inaccessibility of political speech and the danger of "suffocati[on] in cultural twaddle" had clear resonance. The punk work of art, no *engaged* work in Sartre's sense, bears out Adorno's mandate. With its stubborn visibility and ironization of purposive signification, punk maintains what the political work of art, and the political East German subject, have no access to: a stance against stances. From punk criticism, it becomes clear that punks' reimagination of the New Man, and the refusal of the terms of engagement, constituted a threat. Adorno said of Beckett's works that "everyone shrinks from them in horror, and yet none can deny that these eccentric novels and plays are about things everyone knows and no one wants to talk about."[62] In this salutatory formulation, we have our answer for how punk operated—and was seen to operate.

Beginning with punk's appearance in East Germany, this chapter identifies the new aesthetic's point and mode of entry into East German aesthetics and debates about them. I have laid out the stakes of those debates by developing an historicized definition

of the Cold War terms of *engagement* to which punk opposed its own *disengaged* intervention. The chapter's final section offers a point of entry into the rest of the dissertation. Where this contribution both lays out the terms of the dissertation's larger problematic, and starts telling East German punk's story from the beginning, subsequent sections will analyze punk's performance of *disengagement* on different temporal and spatial registers, and consider its hypervisibility as a contumate culture of the Cold War and a property of Cold War paradigms of *engagement*.

In order to make clear the sophisticated genealogy and complex mechanics of *disengagement*, the chapter which immediately follows pursues one very particular articulation of a *disengaged* subject-position: that performed by Sascha Anderson, the punk poet of the Prenzlauer Berg scenes.

Notes for Chapter 1

[1] See Cyrus Shahan, "Punk Poetics and West German Literature of the Eighties." Diss. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2008) 32-42.

[2] Punk's protagonists on either side of the Atlantic knew one another personally and traded music, ideas, and articles of clothing. Punks located common points of origin for their musical style in the Stooges' destructive roar, the MC5's revolutionary irony, or the New York Dolls' glammed-up androgyny. Organizing tours featuring bands from both countries, and speaking to media outlets on either side of the Atlantic Ocean, British and American punks collaborated on a single cultural phenomenon in a trans-continental public sphere.

[3] "punk, *n.*[1]" The Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. 1989. In one of its earliest known usages, the *Oxford English Dictionary* tells us, the term denoted for Shakespeare a prostitute: "She may be a Puncke: for many of them, are neither Maid, Widow, nor Wife." In Middleton's *Michelmas Term*, punk also served as a slur: "I may grace her with the name of a Curtizan, a Backslider, a Prostitution, or such a Toy, but when all comes to al 'tis but a plaine Pung."

[4] In Bangs' arrangement, Iggy is an abased/debased performer who, when not performing self-abuse for effect, moves at ground level, in the effluvium ("god knows what else") of concert-hall floors.

[5] Lester Bangs, "Of Pop and Pies and Fun: A Program for Mass Liberation in the Form of a Stooges Review, or, Who's the Fool?" *Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung*. Ed. Greil Marcus. (New York: Vintage, 1987) 29-31.

[6] Anti-Viet Nam War protests, anti-proliferation, communalism—these are the political movements in whose favor hippie culture had taken a partisan stance. They are also the target of the Stooges' antipolitical ire. Thus Iggy, over top dirge-like piano and Scott Asheton's plodding drums, and accompanied by the collar/tag ringing of a tambourine: "So messed up, I want you here / in my room, I want you here / now we're gonna be face-to-face / and I'll lay right down in my favorite place / and now I wanna be your dog." Iggy's man-become-dog is also the crawling, self-lacerated, opprobrious performer of Bangs' review.

[7] The Stooges performed at the same rock clubs as "counter-culture" bands did, and were signed by the Doors' record label as a packaged deal with the MC5.

[8] *Detournement*, or repurposing, has long been theorized as a signal element of punk aesthetics. Guy DeBord, of the Situationist International, defined *detournement* as the evacuation of meaning and purpose from a recognizable object through its re-presentation in a new form or with a new contextual frame. Greil Marcus was among the first to connect punk to *detournement* explicitly, as his argument about punk and the history of the avant garde requires that he make frequent recourse to Guy Debord's writing. For Marcus (and this seems plausible), punk's embodied recontextualization of elements of the material world rather than the artistic one, coupled with its inscription of this stylistic gambit onto the body, as fashion, distinguishes this practice of recontextualization from the others that had preceded it all the way back to surrealism, dada, and beyond. See Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989) 178-179.

[9] An examination of the famous "cowboy shirt" brouhaha is conducted in Julien Temple's *Filth and the Fury*, a 1999 documentary on the Sex Pistols (Film4 Productions, 1999).

[10] Punk garnered its first cover placement in West Germany in the *Spiegel*'s 23rd January, 1978 edition. Emblazoned with ransom-note letters spelling out "PUNK," in a move which reproduces an iconic Sex Pistols album design, the *Spiegel* cover supplies a reading of the images it compiles: "Kultur aus den Slums, brutal und häßlich."
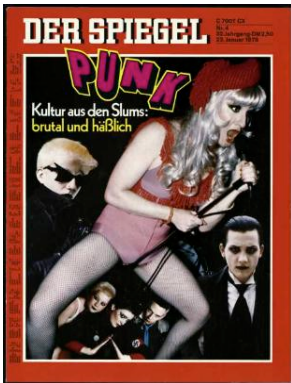
Fig. 1: *Spiegel* cover, 23rd January, 1978.

As "PUNK" names, "Kultur aus den Slums" explains—it assigns the familiar class-inflected point of origin to the figures the cover presents—and "brutal und häßlich" judges. The article associated with the cover also describes punk's offensive aspects frankly, while providing some sympathetic context for them. It avails itself of a declensive narrative that blunts punk's shock value, and uses class as a category in explaining punk: "Häßlich geschminkte Jugendliche tragen in Müll-Klamotten, mit Nazi-Insignien und Hunde-ketten Protest gegen Arbeitslosigkeit und Langeweile in der Industriegesellschaft zur Schau. Ihr primitiver "Punk-Rock" wird von Plattenfirmen erfolgreich vermarktet. Jet-Setter von New York bis München empfinden die Lumpen-Mode als letzten Schick. Doch echte Punker dehen den Rummel schon kritisch: "Da läuft irgendwas schief" (140). Rather than being sensationalized, the swastika is read in its proximity to the dog collar, and both are understood as being marshaled in protest against unemployment and boredom. But it's not just history that's blunted the sign's edge; cooptation, has, as well. Because the Jet Set finds punk fashionable, punk's legitimacy (or efficacy) as a political statement has already been foreclosed-upon—insofar as anything is permitted of the fashionable, apparently, nothing they do can be construed as truly political. But beyond this, whatever spasmodic protest is at stake is not being *ausgedruckt* [expressed], *artikuliert* [articulated], or *vorgestellt* [represented]. Rather, it is being put "on display," *zur Schau getragen*—presented not as an argument for change, or purposeful rhetorical gambit, but as an aesthetic object: something to be seen, and contemplated.

[11] A 1979 article on specifically West German punk preserves a stage in the further evolution of German punk journalism's class-concepts. With its reference to Ton Steine Scherben's famous song and slogan, the article's title—"Macht kaput"—proposes that West German punk's family tree might have some roots in West Berlin and the squatter scene. However, the target of the destruction is left out: punk's status as an organized revolutionary body is indeterminate. Even if its disinterest with participatory politics is reproduced in photo captions which read "Ich verweigere mich total" and "Keinen Bock auf Illusionen," punk is not a progressive negator here. And where the punks' ethos is discussed, it fails by dint of its own vocabulary: "Ihre Forderungen sind wirklich nicht konkret, dafür um so mehr ihre Abneigungen—gegen Erwachsenenwelt und Industriegesellschaft, gegen Popper, Die reichen Kids mit Papas Kohle, gegen 'Bullen' und 'daily terror.' Unter die wenigen programmatischen Äußerungen, zu denen Punks bereit sind, gehört vorzugsweise die Floskel: 'Ich verweigere mich total.'" One word, *Floskel*, assigns punk's radical denial the subordinate status of a conversational ornament, or tautology. But punk's power is not its directional force, or the incisiveness of its critique. Punk makes abandonment of the terms of politics public: "ich verweigere mich total" is a verbalization of *disengagement* from politics, revolutionary or otherwise: here, a German punk characterizes his own elaborately assembled textuality as uncommitted, uninvolved, disinterested, un-engaged. Rather than appearing in *Popmusik*, where a 1977 article on the Sex Pistols had appeared, or constituting the title feature, this 1979 article, "Macht Kaputt," was filed in the *Gesellschaft* (Society) section of the magazine—where more "serious" cultural topics were debated. For the 1977 article, see "Ratten in Jeans." *Spiegel* 16/1977 (11th April, 1977) 212-215. The article is unsigned.

[12] Photoreproduced in Gilbert Furian and Nikolaus Becker, *Auch im Osten trägt man Westen: Punks in der DDR – und was aus ihnen geworden ist*. (Berlin: Tilsner, 2000) 72. On unemployment: "Nach

Berechnungen der DDR beläuft sich die Zahl der arbeitslosen Jugendlichen in den hochentwickelten kapitalistischen Ländern gegenwärtig auf mehr als 7 Millionen!"

[13] Insofar as the punk realizes his circumstances are unjust, and rejects them, his response to his surroundings is a just one; however, *petit-bourgeois* and anarchistic ideals impinge upon the progressive potential of his response, and the punk's text unorganized anger, rather than true, directed radicalism. In keeping with this article's sympathy for the misguided, the statement about the swastikas is especially odd. While their use exemplifies the punk's *Verwirrung*, it notably does *not* index any latent fascist tendencies. The extent of the punk's deviation from what would be the appropriate revolutionary course only takes him as far as the *petit-bourgeois* and the anarchistic—not so far as the *reaktionär* or *faschistisch*. Despite the extremity of its tendencies, punk poses no threat to social order. "Statt einer sozialen Revolution," *nl* writes, die ohnehin nur an der Seite des organisierten Proletariats zu erreichen wäre, wird die Rebellion einer kleinen Gruppe innerhalb der Gesellschaft proklamiert, die sich selbstredend im Rahmen der bürgerlichen Kultur bewegt."

[14] See Charles Allen, "Fäulnis mit Musik." *Weltbühne: Wochenschrift für Politik, Kunst, und Wirtschaft.* (10 November 1981) 1415-1416.

[15] See Charles Allen, "Fäulnis mit Musik" 1415.

[16] In *Subculture*, Hebdige drew lines of analogy and influence between skinhead, mod, and Edwardian cultures of the 1960s to punk. But in an attempt to make a case for (fascist) ideological affinity between punks and skinheads, Allen surreptitiously corrupts and conscripts Hebdige's analysis of points of social or tactical, but *not* ideological or thematic, overlap between punks and early skinheads—groups which remain distinct entities for Hebdige. Allen offers no direct quotations or additional evidence to support the "punks succeeded the skinheads" thesis: the only text Allen brings under careful consideration, Penelope Spheeris's documentary *The Decline of Western Civilization* (1981), contains no claims, by punks or anyone else, that punks succeeded skinheads. This would have been an incredible claim at any rate, since skinhead affiliations with the extreme right led to physical conflict, rather than cooperation or ideological overlap, with punks. (Perhaps most notably, racist skinhead presence in proximity to punk led to the formation of two distinct, ideologically opposed rock festival groupings—Rock Against Racism [RAR] and Rock Against Communism [RAC]—in Britain.) In their book on racist skinheads, Pete Simi and Robert Futrell write that "early US racist skinheads in the 1970s and 1980s drew inspiration from disaffected British skinheads associated with the extreme right-wing national Front and the British National Party. Prior to the mid-1980s, skinhead racism was limited mainly to intermittent local conflicts with nonwhites and minority street gangs." Thus though there was some degree of trans-Atlantic influence as far as the right-radicalization of skinheads was concerned, US skinhead racism was a phenomenon of the late 1970s and 1980s—*not*, as Allen has it, of the pre-punk 1960s—and developed contemporaneously to, but not within, punk contexts. See Pete Simi, Robert Futrell. *American Swastika: Inside the White Power Movement's Hidden Spaces of Hate.* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010) 15. For the German case, things are a bit more complex, as a number of (relatively) curious developments in the distribution of punk and skinhead music meant that the two groupings rubbed shoulders a bit more frequently than was the case, by the mid-1980s, in the United States or Britain, where distinct scenes, replete with their own record labels, venues, and politics, allowed for the separate and *generally* peaceful coexistence of punk and skinhead groups—though occasional streetfights are the exception that prove this rule. Herbert Egoldt, the proprietor of a Brühl record shop, began in the early 1980s to release (and make available for mail order) records by German and Finnish punk groups whose lyrics trended Left-ward. By the mid-1980s, though, he also released records by German, English, and Scandinavian skinhead groups whose records clearly espoused neo-fascist thought. Genre-mixing makes it difficult to say whether these qualify as punk records or not. The word did not appear on any of them, and Skrewdriver's *Hail the New Dawn* is given over to a much more metallic, slow sound than the punk they had played earlier on their Chiswick release *All Skrewed Up*.

[17] See Allen, "Fäulnis mit Musik" 1416.

[18] *Öffentliche Herabwürdigung* was the actual name of the charge. See Tina Krone, Irena Kukutz, and Henry Leide. *Wenn wir unsere Akten lesen. Handbuch zum Umgang mit den Stasi-Unterlagen,* (Berlin: BasisDruck, 1997). They write: "Der Paragraf 220 des Strafgesetzbuches von 1968 bestraft die öffentliche Herabwürdigung staatlicher Organe oder gesellschaftlicher Organisationen, das Tragen von Symbolen, die die öffentliche Ordnung und das sozialistische Zusammenleben beeinträchtigen können oder die gesellschaftliche Ordnung verächtlich machen, mit einer Freiheitsstrafe bis zu 3 Jahren."

[19] See BStU, MfS HA XXII #596/2. 12.

[20] John Peel's show, syndicated on West German radio.

[21] See Dimitri Leningrad, "Die Punker vom Prenzlauer Berg." *TIP* 15.82 (1982) 18-19.

[22] Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*. Trans. Rose Strunsky. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1960) 138.

[23] Trotsky was not the only thinker who tied the emergence of the New Man to culture, and his linkage of the New Man's emergence to a legislation of culture under the circumstances of state socialism is actually prefigured by a formulation less concerned with orthodoxy. In May of 1918, Dada provocateur Richard Hülsenbeck described a New Man. He wrote, "Der neue Mensch weiß den Tod zu fürchten um des ewigen Lebens willen; denn er will seiner Geistigkeit ein Monument setzen, er hat Ehre im Leib, er denkt edeler als ihr. Er denkt: Malo libertatem quam otium servitium. Er denkt: Alles soll leben—aber einse muß aufhören—der Bürger, der Dicksack, Der Freßhans, das Mastschwein der Geistigkeit, der Türhüter aller Jämmerlichkeiten. . . ." For Hülsenbeck, the cessation of the bourgeois (man) is a necessary condition for the new man's emergence. Whereas the fat bourgeois stands at the threshold of all pitiable things, the New Man embodied honor, intellectuality, and nobility of thought. Caught up in the syntactic tumult and citational fury of his own radical artistic practices, Hülsenbeck imagines a radically new human.
See Richard Hülsenbeck, "Der Neue Mensch." *Neue Jugend*, 23 May 1917.

[24] Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* 255-256. Before this: "Man will make it his purpose to master his own feelings, to raise his instincts to the heights of consciousness, to make them transparent, to extend the wires of his will into hidden recesses, and thereby to raise himself to a new plane, to create a higher social biologic type, or, if you please, a superman. It is difficult to predict the extent of self-government which the man of the future may reach or the heights to which he may carry his technique." He continues: "Man will become immeasurably stronger, wiser, and subtler; his body will become more harmonized, his movements more rhythmic, his voice more musical. The forms of life will become dynamically dramatic. The average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above this ridge new peaks will rise."

[25] See Rosalinde Sartorti, "Helden des Sozialismus in der Sowjetunion: zur Einführung." *Sozialistische Helden: eine Kulturgeschichte von Propagandafiguren in Osteuropa und der DDR*. Eds. Silke Satjukow and Rainer Gries. (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2002) 36-38. In her work on actually-existing socialist heroes and their celebration throughout state socialist Europe, Sartorti writes of early efforts to create *Helden der Arbeit* [heroes of work] that the "neue selbstlose Einstellung" imputed to such individuals "setzte jedoch ein entsprechendes politisches Bewußtsein voraus, das sich die große Mehrheit erst noch aneignen mußte."

[26] See Emmerich, *Kleine Literaturgeschichte* 117. "So berichtete z.B. das "Neue Deutschland" 1952 von einer Schriftstellerinitiative, die sich bemühte, UIlbrichts Forderung nach Gestaltung des 'neuen Menschen, des Aktivisten, des Helden des sozialistischen Aufbaus' in die Tat umsetzen: 'die in Aussicht genommenen Themen unterteilten sich in folgende drei Hauptabschnitte: 1. Das neue Leben auf dem Land, 2. Aufbau unserer industriellen Schwepunkte, 3. Wiederaufbau Berlins […] Der junge Lyriker Paul Wiens hat sich entschlossen, Probleme des Wiederaufbaus von Berlin lyrisch zu gestalten. […] Fred Reichwald arbeitet bereits an einem Schauspiel, das die Produktionssteigerung in Zusammenhang mit der Demokratisierung des Dorfes behandelt'…"

[27] Marc Silberman stresses the degree to which Müller's *Produktionsstücke*'s relationship to Brecht remains a topic of debate. See *Heiner Müller*. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1980) 28-33.

[28] This does not, however, result in a dismissal or rejection of socialist reconstruction's utopian ambit. As Jost Hermand observes in his review of *Krieg ohne Schlacht: Leben in zwei Diktaturen*, "Die gleiche Parteilichkeit wie auch der gelcihe Realismus, die beiden Hauptforderungen einer marxistischen Ästhetik, zeichnen Müllers Stücke *Die Korrektur*, *Die Umsiedlerin*, *Der Bau*, und *Zement* aus, die sich zwar in äußerst provozierender Form mit den Schwierigkeiten beim Aufbau des Sozialzmus auseinandersetzen, aber dabei keineswegs auf jene Utopie verzichten, der Müller in der Zeile 'Ich bin die Fähre zwischen Eiszeit und Kommune' seine prägnanteste Formulierung gab." See Hermand, "Diskursive Widersprüche." *Mit den Toten reden. Fragen an Heiner Müller*. (Köln: Böhlau, 1999) 99.

[29] Bathrick, *Powers of Speech* 112. Bathrick's reading rightly foregrounds Müller's critical method, including its indebtedness to Brecht, in suggesting that the piece's divisive, ambivalent protagonist is characterized as such to stimulate audience members' critical appraisal of the events as narrated.

[30] Heiner Müller, "Der Lohndrücker." *Stücke 1*. Ed. Frank Hörnigk. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000) 45.

[31] See Heiner Müller, "Der Lohndrücker" 63.

[32] See Heiner Müller, "Zement." *Geschichten aus der Produktion 2.* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1974) 113.

[33] Heiner Müller, "Zement" 125-126.

[34] Quoted disapprovingly in Allen's 1981 piece for *Weltbühne*: "'Du wirst sterben!'"

[35] Peter Weiss, "10 Arbeitspunkte eines Autors in der geteilten Welt" [10 working points of an author in the divided world]. *Rapporte 2*. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971) 14.

[36] See Weiss, "10 Arbeitspunkte" 14.

[37] Weiss therefore states that in West Germany, an author's "recognition of the social boundaries is accompanied by great difficulty," as it entails a misrecognition of aesthetic freedom as absolute freedom (16-17)

[38] A shift of perspective, Weiss suggests, was necessary for him to understand this. "Herangewachsen unter der Vorstellung einer unbedingten Ausdrucksfreiheit, sehen wir uns hier in unserm Vorhaben behindert—solange wir den Eigenwert der Kunst höher schätzen als ihren Zweck."

[39] See Weiss, "Arbeitspunkte" 18.

[40] Though hardly the first piece to puzzle through engagement's attractions and pitfalls, or to conceive of an authorial stance as having something crucial to do with the material efficacy of a text, Weiss's "10 Arbeitspunkte" attests to the continued complexity of art's social positioning during the Cold War, and to the great importance attached not only to art, but to the attitudes of its protagonists: artists. In principle, Weiss, chooses what he identifies as the socialist theory of art. After stating outright that "die Richtlinien des Sozialismus enthalten für mich die gültige Wahrheit," he rejects the disconnectedness "[*Bindungslosigkeit*]" of un-engaged art as presumptious, See Weiss, "Arbeitspunkte" 23.

[41] See Wolfgang Emmerich, *Kleine Literaturegeschichte der DDR. Erweiterte Ausgabe.* (Leipzig: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1996) 41.

[42] See Helmut Peitsch, *Nachkriegsliteratur 1945-1989.* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2009) 233-234. Peitsch: "The gradual permitting of the techniques of classically modernist literature by the official theory of socialist realism—together with that literature's gradual publication into the middle of the 1970s—was connected to the limiting of critique. . . . It was thus expected of authors that they adopt the "perspective of the planners and directors," in order to achieve the "victory of socialist realism" through the "development of the ideal of the socialist person [*sozialistische{s} Menschenbild*]. Such an active participation by literature in socialist society was contrasted to the [idea that it maintain] the stance of an observer; at the core of this position, 'critical distance' was rejected."

[43] Emmerich, *Kleine Literaturgeschichte* 48. Other art forms operated within the bounds of similar situations. Detailed accounts spanning a variety of "eras" in East German art, which address how particular aesthetic or thematic goals could be inscribed at the level of production, are available for film (Seán Allan, "DEFA: An Historical Overview" *DEFA: East German Cinema, 1946-1992.* Eds. Seán Allan and John Sandford. [Oxford; New York: Berghahn, 1999] 1-21), theatre (Laura Bradley, *Cooperation and Conflict: GDR Theatre Censorship, 1961-1989* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011] 16-24), the visual arts and material culture (Dieter Vorsteher, ed. *Parteiauftrag: ein neues Deutschland: Bilder, Rituale, und Symbole der frühen DDR.* [München; Berlin: Köhler & Amelang, 1997] *passim*, esp. 9-15 and 20-39), music (Elizabeth Janik. *Recomposing German Music: Politics and Musical Tradition in Cold War Berlin.* [Leiden: Brill, 2005]; and Michael Rauhut, *Rock in der DDR 1964 bis 1989.* [Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2002]), and other art forms, though these are among the clearest and most thorough resources.

[44] See Walter Ulbricht, "Der Fünfjahrplan des friedlichen Aufbaus." *Zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Aus Reden und Aufsätzen. Band IV: 1950-1954.* (Berlin: Dietz, 1958) 52.

[45] See Walter Ulbricht, "Fünfjahrplan" 53.

[46] As much has been written about this event as about any other in the cultural history of East Germany. A good place to start, when familiarizing oneself with the films, critics, and party leaders involved in the 11th Plenum's retrenchment of lassitude in cultural policy, is the *Materialband* entitled *Kahlschlag*. See Günter Agde, ed. *Kahlschlag: Das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED 1965. Studien und Dokumente.* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1991).

[47] Alexander Abusch, "Grundprobleme unserer sozialistischen Literatur und Filmkunst" *Humanismus und Realismus in der Literatur.* (Frankfurt a.M.: Röderberg, 1977) 247. Abusch: "Woher kommt es, daß in einigen Drehbüchern zu Filmen und Fernsehstücken ein Kult des Zweifelns an allem, was unsere sozialistische Gesellschaft verkörpert, eine Scheu vor jeder Bejahung des Lebens hervortritt? Woher kommt es, daß in diesen Drehbüchern der Mensch bei uns so dargestellt wird, als ob er, wie in

Westdeutschland, gegen die ihm feindliche Umwelt der der Gesellschaft und ihrer Repräsentanten seinen Weg gehen müsse? Woher kommt diese lebensunwahre "Konflikte" nur um des Effektes und der "Interessantheit" willen häufende Gestaltungsweise, die auch ein angeklebter, schematisch "positiver" und deshalb künstlerisch unglaubwürdiger Schluß nicht ändert[?]"

[48] See Helmut Peitsch, *Nachkriegsliteratur 1945-1989*. (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2009) 233-234. So wurde vom Schriftsteller verlangt, den "Blickwinkel des Planers und Leiters" zu übernehmen um durch die "Ausprägung des sozialistischen Menschenbildes" den "Sieg des sozialistischen Realismus" in der DDR zu erreichen." Eine solche aktive Teilnahme der Literatur an der sozialistischen Gesellschaft wurde im Gegensatz gestellt zu einer Beobachterhaltung; als Kern dieser Haltung wurde "kritische Distanz" abgelehnt."

[49] Here, I refer not just to the Zhdanovite formulations of the immediate postwar period, but to the Expressionism debates of the inter-War period, as well—within which *engagement* was among the most central topics.

[50] See Walter Ulbricht, "Fünfjahrplan" 53.

[51] Jean-Paul Sartre, "Qu'est-ce que la littérature?" (1947) *What is Literature? and Other Essays*. Trans. Philosophical Society (New York), Ed. and intr. Steven Ungar. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988) 21-246.

[52] This is a crucial distinction for Sartre's piece and one whose justification is provided partially categorically—as when he writes "notes, colors, and forms are not signs. They refer to nothing exterior to themselves" (25)—and partially historically, in the form of the extended reconstruction of the institutional and economic changes which impacted art as Europe industrialized and bourgeois, then proletarian consciousness repositioned (progressive) authors within a shifting cultural landscape (see esp. the section "Situation of the Writer in 1947," 141-239).

[53] Sartre, "What Is Literature?" 36-37.

[54] "The writer is, *par excellence*, a mediator and his commitment is to mediation." See Sartre, "What Is Literature?" 77.

[55] Sartre, "What Is Literature?" 67. "If [the writer] accepts being the creator of injustices, it is in a movement which goes beyond them toward their abolition...although literature is one thing and morality a quite different one, at the heart of the aesthetic imperative we discern the moral imperative." By "creating…injustices"—and here Sartre means creating an impactful and realistic representation of an unjust world—the committed author also creates the prospect of those injustices' potential resolution. "Since readers, like the author, recognize [the freedom of men as posited by committed writing] only to demand that it manifest itself, the work can be defined as an imaginary presentation of the world in so far [sic] as it demands human freedom."

[56] Sartre, "What Is Literature?" 224.

[57] The talk has been published on the SSRC's excellent web resource on the public sphere. See Lauren Berlant, "Affect, Noise, Silence, Protest: Ambient Citizenship." *Transformations of the Public Sphere*. Social Science Research Council. 20th November 2009. Web. Accessed 23rd October, 2011. <http://publicsphere.ssrc.org/berlant-affect-noise-silence-protest-ambient-citizenship/>

[58] Theodor W. Adorno, "Commitment." *Notes to Literature Volume Two*. Ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992) 76-94.

[59] See Adorno, "Commitment" 78.

[60] See Adorno, "Commitment" 79.

[61] See Adorno, "Commitment" 93.

[62] See Adorno, "Commitment" 90.

Chapter 2: Satellit Sascha

This chapter studies the work of Sascha Anderson. Anderson was a poet, East German punk, and longtime Stasi collaborator who occupies a central position in post-1989 debates about the nexus of politics and poetics in the GDR. Anderson's informing for the secret police coincided with his organization of poetry readings, concerts, round-tables, and book publications for the clandestine artistic circles of the Prenzlauer Berg. Precisely because he led this double life, Anderson quickly became an emblem of the East German counterpublic spheres—an untrustworthy, ultimately irredeemable outsider whose onetime importance was immediately countered by the exposure of his duplicity. But where the best studies of Anderson's activities are right to explore how Anderson's context influenced his writing and self-presentation in public, they still tend to underplay the work punk did for Anderson's aesthetic.

Here, I argue that the publicly withdrawn subject-position which Anderson crafted (and continues to craft) in his *oeuvre* was, in fact, a punk subject position. Even if the charges of self-exculpation through mystification and postmodernist obscurantism leveled by Anderson's most vociferous critics are true, I suspect they don't paint the whole picture. In punk, this chapter shows, Sascha Anderson found a scene which allowed him to materially transgress the political and cultural boundaries of Cold War Berlin. Furthermore, when it came time to craft his infamously evasive description of his Stasi collaboration,[1] it was punk which provided Anderson with a practice and language of self-fashioning that allowed him to present himself as ostentatiously apartisan,

disengaged actor damaged by circumstance. Where Anderson's most outspoken critics have criticized his irresolute authorial persona as evasive and self-exculpating, I add to their critique an explication of the mechanics of Anderson's evasiveness.

Two Saschas

Sascha Anderson was born in Weimar in 1953, the child of a theatre director and an architect. He lived in Dresden and Weimar as an apprentice typesetter with the *Sächsische Zeitung*, an apprentice at a theatre, and a production assistant for an experimental film. He got to Berlin in the early-1970s, and became involved in the then-burgeoning alternative art scenes in the Prenzlauer Berg. Under Anderson's direction, the avant-garde/punk group Zwitschermaschine managed the West German release of *ddr von unten / eNDe*, a split 12" featuring the work of Anderson's own group and of the Erfurter punk band Schleimkeim. In addition, Anderson published a volume of his lyric poetry in West Germany in 1981.[2] Furthermore, with Elke Erb, Anderson published the 1985 anthology *Berührung ist nur eine Randerscheinung*,[3] a volume which introduced West German readers to the postmodernist poetry of the Prenzlauer Berg. Erb's and Anderson's framing texts, along with those of their publisher, authenticated the Prenzlauer circles in the West German public sphere as producing a formally and epistemologically anti-conformist art which stood in direct opposition to the work of previous East German intellectuals.[4] Upon his emigration from East Germany in 1986, Sascha Anderson had made himself one of East Germany's most visible young artists and writers—within the clandestine circles whose productivity he helped publish, in the East German public sphere, and in West Germany as well.[5]

It did not take long for Anderson's status as East Germany's most visible literary rebel of the early 1980s to take on a new, more sinister aspect. In 1991, the possibility that he had collaborated with the Stasi became a property of public discourse when Wolf Biermann used his *Büchnerpreis* acceptance speech to criticize Anderson.[6] And when a preponderance of archival evidence validated Biermann's broadside, Anderson's emblematic status with respect to East German literature acquired an entirely new resonance.

The facts were clear. Sascha Anderson began working as an unofficial collaborator (IM) in January of 1970. Operating under code names which included "David Menzer" and "Fritz Müller," Anderson provided the Stasi with extremely detailed reports on the Berlin art circles he helped direct and develop. Even as he spearheaded projects which resulted in the illegal publication of music and literature abroad, and moved within a dozen different literary microscenes that composed the churchbound Prenzlauer Berg counter-culture, Anderson provided his Stasi caseworkers with detailed accounts of his own movements and those of his Prenzlauer compatriots. For the participants in the *Literaturstreit* which was taking shape in the inchoate Berlin Republic's public sphere, then, Sascha Anderson added to his status as East German oppositional writing's key figure by becoming, through the very nature of his positioning and collaboration, an emblem for the moral minefield that East German literary and artistic production was thought to be. Specifically: Anderson was a mover and shaker whose actions testified to both the vibrancy of oppositional art and letters in East Germany, and to the thoroughness of Stasi knowledge about such projects. If Anderson was the linchpin of the entire Prenzlauer phenomenon—and, organizationally speaking,

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he was—then revelations of Anderson's collaboration condemned the entire scene after the fact.

As a result, given the contrast between his outsider's *oeuvre* and his active informing, Anderson's body of work has become an example of the opacity of ethics. In a 2002 review essay, Julia Hell proposed that "[the abjection of] Anderson seems to be the price that has to be paid when the re-evaluation of GDR culture becomes an effort to wrench 'good' literature from the 'bad' conditions of its production, the effort to separate literature from politics." In her view, Anderson "has become a screen for the projections of his fellow citizens, the projection of all of the small acts of betrayal and cowardice and accommodation that were required in the east—and are also to some extent part of life in the west."[7] Ten years ago, when Anderson published a book marketed and received as an autobiography,[8] this was surely the case in the German press. Reviews of the book were uniformly hostile, and each seized upon Anderson's dissembling approach to writing his own autobiography as a final act of literary cowardice. The reception of the book's aesthetic failure was at heart a reception of the man's ethical failure. When critics turned to its episodic, evasive narrative form and tortured syntax, these were held to reveal— rather than obscure—the essentially confused, incoherent, and untrustworthy character of *Sascha Anderson*'s author. In this way, Anderson's failures—in art, in life—are recombined in ritualistic critical dismissals of Anderson's accomplishments which authorize broader condemnations of the Prenzlauer Berg's cultural production as having been ethically and institutionally compromised all along.

But though his status as a key figure of the Republic's young poetic generation has now been subordinated to his status as Sascha Arschloch, the Stasi's poet,[9] Sascha

Anderson's status as a *punk* remains a less-considered aspect of his public persona. And so even though the editorial introduction to *Berührung* stresses that "bei den hier versammelten Autoren häufig eine Verbindung zu anderen künstlerischen Bereichen, speziell zur bildenden Kunst, Malerei und Graphik, und zur Musik, vor allem Jazz, Rockmusik, und Punk besteht,"[10] since 1991 it is only in literature on GDR punk that Anderson's proximity to that particular scene is even mentioned, let alone emphasized as a major part of his productivity.[11] None of the major reviews of *Sascha Anderson*— whether in the *Zeit* or *Spiegel*, the *FAZ* or the *Süddeutsche*—makes any mention of punk, even as each devotes substantial space to examining Anderson's position within literary scenes, and his contamination of their critical potential.

This is not a minor oversight. David Bathrick has argued that the Prenzlauer Berg's enduring significance for criticism has to do with the relationships between language and power in East Germany that it laid bare, with the insights its successes and failures afford us into the history of artistically articulated cultural critique in East Germany, and with the generational conflicts which characterize that history.[12] For Bathrick, the Prenzlauer Berg's position between two "establishments"—that represented by SED culture policy and its only tendential relaxation of formal strictures and publishing regulations in the mid-1980s, on the one hand, and that represented by the still-Communist reformism of an older intellectual generation, on the other, is what gives the culture its unique status in the cultural history of East Germany. The Prenzlauer Berg was neither strictly dissident nor clearly conformist, neither autonomous with respect to the regulatory force of the SED state nor entirely under party control, neither purely West-oriented nor exclusively committed to employing East German representational

techniques. It was a liminal culture, positioned between public spheres and periodizations—a scene of multiple affiliations, with several different audiences and more than a few loyalties.[13] No theory of the poetics of the Prenzlauer Berg's key figure, Sascha Anderson, can be complete which does not attend to *all* the representational techniques he employed, and not just to the poststructuralist and deconstructionist ones which have predominated in accounts of the Prenzlauer scenes' transnational imprimatur. This chapter therefore advances the investigation of Anderson's aesthetic of betrayal by pushing beyond flat descriptions of his evasiveness; it investigates *how* his disengagement operated, in prose and in verse.

In what follows, I first review some key scholarly interventions into the Anderson problematic, highlighting their successes and clarifying what my own contribution is. I then reiterate the importance of engagement for the East German literary culture within which (and outside of which) Anderson operated, adding a few brief words about the perceived value of *Kultureerbe* (artistic inheritance). Before turning to an analysis of Anderson's work, I recall some key elements of punks' renunciation of engagement. Finally, I argue that Sascha Anderson managed to ascribe his contradictory deeds to a single, coherent authorial personage for whom both kinds of activity, organization and denunciation, are represented as being of equal importance. This is because he availed himself of a disengaged, punk subject-position—of a stance which is not a stance, but which doesn't preclude writing or singing, and which in fact requires the contumate, public performance of one's own disengagement from circumstance.

Anderson drew upon aesthetic techniques both inherited from Germany's prewar past, and adapted from across the Wall. Specifically, he worked with avant-garde

techniques of citation, recombination, and juxtaposition, and cited Foucault's and

Barthes's investigations of the relationships between language and power. But he also

drew upon the German canon; Goethe, Hölderlin, and others came in for reworking in

Anderson's poetic productivity. What allowed these borrowings from the past and from

abroad to work together was something else he borrowed from abroad: punk. Punk served

Anderson as an epistemology and as an aesthetic, and provided the centripetal force his

complex self-fashioning required in order not to fall apart. In demonstrating that the

articulation of Anderson's self-understanding—and his maintenance of himself as a

coherent property—relied on punk to work, I hope to show how important an aspect of

Anderson's case punk really is.

The Prenzlauer Berg and Andersonology

Before Schedlinski's and Anderson's complicity surfaced, and especially before

the Berlin Wall fell, critics suggested that the Prenzlauer Berg artists offered dissenting

viewpoints on East German cultural production, and challenged GDR aesthetic norms by

adducing Western postmodernist techniques in their work. This was particularly true in

the West German papers, for instance, where Heiner Sylvester's *Spiegel* review dubbed

the *Berührung* volume a collection of "Gegenentwürfe zur herrschenden Ideologie" that

added up to an "existentieller Schrei gegen Wände und Grenzen."[14] And a *Zeit* editorial

on the modernization (sic) of East German literature toward the end of the 1980s made

reference to Jan Faktor's multivolume "Manifest der Trivialpoesie" in arguing that "die

jungen Künstler wehren sich nicht nur gegen das lastende Erbe des 'Sozialistischen

Realismus' mit seinen überkommenen ästhetischen Kriterien, sondern auch gegen eine

konservative Kulturpolitik, die die Künstler nach wie vor gängelt."[15] Readings such as these seem quaintly optimistic in light of the vehemence with which the Prenzlauer Berg's oppositional bona fides were dismissed after the IM collaboration became public. Indeed, even Christoph Tannert—a publisher, critic, and curator who published otherwise unpublishable materials with his URSUS PRESS—concluded in a dour 1996 essay that the "partielle Autonomie nonkonformistischer Positionen in der DDR" had, in light of Anderson's and Schedlinki's activities, proven itself to have been no more than a "Trugbild" all along. All in all: "ein Ausstieg aus dem System innerhalb der Grenzen des Systems war nicht möglich."[16]

Even if post-Wall skepticism about the Prenzlauer Berg's autonomy is understandable, taking such doubt too seriously risks losing sight of its historical significance. After all, it was a group of performing spaces and publishing possibilities which were largely unregulated by the East German ministry for culture, and whose musicians, performers, and poets therefore produced work which was substantially different from other East German art and literature of the day. Notwithstanding the derision of Tannert, Biermann,[17] and many protagonists of the *Literaturstreit*, the Prenzlauer Berg scene[18] remains a unique phenomenon, both with respect to the East German cultural context and the history of Germany in the Cold War.

This was in part due to its actual border-crossing between East and West. Figures associated with the Prenzlauer Berg scene like Franz Fühmann, Wolfgang Hilbig, Sascha Anderson and Elke Erb all published with West German houses while still working at least part-time in East Berlin. But it was also due to its stylistic border-crossing. While blues, jazz, funk, beat, and punk had found protagonists in both East and West Berlin, it

was in the Prenzlauer Berg that these pop music genres were deployed alongside self-reflexive composition, degradations of lyrical form and orthography, and meta-critiques of poetic language and structure whose argumentation borrowed from Derrida, Barthes, and Foucault. Prenzlauer Berg polymathism and self-reflexivity was a phenomenon unique to East Berlin, but its trajectories of affiliation led into, and out of, the East German security state, whose infiltration of Prenzlauer Berg churches, lofts, and courtyards lends this outsider culture a third novel aspect. Nowhere, in East or West Germany, was so much attention paid to ostensibly marginal artists by politicians who so thoroughly enjoyed the upper hand. From the very beginning, the poets and the punks performed their back-alley art for each other and for their police observers. And yet, they performed. Reopening the investigation into the poetics of the figure at the center of this complex, Sascha Anderson, is one way of disentangling the Prenzlauer Berg's complex affiliations—political and aesthetic—while keeping focused on one tangible biography and delimitable body of work.

Alison Lewis's 2003 work *Die Kunst des Verrats: Der Prenzlauer Berg und die Staatssicherheit* studies Anderson's life and work in detail.[19] Lewis's historically-minded approach to the Prenzlauer Berg, and to MfS-collaboration by its participants, is not a partial institutional history of the MfS, or a chronicle of the Prenzlauer Berg. Rather, it analyzes the Prenzlauer artists' precarious position between the center and the periphery of state power in the GDR with the use of two IM case studies. By examining Rainer Schedlinski's and Sascha Anderson's positions within the Prenzlauer Berg scene and MfS information-culture, Lewis accounts for the contradictory dynamic that emerged from collaboration by putative dissidents. As she puts it, in her conclusion:

Mit einem Fuß im Feld der Macht verankert, dem anderen im Feld der oppositionellen Kultur, bewohnten die Informanten auf so genannten "feindlichem Boden" ein ideologisch und kulturpolitisch ambivalentes Terrain. Ihre doppelbödige Position in beiden Lagern prägte letztlich auch die Logik ihrer Handlungen. Als Akteure waren sie keine reine Stasizüchtung, sondern eher ein hybrides Gebilde, mal oppositionell, mal staatskonform und manchmal beides zugleich.[20] (254)

Lewis's work builds in important ways upon David Bathrick's 1995 book *Powers of Speech*, which theorized the dissident GDR intellectual in much the same way: as an ambivalent figure both relied upon, and thought of as fundamentally unreliable, by a state whose legitimatory discourses required the existence of a strong, particularly East German form of cultural production.[21] Where Bathrick theorized the Prenzlauer Berg cultures as contending not only with the state's explicit disapproval but with the disavowal of a prior generation of intellectuals, Lewis reads the scenes' emergence as symptomatic of the State's failure to maintain a convincing legitimatory discourse into the 1970s and 1980s. Picking up where Bathrick left off, Lewis's analysis of the MfS's internal discussions of the importance of IM work within artistic circles shows how no entity was more aware of the symptomaticity of the Prenzlauer Berg's challenges than the security apparatus of the state at which they were most frequently directed.

Lewis's work pursues Anderson's path through the archival materials made available by the BStU foundation, and examines his "*Bearbeitung*" [processing] as an IM. She reconstructs the Prenzlauer Berg's incorporation into the MfS's purview, and details the "operativ-bedeutsame Maßnahmen"—up to and including the recruitment of collaborators in centrally-located figures like Schedlinski and Anderson—taken to ensure there wouldn't be any politically undesireable surprises emanating from the scene.[22] She draws on archival materials and close readings of Prenzlauer Berg lyric poetry to argue

for the liminal positionality of each writer—caught between artistic and political generations, between stringent East German norms and what was at the time seen as Western innovation, between the reiteration and reimagination of the proper politics of aesthetics, and between their responsibilities to their peers and their responsibilities to their Stasi handlers.

My own work augments her analyses by proposing that punk was central to Anderson's negotiation of his liminality. I read a number of the same materials Lewis has: *Jeder Satellit hat einen Killersatelliten* (in particular, the eNDe cycle compiled within it), his writing for the Stasi, and his autobiography. But where Lewis relies on these sources to reconstruct Anderson's path through the Prenzlauer Berg to the Stasi headquarters in the Normannenstraße, I return to them to highlight something she leaves relatively undiscussed: the degree to which his post-1976 textual practices incorporate punk aesthetics, and punk epistemology, as a strategy of negotiating the competing allegiances whose conflict Lewis has already convincingly characterized.

The second monograph on Anderson is Sacha Szabo's 2002 dissertation, "Sascha Arschloch. Verrat der Ästhetik/ Ästhetik des Verrats. Werk und Leben des Lyrikers Sascha Anderson im Spannungsfeld von Poesie und Politik." At heart it is an Anderson biography which incorporates detailed—if somewhat hermetic—readings of the poet's lyrical work into its account of his life. Szabo ultimately hesitates to characterize the *oeuvre* as having primarily comprised Anderson's negotiation of his collaboration. Nevertheless, I find promising his concept of an *Ästhetik des Verrats* [aesthetics of betrayal]—a set of lyrical techniques which index the "betrayal" Anderson perpetrated, and in light of which his work can better be understood. Similarly compelling is Szabo's

suggestion that Anderson inherited this aesthetic of betrayal from the classical avant-garde's skepticism of traditional forms of poetic and visual representation, or appropriated it from his postmodernist contemporaries, from his theoretical interlocutors in France and the United States, or from punks. Where Szabo theorizes the aesthetic of betrayal as configured through specific formal devices like ellipsis and sophistic *reductio ad absurdum*, or the interpolation of myth, I study how this aesthetic of betrayal interacts with the punk texture of Anderson's work. By looking instead at the competition and corroboration of punk and the other elements of Anderson's work, we learn something new about the aesthetic of betrayal—about how Anderson squared his Stasi collaboration with his formal libertarianism and language-political critique.

Ein wirres Buch: *Sascha Anderson*

Sascha Anderson is neither autobiography nor novel, prose piece nor lyrical experiment. It's something of all these, and yet also a polemic and an apologia as well. As the book's early reviewers pointed out, its generic indecision and tonal heterogeneity had an exculpatory effect. Holger Kulick, writing for the *Spiegel*, puts a fine point on it: "Zwei Jahre nach den Aktenfunden hat Anderson nun ein wirres Buch über seine Vergangenheit geschrieben, das leider nur wenig klärt oder erklärt."[23] And Iris Radisch delineates the volume's shortcomings while conceding its contrary magnetism:

> Warum liest man diese unsinnige Buch dennoch mit einer gewissen verwunderten Neugier? Weil man den Verdacht nicht loswird, dass dieses verquaste, nicht selten völlig unverständliche, mit erborgten Begriffen spielende, sich in Genitivmetaphern und Substantivkaskaden verlierende, einen Jargon der romantischen Eigentlichkeit kultivierende, in summa völlig missglückte Werk—dennoch der erste unverlogene Text eines notorischen Lebenslügners ist.[24]

The book was not a clearly legible document of Anderson's life, and was therefore neither a *mea culpa* nor a *tu quoque*. And at the formal level, this generic wandering registered in *Anderson*'s deployment of vague (if allusive) language to obscure the context and circumstances of the events it narrates, and its lack of consistent narrative continuity across passages longer than four- or five-sentence clusters. The critical conclusions, then: *Sascha Anderson* ducks specificity and ends up being a text which, in many ways, says a lot and doesn't reveal very much.

Nevertheless, the temptation to dismiss this frequently frustrating text out-of-hand is worth resisting. While *Sascha Anderson* may not make clear the things about Sascha Anderson its initial audience most wanted to know, for my forthcoming reading—which does not "bracket" his collaboration, but is instead interested in how the figuration of that collaboration impinges upon the production of Anderson's narrating "I"—the book remains a rich resource. The text is so complexly structured that to impose a linear sense on it would be to force a conformity it refuses to exhibit. Because of this, my analysis does not proceed chronologically through the book, by tracing its plotlines or identifying its argument. Indeed, I am more interested in the texture of the book's language and its rhetorical strategies—and the degree to which these things are in dialogue with punk language—than I am interested in piecing together the events it narrates or gauging its fidelity to the truth of these events. I therefore prioritize two aspects of the book: first, its skepticism regarding the coherence of the self whose constitution it enacts; and second, its invocation of punk in discussions of sociability and culture in East Germany. Bringing these two things together—the self's failure to hold together as the sum of the parts it is supposed to have, and the adhesion of distinct marginal cultures in one scene—allows us

to rethink the characterization of its protagonist, "Sascha Anderson," in terms of punk disengagement rather than purely self-exculpatory evasiveness.

Pace Kulick, for whom this *dürftiges Buch* attempts a retreat from the harsh glare of the post-*Wende* spotlight, I argue that punk serves *Sascha Anderson* as an archive from which language can be drawn that actively disengages the narrator from his social context and allows him to treat his own dissolution of the bonds of loyalty and trust as an artistic statement with a familiar genealogy.

Though it is no standard autobiography, autobiographical gestures are present in *Sascha Anderson*. Place of birth and locus of early childhood? Weimar. Professional training? An apprenticeship with the *Sächsische Zeitung*. Family history? "Meine Mutter und ich, in einem vorübergehend freien Atelier einer Gründervilla im Dresdner Südosten bei Familie Sommer. Mutter und Kind. Der Vater, Kunstmaler und Kundschafter, Ostspion im westdeutschen Untersuchungsgefängnis." Though facts are present which orient the narrating subject's life in familial and geographic space, their presentation is a disorganized affair, and their fixity is questionable—Anderson does not provide reasons for his father's incarceration, nor does he speak at particular length on the incarceration's resonance for him. Instead, he forges ahead with characterizations of the *Jugendstil* house he and his mother share (60-61). Regarding these facts' significance relative to one another, but also their absolute significance, uncertainty reigns. Where the writing subject "Sascha Anderson" *is* seems more deserving of his and the reader's attention than where he and his family have *come from*. The view we receive of his childhood is obscured. Without an anchor, or true connection to the circumstances of his birth and subjectification, the narrator's childhood was characterized by an inattention to meaning

balanced by an overattention to pragmatic detail: "ich wusste nicht, was es bedeutet, sechzehn Jahre alt zu sein. Mein Gefühl für die Zeit beschränkte sich auf die Angst, die Ankunft des Zuges zu verschlafen." And his mooring in the details of his life was, at best, tenuous. "Ich hatte keinne Adresse, keine Telefonnummer," he writes when recalling a trip to Berlin during which he makes a failed attempt to become [step]father to a child—and thus to forge an authentic relationship with a woman and her child, a relationship in which he could find himself. He continues, "Ich hatte einen Ort und einen Namen, wie ich selbst nur ein Ort und ein Name ohne Adresse und Telefon war." The circularity of the formulation obscures the simplicity of the narrator's point. Where the fixity of digits and coordinates is lacking, one becomes a nameable unknown: Sascha A. (Dresden), the personage who might be quotable as such in a newspaper, but not locatable on the basis of the identifying information provided.

Here, the narrator's fundamental skepticism with respect to his identity formation and subjectification becomes clear. Despite being interpellated as related by blood to his family, by proximity to his city of residence and its inhabitants, or by conviction to his state, the young "Anderson" is disengaged from all of the relationships he is presumed to be in.[25] It's worth spending a word or two on this disengagement, and on a consideration of its ontological vs. its rhetorical status. Anderson's characterizational tactic, which emphasizes detachment and estrangement from the apparatuses of socialization, is of course not a novel one, or one unique to this particular kind of book (post-Wall texts about growing up in the GDR)—even within East German literature, where the individual's participation in an idiosyncratic form of publicity or public sphere, and her integration into the productive collective, had long been of central thematic importance.

Indeed, a number of post-Wall autobiographical texts—like, for instance, Claudia Rusch's *Meine Freie Deutsche Jugend* (whose sarcastic title already hints at the autobiography's central theme, that of cognitive dissonance and the narrating subject's failure to fully recognize herself in the persona which the State and her family meant for her to assume, even as she participated in and came to like or even love the practices which articulated that persona), published in 2003—have narrated lives characterized by their disconnectedness from the institutions within which they are led: the schools, the FDJ, the union, the family. Writ large, this narrative technique is simply one of disavowal. Ventriloquized: *sure, I was there, but I never really subscribed. There was the life I was supposed to lead, and the life I led, and they were distinct from one another—if not in practice, then in sentiment.*

But if the distinction between the *DDR-Bürger* and the *Staat* to whose demands they never quite acquiesced, was the aspect of East German subjectivity with which West Germans could feel most comfortable operating, Jana Hensel (*Zonenkinder*) takes issue with the notion that the split was a really-existing, rather than just a hoped-for, category. Writing of the post-"honeymoon" dismay (West) Germans expressed when dealing with East Germans' recalcitrance in the face of structural economic changes, Hensel remains skeptical that the "split" was ever really there: Kohl's presumption that "[d]ie Menschen konnten so bleiben, wie sie waren. Sie würden sich schon nicht als grundsätzlich anders erweisen" led to [what she calls] the greatest West German disappointment of the unification process: "die Ostdeutschen entpuppten sich mit der Zeit immer mehr als DDR-Bürger. Weil sie eben doch echte DDR-Bürger waren."[26] Here, the guilt-innocence dichotomy privileged by *Sascha Anderson*'s more vocal readers would demand a reading

according to which the subject-position's textually constituted distance from normative subjecthood is a technique of ethical evasion. The narrating voice does not ever fully or truly inhabit its locutionary (and perlocutionary) acts.

Through its treatment of punk, *Sascha Anderson* bridges this subject-object gap. Punk appears in explicit descriptions of music-making, and in an assembly of allusions and marshalling of punk signifiers in its description of how different forms of (marginalized) aesthetic practice could come to constitute a single marginalized culture, or scene. With respect to the second strategy, a number of allusions serve as veritable punk rock breadcrumbs, cognates constituting common ground between the language of Anderson's involvement with the Prenzlauer Berg and what he considered an international avant-garde on the one hand, and, on the other, the international punk language within which he operated during the 1980s.

Reading the Romanian-German poet Anemone Latzina's *Tagebuchtage*, Anderson finds himself struck by her rendering of the aesthetic process's attractions— "ein Licht," he calls her extraction of things from the context of instrumental productivity (*Tagwerk*): "nein, eine Sonne"—and becomes both intellectually and personally familiar with a new, international pantheon of creative figures. She wrote "[s]o dass ich auf Frank O'Hara stieß und auf Ans van Berkum, die mir Gedichte von Peter Orlovsky und seinem Lebensgefährten Allen Ginsberg aus Holland mitbringen würde." Being taken with poetry becomes being involved in the social context of its production, in the forging of connections with avant garde poets, American and European alike.

This mention of Ginsberg is significant. Though most famous for "Howl," of course, Ginsberg had by the mid-late-1970s—and this is the period of which Anderson

writes, as the episode begins in December 1979—already established a clear connection

to the Anglo-American punk rock scene. Indeed, he'd already written a poem, "Punk

Rock You're My Big Crybaby," and read it in the Mabuhay Gardens, to connect himself

to the American punks' scene on the strength of the performance space: "from Mabuhay

Gardens to CBGB's coast to coast / Skull to toe Gimme yr electric guitar naked / Punk

President, eat up the FBI w/ yr big mouth."[27] This is not the only reference Anderson

makes to a punk-associated poet—another, similar mention comes with an early

invocation of Jarry's famously scatological surrealist play *Ubu Roi*, which provided an

inspiration for surrealists and punks alike. In this way, through the invocation of

multiply-affiliated individuals, the cascade of experimental poets and post-Beat figures

acquires a point of immediate connection (Ginsberg's performance) with punk.

But the messianic invocation of light, and the implication that Anderson's narrator

has joined a transgressive and border-crossing creative class whose joint efforts and

common language transcend the political division of the world, are counterbalanced by a

darker assessment of what it means to be creative, and what the possibilities of textual

production really are. If the (punk-affiliated, but not essentially punk) avant-garde

represents a community of possibilities, and productivity within Anderson's Prenzlauer

Berg circles affords "Anderson" the opportunity to become what he wants to be, if only

briefly, then even this punk-invoking moment of reconciliation would seem at heart a

non-punk moment, after all—an affirmative, rather than negative, mode of being.

And indeed, punk rock—in particular, intraband psychodynamics—is discussed

explicitly as offering a solution to the problem of a subjective disengagement coded, in

this case, as ontologically given. When Anderson is released from prison, and joins the

Dresden collective Zwitschermaschine founded by his acquaintances Cornelia Schleime and Matthias Zeidler,[28] playing largely improvised music was both its own reward and the basis for an important sociability:

> Wer einen Text geschrieben hatte, sagte oder sang ihn über die ein, zwei Minuten schräger acht Sechzentel. Es ging nicht um Professionalität, um Pfründe auf einem nicht vorhandenen Markt, um den feinen Unterschied, um Kunst oder Leben. Es ging um die kurze Zeit gemeinsamen Instrumentierens, um eine etwas lautere Stimme als die des einzelnen, um die mit dem Gesagten verbundene Person, darum, das die Texte als solche wieder eine Rolle spielten.[29]

For the one or two minutes marked off in "skewed" rhythm, the solipsism inherent in being a place without an address, a name without a surname, is warded off by the community of creativity. And what's more, because it's *punk* that's being played and not some other kind of music, the community so constituted is not compromised by quotidian, extrinsic concerns—not by commercial considerations of *Pfründe* or professionalism, by worries about inherent artistic quality, or even by the art-life problematic itself. For "Anderson," punk constitutes a *heile Welt*, a strong-force connectivity which dissipates after the last note fades, but holds good in the timespace the song creates.

As far as it goes, a *heile Welt* is fine, a welcome refuge. But by excluding "Leben" from the list of things at stake in punk performance, Anderson refuses punk the power of intervention even as he grants it the ability to enunciate a new, salutatory sociability through performance. Juxtaposing "Kunst" and "Leben" sends a clear message: for "Anderson" and his compatriots, punk performance is *not* about exploring the art-life boundary (the avant-garde ambition *tout court*), or even—as with Latzina— about expanding one's affiliations outward into the world. Rather, punk is a tool for carving out a niche. Thus despite its optimism, and its clear detailing of the small victory

punk performance helped its narrator achieve, Anderson's text ultimately strips punk performance of its publicity and its broader provocative ambit in order to glean from it the provisional suspension of solipsism. Punk, for Anderson's narrator, has a specific utility. In its East German context, it becomes a personalized and ultimately privatized medium of interpersonal communication, which entails a renunciation of the critical scale it had had in its previous contexts. Anderson's passage on the private utility of punk performance doesn't stop to gesture at the greater possibilities punk might have for him and his cohort, and indeed says *explicitly* that punk is about neither art, nor life. Anderson's fantasy of temporary intersubjectivity and authentic communication is a fantasy of purposive disengagement—in punk moments, *es geht nicht um Kunst und Leben*.

But by giving punk this power, Anderson also robs punk, and his poetry, of the power to mediate the injustices of the everyday—even those which he himself creates by actively sabotaging the conditions of punk sociability by informing on his friends and acquaintances. Recalling his Stasi interviews, Anderson's narrator laments:

> Ich wäre vielleicht glücklicher gewesen, wenn ich den Zynismen, mit denen ich mich im realen Untergrund, meinen Führungsoffizieren gegenüber, vor mir selbst zu schützen versuhte, in meinen Texten, meinen Gedichten eine satte Gestalt hätte geben können. (192)

One word's strict definition is ambiguous. With *Zynismen*, Anderson might either mean the denunciations of his friends and co-"conspirators" that he provided his caseworkers (which, strictly speaking, were undoubtedly *cynical* utterances, insofar as he didn't balk or feel ashamed at offering them), or on the other hand the jaded characterizations he offered of his own work's futility.

This passage expands on Anderson's jaundiced estimation of engaged, or critical art's power. It is an admission of defeat which contrasts a false, or low-stakes underground—the Prenzlauer Berg and punk—with a *real* subterranean plane: the false storefronts and debriefing offices where he went to live the life he couldn't share with his creative cohorts, where he went to inform on them.

If punk offered Anderson's narrator and his bandmates a provisional but micropolitical counterpublic, a space in which communication and understanding could replace isolation, it couldn't offer him what he really sought: a place where full form (*satte Gestalt*) could be given to his cynicisms, and the latter could thereby be textually neutralized. Punk is an escape, rather than a catalyst for doing representational work that is anything other than self-directed and enclosed. It permits a kind of identification otherwise inaccessible to him, but at the same time bears within itself an untapped potential for expression. Punk's power is delimited by Anderson's lack of ambitions for its use, but on the horizon, even in "Anderson"'s defeatism, punk's capacity to give "full form" to injustice is glimpsed.

Sascha Anderson's refusal to grant punk anything more than the barely-apprehended possibility of transformative power implies that *all* East German punk was a stunted, impotent outgrowth of what was elsewhere a more empowering and empowered phenomenon. Notwithstanding the representational limitations *Anderson* imposes on it, however, punk's importance for its narrator's subject-position is undeniable. Toward the end of the book, recounting events following the Wall's collapse in his established roundabout way, Anderson's narrator spends a few words on the discovery of his reports for the Stasi, and on their 2000 publication in *Horch und Guck*:

> In der Kontur, die sich aus den Akten abzeichnet, erkenne ich mich wieder. Der Kommentar des in Adjektive verliebten Autors denunziert die Opfer. In ihm (nicht dem Text, dem Journalisten) begegne ich dem, was ich nie sein wollte, dem,
> Was Ich War. (244)

This is a confusing passage, in terms of both its tone and its referents. It perpetuates the book's overall semi-autobiographical momentum, fixing this reading of the *Horch und Guck* passage in time so as to give this passage the flavor of a self-discovery by his naïve and damaged narrator, rather than of a cheap dig at his (Anderson's) critic: Holger Kulick, whose writing constitutes the adjective-rich text in question.[30]

A cheap dig it remains, however. Kulick, the "Journalist," becomes a proxy-Anderson—somebody who "denounces the victims" in ineffective prose and is thus recognizable as the person whom *Anderson*'s use of typesetting and capitalization stresses he *was*, but is no longer. The passage is fraught, burdened with political tension; what Anderson is doing here involves some identificatory legerdemain. Dissociating himself from the denunciations he produced as an IM—it's "nicht [der] Text" in which he recognizes himself—he instead sides with Kulick, the man studying betrayal and collaboration. Of all the moves *Sascha Anderson*'s narrating polemicist makes, of all his attempts to not be identical with himself, and to let that non-identity characterize his life in East Germany, West Germany, and the Berlin Republic, this is the most difficult to follow. It is an identification with the third party who studies his collaboration, not with the author of the collaborators' documents, which are at issue. *Anderson* effects a full dissociation, as the narrator fails to see himself in the historical person whose crimes are under analysis.

But what does this have to do with punk? Kulick's article is an article about the Stasi's treatment of punk and avant-garde scenes in Berlin and the rest of the GDR. The article cites the historical Sascha Anderson's writing as "Fritz Müller," revealing that he presented his MfS caseworkers with the same arguments about punk's shortcomings as *Sascha Anderson*'s narrator presents his readers. With one excerpt, for example, Kulick shows that Anderson told his caseworkers of a conversation with his Zwitschermaschine bandmates in which he stressed that punk was a dead end, and that other, less controversial formal experimentation—namely, an embrace of jazz—was to be preferred over continuing to play punk. In reading a postmortem of his life as a punk, then, *Anderson*'s narrator re-encounters—indeed, re*asserts*—the distance he elsewhere argues punk might have helped him to transcend. Amidst a welter of obfuscation and grammatical abstraction, the "Anderson" who reads Kulick's work retreats from art's (and punk's) promise, and a retreat from his position at the center of avant-garde art and punk in East Berlin. He refuses to recognize himself as a punk, and as a collaborator, even when presented with documentary proof of his bifurcated productivity. Both the empty self of *Sascha Anderson* and the historical Anderson whose work Kulick describes are distanced, disinterested, uncommitted figures—even if the former refuses an identity with the latter.

Writing for his *Nachwelt*, and in response to a decade of criticism, Anderson turned in a diffident book about his life that seems more concerned with blurring the details of his biography, and with calling the coherence of its author into question, than with explaining how that author came to be who he is, or to act in the way he did. The role punk plays in the book is both an important, and an unimportant one. While punk

seems to provide a basis for a certain kind of experimental, expressive communality, it can perform this function only under conditions of privacy. Once punk has renounced its claim to public space and audiences exterior to itself, it can operate as a safely marginal phenomenon characterized by extreme interiority. In *Sascha Anderson*, punk's promise is at once a crucial one—hidden in amongst the details of performance are self-identification, the possibility of self-expression, and intersubjectivity—and an empty one as well.

"David Menzer"

Though he had contact with the Stasi as early as September 1975, when he submitted an initial handwritten report on his activities, *Sascha Anderson*'s sketchy account of this early Stasi contact eschews consideration of the mechanics of the exchange, focusing instead on the reason he was receptive to the two officers' interest in winning his services as an IM. *Anderson*'s narrator recovers this encounter as a forced choice made only to secure his safety and productivity, and even then reluctantly: to continue working as a writer and co-producer of a film.[31]

Around November 1976 in the chronology of *Anderson*'s account, the protagonist's work with the Stasi is prefigured in a Moscow encounter with KGB officers beyond the one (Kolja) he already knew. After a night of heavy drinking, Anderson's protagonist becomes aware (through Frank-Wolf Matthies) of Wolf Biermann's expulsion from the GDR. The episode provides not only a chronological anchor (the 20th of November, 1976) for the protagonist's encounter with the Stasi upon his return, but also, with respect to the decision to collaborate, a bit of context that justifies his unease.

The *Ausbürgerung* becomes the explicit reason his case officers use to explain their request for a meeting with him, as they encourage him to distance himself from "eine[] Szene, mit der ich überhaupt nichts zu tun hatte" and they use his participation in a film production as leverage for a guilt trip: "[sie] machten mir die fiktive Kalkulation des ansonsten im märkischen Sand oder, wie immer ich wolle, in der Elbe versenkten Volkseigentums auf, falls der Film nicht gedreht wurde."[32]

Notwithstanding this pressure, the next several years—as can be read both from the archival data trail, and from *Sascha Anderson*'s dissembling—did not lead to the establishment of an official IM relationship. Alison Lewis characterizes this interim period, between initial contact with Graupner (Anderon's primary Führungsoffizier, not named in the *Anderson* volume) and his commencement of regular work for the Stasi, as having been a "Katz-und-Maus-Spiel," within the confines of which a "pattern of missed appointments" (which we might call circumspect, or passive resistance to collaboration) was also balanced out with Anderson's unequivocal expressions of disinterest. In late 1979, his case worker Graupner wrote that "[er legt] keinen Wert auf weitere Gespräche mit dem Mitarbeiter des MfS."[33] The recruitment process was, of course, also lengthened by Anderson's 1979-1980 incarceration for check fraud.

Notwithstanding the tenuousness of the first five years of contact with his caseworkers, shortly after his release from custody in November 1980, Sascha Anderson was officially enrolled as an IMS[34] with the cover-name "David Menzer" on the 11th of March, 1981.[35] Well into 1986, Anderson remained an active informant. Even his move to West Berlin resulted only in an October, 1986 reclassification as "Peters," and a refiling of his personnel file with the new West Berlin address.[36]

Throughout his tenure, Anderson's principal value to the Stasi was as an intermediary for personal and professional information related to both the official (state-sponsored) and unofficial (clandestine, do-it-yourself) art scenes in the East German capital and its surroundings. Alison Lewis, for whom Anderson's work within the punk scene was but a smaller part of a larger *Verrat*, a routine subordinated to a broader strategy, writes the following of the Stasi's strategic investment in the information Anderson could provide:

> Die Zielsetzung, die die Stasi zu dieser Zeit mit „David Menzer" verfolgt, ist die Erkundung der potentiellen Auswirkungen der Unruhen in Polen auf die DDR. Zu einem in Schwerin von einer Dienststelle bearbeitenden Theaterregisseur Horst Vogelgesang, der sich laut MfS mit „‚Solidarnosc' und ‚KOR' sowie den konterrevolutionären Machenschaften solidarisch erklärt" hat, sollte [Anderson] den Kontakt aufnehmen und ausbauen. (103)

The counterrevolutionaries and enemies with whom Anderson dealt in his Berlin circles—and on whom he provided information in the context of his reportage on punk, punk concerts, and his own punk work—were largely internal ones, insofar as they were East Germans. But an amendment made to Anderson's classification in 1983 confirms that his utility as a collaborator was thought to extend not only to domestic threats, but to dangers from across the Cold War's constitutive border as well. On 5th January 1983, Anderson became an IMB, or "Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter der Abwehr mit Feindverbindung."[37] A transcription of one of his early interview-reports reveals that Anderson, whatever his suggestions about having *überhaupt nichts zu tun* with internationally-connected avant-garde activities, was very much aware of his own strategic importance with respect to the Stasi's efforts at counterespionage in an international context.

Filed the 24th of June, 1981, the report—entitled *Information zu einer neugegründeten "Punk-Gruppe" in Dresden*—begins with Anderson's providing some relevant context for the music he'd been playing with his circle of friends:

> "Punk" ist eine Musikart, die in der DDR nach [sic] kaum Verbreitung gefunden hat, außer in Ansätzen bei der "Gaukler-Rock-Band" aus Berlin. Die "Punk-Gruppe", die Ralf *Kerbach*, freischaffender Maler in Dresden gegründet hat, bezieht sich weniger auf die Lebensweise von Punk, sondern auf die Musikart von Punk und ist dem Deutsch-Rock, der in der BRD gepflegt wird, näher, als dem Rock, der in der DDR gespielt wird. […] Zur Gruppe gehören weiterhin Cornelia *Schleime* und Sascha *Anderson*, der sich textlich und singend beteiligt.[38]

Anderson focuses on one of the few professional music groups in the GDR that had, as he presents it,[39] adopted punk and new-wave textures into its music: André Herzberg's Gaukler-Rock-Band, subsequently Pankow, whose punning name ("punk-oh") bespoke its membership's willingness to play with Western forms and affiliations to East Berlin geography, all at once.[40] However, as with his characterization of Gaukler-Rock-Band, Anderson's presentation to the Stasi of his and Kerbach's own punk group is one which stresses punk's epiphenomenal and ornamental presence—as an *Ansatz*, and not an essence or central compositional property—and cordons off the non-musical aspects— punk's lifeway, its *Lebensweise*—as rejected elements. In this way, Anderson's presentation effectively disarms punk as a comprehensive activity. Here punk is a color on a palette, a technique or flavor of musical composition among others. This account suppresses punk's organizational power: its power to organize audiences and bands, concerts and festivals, and informal networks able to circulate tapes and periodicals.

Of course, the salutatory reading of punk his narrator would provide in the 2002 book is also nowhere to be found. Instead, "David Menzer" emphasizes punk's disintegrability—its capacity to be anatomized, and compartmentalized, and only

partially adopted. And how is the figure of "Sascha Anderson" adumbrated in this report? Here is the Anderson which post-*Wende* caricatures (and scholarly analyses) construed as a dilettante, but in a way also the Anderson of *Anderson*: the mover between scenes, the man whose artistic productivity is a heterogeneous assemblage, a polystylistic work in progress. However, where Anderson's later narrator (of 2002) heralds punk's socially enunciative power as a way of emphasizing the naturalness of apolitical expression, this writing Anderson underplays punk's power for his strictly Stasi audience.

Anderson's reportage worked with this punk-concept into the mid-1980s —even as it grew more specific, filled with personal information and plans, and therefore useful for his handlers with respect to tracking marginal art across borders. Just a few weeks later, as a transcription of an interview conducted on 8th July 1981 records, Anderson presented once more the notion of the polyglot musician for whom punk was a texture among others. Detailing one planned concert, to take place in an exhibition space designated for the abstract painter Volker Henze, Anderson describes an additional plan:

> Ein anderes Angebot ist von [Redacted] für die Rock-Punk-Gruppe gekommen, am Freitag, dem 10.07.81 in der Kunsthochschule in Weißensee zu spielen zu einer Diplomantenfeier. Dieses Angebot wurde angenommen.

Two concerts: one in an exhibition space, and the other in an artists' college. Neither is within the orbit of the *offene Jugendarbeit* at the *Zionskirche*, which by 1981 was quickly becoming a popular space for unsanctioned bands to play concerts. In addition to providing practical details, Anderson also offered an account of the social context within which such an aesthetic practice ought to develop:

> Die Gruppe selbst begreift sich im eigentlichen Sinne nicht als Gruppe, sondern ist durch ihr gemeinsames Leben, durch ihre gemeinsame künstlerische Existenz zu dieser musikalischen Äußerungsform gekommen, nachdem sie über längere Zeit zusammen mit Ralf *Winkler* oder Michael *Freudenberg* Jazz gemacht haben,

meinen sie, daß der Jazz nicht das Ausdrucksmittel wäre, um mehr Leute zu erreichen, sondern daß der Rock-Punk eine stärkere Form wäre. Sie möchten sich nicht als Gruppe verstehen, sondern als spontanes Gefüge mit musikalischen Mitteln arbeitender Künstler.

Anderson articulates a sociable ideal to his Stasi caseworker—describing a *gemeinsame künstlerische Existenz*—and, in so doing, invokes the "artistic" to situate his punk activities with greater proximity to his other artistic (typesetting, lyrical, cinematic) practices, for which he had received varying degrees of formal training. In this way, the nascent Zwitschermaschine collective is cast as a higher kind of aesthetic community whose chosen genre, punk, happens to have been stumbled upon. Jazz, then, not only provides a generic comparatum for punk, but an implicit explanation-by-analogy for the musicians' collective's shifting membership and lack of professional ambitions. Punk, though preferred to jazz, works like the latter by underwriting the formation of a "spontanes Gefüge," an ad hoc productive sociability. Though Anderson had both been warned against his participation in outsider-art scenes, and charged (during his recruitment by the Stasi) with the task of subverting them in turn, this passage provides a justification, and not an apologia, for his continued work. And the load-bearing element of this justification—the thing which gives rise to the sociability he lauds—is punk.

Anderson's presentation of punk to his caseworker stakes even more ambitious claims on punk's behalf than this. Indeed, it tiptoes right up to the edge of confirming outright the subversiveness the caseworkers ascribe to it. Though punk is but a means to the end of instituting a "gemeinsame künstlerische Existenz," Anderson reveals that its ambitions and potential are not coterminous with his own limited use for punk. Punk is transnational and enunciative of a communality with larger borders, and more ambition, than the community of shared performance. Anderson details Kerbach's plans to organize

a "Dilettanten-Rock-Treffen," where "alle in der DDR auf diese Weise spontan

zusammenarbeitenden Gruppen, Jazz-Rock-Punk" would be invited, and communication

between them could be facilitated. Of the character of the movement whose momentum

Kerbach sought to capture and extend with this undertaking, Anderson says,

> Mir selbst sheint der Charakter dieser ganzen Bewegung im Grunde ein
> Nachvollzug des amerikanischen "Oundergrounds" [sic] zu sein, der Anfang der
> 60er Jahre an amerikanischen Universitäten gepflegt wurde. Die Absicht dieses
> "Ounderground" war es damals, in aggressiver Form, außerhalb der Malerei und
> Dichtung, eben in der Musik auf das Publikum zuzukommen und dabei keinen
> Markt zu nutzen.

Whereas *Sascha Anderson* paints in broader strokes when it comes to the idea that there

existed a potentially transnational experimental art scene, by dropping names like

Burroughs' here before his caseworkers, the historical Sascha Anderson speaks much

more definitively about the relationship of his own "dilettante" scene to American

precursors. His use of "damals" historicizes that American scene and its "aggressive

form," showing that they belonged to a prior time. And his reference to the market helps

to further situate his scene's inspiration in a distant capitalist context. Yet when he

continues, the Western scene of "damals" returns:

> Ebenfalls eine ähnliche Bewegung, allerdings im sozialistischen Lager, gab es
> Ende der 60er Jahre bis Ende der 70er Jahre in der CSSR, wenn man an Gruppen,
> wie "Plastic-Pible" [sic] denkt, die allerdings eine Kommerzialität erreicht hatten
> und eine Wirkung erreicht hatten, die eindeutig politischen Charakter trug.

What emerges from Anderson's characterizations of experimental music scenes within

the "jazz-rock-punk" triangulation is a transnational network-concept of vanguardism.

But even more than this, it is a trans-bloc story—a sequence which, every few years, has

produced iterations which authorize themselves *independent* of market context, and

whose performances' power is also a political one. The "Plastic Pible" are the Plastic

People of the Universe: Milan Hlavsa's Frank-Zappa- and Velvet-Underground-inspired

musical collective, which played impromptu concerts throughout Czechoslovakia in the

early 1970s, and whose members were arrested, imprisoned, and exiled after tensions

with the Czech state came to a head in 1976.[41] Anderson's choice of the Plastic People as

an example for the kind of art-work he was talking about is a provocative one. Border-

crossers in a number of ways, the Plastic People had recruited a Canadian to sing for their

rock band, and retained a cultural critic and poet (Ivan Martin Jirous) to occupy the

Warhol position in their conscious recreation of the Velvet Underground-Factory

dynamic.[42] Moving from genealogy to analogy, from the history of his own scene to its

present-day situation, Anderson offers a theory of the relationship of genre to politics on

an international scale:

> Diesen Charakter haben die Dilettanten-Rock-Gruppen in der DDR, wenn man an
> die Funkturm-Band in Berlin denkt, oder an die jugoslawische Punk-Band, die in
> Berlin lebt, oder an die Dresdner Gruppe von Malern, die Musik machen, auch.
> Ein Grund für diesen politischen Charakter ist sicher da zu suchen, daß nicht nur
> eine Alternative zu den Liedermachern gefunden werden soll, sondern daß der
> Hart-Rock, der Deutsch-Rock, der Punk derzeitig die international gefragteste
> Musik bei Jugendlichen ist, neben der Disko-Musik. Diese musikalischen
> Möglichkeiten zu nutzen, auch Ideen und Gedanken zu verbreiten ist sicher die
> Absicht von DDR-Gruppen in dieser Richtung.[43]

What is phrased as an ascription of a coherent politicality characteristic to this artistic

sociability—as an assignment of a *politische[r] Charakter* to experimental

musicmaking—is, in fact, merely a statement of fact. To hear Anderson tell it, it is the

mere fact that punk and hard rock are internationally popular (and here, popularity is

clearly a value transcendent of the division between blocs) that makes the music

political—the political character of these musical forms is not predetermined, but rather

da zu suchen [there to be sought]. Regarding the idea of a "message," Anderson hedges.

He uses the nonspecific *Ideen und Gedanken* to describe the materials so transmitted. Medium is message here. The choice of genre and compositional practice is prompted by the broader fact of mass appeal, and is made independently of the content to be communicated.

Given the context of its utterance, Anderson's theory of punk practice is provocative and enigmatic by turns. It is provocative, insofar as it insists on both the transnational (trans-bloc) and the political elements of the artistic collective with which he is working. What's more, Anderson invokes the American neo-avant-gardes and Beat as one of its forebears, and then indicates that the Czech "Ounderground" was another. By doing so, Anderson ties avant-garde and punk directly to one another, and ascribes a common subversiveness to both. And yet, Anderson hesitates when it comes to identifying his artistic practice's specific message or meaning. While capable of transmitting ideas and thoughts in general, the so-called dilettante scene remains an empty medium, an institutional phenomenon which exists, and which is at the same time necessarily indeterminate, by dint of its capacity to transmit anything at all.[44]

Anderson's testimony walks a tightrope. He identifies for a punk a powerful lineage, and privileges his (and his band's) artistic subject position by referring not only to its intellectual heritage and mass appeal, but to its communicative power as well. At the same time, he opens up an empty space where specific critically *engaged* content could or should go. This is accomplished through his refusal to characterize the *Ideen und Gedanken* the music transmits. Overall, Anderson's self-situation is one which insists on the social importance, and indeed the politicality-in-general, of his *spontanes Gefüge*— but at the same time one which evades the responsibility of naming the politics in

question. The *Gefüge* identifies a need whose name it will not speak. Anderson situates his and his cohorts' activities on a longer vanguardist trajectory, but effaces the controversy and concrete political substance of his own, his forebears', and his compatriots' contributions. In this way, an evacuated—but appropriate—punk affords him "room" to work with. For a Stasi audience represented by (but not limited to) his caseworker, Anderson offers an account of his punk position, and of dilettante rock, according to which punk is just political enough to matter, and yet not political enough to merit suppression.

To Anderson, much was given—just as much was expected from him. With his diffident account of punk's limited potential, Anderson navigated his caseworkers' suspicions even as he maintained his creative position within the intersecting orbits of punk, his imagined international vanguard, and the Prenzlauer Berg. As long as the Stasi paid for knowledge and a clearer picture of punk activities with inaction, even in the face of expressly illegal activities like smuggling and the foreign release of critical art whose resonance was felt in the Western media, Anderson was willing to do his part. He committed tireless efforts to organizing performances and publications for punks and poets whose power he asserted but whose specific target or programme he refused to name. Through it all, even at this early stage, and even for this Stasi audience, the dissociative disengagement evinced by *Sascha Anderson* characterized Anderson's words and deeds. By situating himself in the eye of the storm, at the empty center of *Ostpunk*'s sound and fury, Anderson could remain untouched.

Conclusion: Recovering the *Erbe*, Anticipating the "eNDe"

In 1983, Sascha Anderson smuggled recordings of his punk band Zwischermaschine out of East Germany and into West Berlin.[45] The contraband musical material was mastered, pressed, and released as a record—the first East German punk record available in the West. Released in 1983 as *DDR von unten / eNDe* with Aggressive Rockproduktionen, the split 12" took its title in part from a cycle of Anderson's poems, eNDe I through V, which had been published two years before with Rotbuch, in *jeder Satellit hat einen Killersatelliten*.

From the recorded musical document, it becomes clear that the eNDe cycle constitutes precisely the kind of text whose translation to song *Sascha Anderson* lauds as potentially reconciliatory. Whatever reservations may exist regarding the quality of Anderson's poetry, the poems' pronounced consonance, repetition, and broken meter mesh well with the lo-fi droning and two-note riffing that define Zwitschermaschine's stripped-down style. Each arrangement adds a rough undergrowth to the gnarled, tortured syntax of Anderson's lyricism, punctuating his plosives with snare strikes, and adding distorted, percussive guitar lines to the breathless flow of his asyntactic lists of words, numbers, phrases, and fragments. Beyond recognizing an effective and discordant marriage of po-mo poem and punk, though, the poetry's invocation of a broader German (and East German) intertextuality hints at a few provocative associations.

In *Jeder Satellit*, the eNDe poems are compiled out of order. Though—as Alison Lewis has held[46]—the cycle parodies what it posits as the official language of the GDR, as the *Neues Deutschland*-tweaking title "eNDe" makes clear from the beginning, each poem within the cycle works a bit differently to do so. "eNDe II," the initial piece, assembles alliterative word-chains, cycling through the alphabet in order:

abendstern ahn alle alles am auf auge
bereiche bewegter

dämmerung der der der die die doch durch durchs
emporgehoben
fern finsternisse flut
glut
haargezweige herz hinein holden höh
ich in ins ins ist

kühle
licht lunas
mondenglanz
nächsten nähe nebel nun
oben östlichen

ruht sänftigend schatten scherzen schlanker schleichen
schleicht schon schwankt schwarzvertiefte see senkte sich
spiele

und und ungewisse
von
weidend wiederspiegelnd

zauberschein zittert zuerst[47]

"eNDe II" betrays a preoccupation with vision, and sight. "licht lunas mondenglanz" is a characteristic sequence, insofar as the moon's light (in 'proper' orthographic form, *das Licht Lunas*) moves from being presented as the product of a Latinate possessive on one line to being the result of a compounding on the next. Anderson's poem, at first glance a soup of stuttered and unrelated terms, reveals itself capable of providing thematic bridges between its lines, at the same time as it insists in other places on leaving no clues for the reader. The gaps in communication—the omission of the C, J, Q, T, and X lines— interrupt the logical movement through the alphabet, while still allowing it to be recognizable. As readers, we intuit that we will arrive at Z, but our progress toward it is broken up, segmented, by the deletion of letters in the sequence and the intrusion of S's

words into R's space. The heterogeneity of the poem's forward flow is disruptive, rough; it constitutes a critique of teleology, and of scientistic expectancy. Though progress is inevitable—the poem makes it to "Z"—it is also unpredictable, and frequently nonsensical.

Johnny Rotten sang "no future for you," addressing those who lived in "England's dreamland." But Anderson's isn't quite the radical antifuturism of punk, a general positing of "no future" which rejects all predictions and projections. Instead, given its publicational context and the title's critique of the *neues Deutschland*'s forward-looking rationale, the poem is a critique aimed specifically at the Marxist science of the future. Anderson's attack is less resolute than Rotten's, since instead of denying the possibility that a future will come at all, it suggests that progress toward the explicitly Communist future—toward the *neues Deutschland* ideal implicit in the theory of real-existing socialism—will be unpredictable, heterogeneously paced, and uncertain. Rather than having no future at all, what we don't have is a way of clearly knowing what that future will be.

In addition to its adoption and modification of punk's anti-futurity, there's another reason "eNDe II" is a punk poem. It's secretly a song. To be more specific, it's a scrambling of Brahms' *Vertonung* of Goethe's "Dämmrung senkte sich von oben." The poem, which served as a basis for an 1873 *Lied* in the sequence "Lieder und Gesänge" (Op. 59), ends with a much more reconciliatory note than does Anderson's recombination of its elements. Elements of the final stanza should appear familiar:

> Durch bewegter Schatten Spiele
> Zittert Lunas Zauberschein,
> Und durch's Auge schleicht die Kühle
> Sänftigend in's Herz hinein.

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What Anderson has done, using and disrupting alphabetical order as a reorganizational principle, is to repurpose a trusty classic. He's not only mounted a future-skeptical critique cognate to Johnny Rotten's original complaint in "God Save the Queen," but he's also taken a focal point of national cultural history (for Rotten, the monarch; for Anderson, the *Dichter* to beat them all), and inverted the meaning of a song whose power relies on that figure—while at the same time paradoxically reasserting that figure's importance by citing him. This is the confusing headspace of postmodernist poetry, and yet Goethe's words dominate its internal monologue and peek through the constraints the poet's logic has placed upon them. Johnny Rotten "mean[s] it, maaaan" but so, too, does Anderson. His poetic patrimony—like Rotten's patriotic inheritance—is too important to cast away, but can't be kept as is. This is a punk poem, a plea masquerading as a desecration—or, put another way, it's a reinscription of Goethe's literary (and Brahms's musical) significance in the guise of an iconoclastic recombination of elements.

"eNDe I," which follows immediately upon the first poem's heels, provides an encyclopaedic context for the previous poem's original source: "goethe dichter goetheana pl werke von u über goethe goethe band k 211 der aber k209 das goethehaus…" The poem reads as an intercept, and hints at the dry, archivist's context in which Goethe becomes an object of expert knowledge, rather than an author whose works are read and enjoyed. Beyond this play with the status of the German cultural inheritance, the poem clearly recalls avant-garde compositional poetics. As a piece of published poetry, but at the same time a piece of a page torn out of a lexicon, the poem uses decontextualization to highlight the problematic way in which Goethe and aspects of his life ("das goethehaus") and work ("goetheana") were cross-referenced and reduced to data points

by superficial fetishism. In this respect, it remobilizes Tristan Tzara's "cut-up" technique—an aleatory method by which the sequencing of poetic elements occurs by chance, through random selection. Ending with the sequence "k 215 goethisch auch goethesch k 218 goethisch auch goethesch k217," Anderson's poem cycles through spelling variants of the approving adjective until the word's circularity and non-indexicality is clear, with out-of-order page numbers further heightening the confusion and the overall aleatoric vertigo which defines the poem's structure.

Other poems in the cycle, like "eNDe IV"—which begins with another Goethe nod when its first line reads, "östwestlicher die wahn"—use similar techniques. They remobilize recognizable aspects of Germany's heritable tradition, while using obfuscatory word order, phonetic respelling, and line-breaks to keep the reader guessing, rather than knowing, what possible intertexts might be. They render material whose significance as elements of the "cultural heritage" was clear, and whose political utility was taken for granted, a distant and confused shade of itself—an estranging, discomfiting thing rather than a tradition to be relied upon. And "eNDe V" reproduces snatches of idle conversation, so that to apply too much pressure to a reading might be to lose sight of the point the poem makes, echoing the classical avant-gardes and the postmodern artists of the 1950s through 1970s: that quotidian speech, discombobulated and devoid of content though it may be, nevertheless has poetic qualities. "eNDe V"'s conversation is a readymade, an exchange to which importance is assigned by the addition of context, of line-breaks and the book around it, and not by any real manipulation on Anderson's part of the raw linguistic material itself.

The "eNDe" cycle betrays a dual inheritance—the inheritance of the prewar avant-gardes, of those avant-gardes that had been crowded out of the East German aesthetic mainstream and denounced as formalistic; and the inheritance of the punk rock critical tradition. In Anderson's manipulation, even before Brahms's composition is reduced to choppy eighth notes and guttural vocal delivery on magnetic tape, Goethe's work is cut up and reassembled on the page. It continues to register as Goethean (goethisch auch goethesch), but its revised presentation retards the superficial recognition of its authority and the narratives that underwrite that authority.

I have read Anderson's textual productivity as a self-fashioning driven by the obsessive thematization of social proximity and distance, and of self-effacement as both a political and representational imperative. Anderson's language, and the ontology it articulates, are in part a punk language, and in part a punk ontology. Punk affords Anderson's texts the jargon of inauthenticity: a critical vocabulary (and *Weltanschauung*) which elucidate the fragmented, tortured, overwrought, and—most of all—contradictory Anderson subject-position as that of an anti-futurist dreamer empowered by text-producing practices he refuses to admit are powerful.

In her review essay on Christa Wolf's *Leibhaftig* and Sascha Anderson's autobiography, Julia Hell calls for balancing critical distance with analytic acuity when it comes to the study of the literature of East Germany and its progenitors: "what is needed," she writes,

> is an analytically astute inquiry into the intricacies of East German culture and its dialectic between *Staatsnähe* and *Staatsferne*, one that would include such peculiar subject positions as Stasi poets as legitimate objects of research. In other words, we might want to replace moral condemnation with a sharp and vivid

picture of the grey zone between aesthetic *Eigensinn* and the "most obscene form of collaboration, betrayal." (112)

By focusing on Anderson-the-punk, I have not only attempted to investigate a "peculiar subject position" like the ones Hell identifies, but also to identify the punk logic contained within the poetics Anderson used to fashion himself. If Anderson was the organizer and instigator his substantial body of work confirms he was, punk provided him with a way to justify textually his contradictory actions. Punk offered Anderson a way of fashioning himself in language which emphasized productive unproductivity and the rejection of futurist optimism. Furthermore, punk's substitution of empty statements for clear messages suited Anderson's dissembling presentation of himself and his activities— both when it came to talking to his Stasi caseworkers, and when it came to addressing posterity on the topic of his own *Staatsnähe* and *Staatsferne*. A Prenzlauer punk, Anderson operated on the cusp of acceptable aesthetic practice. He idiosyncratically embraced the concept of a cultural inheritance, while problematizing its ossification as uncritical respect. At the same time, he eschewed sanctioned representational tools in favor of Western tactics and strategies brought over from the US (Ginsberg) and England (Rotten). A rear-guard vanguardist, and a Novalis-namedropping and Goethe-reading deconstructionist *artiste* punk, Anderson is difficult to read. But by considering *all* the fragments of the Andersonian text, and seeing the punk provenance which many of their representational tactics exhibit, we can perhaps begin to comprehend the common project on which they collaborated: the production of Sascha Anderson. The coherent contradiction. The Satellit who was always also his own Killersatellit.

Notes to Chapter 2

[1] This is an ongoing project which began in early-1990s interviews and perhaps culminated with his 2002 volume of autobiographical prose, *Sascha Anderson*.

[2] Sascha Anderson, *Jeder Satellit hat einen Killersatelliten: Gedichte.* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1982).

[3] Sascha Anderson and Elke Erb, eds. *Berührung ist nur eine Randerscheinung.* (Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1985).

[4] This point of reception was immediately apparent in the *Zeit*'s review of the volume, which was included in a larger review essay on East German art which postulated the existence of *outré* currents within the legislated literary mainstream. The reviewer writes: "Ein eklatanter Unterschied zu der offiziell geförderten Nachwuchsliteratur liegt darin, daß hier keine 'Inhalte transportiert' werden; oftmals wird Sprache ernster genommen als der Inhalt… Die wichtigste 'Botschaft' der neuen Generation von Dichtern besteht darin, daß hier weitaus radikaler als im Westen gültige erkenntnistheoretische und ästhetische Normen gegen den Strich gebürstet werden. 'Nichts ist erkennbar - also ist alles erlaubt. Hinter der Unerkennbarkeit dessen, was mit unseren rationalistischen Denk- und Verbotsstrukturen zugedeckt ist, sind Widersinne freizulegen, die zu keiner neuen gesellschaftlichen Sinnhaftigkeit führen werden, sondern vielleicht zu einer Pluralität der Sinnhaftigkeiten.' Diese sind - darin sind die jungen Dichter und Maler ganz Kinder Heiner Müllers - nur aus dem Müll der (Kunst- und Literatur)Geschichte, aus den der Sonne abgewandten Seiten, aus den Randgebieten, von den unbekannten Dichterinnen und Dichtern zu gewinnen."

[5] David Bathrick calls Anderson "the center of an enormously active scene of writers and artists, facilitating the development of the entire Prenzlauer Berg movement through contacts and publication arrangements both inside the GDR and with Western publishing houses." This is surely how he was received in West Germany, where the first primary contact readers would have had with him as a scene-maker, rather than as a solo poet, involved Kiepenheuer & Witsch's complimentary foreword to *Berührung*, in which Anderson is characterized as "playing [with Elke Erb] an important role in today's literary life of the GDR." See David Bathrick, "Language and Power," *The Power of Intellectuals in Contemporary Germany.* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2001) 140; and Anderson and Erb, *Berührung ist eine Randerscheinung: Gedichte*. (Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1985) 9.

[6] Wolf Biermann cursed Anderson in his *Büchnerpreisrede* as "der unbegabte Schwätzer Sascha Arschloch, ein Stasispitzel, der immer noch cool den Musensohn spielt, und hofft, dass seine Akten nie auftauchen." See Wolf Biermann, "Der Lichtblick im gräßlichen Fatalismus der Geschichte." *Der Sturz des Dädalus oder Eizes für die Eingeborenen der Fidschi-Inseln über den IM Judas Ischariot und den Kuddelmuddel in Deutschland seit dem Golfkrieg*. (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1992) 48.

[7] See Julia Hell, "Stasi-Poets and Loyal Dissidents: Sascha Anderson, Christa Wolf, and the Incomplete Agenda of GDR Research." *German Politics and Society*, 20. 4 (Winter 2002) 82-118.

[8] Sascha Anderson, *Sascha Anderson*. (Köln: DuMont, 2002).

[9] Biermann's phrasing.

[10] See Erb, "Vorbemerkung" *Berührung* 10.

[11] And even there, Anderson's participation in bands, or concerts, is lamented. See, for instance, Christoph Tannert's "Vierte Wurzel aus Zwitschermaschine," a band biography of Zwitschermaschine which argues that Anderson's increasing control over the band resulted in a zero-sum game being played between Ralf Kerbach's and Cornelia Schleime's more avant-garde and jazz-influenced tendencies, on the one hand, and Anderson's raw punk inclinations, on the other. Ultimately, Tannert concludes, Anderson crowded both other members out of the creative process. See Christoph Tannert, "Vierte Wurzel aus Zwitschermaschine." *Wir wollen immer artig sein.* Eds. Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister. (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2004) 370-377.

[12] See David Bathrick, "Language and Power" 155-158. He writes: "What intrigues me about the Prenzlauer Berg poets is not that they claimed to be the only real opposition in the GDR, while simultaneously some of their leadership was consorting with the Stasi...Of far greater importance is the contradiction at the very basis of their notion of what it means to launch an opposition in the first place."

[13] See Bathrick, *Powers of Speech* 224-229; 236-242.

[14] See Heiner Sylvester, "Kuchenkrümel Kommunismus." *Spiegel* 39 (September, 1985) 236-238.

[15] See "DDR Nichts ist mehr gültig." *Die Zeit* 15/1986 (4 April 1986). Web.

[16] See Christoph Tannert, "'Nach realistischer Einschätzung der Lage...' Absage an Subkultur und Nischenexistenz in der DDR." *GDR Monitor 35. Prenzlauer Berg: Bohemia in East Berlin?* (Amsterdam:

Rodopi, 1995) 109. All in all: "an exit from the system within the boundaries of that system was not possible."

[17] In the same speech he used to "out" Anderson, Biermann minimized the Prenzlauer Berg scene as "ein blühender Schrebergarten der Stasi...Jedes Radieschen numeriert an seinem Platz." This metaphor not only reduces the scene's size by orders of magnitude, reducing an entire city sector with connections to others to the $10m^2$ plot of the urban gardener, but elucidates a fantasy of total rationalization and control—every vegetable numbered, and in its place.

[18] Philip Brady quotes a tentative explication of the "scene" concept by Jan Faktor, and asks searching questions which point up the Prenzlauer Berg's uniqueness, in a volume he edited (in which Tannert's decidedly more dismissive contribution appears). Philip Brady, "Prenzlauer Berg—Enclave? Schrebergarten? Powerhouse?" *GDR Monitor 35. Prenzlauer Berg: Bohemia in East Berlin?* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995) 1-18.

[19] Alison Lewis, *Die Kunst des Verrats. Der Prenzlauer Berg und die Staatssicherheit.* (München: Königshausen und Neumann, 2003).

[20] See Lewis, *Kunst des Verrats* 254.

[21] See Bathrick, *Powers of Speech*.

[22] This archival work is invaluable to my own project, and provides each of my readings of the police files with its point of departure.

[23] See Holger Kulick, "Von Reue keine Spur." *Spiegel* (6th March 2002). 202-206.

[24] See Iris Radisch, "Schwarzkäppchen und die böse Welt." *Die Zeit* 12/2002 (14 March 2002) 2. Web.

[25] See Jana Hensel, *Achtung Zone.* (München: Piper, 2009) 23. This isn't a penetrating insight on Hensel's part, necessarily, but it's an important contribution. It is important because rather than merely tell a tautological truth (East Germans were, in fact, East Germans) she is diagnosing a rhetorical falsehood. The belief in the inauthenticity of East German subjectivity—a believe which is here ascribed to West Germans—was, all along, an oversimplification. It was a distortion, she shows; a belief about the East German population given rise to by Cold War-era convictions regarding the inauthenticity (and sure ephemerality) of the *System* that conditioned that subjectivity. The "problem" is surely a false one. There is no basis on which certain subjectivities can be determined to be more or less genuine, or subjectivation processes be shown to have achieved total suture and others to have failed by comparison; being both consistent and specific when formulating these judgments, and then generalizing about populations on the basis of findings in individual cases, would be complicating an impossible task by assigning it the highest conceivable stakes. The fact, however, that the subject-subjectivation *gap* persists as something texts thematize as important and essential to communicate? That suggests that whatever the ontological status of the gap may be, as a property of thought and debate it serves an important function in the ongoing, transdiscursive, and all-German effort to identify and describe the hallmarks of East German personhood.

[26] In this, *Sascha Anderson*'s creation of a distanced subjectivity is distinct from that which takes place in several of its contemporary texts, which are (by dint of their authorship and subject matter) concerned with less ethically pressing issues than is *Anderson*. To be more specific: the distanced-subject is constituted both thematically and stylistically; disidentificatory distance is achieved less explicitly than in comparable autobiographical texts about East German childhoods. By elevating distance to a structuring principle, *Anderson* provokes readerly confusion about the adhesion of its narrating protagonist's different experiences and character traits. It makes extended use of parataxis; it buries grammatical subjects behind long attributive-adjectival chains; it argues for the antiteleological nature of the process of maturation by establishing an extreme episodic structure punctuated by disruptive, stream-of-thought segues between diegetically coherent passages and narrated time periods, *Anderson* raises estrangement to the level of a formal, as well as a thematic priority, whereas other texts of its period and kind are far more explicit, and less tactically daring.

[27] Allen Ginsberg, "Punk Rock [sic] You're my Big Crybaby." *Illuminated Poems.* (New York: Thunder's Mouth, 1996) 72-73.

[28] For a discussion of the band's formation and transformation over time which is a little less rosy about its having offered a safe, creative space, see Christoph Tannert, "Vierte Wurzel aus Zwitschermaschine." *Wir wollen immer artig sein. Punk, New Wave, Hiphop, und Independent-Szene in der DDR von 1980 bis 1990.* Eds. Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister. (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2005) 370-377. Tannert suggests that Anderson assumed creative control to the dismay of the other band members, and

altered the group's sound such that it transitioned from being a looser, more improvisational group committed to multimedia performance toward a straightforward punk and rock band.

[29] See Anderson, *Sascha Anderson* 191.

[30] See Holger Kulick, "Entpolitisieren, Entsolidarisieren, Kontrollieren. Ein Nachtrag: Die Rolle von Szene-IM wie Sascha Anderson oder Rainer Schedlinski am Prenzlauer Berg." *Horch und Guck* 29 (2000) 30-39.

[31] See Anderson, *Sascha Anderson* 142. "Das war es, was ich wollte, dafür hatte ich *Ja* und wie sie es so gern ausdrückten, 'ohne wenn und aber', gesagt." This characterization of the initial relation to the Stasi as one characterized by uncertainty and reluctance, or by foreboding, might not be far wrong. Alison Lewis suggests that to a certain extent, his resistance to working in such a capacity lasted a few years: "für die ersten dreieinhalb Jahre nach dem eigentlichen Beginn der Zusammenarbeit im Jahre 1975 sträubt sich Anderson gegen seine Auftraggeber von der Stasi und versucht seine Aufpasser abzuschütteln, wenn auch immer mit wenig Erfolg." See Lewis 62.

[32] See Anderson, *Sascha Anderson* 143-144.

[33] See BStU, ZA, AIM 7423/91 1. Beifügung p. 64-65. Lewis quotes this sentence, as well. See Lewis 63.

[34] An "Inofizieller Mitarbeiter, der mit der Sicherung eines gesellschaftlichen Bereichs oder Objekts beauftragt ist – 1968 mit Richlinie 1/68 vom Januar 1968 eingeführte Kategorie; 1979 wie folgt definiert: Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter zur politisch-operativen Durchdringung und Sicherung des Verantwortungsbereichs. See Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen deutschen demokratischen Republik, *Abkürzungsverzeichnis: Häufig Verwendete Abkürzungen und Begriffe des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit*. 4th Ed. (Berlin: BStU Abteilung Bildung und Forschung, 2000) 46.

[35] See BStU, ZA, MfS AIM 7423/91 1. Beifügung p. 2. The file itself had been opened in Dresden on the 27th of February, 1981, and Anderson was reclassified as an IMB with the new cover-name "Fritz Müller" on the 5th of January, 1983.

[36] See BStU, ZA, MfS AIM 7423/91 1. Beifügung p. 3.

[37] See BStU, ZA, *Abkürzungsverzeichnis* 45.

[38] See BStU, ZA, MfS AIM 7423/91 p 1. Beifügung. 145. Emphasis in the original, as was standard practice for files whose identification of individuals was "called out"—likely so that strategic skimming could more quickly result in the formation of associations between groups, people, and activities.

[39] This initial characterization of punk's limited presence in the GDR is intriguing. The acuity of historical hindsight permits us, today, to give Anderson's statement to the Stasi the lie. Dirk Teschner helpfully summarizes what we already know (that punk bands had formed throughout the GDR by 1979-80, even if the infrastructure and communication lines which would characterize the national scene a few years later hadn't entirely formed: "Weimar gründeten sich 1979 die Madmans und die Creepers. In Berlin gründete sich ab 1980 mit Ahnungslos, Probealarm, Skunks, Alternative 13, Planlos, Unerwünscht und der jugosla-wischen Band Koks die ersten Punkbands. In Leipzig war es 1981 die Band Wutanfall, in Erfurt 1981 die Band Schleimkeim, Rotzjungen 1981 in Dresden, Restbestand 1982 in Magdeburg. In dieser Zeit gab es in der DDR eine kleine überschaubare Szene, die kaum etwas mit der, von der heutigen Kulturwissenschaft „akzeptierten", DDR-Underground Kunst- und Musikszene gemein hatte." It seems like Anderson knew a little more than he was letting on, given the extent of his contacts in Berlin, Weimar, and Dresden. See Dirk Teschner, "Zwischen Plänterwald und Coswig." *telegraph* 109 (2003). Web. Accessed 10th April 2011. <www.telegraph.ostbuero.de/109/teschner.htm>

[40] In his essay "Kunsterziehung durch Punk," Bert Papenfuß cites Gaukler-Rock-Band and Keks—who also released records with Amiga—as having been foremost among the punk/wave bands. And their concerts served as meeting points: "Austoben konnte man sich auch bei einheimischen Wave-Combos wie die *Gaukler Rockband* oder *Keks*." (Emphasis in the original.) See Bert Papenfuß, "Kunsterziehung durch Punk: Punk samt Ornament gegen Punk," *Wir wollen immer artig sein*. Eds. Ronald Galenza und Heinz Havemeister. (Berlin: Schwarzkopf und Schwarzkopf, 2004) 503. But beyond Papenfuß's testimony, there is the music itself: against the prog-influenced pop maximalism of their contemporaries, Gaukler-Rock-Band and Keks worked with spare arrangements, palm-muting and power chords, and trebly production to produce a kind of *neue ostdeutsche Welle*. Gaukler-Rock-Band's first single, "Bootsfahrt," was compiled by Amiga's *Kleeblatt* series in 1981 and followed the pattern of some British post-punk bands like the Slits and Public Image Limited by incorporating reggae rhythms and two-tone ska strumming. Keks, which also had a contract with Amiga, played in much the same style; an exemplary song is "Komm auf mein Schloß"

(1980; also compiled on *Kleeblatt* that year), which also breaks into standard rock 4/4 and brings in a punk sensibility with a distorted two-chord progression—in addition to using an "eins, zwei, drei, vier!" adapted from the Ramones to cue a segue out of the bridge.

[41] It is puzzling that the transcribing officer—or, indeed, any East German security official—would be unfamiliar with the collective's name as late as 1981, since the Plastic People's arrest and trial had not only prompted an international outcry, and substantially inspired the formulation and circulation of Charta 77, but had also taken place at the same time as had Wolf Biermann's expulsion from East Germany. A Stasi official's unfamiliarity with such an important case is surprising. Tom Stoppard interviewed a member of the Plastic People for a Sunday feature in the *Times*. See Vratislav Brabenec, "Did Plastic People of the Universe Topple Communism?" Interview by Tom Stoppard. [*London*] *Times* 19 December 2009. Web. 14th April 2011.
<http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/music/article6960888.ece> Curiously, very little of note has been published on the Plastic People in English; Craig Cravens, editor of a textbook on the Czech Republic and Slovakia, includes in his section on the two countries' communist history a brief discussion of the Plastic People. See Craig Cravens, *Culture and Customs of the Czech Republic and Slovakia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006) 136-139.

[42] See Barbara Day, *The Velvet Philosophers*. (London: Claridge, 1999) 202. Day: "In March 1974 an open-air concert near České Budějovice by the Plastic People of the Universe and DG307 was broken up by police, with hundreds of young people arrested, injured, and later expelled from school and work. The trial of the Plastic People in 1976 was the culmination of this campaign; ironically, it brought together in the corridors of the court house many of the people who were to be founder-signatories of Charta 77." Georgetown University's excellent National Security Archive devotes an entire website to the international significance and reception of Charta 77, as well as transcription-translations of files on the charter prepared by the former Czechoslovakian security service (*Státní bezpečnost* [StB]) and currently archived by the Security Information Service of the Czech Republic. See Vilém Prečan, Svetlana Savranskaya, and Thomas Blanton, eds. "Charta 77 after 30 Years." *National Security Archive*. 6 January 2007. Web. Accessed 14th April 2011. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB213/index.htm>

[43] All citations from this interview transcript, up to and including this one, stem from BStU, ZA, MfS AIM 7423/91, 3. Beifügung, 181-182.

[44] Here, we can refer to Kant's famous consideration of the empty subject in the first Critique: "Zum Grunde der [Wissenschaft der reinen Vernunft] können wir aber nichts anderes legen, als die einfache und für sich selbst an Inhalt gänzlich leere Vorstellung: *Ich*; von der man nicht einmal sagen kann, daß sie ein Begriff sei, sondern ein bloßes Bewußtsein, das alle Begriffe begleitet. Durch dieses Ich, oder Er, oder Es (das Ding), welches denket, wird nun nichts weiter, als ein transzendentales Subjekt der Gedanken vorgestellt =x, welches nur durch die Gedanken, die seine Prädikate sind, erkannt wird, und wovon wir, abgesondert, niemals den mindesten Begriff haben können..." Rather than the thinking subject in general, Anderson evacuates the communicative subject which emerges from musical collaboration; his presentation of the punk group as an empty critic (critical subject) renders it, by theoretical sleight-of-hand, an indeterminate political force which can't be characterized in terms of specific protests or policy recommendations. This punk position thus attends (*begleitet*) effective musical protest, but is not bound by the contents thereof. See Immmanuel Kant, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft. Theoretische Philosophie* I. Ed., ann. Georg Mohr. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2004) 412-413.

[45] After corresponding with Tim Renner, an employee of the West German broadcaster MDR, Anderson worked with members of two East German punk bands—Stefan Döring's Rosa Extra, from Berlin, and Erfurt's SchleimKeim—to try and bring about a three-way split release. Rosa Extra bowed out of the project, which was eventually released by Aggressive Rockproduktionen as *DDR von unten / eNDe*, a split release by Zwitschermaschine and "Saukerle" (a psuedonym for SchleimKeim which nevertheless did not prevent the band's members from being arrested for their illegal release of music). For the whole story, see Torsten Preuß, "Zonenpunk in Scheiben: Die erste Punkplatte aus dem nahen Osten." *Wir wollen immer artig sein. Punk, New Wave, Hiphop, und Independent-szene in der DDR von 1980 bis 1990.* Eds. Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister. (Berlin: Schwarzkopf und Schwarzkopf, 2004) 126-135.

[46] See Alison Lewis, "Die neue Unübersichtlichkeit. Die Lyrik des Prenzlauer Bergs: Zwischen Avantgarde, Ästhetizismus und Postmoderne." *Postmoderne Literatur in deutscher Sprache: eine Ästhetik des Widerstands?* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000) 280.

[47] Sascha Anderson, *Jeder Satellit hat einen Killersatelliten.* (Berlin: Galrev, 1997) 17.

Chapter 3: It's Punk Time! Futurity, Pessimism, and GDR Punk

It's Monk Time! It's Punk Time!

Billed for much of the 1960s as the anti-Beatles, the Monks made some tonal and

thematic lyrical adjustments in order to live up to their name, and to make (transnational

pop) history as Germany's oddest proto-punk band. "Monk Time," opens their 1965

album *Black Monk Time*. Drums and high-pitched organ drone start up together, the

drumbeat's regular martial pulse presenting a counterpoint for the primitive synthesizer's

held note. Slashing banjo, overdriven and feeding back, provides harsh, metronomic

accompaniment for the downbeat. An organ skronk ends the holding pattern, and

Burger's shout charges into space provided by a brief beat break:

> Alright, my name's Gary.
> Let's go, it's beat time, it's hop time, it's Monk time
> You know we don't like the army.
> What army?
> Who cares what army?
> Why do you kill all those kids over there in Viet Nam?
> Mad Viet Cong.
> My brother died in Viet Nam
> James Bond, who was he

Gary immediately names the rigorous temporality in which the Monks have implicated

the listener: it's beat time, it's hop time, it's monk time. But Monk time isn't just a

rhythmic signature. It emblematizes an epoch. Monk time receives historical anchoring,

as a jumble of 1965's most contentious issues rubs shoulders with a selection of

Goldfinger grabs; the My Lai massacre was years off at that point, but the murder of

children and the deaths of the American soldiers like Gary, who (unlike Gary) have been sent over to fight in Viet Nam, are juxtaposed as the hallmarks of the era—as the ticks of the clock of Monk time. Even this blackest of humors, however—the whimsy of imagining dead Vietnamese and dead brothers together—is further leadened when the music swells, and Gary's tolerance of the song's frenetic pace, and of his place in time, of the fear and violence of the Cold War, comes to a loud and pathetic end. The organ swells, and Gary wants out: "Stop it," he screams, "Stop it! I don't like it! It's too loud for my ears." The noise of the bass, banjo, and drums lend his protests credence; Monk time becomes just as unbearable for us as it clearly is for Gary, but the beat propels us forward, out of the bridge, into the confusion of James Bond references—"Pussy Galore is coming down!"—and the invocation of the ultimate fear factor: "We don't like the atomic bomb!" And the insistent refrain: it's beat time, hop time, and Monk time. It's zany, it's pop-saturated, and it's terrifying.

This chapter is about punk time. What I call punk time was a theoretical product of rock music. It was a coefficient of the interaction of music and text. Punk time was articulated in East Germany much like Monk time was articulated in the Federal Republic: as an intepretation-articulation of a temporal horizon, as an aesthetically accomplished negotiation of a fraught situation. The forthcoming analysis shows how certain kinds of GDR musical performance afforded their participants with a means of finding their own place in time, and did this in the GDR, where time, and the determination of one's place in it, were burdened with a great deal of meaning.

First, I talk about time, about the organization and segmentation of time in the GDR. Next, I consider rock music's making of temporal meaning in the GDR. I'll do so

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by taking a look at some representative *Ostrock*'s compositional structure and the circumstances of its performance in the GDR, in addition to briefly outlining the institutional history of rock in the GDR. Punk was very much in dialogue with the other developments taking place in pop music, however politically or institutionally isolated punk's proponents may have been from their counterparts at Amiga, so it is worth examining GDR rock's work with time before considering punk's. Finally, I take a look at the ways in which punks enunciated punk time in the GDR, in dialogue (and by contrast) with the kinds of musical time-saying that preceded theirs.[1] Throughout, I consider the tactics of transgression, of historiographic appropriation, employed in each text.

My readings of the primary texts here—rock songs from Oranienburg and Leipzig, punk songs from Berlin and Erfurt—have one major analytic priority. Rather than attempt more global thematic or formal analyses, they consider the specific interaction of the songs' individual time-concepts with German Democratic time: with the progressivist time of SED theory and the productivist time of the GDR everyday. The analysis identifies interfaces: points of contact where punk time contradicted progressivist time, or challenged productive time, where it simply negated a given aspect of historical epistemology—or proposed its own alternatives.

This chapter hopes to demonstrate two things. First, that punk time was a kind of rocktime with its own tactics and genealogy. And, secondly, that punk time operated on those of the aspects of GDR autonarration which had been granted the greatest symbolic investiture, and which were also therefore most vulnerable to probing, critique, and

satirization. This isn't an account of punk's widespread reception, but rather of its cunning in finding opportunities to inhabit the fault lines of the culture it called home.

Time in Place: Socialist Time

How societies organize time is one fundamental way in which they are themselves. Societies' organization of time comprises their segmentation of days into hours during which different things are done; their assignment of commemorative or ritual importance to certain days of the year; their insistence on keeping some parts of their past present, and distancing themselves from others; and their arrangement of popular experiences in the formal sequence of locally, nationally, or transnationally defined narratives. This is hardly a new idea. Nor, for that matter, is the notion that a consistent, intersubjectively constituted temporality inheres in the experience of national belonging. Already in 1989, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* proposed that the development of national consciousnesses required the establishment of experiential simultaneity: of a temporality proper to the nation, a shared horizon of expectation[2] along which events are organized.

Of Communist societies, Susan Buck-Morss has proposed that the events of 1917 prompted politicians' and artists' (frequently fractious) negotiation of a new, revolutionary temporality. The socialists' revolutionary project operated according to the intentional logic of the dreamworld; and in that logic inhered a purposive temporality. The socialist dreamworld was a vision of the better world that could be made, and it was a vision whose guarantee was given in the pace of progress, the periodization of past and future, and the justification of everyday political, aesthetic, and industrial practice

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according to that logic and its temporality. But this subsumption, she claims, was hastily undertaken.

Buck-Morss considers the scenarios of revolutionary rupture and forced modernization, which were common themes in Soviet art and politics of the immediate post-revolutionary period. She points out that the promulgation of a totalizing, revolutionary temporality is untenable:

> Both [scenarios] are based on a temporal conception that is theoretically impoverished and practically inaccurate. Social life in fact occupies a plurality of layers of time, from glacier-slow to lightning fast, from inexorable repetition to ineluctable transiency.[3]

All time-concepts thus comprise both the *longue durée* and the quotidian, whose relation to one another is negotiated by each individual for herself, or himself. Furthermore, "The range of temporal connections and disconnections produces a complex force field in which social revolutions in fact take place, rather than lining up obediently behind the leadership of progress."[4] Rather than take the revolutionaries at their word, with this observation Buck-Morss shows that the structure of revolutionary time was constituted by the revolution, instead of having caused it. Revolutionary time was not "realized," with the dream it helped to structure; it was a 'force field' in which differentially empowered (and interested) parties determined the meanings and portents of events as they happened.

Conceiving of revolutionary time as a contested concept, and one which different actors—the Soviet state, artists, workers' collectives—hegemonized at various times, affords scholars a useful way of thinking about the East German case, as well. In his 2009 study *Skin of the System*, Benjamin Robinson suggests that with the GDR's end in 1989, the predominant (liberal and Western) historical narrative lost its only worthy challenger:

"Real socialism's retrospective disqualification from reality is a temporal abandonment that allows twentieth-century history to be structured by other events which still command their loyalists."[5] Succeeding a situation in which two narrations of world history competed for definitional primacy, the "End of History" was the beginning of the dominance of a single, universal historical narrative.

Even though it has since lost its explanatory currency, that "disqualified" narrative nevertheless anchored East Germany in time. The events it comprised, and the interpretations of them it offered, were crucial both for the development of grand historical narratives and for the ordering of schedules at the level of the every day. The meaning of time, and the meaning of the republic's place in it, were thus of particularly vital importance to the GDR's founders and perpetuators, and were negotiated at every point of interaction between the goals the state set and the pursuit of them in practice. Speeches given on holidays, television documentaries, illustrated commemorative periodicals, class discussions in school, the service oath of the military, or the announcement of and debate about quotas and targets on the shopfloor—in all these cases, time was a crucial rhetorical component of the ways in which imperatives were formulated, achievements recognized, or misdeeds decried.[6]

There is no single formulation of the SED's positioning of itself in time, from which all policy benchmarks, or historical arguments, were derived. In the pages of the SED journal *Einheit: Zeitschrift für Theorie und Praxis des wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus*, however, survives a record of a conversation about time, history, and the promise of the coming years. Bureaucrats, union leaders, teachers, professors, historians, and sociologists took part in it by publishing in the journal, and by engaging with and

critiquing one another's work throughout the forty-year history of *Einheit*'s print run. As a result, this journal constituted a privileged site for the GDR's negotiation of appropriate socialist attitudes toward past, present, and future.

Forty years of analysis from across the disciplines left a diverse and daunting archive behind them. For the purposes of brevity, and clarity, I focus in the forthcoming on the most important figures who published in the journal and its special issues—the journal's founding editors, Ulbricht and Honecker, the ZK as a whole—and on those historical self-situations which appeared in response to three of the defining moments (or events) of East German history: the creation of the SED and establishment of the provisional state in 1946; the closing of the border in 1961 and the prospect of increased security and stability that it was thought to bring; and the transition from Ulbricht's to Honecker's leadership, and the appearance of "real existing socialism" as a key concept in the early 1970s. The differences between *Einheit* contributions made at these times testify not only to the disparity of opinion which persisted at all times in the (far from monolithic) SED government, but to the ways in which historiographic discourse itself changed over time in the GDR.

Einheit unifies Time

In "Der Beginn einer neuen Zeit," their introduction to *Einheit*'s 1946 compendium, the editors provide a brief diagnosis of the recently-fought war's cause, and append an assurance that a cure has been found:

> Ein Jahr nach der Befreiung Deutschlands von der nazistischen Gewaltherrschaft, deren Errichtung durch die Spaltung der Arbeiterbewegung ermöglicht wurde, haben die Arbeiterparteien in der Ostzone sich vereinigt.

Historical errancy caused the war, but has been corrected. The occurrence of what "Millionen seit Jahren sehnsüchtig erhofften," the unification of the working class movement, will correct the historical wrongs that have left Germany in ruins. The editors inaugurate not just the beginning of new times, but the beginning of a new kind of time: progressive time, in which history occurs as it ought to. The essay's title is a Wilhelm Pieck quote, from a speech which draws on a metaphor of building—"wir haben das Fundament gelegt. Es ist der unerschütterliche Fels, auf dem das deutsche Volk eine glückliche Zukunft erbauen wird"—in order to make collective intentionality, and the mandate of a public work, the definitive aspects of the new epoch. Out of the declensive working-class history of the early twentieth century, here "das Kapitel der Spaltung, der Schwäche und des Niedergangs" emerges a new progressive temporality whose inhabitants have a concrete task, and the rock of new beginnings underfoot.

That task—the transformation of economy and society—is a "geschichtliche Aufgabe," a project whose analogue is the reconstruction of a "wohnliches Haus für unser Volk" and the forging of a democratic state. The postwar unification of the working class provides this project the condition of its possibility; what remains is the direction of concerted effort, and the application of the appropriate (ideological) tools to the task.[7] Thus though time had stopped progressing and the revolution stalled, the historical aberration has been corrected. The proper conditions have been met for the resumption of history's forward progress, a movement driven by the energy expended in the building of socialism.

In 1962, *Einheit* produced a special publication on the events of August 1961. Entitled *Die geschichtliche Aufgabe der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und die*

Zukunft Deutschlands, the document compiles both the titular study, which was a work of the Staatsrat, and, by way of introduction, a speech by Walter Ulbricht on the occasion of the eleventh *Tagung* of the National Front. At the outset, Ulbricht traces a genealogy of important German publishers of revolutionary documents. Located along this rhetorical trajectory are Fichte ("An die deutsche Nation"), Marx and Engels (the Manifesto), Liebknecht (the revolutionary program of the Spartacist uprising promulgated on October 7th, 1918), and the KPD (its 1939 call for international cooperation between laborers in a people's front). Ulbricht himself is the final member. Armed thus with the authority of history, he characterizes the work's contents and point of methodological departure:

> Das Dokument enthält eine geschichtlich begründete, unwiderlegbare Anklage gegen die deutsche Großbourgeoisie, die jeden Anspruch auf die Führung Deutschlands verspielt hat und beweist ebenwso unwiderlegbar, **dass nur die Arbeiterklasse im Bund mit allen demokratischen Kräften Anspruch auf die Führung Deutschlands erheben kann**.[8]

The concept of "geschichtliche Begründ[ung]" not only supports the diagnosis of the West German state's deadly combination of political anachrony with military-technological force, but it also justifies the East German state's claim to leadership of the entire nation, along with that leadership's assertion over time. History, therefore, is both destiny and testimony; it vouchsafes both a descriptive and a normative claim. West Germany's failure is legible in the reemergence of a historical failing which operates in the guise of a contemporary political philosophy: Westbindung, here a "Spaltungsmaßnahme der Westmächte."

Predictive certainty emerges from the document's analysis of the East German state's historical situation, such that ethical conviction and collective effort inhere in the concept of the "geschichtliche Mission":

> Die geschichtliche Mission, der Weg und das Ziel der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Sozialismus und Frieden, liegen heute klar zutage. Ebenso offenkundig ist es, daß der Wunschtraum der Adenauer-Regierung, durch Aufrüstung und Provokationen die DDR dem westdeutschen NATO-Staat anzuschließen, in Nichts zerronnen ist. (10)

The temporal structure of this formulation picks up where the constructive metaphors of 1946 left off. Now, however, the comparative work is done by movement, and momentum, rather than by construction and productivity. The same expectant temporality is in play, but a different task is assigned. That the *goal* (peace) has come to light ("klar zutage liegen") constitutes only half of Ulbricht's formulation. The other half, his identification of the *way* (socialism), performs a deferral of achievement. Ulbricht pushes peace forward, into the rhetorical distance opened up by *Weg*'s metaphorics of travel. This is the time horizon, the approachable but unreachable limit, Ulbricht sees when looking forward.

On the first page of the *geschichtliche Aufgabe*, the Staatsrat looks back toward a newly distant fascist past. The council writes, "[Der Republik] hat die Geschichte den Auftrag erteilt, dafür zu sorgen, dass niemals wieder von deutschem Boden ein Krieg ausgeht" (49). But a return of errant history threatens from across the border:

> [i]n der westdeutschen Bundesrepublik herrschen heute wieder Menschenverachtung, Ausbeutung, klerikales Dunkelmännertum, Geld- und Eroberungsgier und Militarismus. Das heißt, in der westdeutschen Bundesrepublik wird—durch eine Scheindemokratie getarnt—alles konserviert und belebt, was es in der deutschen Geschichte an Rückständigem, Barbarischem, und Unmenschlichem, an Dummheit und Borniertheit—gegen das eigene Volk und gegen andere Völker—gibt. (51)

Anachronism is the paramount concept in this assessment. In West Germany, an old threat lingers as a future danger. And with its resurrection (*belebt*, I would argue, implies *wiederbelebt*) of fascist history, the Federal Republic is out of place in time with respect

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to the GDR, whose leadership has recognized the task history has assigned it. Layering a temporal difference over top of Germany's geographic division serves the *Staatsrat*'s politics of distinction ably.

In this text's penultimate chapter, construction reasserts itself as a metaphor for thinking ethically about history, and productively about the future. Pages of comparisons between the GDR and the FRG find the latter wanting, as the listing of East German accomplishments—the expropriation of the landed bourgeoisie, the reduction of unemployment and housing shortages—builds to a crescendo. And yet,

> [die DDR], die sich im Einklang weiß mit den Entwicklungsgesetzen der menschlichen Gesellschaft, kann mit der Vollendung des Aufbaus des Sozialismus…nicht warten, bis die friedliebenden Kräfte in Westdeutschland unter Führung der Arbeiterklasse den Sieg errungen haben. (77)

Historical certainty produces political urgency. Though the Republic's progress obeys the laws of historical development, the postwar era has yielded a situation in which there is simultaneously no time to rest on one's laurels and which nevertheless allows one to look back on one's accomplishments (even if only to find them wanting). Success is deferred. Even with the "securing of the border," one only looks back to see why moving forward is so vital.

Following Honecker's accession to secretary-general, the Republic's theoretical vocabulary underwent only very slight modifications. In the first issue of 1972's volume of *Einheit*, Honecker wrote that from the present historical standpoint, and in light of the results of the previous five-year-plan and the expectations of the new one, it was plain that the Republic was to improve on those accomplishments already made. Honecker's concrete articulation of what is to come continues to enact the asymptotic scenario of approach: "[der VIII. Parteitag der SED] verdeutlichte, daß die Gestaltung der neuen

Gesellschaft auf einem komplizierten und langwierigen Weg vonstatten geht."

Furthermore:

> Bis zur Vollendung des Sozialismus in der DDR wird daher noch einige Zeit vergehen und noch viel zu tun sein, um das dafür erforderliche höhere Niveau der Produktivkräfte, der sozialistischen gesellschaftlichen Beziehungen und des sozialistischen Bewußtseins der Menschen zu erreichen.[9]

Thirty-four years in, the building of socialism remains far off. Socialism is an end whose advent requires the elapsing of *einige Zeit*. What is more, Honecker's verbs are comparative, rather than contrastive; instead of setting his sights on a *hohes Niveau der Produktivkräfte*, Honecker mobilizes the comparative form *höheres* to both acknowledge and underemphasize completed achievement, while pushing the bar just a bit higher. This is a logic of deferral, according to which socialist time remains a time of collective expectation. This is the temporality appropriate to clocking the development of an object which is *perfectible*, but will never be perfect.

Other Negotiations of GDR Time

Though this is the most explicit formulation of the socialist deferral, *Einheit* was hardly the GDR's only forum for political and historical debate. Politicians and artists had theorized GDR mass culture—dramatic performance, cinema, pop music, and literature—from its very inception as a site at which the meaning of history and the possibilities of the future were to be negotiated. For the communist leadership, and for the intellectuals, writers, critics, artists, musicians, and philosophers who informed its decisions, the legislation and production of an East German (popular) culture was about encouraging the production of a culture proper to the ideals of the new society they were collaborating to build. As a result, at the center of all debates on the meaning of culture in

the GDR, and on aesthetic expression's proper forms, was the question of the proper means of representing the working-class subject *to* working-class subjects, in a way which would validate the latter's ongoing negotiation of its identity-concept.

The *Arbeiter- und Bauernfakultäten* institutes, installed at universities in the 1940s, targeted the attitudes of an entire generation of students toward professional life. These institutions sought to produce a socialist intelligentsia, and trained teachers, lawyers, and cultural authorities alike (Hermann Kant, the future head of the Deutscher Schriftsteller Verband, was trained at the ABF Greifswald and fictionalized his experience there in his best-known novel, *die Aula*). At the ABF, the teaching of career skills was ensconced in an ideological-ethical framework which emphasized the political significance of each of the tasks students learned to perform. By the mid-1950s, committee-formulated positive laws for art were put into practice everywhere. Occasionally, this articulation took the form of aesthetic programs like that which emerged for literature out of the Bitterfeld conferences of 1959 and 1964.

This program, which came to be known as *der Bitterfelder Weg*, conceived of the realistic representation of collectivity and industrial productivity, and in particular the *Aufbauroman* and *Produktionsroman*, as building blocks for a new socialist aesthetic. Beyond this, it emphasized close collaboration between all phases of production: creation, publication, and distribution. This was not a perfect process; the countervailing tendencies of that literature have long been a topic of critical interest. But whatever the movement's internal fault lines were, it was nevertheless an important movement, and produced a significant corpus whose formal properties and representational strategies

survived for decades after the key genres—the novel of production, the novel of arrival, the novel of construction—became historical.[10]

Artists worked with different media in producing texts which could represent the mandate the past gave the future, and could convincingly situate the construction of the socialist subject in the context of the construction of the socialist society. Some examples help to illustrate the diversity of approaches taken to this negotiation. Brecht's fragmentary play *Aufstieg und Untergang des Egoisten Johann Fatzer* laid much of the groundwork for the now-famous theory of the *Lehrstück*, and was later identified by Heiner Müller as a crucial site where Brecht negotiated the political role theatre could play in a non-market context, and where readers and viewers could be prompted to think through East Germany's inheritance of the *Kultur* of previous aesthetic moments in Germany along with their foreclosure by fascist violence, and in particular the society's inefficacious inheritance of the radical Weimar avant garde.[11] Frank Beyer's film *Spur der Steine* drew on the generic properties of the Western in order to thematize the clash of the energy and creativity of construction with the surefootedness and hesitancy of bureaucracy, and the renegotiation of loyal socialist selfhood that clash prompted. Its formal experimentation (and overt critical content) were, unsurprisingly, at the center of 1965's 11th plenary debates on culture.

Finally, Brigitte Reimann's novel *Franziska Linkerhand* examined the disparity which existed between *Anspruch* and accomplishment as the momentum of the 1960s gave way to the deceleration of the 1970s and Real-Existing Socialism. Hunter Bivens' reading of the novel emphasizes its exploration of "waiting" as a central mode of East German experience:

> Reimann depicts the GDR as a life world in which industrial modernity's productive telos has become uncoupled from social content, a society of people in constant motion yet going nowhere. In the denial of social anticipation, the provisional emerges as a central trope of the novel, and this suspension of social momentum acquires an almost ontological weight.[12]

Bivens diagnoses an important tension. Reimann's "provisionality," dynamic stasis, permits neither the recognition of past successes nor the inference that future achievements are within reach. As such, the novel is a context-specific engagement with the interaction of *Anspruch* and accomplishment, and with the impact that interaction had on both the spaces and times East Germans inhabited. As we will see, pop and punk music managed similar contributions, working with a medium—sound recordings—as politicized as books were.

Pop Politics: *Ostrock* Keeps Time

By 1948, the state-owned record label Amiga had released *more* jazz records than all West German concerns combined.[13] This was in part because no wide-ranging set of criteria had been formulated for the professional or aesthetic management of what state memoranda called *Jazz- und Unterhaltungsmusik*. Instead, jazz performances remained possible in various venues, while the Ministry for Culture's attempts at actively encouraging appreciation of Soviet culture took the form of free-admission festivals organized around dancing, singing, and cuisine. In 1951, however, the creation of the *Verband deutscher Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler* provided the SED Ministry for Culture, to whom this nominal artists' union reported, with immediate access to the songbooks (fakebooks) of the GDR's performing musicians, and with control over the promotional structure within which the latter performed. Regarding the form of the music

that ought to be performed, the union and its political superiors remained agnostic; undue improvisational tendencies were expected to be curbed, as was modal (rather than diatonic) play. Furthermore, and most vaguely, all jazz was expected to be expressive of socialist values—however inchoate their aesthetic form remained at this time.

It was really as a response to the Beatles, and their popularity in East Germany, that a clear set of guidelines for rock policy, and for rock aesthetics, was formulated. By 1963, many East German bands drew on the Beatles' repertoire in composing their own songs. This resulted in the public performance of four-four-timed, skiffle-descended pop songs whose lyrics were a mélange of English fragments—"baby," "yeah," "beat," "kid," "car"—at FDJ-Klubs throughout the Republic.[14] Growing associations of rock with violence prompted the ZK to deliver a 1965 decision entitled "Zu einigen Fragen der Jugendarbeit und dem Auftreten der Rowdygruppen," which proposed that police and other authorities undertake a number of anti-rock measures aimed at reducing the number of rock musicians, and frequency of rock concerts, in the GDR.[15]

Things reached a critical mass in December of that year, of course, with the Eleventh Plenum; part of the Plenum's crackdown on popular culture was agitation against the Rolling Stones and beat music. Contained within this criticism was a glimpse of the normative aesthetics to come: "Niemand in unserem Staate," said Honecker to the plenary audience, "hat etwas gegen eine gepflegte Beatmusik."[16] Moving forward, the concept of the *gepflegt* artwork would be put to the test. Some musicians would find opportunities available to them which the immediate post-plenary climate might have indicated were foreclosed, whereas others would run aground on the GDR rock aesthetics

and find themselves incapable of properly honoring the prescriptions that FDJ, ZK, and Ministry of Culture thinkers developed for the art form.

The arrival of an East German rock *gepflegt* enough to pass censorial muster, and savvy enough to find commercial success, came with the Puhdys' vinyl debut. Though the band had been around since the mid-1960s, Amiga released their first and eponymous album in 1971. That album's lead-off track, "Vorn ist das Licht," sets the tone for the entire record and makes a number of key elements of the preferred GDR rock aesthetic immediately clear.

A brief keyboard run opens the song, and an accelerating roll on the floor toms provides a near-"Zarathrustrian" introduction to the song. "Vorne ist das Licht," the Puhdys harmonize as the instrumentation stops. The drums fall into rock's 4-4 pattern, and an electric guitar flourish invokes for a moment the beginning of Creedence Clearwater Revival's 1969 anti-Vietnam screed, "Fortunate Son," and its descending introductory strains. But this song's bent notes climb rather than fall, as the call-and-response of the main verse begins:

> Vorn ist das Licht! Vorn ist das Licht!
> Vorn ist das Licht
> Du kannst es sehen
> Vorn ist das Licht
> beim Vorwärtsgehen
> Vorn ist das Licht
> Trägt die Jungen
> Vorn ist das Licht
> So singen tausend Zungen[17]

The declaiming singer-narrator's understanding of his position in time doesn't need much elaboration. The song remobilizes aspects of the *Einheit* and ZK materials—goal-oriented motion, the legibility of a brighter future (das Licht) to come—and embellishes these

lyrical elements' with the propulsive backbeat and call-response structure, and through repetitive, collective utterance. Puhdys adapt choral harmonies to deliver their rock song's messianic, if non-religious greeting of the better time that's sure to come. The song's increasing pathos helps to accentuate the happy urgency of its message, as well. The instrumental performance grows from spare bass and rhythm guitar in the opening and many of the verse and chorus parts to the burst of bongos, drums, and polyphonic song of the final refrain. The song ends byzantine and effusive after it begins spare and promising.

Considering the generic properties of the Puhdys' song illustrates a few other things about GDR rock. "Vorne" includes instruments—bongos, an electric organ—then in vogue in international rock. In addition, the compositional structure, though it comprises a (for the time) hardly unusual intro-verse-chorus-verse-etc. progression; as we have seen, the song also incorporates a number of vocal and instrumental arrangement shifts as its running time elapses. The Puhdys' inclusion of these elements bespeaks this *gepflegt* rock band's attention to blending nonrock performance idiomata (here, choral textures in the refrain) with the rock rhythm and vocal delivery. Of course, neither the instrumental nor the idiomatic choice was unique to East Germany or its rock tradition. In fact, the progressive direction rock had taken in Britain and the United States suggest an international lineage for the Puhdys' first album. By offering consumers of music a product comparable to (or recognizable as) the music on the RIAS airwaves, but at the same time attending to SED culture policy's expectations of aesthetic sophistication and technical skill, the Puhdys could attract listeners familiar with (and partial to) the Western music their own music was supposed to counter, if not replace. Thus though it is a signal

case in the development of the *Ostrock* aesthetic, and led off one of the first genuine homegrown album hits in Amiga (and East German) history, "Vorn ist das Licht" was both the inaugurator of a *gepflegte Rockmusik* and heir to the ever-evolving rock idiom on display internationally, on vinyl and on the airwaves.

While the Puhdys became the GDR's most popular rock band, the Klaus Renft Combo walked the line of permissibility. After a 1965 performance ban prompted a minor riot in Leipzig, the band underwent particularly close *Einstufungskomitee* scrutiny. They nevertheless released two albums for Amiga, in 1973 and 1974, before Jentzsch's final banning in 1975 prompted a 1976 emigration. Among other things, those albums fuse progressive rock arrangements with material from the ironic *Liedermacher* idiom Wolf Biermann was, at roughly the same time, making his stock-in-trade.[18] At the same time as it cross-pollinates genres from either side of the Wall, though, the album considers the prospects for East Germany's future. Two songs, tracked together, are emblematic in this regard.

"Ich bau dir ein Lied," the first song of the pair, sets an intimate tone with initially minimal instrumentation. Renft's pleading voice, accompanied by acoustic strumming, begins high but grows higher as the project of which he sings takes verbal shape:

> Ich bau euch ein Lied
> aus blauen Pflastersteinen
> und lege es in eure Hand
> da fallen die Steine
> allmählich auseinander
> und werden ein herrlicher Sand

From an initial elongated, tentative "iich," as he moves from construction to presentation, Renft's delivery of the lyrics becomes increasingly decisive. When decomposition

begins, Renft's pitch drops and his delivery slows. His aesthetic creation meets its natural (and productive) end, and the task of catalyzing creativity shifts to audience:

> Und blast ihr in den Sand
> euern Atem aus
> werden Wellen draus
> mögen diese Wellen
> auch in euch selber Kreise ziehn
> auf den Schwellen
> zum Herzen euch wie Blumen blühn

This is an enactment of creation and destruction, of aesthetic production and listener participation. It functions within the metaphoric circuit of construction and renewal which the Republic drew on from it beginnings to articulate the appropriate temporal vantage its citizens ought to have. The process by which the built song falls into dust, and is revived by the breath/investment of the (second-person plural) listener, is a call to participation. The subjunctive "mögen" backs away from the *Einheit*-style certitude of vindication by history, and instead presents the hoped-for outcome—the galvanization of the listener—as something that may, or should, happen, but is not guaranteed.

In addition, though "Lied" draws on the teleological vocabulary of construction, it interpolates cyclical, recursive elements into that linear progression. The acoustic guitar and the rise and fall of the vocals' volume vouchsafe the building and the collapsing and the rebuilding which are figured textually. The song's time-concept therefore captures an approach toward a wished-for goal which does not take shape as a vector, but as a line which folds back upon itself.

As the last notes of "Lied" sound, and the hope of collaborative aesthetic building rings for a quiet moment, an organ blast and power chord take over, and "Nach der

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Schlacht" opens with its chorus. The initial refrain, a stock-taking of a battle's outcome, highlights the casualties suffered:

> nach der Schlacht
> war`n die grünen Wiesen rot,
> nach der Schlacht
> war` n viel Kameraden tot.
> und man stellt sich auf das verblieb`ne Bein,
> und man meint,
> das müsse der Sieg schon sein.
> und man meint ...

Though this passage's temporal perspective shares the early *Einheit* material's postcataclysmic vantage, its explicitly post-*fascist* character isn't clear—and neither is its adherence to the optimism of the *Einheit* formulations. The ruination of war and the deaths of *Kameraden* (not, or not yet, *Genossen*) were certainly elements of the self-situating vocabulary of the immediate postwar period. But emphases on renewal, the rebuilding of the cities, and the production of a communist social body were there as well. Renft Combo's assessment emphasizes losses sustained, not gains expected. *Man stellt sich auf das verblieb'ne Bein*, and thinks to himself that the new condition must be the expected victory. Instead of the certainty of the Marxist historiographer, Renft's is the ambivalence of the once-bitten. In this construction persists the possibility that vindication-by-history (*der Sieg*) might have been misrecognized.

The fills and organ vamps which characterize the song's opening are relieved by a walking bassline over a regular shuffling beat. Each line's final four syllables follow the beat precisely:

> Feiern den Sieg der Revolution
> die Amputierten auf der Station
> billig der Wein, doch sie gießen sich ein.
> Kamerad, ist nicht schad`,
> um das Bein - musste sein, Kamerad ...

The ascent/descent of Renft's phrasing highlights the contrast between achievement and setback, but the rhythm's continuous forward motion instrumentally renders the spoken contrasts incidental to the progress made. The song's time is thus the dialectical time of history's progress, where minority reports—the well-populated hospital ward, the poor quality of the material wealth achieved, the loss of limb—are read aloud, but subverted in impact by the overall development of the musical text. This passage of the song is an ironic naming of the justifiable-expense logic at the heart of the command economy's self-identification; only through the sacrifice of certain individual claims can the ventriloquized needs of the aggregate population be achieved. It is also an enactment of the treatment which namings of this kind receive—they are the documents of barbarism countered by the documents of civilization; the losses without which historical victory could not occur.

But the shuffle over top of which the sustained guitar notes and their accompanying organ vamps are laid stutters, and grinds to a halt, as the guitar solo gives way to isolated, unrelated notes. Where forward movement had been, an expectant pause. Then, accelerating to a din of fractional notes played so fast the spaces between beats are near-indiscernable, a drum solo.

This might be figuration of another battle to come, a disassembly of order and banishment of regularity that comes with diving guitar squalls and then a solo characterized by such an instability of timing as to seem to be entirely without regular timing at all. However, as the drum solo slows to a heartbeat of floor tom strikes, the driving rhythm of the previous verse passage strikes up immediately, and we're underway again.

> Kein Paradies, Kamerad, wird es sein,
> der Mensch wächst sehr mühsam und nicht von allein,
> in diesen großen Mantel der Macht,
> um das Bein, wär` es schad`,
> schlüg`st du nicht, Kamerad,
> noch die Schlacht ...

And though this verse follows the same pattern of delivery as had the first, its final alteration of the song title—changing the retrospective 'nach' of the refrain to the prospective 'noch'—highlights perhaps the most cynical expectation of all: that the sacrifices already made, and losses already suffered, will have been for naught if more is not given. This is a logic of deferral, a request for more backed by a promise of recompense pushed ever forward into the future. Renft's recapitulation song describes the callous logic of the expectant, empty time proper to communism's construction. It would be too bad about the leg you've already lost, comrade, if it didn't remind you to risk the remaining one.

The Klaus-Renft-Combo's and the Puhdys' careers took different paths. After Renft's emigration in 1976, his band became by the 1980s more a symbol of rock composition's foreclosed-upon possibilities than an aesthetic presence or commercial force. The Puhdys enjoyed the latter status as the top-selling East German act for several years in the 1970s and 1980s. Notwithstanding the temptation to categorize them as 'conforming' and 'dissident' musicians, respectively, both Puhdys and Klaus Renft Combo used rock music to fashion figurations of the temporality they experience. Their songs characterize the tempo of life in the GDR, and describe the horizons of historical expectation with which the bands' members and their contemporaries were presented. Each song demonstrates how the temporal dimension, its promises, and its deferrals could be expressed in song.

SchleimKeim Measures Punk Time

In their thematization of the properties and problems of GDR time, rock

musicians were not alone. Punk, a rock-related genre with which East German musicians

began experimenting in the mid-1970s, proved to have similar expressive potential. One

band in particular, Erfurt's SchleimKeim's worked with many of the same raw

materials—deferral, guitars, teleology, drums—that Renft and the Puhdys had, but

produced a different overall effect.

Schleimkeim formed in Erfurt, in 1979.[19] Over the course of the 1980s,

Schleimkeim would become the most notorious—and arguably controversial—of the

East German punk bands. Their 1982/3 collaboration with the East Berlin poet and punk

Sascha Anderson and (NDR moderator) Tim Renner to produce a record with AGR in

Hamburg, along with their recalcitrance in the face of interrogation and sanction, created

an environment in which Otze spent hundreds of hours in interrogative custody and

months in jail over a period of years, on charges including drunk and disorderly conduct,

resisting arrest, and the illegal conduct of goods across borders.[20] Through it all,

Schleimkeim generated a deep catalog of self-recorded songs. The 1983 recordings which

became half of the AGR split release *ddr von Unten*, the 1984-1987 recordings that are

informally known as the Stotternheim Tapes, and 1988's so-called Gotha Tapes all attest

to the band's sustained productivity throughout the 1980s.

Because Schleimkeim's contribution to punk time occured over the course of

several songs, analysis cannot reduce it to a single formulation. The two songs considered

here, which were recorded in 1983 and 1988, can be read as constituting a process of

negotiation whereby normative GDR time—progressive time, and yet the time of acknowledged-yet-specious accomplishments and revised expectations—was contested through the presentation of multiple contradictory alternatives. Though these two challenges articulate a total criticism, since their respective positings of alternative temporality combine to constitute a thoroughgoing rejection of both normative time *and* the alternative temporalities they individually propose, they remain distinct statements.

"Scheiß Norm," the first of the songs, was performed live throughout the early 1980s. In 1983, the band had the song committed to West German wax, on *ddr von Unten / eNDe*. Sequenced on SchleimKeim's side of the split after "Alles in Rot," whose punning title proposes an affinity between scarcity and socialist existence, "Scheiß Norm" announces its time signature, traces its own genealogy, and selects its audience before the first note is played on any of the instruments.

A simple "eins, zwei, drei, vier!" does all that work.[21] "One, two, three, four!" was the Ramones' innovation; taking the place of stage banter, the utterance (usually Dee Dee's responsibility) passed the time between texts as they were performed in order. It not only named the beat of the song to come, but announced the end of the song that had come before. For SchleimKeim, this count-off performs a similar perlocutionary function. It separates "Alles in Rot" from "Scheiß Norm," and produces, because it strikes up and introduces, the latter's time. What is more, "eins, zwei, drei, vier!" links the SchleimKeim song to the Ramones' catalog; as an allusion, the count-off enacts a trans-Atlantic connection. At the same time, however, SchleimKeim's count-off is in German. It identifies a Germanophone audience familiar with punk, and tells that audience what's coming. Thus without belonging to the song itself, but not being entirely

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separable from it, the count-off produces the circumstances of the song's reception. Though it's minor, a blink-and-you'll-miss-it ornament, this paratext is important because it not only sets the song in motion, but because it characterizes the song's history and affiliations. This is a punk song, the count-off says, but it's a German punk song, with its own language for telling time.

A tom-beat and hyperdistorted power chords provide a one-two-one-two-three series of stutter-starts, and then the punk polka picks up as singer/drummer Otze roars wordlessly in tune (time?) with the three-chord series:

> [aaa aa ja ja ja / a ja ja ja ja ja]
> norm norm norm, du bist zur norm geboren
> schaffst du keine Norm, bist du hier verloren
> [guitar break; three drum strikes]

In each case until the last, the drum strikes reset the verse pattern. Each verse is thus an iteration of the others which does not build upon them, or continue their narratives, except to repeat one of their elements—the word "Norm"—in relation to new information, and new narrated scenarios. Accordingly, the song does not draw previous melodies or themes into increasingly complex arrangements, or even incorporate a musically distinct refrain. It uses neither of the techniques Renft and the Puhdys employ. A debased or degraded kind of pop music, "Scheiß Norm" dispenses with the ambition of arrangement and the recurrence-with-a-difference of themes in order to foreground a maddening repetition: that of the word Norm, which pervades the text and serves as a lyrico-rhythmic marker by becoming a shouted element of the drumbeat. The refrain, such as it is, is sung to the same chord progression as the verses. One break in the song's even mechanical motion comes in the form of the three unaccompanied beats which

divide verse-refrain cycles from one another, and even these don't herald a melodic or rhythmic change; rather, they signal the arrival (repetition?) of more of the same.

And yet, the lyrics tell a slightly different story alongside the stable music. The first verse makes *Norm* both a personage whose position one occupies as one is born (*zur Norm geboren*) and an obligation to be met, a goal to be fulfilled (*schaffst du keine Norm*). One can thus both be and meet this expectation, can operate as/on a *Norm*. The *Norm*, of course, is the socialist subject in whose production art—like all of life practice in the GDR—was expected to be implicated. The segmentation of time proper to such an existence-enterprise is laid out in the next verses:

> In der schule fängt es an, du musst stehen deinen Mann
> büffeln rackern schufften [sic], büffeln rackern schufften [sic]
> [chorus]
> kommst du dann zur arbeit, du glaubst du bist befreit
> doch musst du deine Minuten schaffen
> buddeln raffen raffen, buddeln raffen raffen

With *Einschulung*, the true work of the *Norm* begins, as at school, the second-person listener is charged with giving a good accounting of himself. The colloquial expression 'deinen Mann stehen'—to be a man—is key here. With this gendered turn of phrase, the verse narrates the incorporation of the individual into the masculine social fabric of the workplace and expectations whose recurrent activities are counted off in infinitive form: *büffeln*, *rackern*, *schufften*. From studying through struggling to laboring, the fruits of education are just the beginning of labor. Nevertheless, though "you" believe yourself liberated when leaving school for work, the norm—no longer an expected average but instead worked time itself, *deine Minuten*—greets "you" again, with a similar cavalcade of workverbiage: *buddeln raffen raffen*. The details have changed, but the structure's the same. The tempo of working life, musically (and lyrically) structured the same, is one of

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repetitive motion, of digging, of struggling, of toiling, of grinding. It is also communicated in short, bisyllabic bursts. From production, "Scheiß Norm" transitions to reproduction, where things are found to be much the same:

> kommst du dann nach haus, deine frau zieht dich aus
> doch du fühlst dich nicht in form
> doch du musst schaffen deine Norm

Pleasure and desire are not at issue. At stake is the perpetuation of the life-cycle whose repetitive tempo the song has already explored, and which it pushes further into the bedroom. Now, the word *Norm* takes on a third meaning, or at least adds a nuance to the first of the two meanings we've already seen: as a *Norm*, one produces one's successor—also a *Norm*, whose life-cycle and responsibilities will be identical to the parent's—as a matter of reproductive obligation rather than sexual choice.

The band's steadfast maintenance of the chord progression corroborates the account its lyrics offer of the organization of one's life in the GDR. The *Norm*-effected periodization of life—school, work, perpetuation, death—and the syntactic commonalities between verses illustrates the homogeneity, the percussive monotony of life's temporality as SchleimKeim imagines it. A coda, on heaven, drives the point home:

> Kommst du dann in Himmel
> Fühlst dich wie neugeboren
> Doch dort ist alles scheißegal
> Denn im Himmel gibt es keine Norm

That everything in heaven is equivocal is experienced not as a relief, or a release, from the pressure of life as a *Norm*. Instead, the "doch" which begins the verse's third line indicates that this equivocality is experienced as a surprise, retarding the feeling of having been born anew. This verse thematizes the effectiveness of the *Norm*-acculturation that has gone before.

"Vor vielen tausend Jahren," was recorded "mit RFT Radio-Rekorder 'Babette' (kostete 450 Ostmark)."[22] The level of its fidelity is therefore lower than was the case with the smuggled AGR recordings which included "Scheiß Norm"; those had been leveled and rechanneled for inclusion on an LP. The *Nichts* sessions are even more rough-hewn than most East German punk songs, and the lyrics are thus a bit more difficult to make out amid the high sustain of the cymbals. Easily distinguished, however, are the notes of a staccato solo, picked out to begin the song with a plainitive casting of the melody the chords provide for the sung—not shouted—first two verses. The result: an uncharacteristically pathetic top end, underpinned by the fill-heavy 4/4 that keeps it punk:

> vor vielen tausend Jahren muß es gewesen sein
> da tauchten unsere Vorfahren in die Atmosphäre ein
> sie fanden einen Planeten von Giften noch rein
> darum sollte dieser Stern ihre neue Heimat sein
>
> sie hatten alles im Gepäck für eine neue Welt
> vom Computer bis zum Atomkraftwerk und genügend Geld
> Autos, Häuser, Roboter, sollten auch hierher
> Flugzeuge für den Himmel und Schiffe für das Meer

Preterism with a science-fiction bent, these two verses narrate two kinds of idyllic life. First, there is the unsullied natural world 'found' by the civilizing new arrivals. In an interesting rhetorical move, the text names the problem to come—the poisons of development—while at the same time calling the pre-poisoned idyll by its famous name: *Heimat*, a concept no less important in the GDR's public and private imaginations of place than it had been for Germans since the 19th century. The settlers' intention to build a technologically advanced society is hardly an unusual turn for a science-fiction narrative. World-building, colonization, and the use of technology to rationalize and civilize unspoiled planets are elements common to science-fiction of all types, and would

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have been familiar to readers of GDR science fiction.[23] And yet, where many of GDR sci-fi's fantasies of civilization involved faraway lands, antipodes ready to be brought into the socialist orbit, this scenario is not limited to foreign climes—rather, it's the whole planet that'll be caught up in development by computers, atomic energy, and "enough money for all." It doesn't take too much of a logical leap to see in this narrative the world-spanning totalism of the socialist (or even capitalist) claim to providing technology and greater prosperity to all who need them. This is a narrative of advancement and progress whose major elements are borrowed from similar stories the GDR told about itself in its schools and factories, on its broadcast spectra, and in its politics. The question of how to understand this story's presentation—as ironic retelling, or straight-faced recitation, or as something else entirely—remains open, until the next verse changes the song's tone entirely.

The lyrics for the next verse are, in the typeface of the liner notes to the 2000 release, written entirely in capital letters. Otze's vocal delivery explains the orthographic choice, as his previously subdued croon becomes a shout:

> DOCH EINEN, DEM GEFIEL ES NICHT WIE MAN SICHS VORGESTELLT
> ER WOLLTE NICHT SO LEBEN WIE IN SEINER ALTEN WELT
> WOLLTE KEINEN LUXUS, KEINE AUTOS UND KEIN GELD
> NUR BLUMEN, WÄLDER UND VIELE TIERE IN SEINER NEUEN WELT

This interjection of discord—both at the level of the diegesis and at that of the music, which accelerates in tempo and increases in volume, guitars distorted but foregrounded— disrupts the temporal movement the narrative had made to that point. Where the song's narrative's time had been the time of building and civilizing, a progressive time of goal-oriented action in which steps are taken toward a future whose envisioning draws on a previous success—and how could this be anything but the time of the GDR, the time of a

place being civilized according to the successful blueprint offered it by the Soviets?—now the past is drawn upon as the very grounds for disrupting civilizing time and replacing its futurism with prehistoricism. The author of the minority report, an individual dissatisfied with promises of luxury, technology, and money because he lived unhappily in "his old world," looks not *forward*, but *back*, for the ideal state of being. Rather than a progressive temporality, his is a retrogressive alternative: a back-to-the-prehistorical idealism which, if utopian, is certainly different from the technological utopianism, and its concomitant temporality, articulated with the goals of the civilizers. But his dissent goes beyond a feeling of dissatisfaction. The individual turns to action:

> Er zerstörte was sie mitgebracht in einer Explosion
> denn das Ende vom Lied kannte er damals schon
> es würde das passieren was uns heute bevorsteht

The anarchist's answer—an explosion—surfaces here as a way out. But it's a way out that hasn't been taken, because the introduction of the first-person—the "us" whom the 'end of the song,' the dystopia in place of utopia promised, is facing—makes clear the point along the song's timeline that the band, and their audience, inhabit: the time before the end. And that end is really two ends, two points at the conclusion of two timelines split off from one another by belief: the looked-forward-to end proper to the temporality of the civilizing mission, and the already-known, dreaded 'End des Liedes'—the collapse it is better to retard our progress toward than to contend with once it is reached.

SchleimKeim's contribution with "Vor vielen tausend Jahren" is, on its surface, a critique of utopian time, a questioning of its promises and structure, which its lyrics and arrangement are used to articulate. In this sense, it is a 'critical' song; its objects are straightforwardly recognizable, and its stance near-unmistakable. And yet, at the same

time, the uncharacteristic tenderness of its opening bars is at odds with its incendiary

climax and deterministic conclusion ("der Drang zu sterben / der Drang zu sterben / der

Drang zu sterben / steckt in jedem Menschen"). The two parts of the song, pre- and post-

critique, coexist uneasily as, on the one hand, an acknowledgment of the power and

pathos which attend utopian temporality, and, on the other, a disillusioned observer's

backward- *and* forward-looking rejection of the present day's accomplishments. It is

therefore both a rejection and confirmation of utopian time's attractions, an

acknowledgment and an angry alternative.

Conclusion

Regarding the legitimatory strategies proper to totalitarian domination, Hannah

Arendt offers an indelible formation of the Stalinist mechanism's appeal to history and

posterity as the guarantors of its correctness:

> Totalitarian propaganda raised ideological scientificality and its technique of
> making statements in the form of predictions to a height of efficiency of method
> and absurdity of content because, demagogically speaking, there is hardly a better
> way to avoid discussion than by releasing an argument from the control of the
> present and by saying that only the future can reveal its merits.[24]

"Making statements in the form of predictions" is an especially apt description of the

Einheit texts' strategies, given that nearly all the short- and middle-term tasks which

Einheit set were characterized as prudent actions in formulations which had an explicitly

predictive flavor—"[die DDR]," we recall, "…kann mit der Vollendung des Aufbaus des

Sozialismus…nicht warten, bis die friedliebenden Kräfte in Westdeutschland unter

Führung der Arbeiterklasse den Sieg errungen haben." Proletarian victory in the West,

assured though it may be, cannot justify procrastination when it comes to the final

construction of socialism in the east. The GDR, a socialist state with a centralized

economy, drew upon an archive of legitimatory strategies which stretched back through

the Stalinist 1950s to the utopian moment of its founding. As the changing tone and

vocabulary of the *Einheit* contributions makes clear, however, the course of GDR

history—from utopian promise in 1946 or the redoubled conviction and wariness of

1962, to the more explicit deferral of 1972—and the political situation 'on the ground'

impacted the form that appeal-to-history took.

A look at the work of Claude Lefort affords some insight into how the futurist

texture of political operates as a property in rhetorical circulation. His characterization of

totalitarian discourse is especially instructive, when one considers the homogenization

(Arendt might say *Nivellierung*) effected by the emphasis on concerted participation in a

single (State-conceived) project by all individuals, and the dedication of all available

pedagogical, industrial, and political resources to its completion:

> Above all else, totalitarian discourse effaces the opposition between the state and
> civil society; it seeks to make the presence of the state manifest throughout the
> social space, that is, to convey, though a series of representatives, the principle of
> power which informs the diversity of activities and incorporates them in a model
> of a common allegiance.[25]

In its schools, its parliament, its factories, and its city streets, the GDR articulated a

vision of the future in which each of its citizens had a part to play, and a place to be. That

vision was encumbered—or outfitted, depending on how you'd like to cast it—with a

temporality proper to its goals and its vision for achieving them. It was a structuring of

time past, and of time to come, which emphasized living in a goals-oriented fasion. Since

it subscribed to the Marxist-Leninist historiographic tradition, it was therefore also a

progressivist temporality—the succession of days, months, and years was thought to be marked by increasing prosperity, equity, and efficiency.

Lefort also describes the gap which will necessarily exist between a given total claim and its actual accomplishment:

> [Totalitarian power] exercises the fascination and terror of representing precisely the social as a whole, the non-division, the inhuman discourse *qua* absolutely human. Such, at least, is the pole towards which totalitarian ideology tends, but in overcoming the contradictions of bourgeois ideology, it constantly comes up against the impossibility of fully realizing itself; it lives, in turn, under the threat of the effects of social division…[26]

The GDR's outfitting of time with structure and significance, on both the macrological and micrological scale, found expression in a variety of media and contexts. As we have seen in the pages of *Einheit*, and of *Die geschichtliche Aufgabe der deutschen demokratischen Republik und die Zukunft der Nation*, perhaps the richest sources in which we can identify the processes of making sense, the claims it made concerning the responsibility of individuals to the state, to one another, and to history were eminently totalizing claims. They dealt in absolutes. And yet, in light of Lefort's insistence that totalitarian discourse must always encounter its own contradictions, we can begin to understand the necessity of the exclusion of specific historical facts and explicit causal accounting from the *Einheit* dogma, and to conceptualize the fraught character of the other cultural texts at hand in this chapter.

By staging a confrontation with the contradictions of the totalizing—not totalitarian—concept of progress in circulation at the time, the pop and punk music texts considered here inhabit the ambiguities of the Republic's insistence on forward motion. They scan its time horizon, and take positions on the outlook they've been offered. That they in each case imagine alternatives to the division and understanding of time and

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history before them, but at the same time acknowledge the power of the dominant interpretations communicated at points all along the state-citizen interface, is a testament to both the fluidity of the discourse's boundaries and the efficacy of its communication.

What punk does and the other texts don't is operate on the margins of intelligibility, both socially—in terms of the circumstances of its performance—and rhetorically. It dissolves the communicative possibilities of music, and of its lyrical elements, into a pathos of acceptance-rejection that works more plainly with the contradictions of communist time and messianic deferral than the other pop genres had been able to do. And yet, though SchleimKeim's contention with the division of human life into routines of expectation-fulfillment, or its imaginative challenge to the certitude of communist vindication, make for rough listening, they are not necessarily to be romanticized as essentially more 'critical' than the Puhdys' 'complicit' optimism. Both bands' songs encounter, and lay bare, the logic of deferral which was GDR temporality's mainspring. In a strictly regulated marketplace of ideas, punk's marauding notions—its anarchist's response to the organization of time according to communist construction—were not so different from those of the genres which by that point had been *eingestuft*, or categorized as appropriate for professional performance and popular consumption. The essential difference, I suspect, is one of degree rather than of kind.

If Monk time was beat time, and hop time—a time appropriate to the West German street on which the Beatles made their bones—then the punk time we've clocked was correspondingly appropriate to its own context: to the static progressivism, and to the deferral, of socialist time.

Notes to Chapter 3

[1] By no means does this essay mean to place the Puhdys alongside the Klaus Renft Combo in the analysis, or punk opposite either, and thereby locate these several works on opposite ends of a spectrum whose antipodes would be called something like "complicit" and "critical." Discussions of this kind about GDR art aren't productive to rehearse, and nor (in my opinion) have they ever been. David Bathrick's book on the position-in-discourse of the GDR intellectual is a book-length study among whose central concerns is the complication or indeed transcendence of this kind of reductive criticism. See David Bathrick, *The Powers of Speech: The Politics of Culture in the GDR* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995). Among the first, the most impassioned, and the most important post-*Wende* formulations of the extreme position of the 'first edition' of the complicity-critique debate whose terms I find lacking is Frank Schirrmacher's "Verdacht und Verrat" (published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5th November 1991). For one thing, they rely on a authenticity-concept which, understandable though it may be when the one performing the up-or-down assessment belongs to the group of the *Betroffenen*, those deleteriously impacted by the SED's culture policy, is untenable for reliable analysis; art, I'm convinced, is more complex than our perceptions—however well-founded—of its adherence to a programmatic politics might have it be.

And for another, the results to which they limit one are not significant ones; more interesting than *what* an artifact's (or artist's) politics might be is the question of *how* the artifact or the artist effects a politics of resistance—how an individual or work interacts with the other ethical, juridical, artistic, or political expressions around itself.

All this is not to say that the concept of the critique of existing circumstances is one that is useless for studying expression in East Germany. Rather, it's to say that with respect to work on the art of the GDR, the past twenty years' overcoding of aesthetic debate with the binary logic of complicit/critical has made that logic the elephant in any room, and made the framework one which could do with some unsettlement, or complication. To ignore the strained tenor of debate on aesthetics in the GDR would be to ignore a key indicator of its importance—though the debate's structuring oppositions are perhaps too clean-cut, they can certainly be preserved in a critical model which stresses the mutual implication of complicity and critique, and their frequent coexistence as countervailing tendencies within, rather than epithets which describe, artworks made in the GDR.

[2] Reinhard Koselleck offers a useful analysis of the relationship between such a structure—the range of meanings individual events can assume—and the iterable practice of everyday life, what he dubs the 'event.' He emphasizes that interpretations of the past determines what the future is thought to hold, but that the structure of expectation is volatile: "Expectations," he writes, "that one may be entertaining can be superseded, but experiences one has had are being collected. The space of experience and the horizon of expectation cannot therefore be related to one another in a static way." See Reinhard Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*. (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002) 127.

[3] Buck-Morss, Susan. *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: the Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West.* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002) 66.

[4] Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld* 67.

[5] Benjamin Robinson, *The Skin of the System: On Germany's Socialist Modernity*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009) 26. Of the "other events," Robinson gives the examples of World War I, the rise of illiberal powers, the Holocaust, the liberation of the conventation camps, and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

[6] As years of *Alltagsgeschichte* have made clear, the effective communication of the SED Central Committee's plans and goals was by no means a foregone conclusion, and people mainly attributed what significance they wanted to the goals passed down to (or through) them. *Eigensinn*'s emergence as a concept which characterizes individuals' negotiation of social imperatives does particularly important work in helping us to think about state apparatuses' ascriptions of significance and formulation of societal goals, and, more importantly, about their reception. In the development of *Eigensinn*, Alf Lüdtke's groundbreaking work has been most important at the conceptual level; for the case of the GDR, a look at Thomas Lindenberger's exemplary *Herrschaft und Eigensinn in der Diktatur* (Köln: Böhlau, 1999) rewards itself immensely.

[7] Another interesting contribution to the journal during its first year of publication was Dr. Hermann Mönch's essay "Über materialistische Geschichtsauffassung," whose commentary on historical method is

invaluable for understanding the ways in which the GDR's founding theorists conceptualized their epistemological position with respect to history, and indeed with respect to the future. Much of the essay derives directly from *die deutsche Ideologie*; commentary on the mechanics of the production and reproduction of life circumstances through labor and specialization, and on the importance for any critical, historically conscious social theory first recognize the circumstances of its own production, suffuse the document. And a concrete formulation of theoretical superiority emerges on this basis, and explains both the disaster of fascism and the acuity of the new social theory whose initial hashings-out *Einheit* collects. With space at less of a premium here in the footnotes, this theory of theoretical transformation is worth quoting at length: *Soweit überholt Ideeen in erheblichem Maße erhalten und wirksam sind, kompliziert sich die Lage und kann die historisch erforderliche Umwandlung des Gesellschaftslebens wesentlich erschwert werden. Eine historich falsche Ideologie wie der Faschismus konnte sogar die Herrschaft erlangen und einen geschichtlichen Rückschritt mit sich bringen. Die Erschwerung fortschrittlicher Umgestaltungen durch unbrauchbare ideelle Restbestände kommt auch bei sonstigem reaktionären Gedankenballast und insbesondere für die augenblicklichen Zeitverhältnisse in Frage. Es ist ein Verdienst Plechanows, grundsätzlich betont zu haben, "daß auf den verschiedenen Strufen der gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung jede gegebene Ideologie der anderen Ideologien erfährt." Durchsetzen wird sich diejenige, die imstande ist, den vorhandenen sozialökonomischen Widerspruch, Antagonismus, wirklich zu lösen, das Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftsleben tatsächlich und gedanklich in ein produktiveres Gleichgewicht zu bringen und den Fortschritt zu sichern. Mit jenen Tatsachen und Vorgängen ist das geschichtliche Leben in allen seinen gesellschaftlichen Äußerungen verbunden*. Also provocative, though outside the purview of this essay, is the theory of cross-pollination (or, less, generously, cross-contamination) on display in Mönch's selection and use of Plekhanov. See Hermann Mönch, "Über materialistische Geschichtsauffassung" *Einheit* 1.3 (1946) 166.

[8] Der Staatsrat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik. *Die geschichtliche Aufgabe der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und die Zukunft Deutschlands*. (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Zentralverlag, 1962).

[9] See Erich Honecker, "Fragen von Wissenschaft und Politik in der sozialistischen Gesellschaft der DDR." *Einheit* 72.1 (January, 1972) 13.

[10] See Julia Hell, "Soft Porn, Kitsch, and Post-Fascist Bodies" *Socialist Realism without Shores*. Eds. Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997) 222. For an account of the ambivalent politics of the literature produced from the more emphatically legislated 1950s through the more loosely controlled early 1960s, see the third chapter of Peter Zimmermann's 1984 volume, *Industrieliteratur der DDR: vom Helden der Arbeit zum Planer und Leiter* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984) 98-134. While Zimmermann's access to the art-critical and party archives was understandably limited by the circumstances of his writing, his account of the problems the books themselves addressed is especially lucid. Responding to Stefan Heym's famous consideration of the impossibility of representing workers' sentiments honestly when representing those attitudes most desired, Zimmermann writes, "Damit war die Crux, die die Produktionsliteratur gerade in den Jahren des Neuen Kurses lahmlegte und immer mehr Schriftsteller veranlaßte, der Gestaltung von Gegenwartsthemen auszuweichen, bezeichnet: Man konnte nicht mehr nach dem harmonisierenden Muster schreiben, ohne unglaubwürdig zu werden, und noch nicht realistisch, ohne sich dem Verdacht des Defätismus auszusetzen."

[11] See Heiner Müller, "Fatzer-Keuner." *Heiner Müller Material: Texte und Kommentar*. Ed. Frank Hörnigk. (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, 1989) 33-34.

[12] Hunter Bivens, "Neustadt: Affect and Architecture in Brigitte Reimann's East German Novel *Franziska Linkerhand*." *Germanic Review* 83.2 (Spring 2008) 149.

[13] Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in Divided Germany*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) 42.

[14] See Michael Rauhut. *Beat in der Grauzone. DDR-Rock 1964–1972*. (Basisdruck, Berlin 1993).

[15] Copies of the initial drafts of the decision are housed in the Bundesarchiv (SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/JIV2/3/1118). For a synthesis of the decision's main points, see Rauhut 31-32. They initially included, in a paragraph redacted by Erich Honecker, hard-labor sentences for rock musicians found to be resistant to seeking employment.

[16] The Rolling Stones' concert in West Berlin in the summer of 1965 is taken to be the primary inspiration for the Plenum's commentary on rock by both Uta Poiger (216-217) and Michael Rauhut (36-38). Honecker's indication that there could be a "gepflegte Beatmusik" is quoted in Rauhut (36).

[17] "Vorn ist das Licht," like all Puhdys texts, is available online at the band's website, http://www.puhdys.com/php-programme/alben/index.php?mode=4&titleid=1. Accessed 27th March, 2010.

[18] On *Renft*, the 1974 album, Renft and his band brought a number of new styles from the airwaves over into East Germany; if it weren't for the timing of its release, one would contend that "Du meine Mama," a primarily instrumental track with a recurrent refrain comprising only the words of the title, is a near-rewrite of War's 1975 hit "Low Rider," replete with its sparing vocals, propulsive funk-time beat, and nearly everything except the horns. Instead, since Amiga's distribution limitations make it exceedingly unlikely that any of Renft's work found its way into War's hands, the case seems to be one of convergent evolution rather than immediate influence. One could go on with comparisons of this kind; the overarching point is that Renft's music was a Germanophone rock with ties both to the circumstances of its production and performance in East Germany, and to the developments taking place on the international scene. For a commentary on the travels of different pop genres across the Wall, see Johannes von Moltke, "Entertaining the GDR: DEFA Cinema and the Question of Genre," invited lecture sponsored by Gerd Bucerius Institute at the University of Haifa and the Haifa Cinematheque, November 14, 2007.

[19] Dieter "Otze" Ehrlich (self-made drums, vocals), his brother Klaus "Bui" (self-made guitar), and Andreas "Dippel" Deubach founded the band. After rehearsing at home, in the bedroom, the threesome played an initial semipublic concert with Weimar's Creepers in Erfurt's *Johannes-Lang-Haus*, a church-affiliated space used for music recitals, poetry readings, and outreach events. This was only the first of many Schleimkeim concerts; by 1982 and 1983, the band became a fixture at superregionally organized punk concerts in East Berlin, Halle, Leipzig, and Weimar. For a Schleimkeim band history, and rather sad biography, of Otze Ehrlich, see Anne Hahn's and Frank Willmann's book *Satan, kannst du mir nochmal verzeihen* (Mainz: Ventil, 2008).

[20] Otze's prodigious catalysis of Stasi writing ought to be a bigger story than it is; hundreds of separate files mention his contact with unofficial collaborators, thousands of words are devoted in any number of files to the consideration of his function as a linchpin of the East German punk scene, of the meaning of his lyrics, and of the international contacts he and his band were suspected to be maintaining.

[21] For reference: http://www.youtube.com/watch#!v=MWHAL_q1ne8.

[22] The song was re-released on SchleimKeim's *Nichts gewonnen, nichts verloren Vol. 1* through Andreas Höhn's Höhnie label in 2000.

[23] See Dolores Augustine, *Red Prometheus: Engineering and Dictatorship in East Germany, 1945-1990* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007) 201-261.

[24] Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*. Intro. Samantha Power. (New York: Schocken, 2004) 456.

[25] Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1987) 217.

[26] Lefort 220.

Chapter 4: DDR von Unten

This chapter reconstructs encounters between East German punks and the different

viewers for whom they constituted themselves as visible bodies in space: other punks,

police officers, educators, coworkers, and passers-by. For all the "noise" punks made

sonically, they also presented a visual disturbance: an arrangement and display of

shockingly configured bodies in places both real and represented. Borrowing a key

distinction from Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space,[1] I argue that East

German punks engaged their urban environment on two different spatial registers: as

sometimes loathsome, sometimes sympathetic figures within *representational space* (ie

the space enunciated by everyday practices, including artistic ones); and as streetborne

pathogens which confounded and contradicted *representations of space* fashioned by

Stasi policemen.[2]

In this chapter, I first examine two sets of photographs of punks in my

theorization of punks' fashioning of themselves as visible occupants of the social space

of the everyday, and of the ways in which they reconfigured that space through their very

presence. Then, I study Stasi policemen's writing about punks—in particular, about their

visibility and visuality—as it is preserved for us in the archives of the BStU. In a third

and final section, I turn briefly to an examination of the poetics of East Berlin punks'

self-presentation in space in order to clarify *how* they articulated their alterity through

style. Moving from specific punk occupations of space to the counterespionage theory

and punk epidemiology developed by the Stasi, and then back to the concrete practices of self-styling which punks engaged in, this chapter reconstructs punks' occupation of specific East German urban spaces along with the poetics of that occupation. In this way, it tracks punk's broader impact on the theories and practices by which East German space was constituted, and pursues punks' *disengagement* of themselves from prevailing uses of that space.

Punks Appear

In the late 1970s, punk was already a long-tenured property of entertainment discourse in the West German elements of divided Germany's shared mass-media environment. On West German television, seized upon by content-hungry television providers looking for the next pop genre or marketable fashion, punk might already have become passé as a visual phenomenon by reason of broadcast overload. As Frank Apunkt Schneider puts it in his study of the transition from punk to NDW in the West German popular music scene, *Als die Welt noch unterging*,

> Die Medien grabschten nach Punk wie Tiere bei einem Futtertrick. Ihr Aufgreifen der Punksensation war genau die Reklame, die nötig war, um ihn in die entlegensten Provinzen zu transportieren; zu denen, die er etwas anging, die seine Botschaft instinktiv von den massenmedialen Schlacken befreien und verstehen konnten. (108)

Within the context of his book's focus on West Germany as the environment within which NDW spread viruslike from city to city, and then from cities to towns, it is unlikely that Schneider's term "entlegenste Provinzen" designates East German villages or cities, as well. But that doesn't mean that it couldn't. For in purely technological terms, Eisleben or Leipzig stood in the same relation to Hamburg and Frankfurt

broadcasts as did Lütjenburg. And while Schneider's distinction between preferred and privileged readings—which he owes to Hebdige anyway—also refers to a West German interpretative-appropriative process, an analogous parsing occurred in East Germany as well.

The work of Gilbert Furian, a sort of amateur sociologist, constituted one such analytic effort. A very early set of photographs of East German punks was reproduced with a document Furian prepared called *Erinnerung an eine Jugendbewegung: Punk*.[3] Initially assembled in 1982 as a kind of ethnography of punk, and reproduced in a clandestine fashion after having its publication blocked in 1984, the report comprised transcripts of interviews with East German punks and a number of photographs. The report resulted almost immediately in legal trouble for Furian, as it was not a piece of sanctioned social work, and its subject matter had the potential to prove embarrassing.[4] The police's assessment of the writings' intentions is contained in the charge on which Furian was initially held: establishing illegal contact [with the West] "zum Zwecke der Verbreitung im Ausland Aufzeichnungen mit Nachrichten herstellte, die geeignet sind, den Interessen der DDR zu schaden."[5] This identification of political intent notwithstanding, the document is largely devoid of an interlocutory or editorial voice. It comprises transcribed segments of interviews, which have been chosen, compressed, and organized according to a number of keyworded themes: Gründe, Gemeinschaft, Aussehen, Zukunft, Arbeit, Anarchie, Musik, and Liebe.

Interspersed throughout, taped into the packet between text blocks, are photographs of punks in various poses and places, including gardens, apartments, concerts, and a practice room. On the first page of the document, Furian offers an

indemnifying statement: "die Fotos," he writes, "zeigen nicht die an den Gesprächen beteiligten PUNKS; sie sind davon unabhängig entstanden."   With this untrue statement,[180] Furian was attempting to avoid making an explicit connection between his interviewees' observations and these photos, from which they could be identified. But the disclaimer proposes that we ascribe the photographs a specific incapacity—a non-indexical function—with respect to the written text. If the pictures "were created . . . independently" from the interviews, then they can neither confirm nor contradict the particular information provided by Furian's subjects. Instead, they exist uncertainly in proximity to it.[181]

The first page of the *Erinnerung* packet provides two photographs of some punks' apartments. Likely playing off the pamphlet title's invocation of memory, these initial photographs have no clearly visible human subjects in them. Instead, they record an aftermath: the traces that punks have left on their domestic environment.

Figure 1. Punk apartment, from Furian's pamphlet. Reproduction by the author.

The first, taken of a floor from roughly eye level, does catch one punk's leg (hanging off a couch to the left, with the rest of the punk out of the frame). But the shot is centered around a waste-strewn floor, piled with magazines and newspapers receding to the baseboards. A blanket occupies the right middle-ground, with a coffee mug next to it on the floor. In the background, two objects predominate: a cassette player with built-in amplifier, and a hanging leather jacket, painted and studded in the punk manner. The *Kassettenrekorder* is incongruous. In this room littered with things, a coveted piece of consumer electronics is placed on the floor against the wainscoting, rather than on a shelf, or on a table or sideboard.

But the cassette recorder is actually of a piece with the items scattered throughout the rest of the room, in the same way that a line is part of a poem—or a note part of a song. Consider the forces in play in this room. If a general representation of space—an abstract scheme which governs the segmentation of space—works effectively, it does so by clearly distinguishing the uses of space.[8] Domestic space is to be used differently from industrial space, the street differently still, and so on. And at the macroscopic level, architecture and planning achieve the desired results. But within each segment, this differentiation of normative uses is analogously conceived and effected (if on a smaller scale), yet also circumvented, reinterpreted, challenged, rejected, or ironized.

When the punks scatter these objects across the floor of their unfurnished room, they confuse the uses of the spatial sub-segments which constitute the total domestic space. They turn an instantiation of a representation of space—a room which "realizes" the goals of a more broadly conceived paradigm—into a representational space: a place as practiced, and lived. If one comes from above, as the execution of a systematized set

of intentions, the other coalesces as the malleable product of manifold practices. In this

case, rather than use a table to hold the cup, the drawer of a *Schrankwand* to hold the

papers and magazine and books, a bed to hold the blanket, or a stand to hold the

Kassettenrekorder, the punk space jumbles all these objects—attended by their respective

functions—together at once, producing a flurry of possible activities whose material

substrates are arrested together in the purview of a single glance: sleeping eating listening

reading writing singing. Against the normative uses and distribution of space which

would ordinarily have structured the apartment via the lines and surfaces and obstructions

of furniture, this marginal punkspace recombines the standard elements of an apartment

and subtracts the structures which order them. As a lived space, a space constructed as a

concatenation of practices, this punk apartment counters prevailing uses of space, and the

logics of distinction underlying them, by eliminating their points of articulation (pieces of

furniture) and rejecting the organization they impose. Punk space, even when recorded

without punks, is constituted within this photograph as an unregulated and disorderly

space of confusion and decontextualization. The order of the room is compromised by the

out-of-place positioning of objects, recognizably punk or otherwise.

On the same page as this first image of the jumbled and polluted *Wohnzimmer* is a

second, truly unpopulated photograph. It is of a foyer, taken from eye-level and aimed at

a window, which sheds natural light on a scene whose disorganization resembles that

which the first photograph presents the viewer. The room's detritus-strewn floor connects

this image, thematically, to its partner.

ERINNERUNG AN EINE JUGENDBEWEGUNG: P U N K

Dies sind die verdichteten Aufzeichnungen von Gesprächen mit sieben
PUNKS aus Ostberlin, die im Verlaufe des Jahres 1982 stattgefunden
haben. Seither können sich Meinungen und Haltungen geändert haben;
trotzdem sind die Äußerungen wert, aufbewahrt zu werden als Dokument
jugendlichen Lebensgefühls.

Die Fotos zeigen nicht die an den Gesprächen beteiligten PUNKS; sie
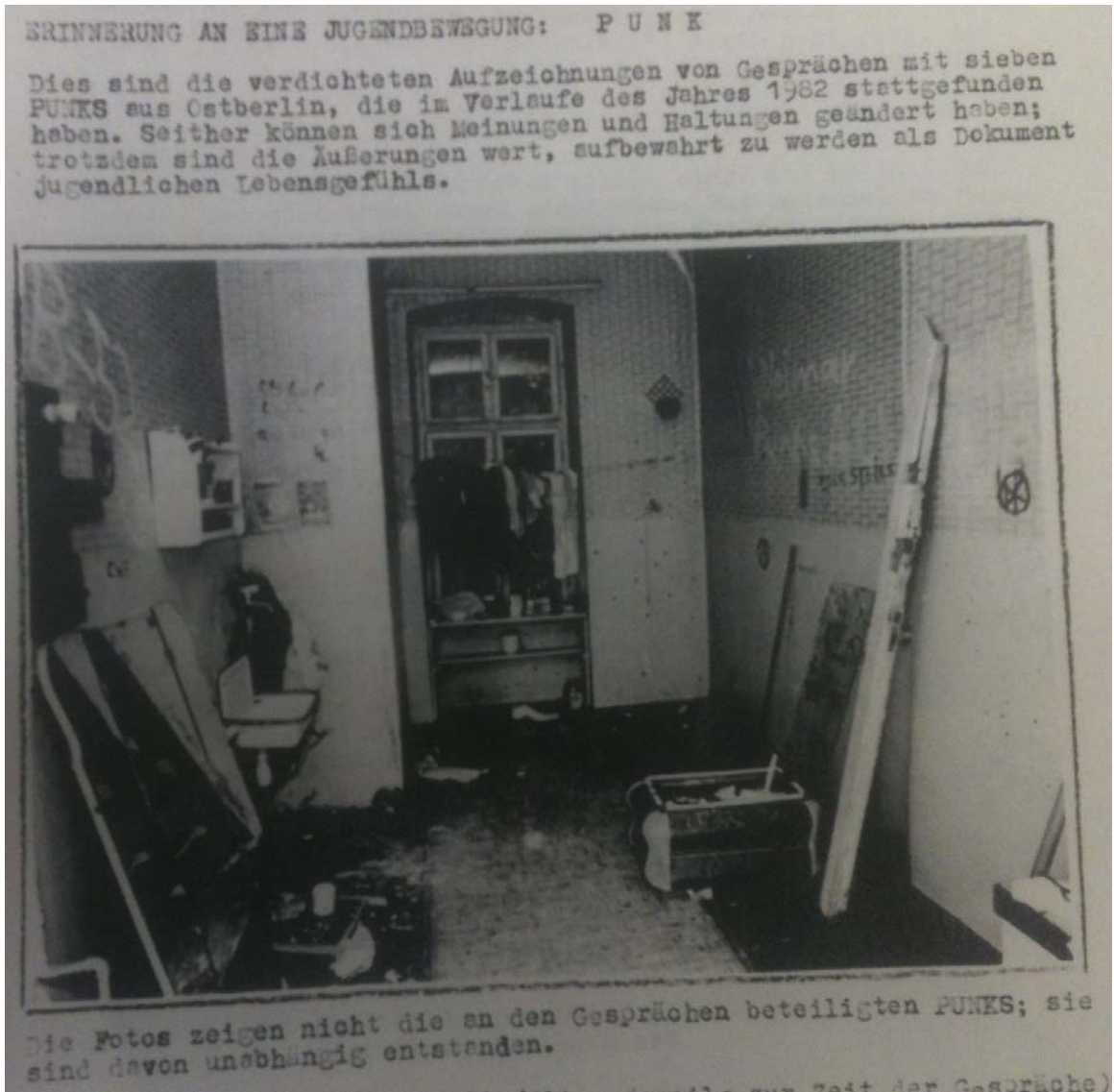sind davon unabhängig entstanden.

Figure 2. Punk apartment, foyer, from Furian's pamphlet. Reproduction by the author.

But this photograph is far larger than the first; its resolution is clearer, at least in

mimeographic terms, and the viewer can thus read the grafitti which dominates the walls,

from left to right: B-52, ???, "Weimar Punks," an circle-A anarchy symbol, and the Dead

Kennedys' logo. If the the clutter shows how the disintegration of spatial functionality

continues in this foyer, the graffiti both underlines the refunctionalization in play (walls-

become-representational-surfaces, the *Wände* are now *Leinwände*) and effects a new kind

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of respatialization. This respatialization follows a logic of inversion and the inside-out, according to which the proper site for graffiti (exterior walls, the walls visible to the passing-by public which bound the public space of the street) is reconstituted indoors, on the interior boundaries of the domestic space.

Graffiti here acquires a new significance to accompany its new context. It blurs the distinction between the private space of the home and the public space where "official" graffiti—the productivist cartooning and sloganeering which interpellated citizens as collaborators in the socialist project—was displayed. And it is important to remember that *this* is the visual context within which GDR graffiti operated, the canon against which it positioned itself. For if Western graffiti, (as Timothy Drescher[9] has argued) could and can be a reclamation and subversion of surfaces on which claims had been staked by advertisers, then Eastern graffiti was less a displacement of diverse commercial pitches than of a raft of single-sourced political ones.[10] In the punk apartment, the outside is brought in, but in disrupted form. The apartment becomes a representational space in which the debilitation of domestic spaces is practiced as the tossed-off advertisement of bands (cf. the Dead Kennedys' logo) and, in another bandname-citation, the invocation of American bombers by name—all in place of either the unmarked surface of domestic walls, or the appropriately inscribed public artspace of socialist construction and long-lived Marxism-Leninism.

Read apart, as two separate representations of punkspace, the photographs at issue disassemble the distinctness and utility of space in their jumbling and overwriting of the functions and surfaces of space. Taken together, and put back into their putatively semi-documentary context as corroborating aspects of a broader ethnographic project, they

exert considerable persuasive power as to the veracity of the statements the interviewed

punks make. But quite apart from their documentary or indexical function, they produce a

representational space with its own practices and dimensions, its own significances, and

its own boundaries. They produce this representational space in opposition to, and as an

alternative to, spaces as they are constituted and used within a broader representation of

space conceived by urban planners, architects, politicians, and security personnel. This

apartment, one of hundreds (thousands) like it in East Berlin, acknowledges the

parameters and perimeters of its design while adding a visible functional difference. They

have walls, but not like other walls. The punk spaces which are thereby created have

rooms, but not like other rooms. As built, when built, they were subordinate to the

demands of planning and construction. As lived, and practiced, these punk spaces turn

those demands inside out and jumble them up. They subject ostensibly rationalized,

carefully rationed and divided domestic space to a punk transformation which repurposes

and reimagines the surfaces and uses of a dwelling, one act of reconfiguration at a time.

Streetspace

In "Walking in the City," a chapter of his *Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau

distinguishes the vantage of the planner—the macroscopic surveyor's top-down

apprehension of the city as a coherent image—from that of the walker, whose inability to

see the city and comprehend it as a totality is offset by his ability to determine the uses to

which its component spaces are put.[11] "The long poem of walking," he writes,

"manipulates spatial organizations, no matter how panoptic they may be: it is neither

foreign to them (it can take place only within them) nor in conformity with them (it does

not receive its identity from them)."[12] The city is therefore conceived by planners as being of-a-piece. This city-concept is formed from an Archimedean standpoint at some epistemic and scopic remove from the actual physical structures or day-to-day operations of its referent, the city. But cities are constituted from below by walkers, as a product of their navigation and transgression of the planner's designs upon it. And any analysis of the meaningfulness of space must take both elements of this intercourse—the macrological vision and the quotidian creation—into account as inassimilable, but related possibilities.

Even beyond the planner-walker contrast, de Certeau's article offers a number of other possibilities for thinking through transgression in tendentially normalized space:

> One can analyze the microbe-like, singular and plural practices which an urbanistic system was supposed to administer or suppress, but which have outlived its decay; one can follow the swarming activity of these procedures that, far from being regulated or eliminated by panoptic administration, have reinforced themselves in a proliferating illegitimacy, developed and insinuated themselves into the networks of surveillance, and combined in accord with unreadable but stable tactics to the point of constituting everyday regulations and surreptitious creativities that are merely concealed by the frantic mechanisms and discourses of the observational organization. (96)

While de Certeau's "observational apparatus" is a universal element of urban dynamics, rather than a concretely identifiable institution or set of institutions, this supposition about the limits of the management of urban space is surely borne out in the East German context. East German authority has long been theorized as a social practice,[13] and the public space of the street was but one site where the encounter between those keeping or enunciating order, and those disturbing it, took place. A pair of photographs, taken by Halle punks in 1982 and 1987, affords valuable documentary insight into the punk seizure and repurposing of public space.[14]

Figure 3. Am Händel. Photo: Simone Kautz / Matthias-Domaschk-Archiv Berlin. Reproduced under Fair Use from Galenza and Havemeister, eds. *Wir wollen immer artig sein*.[189]

Am Händel

The first photograph was taken during the day on Halle's *Marktplatz*, with the camera angled upward from the street-level toward a plinth accessed on all sides by two stairs. The *Marktplatz*, on which this photograph was taken, is the center of Halle's *Innenstadt* and thus of its old city. From it, the city's major thoroughfares radiate outwards towards its medieval industrial center (the salt pannery on the Saale), its retail district (the *Leipzigerstraße*, on which more is written below), and its commercial and industrial train stations. But the market square is not only the city's physical-geographical and industrial hub. It is also the city's historical and cultural focal point. Bounded on the western side by Halle's market church—in which Martin Luther delivered a sermon in

1546—and on the east by the new town hall, built adjacent to the site of its destroyed

sixteenth-century predecessor, the market square also features the Red Tower and a

mounted statue of Georg Friedrich Händel, Halle's most famous native and one of the

focal points, according to the historiography of Halle produced during the governance of

the SED in East Germany, of *Mitteldeutscher* cultural productivity.[16]

But if Händel is a particularly important figure, within the textual frame of this

photograph, it's because he both is and isn't there. To be specific: in the center of the

photograph, which is of the center of Halle's market square, stands an empty plinth

surrounded by, surmounted by, and of course recoded by punks. Two are climbing the

plinth, one crouches on top of it, and three others stand on the steps leading up to it.

Händel ought to be here, says the (temporarily incorrect) inscription on the marble plinth.

Ah, but he isn't, stress the punks with the positioning of their bodies. Where Händel

ordinarily stands, a punk crouches on one knee. His black leather jacket and outlandish

haircut would gild the lily, since merely assuming this position, taking Händel's place, is

in itself a reconstitutive act with respect to the order of the market square (and, more

broadly, of the city center). Händel has been replaced by somebody else, a punk, and the

plinth—which elevates an object of veneration, both spatially and figuratively, to the

position of the square's focal point—has become the bully pulpit for an unauthorized, but

very real, replacement of Händel's bronze *Erbe* with a living, breathing, challenging

youth. Here, punks crown themselves the guarantors of culture and the focus of Halle's

urban space; they sit at the axis of commerce and culture, ugly and rude usurpers.

That, at least, is one interruptive and disruptive tangent documented by the

photograph. One transgressive possibility. As Stallybrass and White remind us, however,

even when the Carnival crowns a bacchanalian King, it still venerates the trappings of royalty. They quote Barbara Babcock: "'All symbolic inversions define a culture's lineaments at the same time as they question the usefulness and absoluteness of its ordering.'"[17] And while this photograph depicts the enactment less of an inversion than of a usurpation, the larger point stands —that transgression and reinscription are copresent, locked in a processual back-and-forth resolved only in the interpretative moment, in every public performance or utterance. The punk photographer's successful capture of this flux is apparent in the angle taken on the punks' assumption of Händel's authoritative perch. Looking from the lower ground to the higher, the photograph's vantage is deferential to the iconic Händel position, however iconic its seizure may be. The punk may occupy, for the moment, the high ground. But Händel's name, still clearly legible, indicates that this can be no more than an interregnum.

The occupation of Händel's space, of this paramount space which focuses the city's logic of cultural inheritance, can't be accomplished in a vacuum. It exists not for itself, but for others; as the objectionable object of a disapproving or confused look. And if the specific punkness of this spatial appropriation begins with the specifically punk materiality of its protagonists—leather jackets, chains, spiked hair, studded belts, boots— it doesn't end with visual provocation, but rather the recognition and enjoyment of its success in drawing attention. That an awareness of audience is an essential aspect of this performance is proven not by the arrangement of these punk bodies in space, but rather by their demeanor and by the directionality of their glances. One punk, front and center, puffs his cigarette, looking off-camera to the viewer's left; his gaze is replicated and followed by the punk to his left. The vector of their look is matched and offset by the

glance of the punk on the far left, caught in the act of climbing, who glances off-camera-right. In the middle ground, at the corner of the plinth, the lone punk woman looks at the centered punk, constituting a triangular network of observation (punk-to-unseen-passersby, unseen-passersby-to-punk, punk-to-watching-punk).

The punks see themselves being seen, watch themselves being seen, and are watched; the name of the game is specular redundancy. The punks' improper occupation of a heavily-invested space at the center of town occasioned observation, and the punks' ability to look back, to rejoin the observation with their own observation, affords them a uniquely important subject-object-position. At the center of town, from old Händel's vantage point, the punks position themselves as both seers and the seen, semi-legible figures who are themselves re-reading the *Marktplatz* as a place whose high ground can be ostentatiously, visibly occupied—and whose off-limits areas are just as open to reinscription, and rethinking, as the rest of it might be. Again—through all the seizure of territory, old Georg Friedrich Händel glowers, an absent presence intruding upon the proceedings with all the gravity of place-specific tradition and cultural *Erbe*.

If the photography doesn't enact or document a mass revolt, or a large-scale transformation, it enunciates a representational space in which the seizure of space, the appropriation of a vantage point, and the rethinking of an urban space occurs—however tendentially. In public, through the occupation of historically and culturally significant space, the punks disrupt the trajectories of deference and make a spectacle of their own non-belonging. In this way, they extricate the spaces they seize from the pedestrian routines of the everyday, effecting a functional disengagement of newly punk territories which—however provisional it might be—is impossible to overlook. Punks insinuate

themselves into the vistas and vantages of East German cityspaces, and introduce their odd appearances into precisely those postcard perfect sites for whose sake streets, market squares, and flows of pedestrians have all been arranged. The coordinated discombobulation of the punks' individual appearances contains no slogan, no message, no program—but it effects a disengagement just the same.

Figure 4. Punks in front of Berlin's *Palast der Republik.*[192]
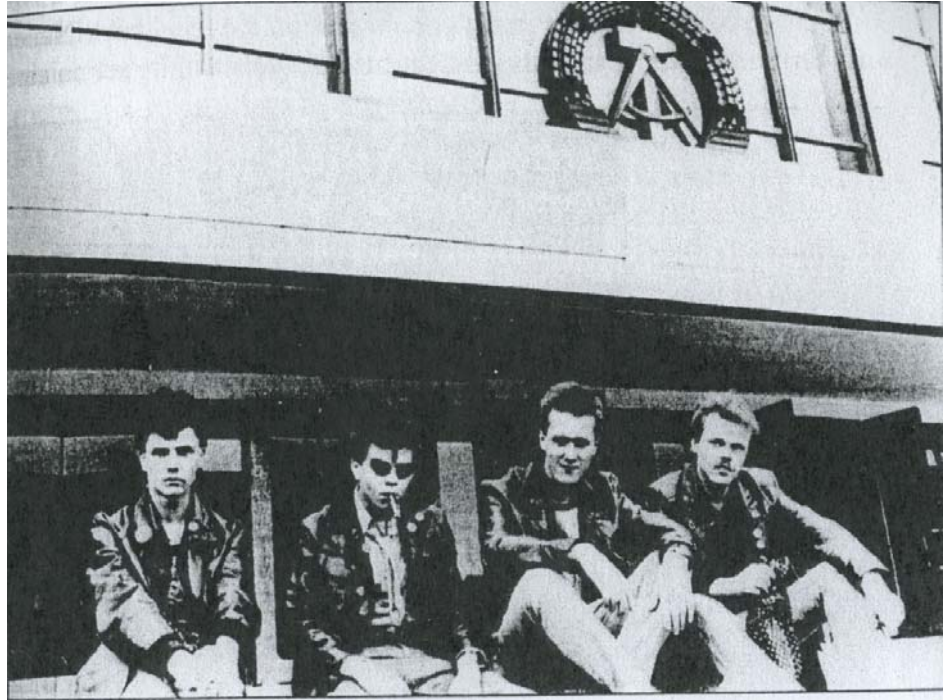
Tanz auf dem Boulevard

Another photograph was taken on May 1st, 1987, on Halle's *Leipzigerstraße*—a thoroughfare which leads from the city's *Marktplatz* to its central train station, and which would certainly have been a major avenue for the solidarity parade that took place that day. Lining its background, from left to right, are thirty or forty individuals, formally dressed, and organized in a line before the storefronts behind them. In the relatively more empty foreground, four pairs of punks stand embracing one another. Catching them in

their execution of an exaggerated waltz, the photograph stages presence in the street as a matter of contrasts: between foreground and background; between large, lined-up group and punk pairs; and between cluttered, densely-occupied sidewalk and the more open cobbles of the larger pedestrian area. But if these contrasting distributions within space underline the punks' apartness from their audience, the configuration of their bodies—moving together, as ironic dancers—and the incongruity of *that* activity, on *this* day, is the more impactful distinction ordering the representational space the punks make of the street.

Figure 5. *Tanz auf dem Boulevard*.

The 1st of May was the socialist holiday *nonpareil*, a theoretically international celebration marked by marching, and by demonstrations which reperform an activity

once undertaken spontaneously. In the GDR, crowds flowed through streets whose lamp-

posts were festooned with banners, following bands, formations of marching soldiers, and

paramilitary sport groups past daïses occupied by dignitaries. The *use* of the East German

street was, on a normal day, involved with its function as a duct connecting home to

work, retail, or play. But on this day of days, main streets throughout East Germany were

rededicated through marched performance as sites of political agitation and the

purposive, unidirectional, cohesive movement of a collective.

And the significance of the May-day demonstrations was not merely limited to

their efficacy as a mass performance, but as documented (and documentable) spectacle,

as well. For instance, a photograph in Harald Hauswald's book on Berlin's 1987

Maidemonstration, of flag-bearers caught in a downpour, came in for explicit critique by

Stasi officers who reviewed the book's West German publication as constituting a piece

of hostile reportage:

> Aufnahme von einer Gruppe Fahnenträger am Schluss der Maidemonstration
> 1987, wo bekanntlich ein Unwetter sich entlud. Hauswald hat genau den Moment
> abgepasst, wo eine für sich abgespaltene Fahnenträgergruppe von Regen und
> Wind durcheinandergewirbelt wird. Fahnenstangen kreuz und quer, gebeugte,
> sich mühsam haltende Fahnenträger. Übertragene Wunschvorstellung des
> Reporters?[19]

This assessment of both the intent and the power of the photograph bespeaks a mutual

understanding of the importance of the *Maidemonstration*'s appropriate representation.

Even if it is couched as a question, the Stasi writer's imputation of wish-value to this

photography of the beleagured flag-bearers shows how invested his assessment is in the

photograph's having been maliciously, rather than faithfully, taken. It doesn't record, but

rather distorts, and is therefore a purposive representational act—like others in the

collection, an infidelitous representation of East German spaces and the lifeways in

which they are implicated. This Stasi reading of the *Fahnenträger* photograph clarifies the stakes of the *Tanz auf dem Boulevard*, and the context that raised them. Here, punks intrude upon the mass display for whose uses the streets have been set aside; the photograph's existence records a disruption that would, in and of itself, have been prosecutable as public defamation.

But unlike the Hauswald photograph, whose inopportune subject involves an intercession by nature,[20] the boulevard photo represents punks' intentional repurposing of the street. Dancing without music and in loose association, they offer an embodied, moving, and ostentatious performance which interrupts and disrupts the linear and putatively committed mass-motion of marching and substitutes instead a lackadaisical, freewheeling, and above all ironic Brownian motion. The representational space whose enunciation this photograph documents is a space where incompatible practices—the one we know should be happening and was planned well in advance as part of a coordinated national effort, the one which occurs spontaneously and whimsically—coexist adjacent to one another. And the presumably dominant of the practices, the one the entire day ought to have been devoted to, is the one that has been disrupted, put on hold, deferred. This is evident not only in the photograph's perspectival arrangement of bodies, in foreground and background, but in the bodies' arrangement with respect to one another. The better-dressed, older crowd is backed up against the *Obst- und Gemüsemarkt* storefront, with their flags behind them, leaning up against the store display. Lined up, unmoving, they constitute an audience for the punks' display; only one young family has moved to bridge the gap and approach the punk dance, and even they have stopped short of joining the loose cluster.

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Redirecting the ceremonial flow of pedestrians to the periphery, and retarding the progress of the *Maidemonstration*, the dancing punks inaugurate the inopportune moment and provide a bit of social *Unwetter* for the May-day parade. It is not we who refer to de Certeau in our analysis, but rather the punks themselves. They recognize the symbolic centrality and power of the socially peripheral, whose spatial practice drives the demonstrators to the edges of the street. For this in/opportune moment, on this memorial day, the punks resegment streetspace and turn mass movement into mass stasis, and the propulsive trajectory of the march into the ironic ambling of the *Tanz auf dem Boulevard*.

The Stasi confiscated punk photographs like those we've considered. Of course, its officers—and not just those in the detachments along the border—also confiscated mail, newspapers, music cassettes, documents, books from East German citizens, and even from foreign nationals, for any reasons at all. But in the case of Furian's document, and in the case of punk photographs, the photographs were confiscated not as contraband but as evidence in an ongoing investigation. I mean this in two senses. First, in the criminal proceedings against Furian; but second, in an ongoing *theoretical* investigation of punk's presence, and import, in East Germany. Moving up the ladder of abstraction, from the constitution of punk spaces in the street through their occupation and detachment from the larger (planned) urban spaces around them to the formulation of *representations of space* (the abstractly formulated plans punks challenge), the next section analyzes Stasi investigations of punk intrusions into securitized East German space.

The Visible (Re)public

In 1965, the Ministry for State Security's Zentrale Auswertungs- und Informationsgruppe (ZAIG), its primary data analysis agency and a key locus of policy and strategy formulation within the Ministry, filed a "Bericht über Gruppierungen Jugendlicher in der DDR,"[21] which articulated suspicions about the infiltration of the GDR by an antigenic Western culture. Such suspicions weren't anything new to the report's readers within the Stasi and the Politbüro. However, its methodology—the means it uses of identifying and monitoring "groupings"—probably was:

> Der Hang dieser Laienmusikgruppen, besonders der Gitarrengruppen, zur westlichen Lebensweise äußert sich neben den Namensbezeichnungen auch in folgenden äußerlichen Erscheinungen:
> - in Tragen von Frisuren und Kleidungsstücken nach westlichen Vorbildern. (Eine Reihe dieser Gruppen besitzen auch "Beatle-Perrücken", die sie bei Auftritten tragen [...]).[22]

Even in 1965, linking behavior to appearance and dress was, , a long-established practice for Stasi police officers, and for police officers in general. But to do so in such a way as to suggest that choices of clothing and hairstyle could be read as standing in one-to-one correspondence with a specific ideological payload whose origins were in the West was, if not innovative, at least decisive.[23]

In addition to theorizing political attitudes as visually apprehensible phenomena, this report also identified, in two steps, the spaces in which this political visuality became something materially impactful. In some spaces, negative Western clothing bespoke poor attitudes, but was relatively seldom-seen: "Im allgemeinen ist festzustellen, daß die Mehrzahl dieser Jugendlichen in den Schulen oder auf den Arbeitsstellen kaum negativ in Erscheinung tritt. Als äußerliches Merkmal sind dann lediglich – und das auch in beschränktem Umfange – die auffallende Kleidung und Haarfrisur zu werten, an dem diese Gruppe Jugendlicher zu erkennen ist."[24] In those spaces within which contact with

superiors like teachers or managers was more intimate, and the expectations for task-oriented behavior clearly defined and understood, "making a negative appearance" (*negative in Erscheinung treten*) happened less frequently.

But under some circumstances, youth style, rather than simply providing an expressive form (an *Erscheinung*, or appearance) for an underlying political trait (an essence), is accompanied by disruptive or dangerous behavior: "das rowdyhafte und undisziplinierte Verhalten erfolgt hauptsächlich während der Freizeit in der Öffentlichkeit." Where the control of supervisors, managers, and teachers stops, the behavioral excess presaged by style choices ramps up. And what is more, this takes place in precisely that place—in *public*—where the broadest audience can be found for both the deviance and the fashion which, in this constellation, seems logically to precede (or at least attend) it.

Ex negativo, public space is defined here as an endangered place where parental, pedagogical, or professional authorities cease to obtain. It opens up as a space which can and must be observed and policed, so that—as redoubled efforts in the FDJ clubs, in the schools, and in workplaces develop—negative and Western appearances, along with their attendant activities, can be effaced from view. Thus the report's specific policy recommendation: "weitere Verstärkung der Öffentlichkeitsarbeit des MfS zu Problemen der Jugend." Through *Öffentlichkeitsarbeit*, work in (and on) public space, the reduction and elimination of inappropriate attitudes can be accomplished. And the measurement of its success will not only be found in reduced numbers of arrest reports, but also in what a glance might at some point reveal: an absence of negative and Western visuality. What emerges from this early set of operational guidelines is not just a plan for preventing

ideological infiltration, or even a physiognomic principle—though each of these is present within the ZAIG's report. Indeed, the report affords us an insight into an emerging division of the spaces of the GDR into visible, administrable jurisdictions whose status can be taken in visually. An outline of the abstract and conceptually segmentable space proper to police work, the purview of the secret police, begins to come into view. According to the Stasi's physiognomic logic, underlying subversive essences could be read on the body; a visibly 'clean' space was a relatively less subversive one; and *Öffentlichkeitsarbeit*—specific interventions on the street—could achieve the desired visual order.

This can be taken a step further, from the inchoate concept of police-able space to a broader administrative geography. From the documents Stasi respondents wrote to one another, and from the language which developed within these, emerges a *synopsis* of their purview—an arrangement of all the locales and sites of the GDR in a meaning-giving structure.[25] The sad concatenation of arrest reports, *Operative Personenkontrollen*, incarcerations, and even undocumented abuses attests to the wide variety of sanitizing strategies the MfS enjoyed when it came to sweeping the street. Despite all those, however, punk proved a frustrating limit-case for this synoptic seeing of the East German territory and the spaces of its cities. Punks constituted a marginal, yet unmistakable and inassimilable sight; their stubborn presence, against all odds and attempted subversions, withstood the effacement of detail and specificity to which the Stasi's representation of East German space, by its very nature, aspired.

Verhaltensweisen erfassen

To understand how crucial the conceptualization of space was to Stasi punk policy, it is important to study that policy's emergence in the context of the Stasi's develeping policy toward youth criminality. In 1965, as we have seen, the ZAIG introduced an explanatory and classificatory mechanism which stressed transgression's visibility upon the body, and emphasized the importance of *Öffentlichkeitsarbeit*. Tracking the further development of the MfS's youth-criminality policy at the highest (ministerial) levels helps us to contextualize street-level tactics within the broader representation of space that emerged from their strategy.

In 1981, a major research paper was filed with the *Ministerrat*, a major GDR executive body, entitled "Die politisch-operative Bekämpfung des feindlichen Mißbrauchs gesellschaftswidriger Verhaltensweisen Jugendlicher." Its assembly had been a collective effort, undertaken by officers from the Hochschule des MfS (the ministry's juridical college and, along with the ZAIG and the office of the minister himself, one of its primary loci of strategy development), from HAs XX and VIII, and from the *Zentraler Operativstab*, the Stasi office charged with coordinating operations that took place between HA. Both the report's addressees and its protagonists attest to the importance it was intended to have for the Stasi's work with "gesellschaftswidrige Verhaltensweisen" as it continued into the 1980s, sixteen years after the 1965 report had highlighted the dangers posed by "negative Gruppierungen" among youths. And the insistence upon the importance of recognizing negative attitudes by looking at appearances remains. Among the strategies which would buttress the "beschleunigte Feststellung und Einschätzung gesellschaftswidrigen Verhaltens von Jugendlichen mit operativ interessierenden Merkmalen" was the "eindeutige Feststellung solcher Identifizierungsmerkmale, wie

Geschlecht, anscheinendes Alter, Körpergröße und Gestalt mit Einzelmerkmalen, Gang, Haltung, Sprache, Gewohnheiten, *Bekleidung, mitgeführte Gegenstände und besondere Kennzeichen.*"[26]

The 1965 youth-policy formula still obtains, insofar as the identification of attitudes can supposedly be accomplished through the recognition and classification of appearances. And what's more, the strategic recommendations, presented in this report in longform, remain the same: more committed engagement by teachers and FDJ workers, better security in the *Öffentlichkeit* with particular attention paid to the areas around venues for youth *Veranstaltungen* like concerts, etc.[27] This report confirms the continued existence of—and unabated Stasi interest in—"gesellschaftswidrige Verhaltensweisen Jugendlicher," particularly as relatable to actual delinquency and crime, on the one hand, and to what is referred to as the "feindliche[r] Mißbrauch[]," or hostile appropriation thereof. In their words: "Es ist ein fester Bestandteil der Strategie des Imperialismus, Jugendliche aus sozialistischen Staaten als personelle Stützpunkte für die Realisierung des imperialistischen Langzeitprogramms zur Beseitigung des real existierenden Sozialismus zu gewinnen."[28] Crime, in this view, takes on political character, and identifying criminals becomes an existential, rather than epiphenomenal, undertaking.

This report is extensive. It includes a sophisticated derivation of its strategic assumptions from SED policy and Marxist theory, and construes asocial youth behavior as a complex phenomenon impacted by foreign media, the evangelical churches' youth work, and insufficient influence by teachers and other authority figures. But it has no mention of punk in particular, or a theory of youth *subculture* in general. As an omnibus document, and one concerned with asocial youth behavior besides purely

criminologically-juridically (*strafrechtliches*) classifiable behavior, the report succeeds in producing a general theory of the geopolitics of youthful deviance. At the same time, it makes specific tactical recommendations for eradicating that deviance's visual traces from public space through *Öffentlichkeitsarbeit* and interdepartmental cooperation.

But a comprehensive theory of the social cohesion of antisocial youths fails to emerge. This is so, even if the term which would later be used to theorize punk (*negativ-dekadente*[*s*] *Verhalten*) makes an appearance in a pair of footnotes. Respectively, these notes laud the promise of a more holistic analytic approach, and propose which usage should accompany it:

> Der Begriff des gesellschaftswidrigen Verhaltens wird damit in der vorliegenden Arbeit nicht im strafrechtlichen Sinne gebraucht, sondern als Sammelbegriff für nicht normgerechtes Verhalten im obigen Sinne. In der politisch-operativen Arbeit wird zur Kennzeichnung solcher Verhaltensweisen Jugendlicher der Begriff negativ-dekadentes Verhaltens angewandt. Nach Meinung der Verfasser wird durch den Begriff "gesellschaftswidrige Verhaltensweisen" Jugendlicher die ganze Breite und Vielfalt solchen Verhaltens in Beziehung zu den Normen der sozialistischen Gesellschaft besser erfaßt.[29]

"Anti-social," rather than "negative-decadent" behavior, is the overarching term. In this conceptual constellation, "negative-decadent" behavior becomes a subset—part of the *ganze Breite und Vielfalt* under consideration in this omnibus study. And yet, despite the pressing political significance of asocial youth behavior, in light of its political weaponization by the enemy's abuse of it, there remains a hesitation to make behavior or behavioral predispositions coterminous with the individuals who display them.

> Es geht den Autoren bei der Erläuterung von gesellschaftswidrigem Verhalten und dessen politisch-operativer Relevanz keinesfalls um eine Klassifizierung von Jugendlichen (etwa also negativ-dekadente Jugendliche), sondern um eine politisch-operative Wertung von Verhaltensweisen, die natürlich immer bei bestimmten Jugendlichen auftreten, deren Gesamtpersönlichkeit aber nicht in jedem Falle mit dem gezeigten gesellschaftswidrigen Verhalten identisch ist oder nur darin zum Ausdruck käme.

This ameliorative statement is buried in a footnote, as if it were merely providing some minor clarification on usage, rather than a more wide-ranging statement of purpose. One is hesitant to take it at face value; for what, if not a classificatory apparatus with a particularly scopic character, is assembled in this programmatic document on the identification, nature, and eradication of antisocial youth cultures? But in the main body of the text, as well, a hesitation appears concerning the coextensiveness of asocial behavior and individual: "Prinzipiell ist davon auszugehen, daß die einzelnen Jugendlichen als Persönlichkeit nicht pauschal mit den von ihnen gezeigten gesellschaftswidrigen Verhaltensweisen identifiziert werden können."[30] The document is of two minds at once: though appearances can produce valid classifications, and these classifications can ground strategy and strategically appropriate interventions, a classification should not be mistaken for the final word. This leaves the door open, both for the possibility of the redemption of youths identified as asocial, and at the same time for the coexistence within one individual of multiple classes or kinds of asociality.

As a theory of the visibility of deviance, and of the vulnerability of young people in the GDR to subversion, this 1981 report is detailed, specific, and universalizing. But its publication took place at the same time as the Stasi's first reports on punk were filed. And punk, unlike *gesellschaftswidrige Verhaltensweisen* more broadly understood, was quite a bit more *irritierend*—and had to be theorized as enjoying a more direct connection to the West—than the generally undesirable behaviors this *Information* cataloged and explained.

Punk fotografieren

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The Stasi's programmatic thinking about the suppression of punk contained a sophisticated visual praxis which tended toward typologization and physiognomic logic, and could—if used correctly at local levels—help square the actually-existing, actually-perceptible GDR with their larger representations of space. Punks (and, later, other groups) could be identified purely on a visual basis and then, through arrests or *operative Personenkontrollen* (OPK), taken off the streets—removed from the *Stadtbild*—and subjected to debriefings whose primary purpose, as one reads more and more of them, becomes inscrutable in direct proportion to the redundancy and familiarity of the insights they helped officers to achieve.

As an institutional practice, the collection and archiving of punk photography by the Stasi allowed for punks to become recognizable to all the officers who worked in the different *Hauptabteilungen* for whom youths and their behaviors were of concern. They were recognizable as a visual *phenomenon*, like black mold, the recognition of whose specific instantiations was possible through the circulation of study of typical (typifying) images. And, like black mold, they threatened—as we have seen from the *Sympathisanten* concerns—most every structure, no matter how sound, within the Stasi's representation of East German public space. A look at some early case reports helps us to grasp how the representation of space traced out in the more theoretical, macroscopic documents examined above was also contained within documents detailing suppression tactics and local-level policy.

In 1981, officers from the MfS's HA XX archived some materials received from their colleagues in the Berlin-Mitte *Kreisdienststelle* of the *Deutsche Volkspolizei* (DVP). Indeed, they filed thirty pages of photographs from the DVP's *Anlagekarte zum Auftreten*

sogenannter Punk-Anhänger auf dem Alexanderplatz in Berlin-Mitte am 31.01.1981 gegen 10.00 Uhr.[205] This exhaustive title provides enough information that the incident report seems not to have merited preservation; the *Anlagekarte*, however, which comprises 19 mugshots and three confiscated photographs—all of punks, with each mugshot including a facial close-up and a full-body photograph that documents the full extent of the punk's clothing—clearly provided the officers at HA XX with some important identifiers for the work they'd do in the ensuing years to distinguish and classify youth deviances on the basis of appearances.

Figure 6. *Deutsche Volkspolizei* (DVP) arrest photographs of punks, archived by the Ministry for State security.

In her book on Stasi photography, *Das Auge der Partei*, Karin Hartewig reproduces several punk mugshots without comment, alongside an analysis of Stasi punk policy and the changes made to it in response to the subsequent appearance of skinheads.[206] And though her characterization of Stasi policy is clear and correct in its broad strokes,

Hartewig misses an opportunity when she stresses that "[Punks] Wirkung lag in der Musik," by contrast with that of the skinheads. The Stasi incorporated various kinds of photography into its dealings with punk, and the existence of numerous caches of mugshots, each of which documents punks' appearances as recognizable from a distance (eschewing the inclusion of close-up mugshots alone)—along with the existence of numerous files which archive confiscated photographs of punks in churches and on the street, along with photographs provided voluntarily by embedded IM—suggests that punk's being visible was at least as important a preoccupation of the Stasi's as its being audible.

In fact, you might say the 1981 report's photos provided impetus for interdepartmental work to be conducted within the Ministry for State Security in the ensuing years. By 1983, images of punks taken by police officers, Western journalists, punks themselves, and by the *inoffizielle Mitarbeiter* among them had begun to appear throughout the Stasi's case files. And though explicit analyses of these photographs is not conducted within the files, their overarching strategic relevance is attested to by the diversity of the *Hauptabteilung* which collected and archived them: XX ("Kultur, Kirche, Untergrund"), VIII (Beobachtung/Ermittlung), and the ZAIG (the central policy and strategy office) were just a few.[33] That is, photographs began to take on a strategic importance of their own—outside of the initial contexts of their genesis, which frequently involved specific arrests and incident reports—as they were reproduced (images from the Furian document were, combined with mugshots, included with multiple files whose principal contents were clippings from West German magazines and newspapers). The Stasi's different departments and officers used them, then, as items which could provide a

point of entry for uninitiated lookers and observers within the Ministry's ranks. In this respect, the specific people to whom the photographs in the initial arrests reports referred became unimportant—as did their specific crimes. They took on representative, or exemplary significance, and were used to represent a more general phenomenon.

Initially, then, the collection of the photography of punks thus permitted a theoretical movement, undertaken on the part of the Stasi, from the particular to the general, and from the tactical to the strategic: from the photographing of the individual upon his or her arrest for the purposes of subsequent identification, to the use of photographs in their capacity to typify a visuality which existed generally, and to record a spatial practice undertaken by a whole population, rather than by isolated persons whose names and addresses and thoughts and crimes were significant.

This collection of punk photography enabled Ministerial *Stellvertreter* Rudi Mittig, and his colleagues with the ZAIG, to file a comprehensive report on punk's spatial practices, the political importance of its visuality, and the particular sites—both archetypal (parks, streets, market squares) and specific (Alexanderplatz, Plänterwald)—on which it exerted its influence. As we will see, however, the ability Mittig and his cohorts gained from the photography and the ensemble of observers' reports to see the same transgressions taking place in the same ways, all around East Germany, produced a theoretical dilemma. On one hand, the belief that the punk threat was everywhere in the Republic, potentially within all public spaces, visible and yet in possession of an invisible support network comprising individuals whose inability to be counted was in fact a problem of scale; and, on the other hand, the simultaneous conviction that punk's tendential destabilization of space and sight in East Germany had to be stopped.

Punk erfassen

If punk remained, in 1981, a phenomenon whose presence in the MfS's files was limited

to isolated arrest reports, un-annotated photo caches, and some specific conclusions

drawn from interviews about its ability to index asocial behavior, by 1983 and 1984

reports began to be filed which theorized punk more concretely, and contained within

themselves a clear indication of how important punk's visual aspect was for Stasi

understandings of its political content, social origins, and symbolic efficacy within the

GDR spaces that had to be protected from it.

On 18th May, 1984, Rudi Mittig filed the most influential document in the history

of the Stasi's considerations of punk, the *Information über beachtenswerte*

Erscheinungen unter negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen in der DDR, with the ZAIG. This

document would be reproduced for the rest of the decade by officers working within a

number of departments, and is found throughout the BStU archives' holdings—especially

in those sections of the corpus whose origins lie with HA XX and VIII. This document

was therefore not merely a tone-setting, or initially important, *Information* which would

later be replaced as new information became available. Rather, in 1986,[34] an updated

document was published (also by Mittig) which reproduced many of the 1984

Information's conclusions, and in a number of cases uses paraphrase, or outright

restatement, to further the case made two years before. A quick comparison of passages

not only indicates the degree to which the later document relied on the former, but also

gives us a look at how strategic conclusions completed the transition from provisional to

accepted. First, from the 1984 piece:

Seit dem Jahr 1982 sind von negativ-dekadenten Jugendlichen der DDR verstärkte Bestrebungen erkennbar, im Sinne der in westlichen kapitalistischen Staaten existierenden "Punk"-Bewegung in der Öffentlichkeit aufzutreten. (Angehörige der "Punk"-Bewegung in den kapitalistischen Staaten bezeichnen sich als sogenannte Aussteiger aus der Gesellschaft und versuchen, durch ihr äußeres Erscheinungsbild und asoziale Lebensweise öffentlich ihre Oppositionshaltung gegenüber dem Gesellschaftssystem zum Ausdruck zu bringen.)

The 1986 *Information*:

Die in der Information vom Mai 1984 festgestellten Tendenzen über die Existenz und das Auftreten von negative-dekadenten Jugendlichen in der DDR im Sinne in westlichen Ländern entstandenen sogenannten Punk-Bewegung haben sich weiter fortgesetzt und verstärkt. Angehörige der "Punk-Bewegung" in den kapitalistischen Staaten bezeichnen sich als sogenannte Aussteiger aus der Gesellschaft und versuchen, durch ihr äußeres Erscheinungsbild und asoziale Lebensweise öffentlich ihre Oppositionshaltung gegenüber dem Gesellschaftssystem zum Ausdruck zu bringen.[35]

The removal of parentheses from the brief statement about punk's origins and purported essence in the West is not unimportant. The first document's formatting asks that one read this technique of self-revelation-through-appearance parenthetically, as an aside whose importance is peripheral, clarificational rather than foundational. The 1986 information, however, accepts this understanding of punk as a definitive one, and this certainty is reflected in the modification of the sentences which follow the recurrent statement.

The 1984 report suggests that East German youths are primarily inspired by intensive propaganda ("insbesondere inspiriert") produced by the "elektronische[] Medien der BRD," and only "teilweise durch direkte gezielte Beinflussung von personen aus nichtsozialistischen Staaten im Rahmen ihrer Kontakttätigkeit."[36] The 1986 version construes the causal link in such certain terms that the "Angehörige…" statement takes

on new gravity as the presence of evidence is invoked, and primary agents of

malfeasance identified without hedging or hesitation:

> *Es liegen Beweise vor*, nach denen Bürger der BRD oder Westberlins im Rahmen der Kontaktpolitik/Kontakttätigkeit jugendliche DDR-Bürger direkt zu einem Auftreten als Punker inspiriert haben.[37]

In both cases, punk constitutes a breach of the territorial integrity of the GDR. The 1984

document outlines a two-pronged attack of influence, as a result of both an ethereal

bombardment (the Western media) and direct *Kontakttätigkeit*—the actions of infiltrators

within the circumscribed space of the GDR itself. But beyond the spatial dimension of

the punk threat's construal, we can also see the important role appearance plays within

this constellation of subversive activity. The "expressivist" theory of punk holds true, as

it did in the ZAIG files on youth asociality from twenty years before, and 1981. Thus the

use of *Ausdruck* to characterize what punk visuality does with respect to punk politics: an

äußeres Erscheinungsbild "expresses" (*zum Ausdruck bringen*) an *Oppositionshaltung*, or

oppositional stance. But it is not the *Oppositionshaltung* itself which is being directly

inculcated, but rather an *Auftreten als Punker* which is being encouraged. In this

formulation, we see that the punk-physiognomic principle is in fact bidirectional: not

only does the appearance indicate the presence of the essence, but the production or

installation of the symptom (a deviant *Auftreten*) is sufficient to prompt the appearance of

the disease (an *Oppositionshaltung*).

And if this isn't enough to clarify the degree to which punk was an interloper, an

intruder in East German public space of explicitly external origin—and to which East

German space was therefore the territory of a Republic in peril, breached from without by

individuals who corrupted its sightlines and whose mere appearance was publicly

wirksam—Mittig's document's frequent ascriptions of Western origins to East German

punks do the trick. But in a few places, punks are not only Western by dint of their initial

imprint, but of their ongoing affiliations as well:

> Nach dem MfS vorliegenden Hinweisen wurden bisher ca. 900 vorwiegend jugendliche Personen in der DDR als Anhänger der westlichen "Punk"-Bewegung festgestellt.[38]

Beyond the estimate of the number of punks, this passage characterizes punks as a group,

or "movement." In chapter 1, early analyses of punk argued for punk's disorganization

and lack of affiliations with organized class struggle despite being an authentic

expression of underlying problems with the late-capitalist organization of production and

social life. But this characterization of punk as a "movement" contains within it—not

only theoretically, but syntactically, as well, given its identification as a *westliche[]*

"Punk"-Bewegung—an insistence on punk's coherence as an organized and

transnational, rather than spasmodic and localized, phenomenon. Not only has punk

crossed the Cold War's central border, borne by the airwaves and its agents into East

Germany, but it retains connections to its point of origin, in the West: connections which

take on a political character captured in the *Information*'s use of a key piece of political

vocabulary—"Bewegung"—which politicizes, and in a strange sort of way, legitimates,

punk as a coherent phenomenon. Punk isn't just in East Germany, but in West Germany,

as well; a kind of third punk (third man), punk itself, hovers over each individual

instantiation of its spatial takeover, as East German space threatens to assume the

characteristics and relationships of West German space through the punk presence within

it.

Battles are being won more effectively in some places than in others. Tallies of

punks' distribution within the GDR can be conducted according to city:

> [d]en territorialen Schwerpunkt bildet die Hauptstadt der DDR, Berlin, mit ca.
> 400 derartigen Personen. Weitere Konzentrationspunkte bilden die Bezirke bzw.
> Bezirksstädte Leipzig mit ca. 95 sowie Mageburg und Cottbus mit jeweils ca. 60
> "Punks". Darüberhinaus gibt ese eine von der Größenordnung her nicht eindeutig
> bestimmbare Anzahl von Sympathisanten in der DDR, die zumindest zeitweilig
> zum Umgangskreis der "Punks" zählen, jedoch vom Äußeren her nicht immer als
> solche erkennbar sind.[39]

Not only are these punk-sympathizers not recognizable on the same basis as the punks

are, but determining their exact number is impossible due to their uncountability. It is a

scalar problem—a problem of the order of magnitude—not faced when dealing with the

punks, whose numbers and concentration can be estimated, and whose presence can be

visually confirmed.

This isn't just a view into the paranoia of the party's Shield and Sword (though it

is that, too); it's an extension of the uncertainty punk introduces to all the space that is the

Stasi's domain. Not only does punk appear in East Germany, connected to the West as an

act of political sabotage and a term in a political relationship, or *Bewegung*. It wins

supporters, who are unidentifiable because of both their pervasiveness and their visual

anonymity. In this endgame, the punks portend (and in some sense have already

inculcated) the spread within East German space of Western-inspired, punk-focalized

negativity which is both visually apprehensible and clandestine at once—as well as being

both scattered and countable, at the same time as it is universal and unquantifiable. In

light of these unsettled questions—Can punk be monitored as a series of specific

disturbances which are, in turn, specifically prosecutable? Or is punk, on the other hand,

something that can only be combated abstractly, as a transgressive potentiality present

everywhere within GDR space?—the limitations of the Ministry's representation of space comes into view. The global perspective incorporates an unidentifiability, inscrutability, and network of *Sympathisanten* into the punk-concept, and all the Republic's space is reimagined, abstractly, as (possibly) appropriable territory, the progress and status of whose appropriation even Mielke's deputy, Rudi Mittig, implies is unrecognizable because it is invisible. An impasse. Conceive of spaces as practiced, and retard individual practices deemed unacceptable. Or strategize broadly, and theorize punk as universally efficacious throughout East Germany. This is the impasse.

But the paradigmatic, big-picture thinking is what wins out. So rather than assess each city's punk problem as a unique problem with its own geographic and social context, the spaces within each city become isomorphic with one another. Each city has certain spaces from which punk is effectively excluded, and others in which punk holds sway:

> Die Mehrzahl der "Punks" gehört losen Gruppierungen an. Ihre Zusammenkünfte erfolgen fast ausschließlich im Freizeitsbereich. Als Trefforte dienen hauptsächlich Wohngebietsgaststätten, Parks und Abrißgrundstücke, vereinzelt auch Jugendklubs. Als überregionale Treffpunkte in der Hauptstadt der DDR, Berlin, werden insbesondere der Kulturpark im Stadtbezirk Berlin-Treptow und die Fußgängerzone sowie dazugehörige Einrichtungen im Bereich Alexanderplatz im Stadtbezirk Berlin-Mitte. […] Es warden ihnen kirchliche Räumlichkeiten für Zusammenkünfte zur Verfügung gestellt bzw. Einladungen für entsprechende Veranstaltungen ausgesprochen, wobei sie ideologisch mit pseudo-pazifistischen und neutralistischem Gedankengut infiltriert werden.[40]

Besides adding an additional influence on punk to its theory (that of the churches, which to a certain extent were long-presumed to be agents of Western imprint anyway), this passage enumerates the places punk has been observed to occupy effectively —and, *ex negativo*, the places it hasn't been. Elsewhere, Mittig's document clarifies that some segments of East German space can be controlled, and kept punk-free.[41] What this

passage argues must happen is that those spaces where punk is most effective, where the

Stasi's representation of space's plans have been disrupted by visualities which retard the

flows of pedestrians or the enjoyment of freetime, must be policed by the Stasi and its

colleagues with the DVP.

This couldn't be done through the use of *inoffizielle Mitarbeit*, or unofficial

collaboration, alone. Here, "at risk" spaces are identified, and the threat posed to them is

extended to menace all correspondent spaces throughout the Republic.[42] Thus the listing

of the *kinds* of sites where punks meet—bars, parks, vacant lots, clubs—before a few

signal examples are offered: Treptow, the East Berlin park designed as a war memorial

with monumentalist risers and titanic bronze statuary centering its long malls;

Alexanderplatz, among East Berlin's most prominent public squares and a site whose

long-term historical significance for German culture is perhaps difficult to overstate.

Extrapolation, homogenization: these are the keys to the construal of correspondent

spaces within different East German cities and towns as isomorphic with one another.

Fußgängerzonen, once rendered analogous to one another, can be similarly policed.

If police properly execute the classificatory and typological thinking this

Information develops, and the 1986 *Information* underlines, and work efficiently in those

Öffentlichkeiten where punk is *wirksam*, punk can be eliminated as a disruptive visual

force at the local level. The specific tactics recommended for this elimination are three-

fold. First, at the level of observation, a comprehensive program of personal

identification and documentation is required.[43] Second, there are interceptive arrests

made in advance of planned events or meetings to present individuals from reaching their

destinations, occasionally referred to as *Vorbeugungsgespräche*, which occlude punks

from sight by removing them from the street and subjecting their behavior and appearance to inquiries designed not only to elicit further information on an individual's social circle and activities, but to provoke emotional responses which may betray undue sympathies or inappropriate attitudes. If *Vorbeugungsgespräche* achieved the appropriate leverage, an *operative Personenkontrolle* would follow. With these, as John C. Schmiedel has pithily put it, "the investigators roll[ed] up their sleeves. Unlike a security check, these were offensive measures against a person or entity that had made itself questionable in some way . . . apartment searches and surveillance of mail and post at this level were standard."[44] In a number of cases, these led to arrests and episodes of investigative detention (*Untersuchungshaft*), and these in turn, on occasion, to the opening up of an *IM-Vorgang*, and with it the establishment of a new beachhead within the social space previously monitored from outside, through *Dokumentierung*. Moving from distanced observation, to interdiction, and finally to infiltration, the Stasi's treatment of punks worked methodically, from the outside in. At the same time, lip service was paid to the inverse approach in the form of repeated calls—which began in 1965 and didn't stop until 1990 silenced them—for the provision of assistance and support to the *Instanzen* directly charged with inculcating appropriately socialist attitudes in East German young people.

Through these actions, Mittig's *Informationen* imply, the representation of space can be secured, saved, preserved, maintained. This representation of space, as we have seen, conceives of East German space as a bounded space, segmented according to the uses—production, education, recreation—of subspaces within it. East German space, however, is subject to infiltration and ideological bombardment; the outcome of these

subversive activities produces a visible symptom, articulated on the bodies of the

presumably asocial. Eradicating this unwanted visuality requires conceiving of the public

places within individual East German cities as isomorphic by reason of their normative

functions, and therefore policeable through a theoretically produced, universal set of

interventions—interventions whose efficacy does not vary according to whether they are

undertaken in Berlin, or in Leipzig; in Halle, or in Zeitz. Producing East German territory

in the way that he does, Mittig heightens—because he homogenizes—the danger punk

poses. All public spaces become isomorphically corruptible, susceptible to appropriation

and degradation by inappropriate visuality; because one national strategy must dictate

local tactics, the stakes are high everywhere.

Typologizing Punks

Having established punk's visibility, and outlined the dangers that that visibility

poses in itself, Mittig's documents get down to brass tacks, enumerating specific

identifiers that it will be helpful for caseworkers and patrol officers to know:

> Das auf Öffentlichkeitswirksamkeit abzielende Äußere der "Punks" ist vor allem
> gekennzeichnet durch Züge der Entartung und der Asozialität. Besonderheiten
> zeigen sich in der Frisur (sogenannter Irokesen- und Bürstenschnitt) und in der
> Haarfärbung (grelle Farben, mehrfarbig) sowie im Tragen von verschlissener
> sowie ungepflegter Kleidung. Ferner werden von "Punks" unterschiedlichste
> Gegenstände wie Sicherheitsnadeln, Rasierklingen, Metallringe,
> Hundehalsbänder, Ketten, an der Kleidung befestigt getragen.[45]

Again, there is a marked emphasis on publicity and public space. However, rather than a

call for public patrols and more effective control of public space by the Stasi and its

operatives, this formulation involves the flip-side of *Öffentlichkeitsarbeit*:

Öffentlichkeitswirksamkeit. This is public efficacy, the power of punks' *Äußere* to impact,

or transform—become *wirksam* within, and with respect to—the public space they inhabit. Cataloging the aspects of the punks' efficacious surface, then, allows once again for the identification of underlying asociality across broad spectra of the population. It is useful information, a handbook for policing.

But into this familiar explanatory strategy, a new word sneaks. *Entartung*. Its obvious National Socialist lineage, if not overtones, makes its inclusion in these files a slightly odd move, but doesn't ultimately distract from the text's basic point about the texture and origins of the punks' asocial display: punk degeneracy, its imperfect formation of traits and structures, and its debasing of proper visuality, is a correlate of the Western decay which punk appearances index and transmit.

Complementing *Entartung*'s invocation of ontogenetic failure is a list of out-of-place items: a cataloging of potential objects which might be incorporated in a punk *detournement*, and whose misplacement on the body constitutes a violation of usage- and efficiency standards which draws attention, by ostentatiously staging a misuse, to punks' play with the out-of-place. In this vein, beyond listing the raw materials of *detournement*, Stasi analysts paid photographic attention to how punks—in a process analogous to the reimagination of the apartment's interior walls as exterior surfaces—reimagined the surfaces of their own bodies as advertising surfaces for their own artwork and arcane, content-free sloganeering. Two mugshots foreground articles of clothing that punks have painted themselves:
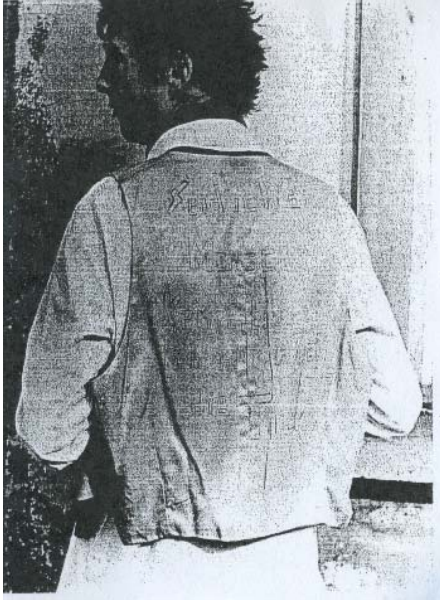
Figure 7. Arrest photographs emphasizing punk inscriptions.

Neither inscription is especially profound. Where one reproduces the enigmatic—if contrary—"No Future" in English [r], the other paraphrases Schopenhauer's famous misanthropic dictum, "seitdem ich die Menschen kenne, liebe ich die Tiere," in broken, misspelt German which renders the statement more enigmatic than informative. One punk quotes Johnny Rotten, another Schopenhauer; in each case, the oddly-attired body becomes a legible surface from which sloppy, scrawled, hard-to-read enigmas call out for attention. As the photographs attest, these punks' misuse of their bodies called out for recognition, documentation, and cataloging.

A violence is contained within this reimagination of one's body as a representational medium through which one's detachment and disengagement of oneself from ordinary ways of occupying space could be represented. Detournement, repurposing, autoinscription—all these are symbolically violent techniques by which standards of personal appearance are violated. But the penetration of earlobes by safety pins, the creative or piecemeal cropping of hair, and the privileging of filth and dirt in

self-styling? These degradations of the body exceed the out-of-place and inappropriate, and stage a more volatile transgression. Through them, the skin is punctured and the overall cleanliness of their human forms endangered; punks' alterity approaches the radical as they disengage themselves from socially determined protocols of self-maintenance by inflicting visible harm upon themselves.

The full radicalization of self-mutilation as performance was effected by Dresden's *Autoperforationsartisten*, Micha Brendel's and Else Gabriel's performance art collective which also recorded unlistenable antimusic as *die Strafe*. Given the collective's art-school bonafides, their work is as accurately situated in the tradition of Body Art, with its forebears in Fluxus's happenings and Joseph Beuys's performances, as in the orbit of punk.[220] Nevertheless, as the *Autoperforationsartisten* abused their bodies and altered their appearances through mutilation, binding, concealment, and abrasion, so too did punks.

Figure 8. Micha Brendel, of the *Autoperforations-artisten*.

Figure 9. A L'Attentat flyer, included in X-Mist's reissue of *Made in GDR*.

Micha Brendel **[l]** operates on himself, rendering his barely-clothed and mudstrewn body the object of an autovivisection. L'Attentat's members exhibit a crude and jokey androgyny **[r]**, concealing their penises between their legs and garbing themselves with just enough punk clothing—suspenders, leather jackets, spiked wristbands—to identify themselves as punks. While the one performance is deadly earnest, the other effectively ironizes an anti-fascist, anti-intolerant message with semi-nude posing that conceals as much as it reveals. Both are performances of self-alteration. And while Brendel's stark, clinical incisions bear a more direct relationship to forms of public self-mutilation familiar from Viennese Actionism of the late 1960s or Paul McCarthy's *Hot Dog* (1974), L'Attentat's presentation of their nearly naked, uncomfortably posed forms reimagines standard (i.e. clothed) group shots with a gender-troubled and confrontational configuration—one marked as a punk reconfiguration by the subjects' careful inclusion of useless suspenders, leather jackets, and teased hair.

DDR von Unten

From the mutilation of bodies and their positioning in space, to the manipulation of spaces through the positioning of mutilated bodies, punks positioned themselves within a space-constituting dynamic whose other participants—passers-by, the Stasi, other punks—had no choice but to see them. Punks reimagined the interiors of their homes and the surfaces of their bodies, whether clothed or unclothed, as contestable sites where the negotiation of meaning and the inscription of ideas—however inchoate—could take place. In response, Stasi commentators developed theories of punk along with strategies of typologization and containment whose rhetorical structure attests to both the

mpressive extent of the Stasi's surveillance networks and the constitutive power of punk disruptions.

Punk grafitti could be painted over; punk houses could be demolished (and were, in many cases—especially after 1989). Punks could be arrested, expelled, harassed, inducted into the military, and interrogated. But the degree to which their occupations of space resonated was incommensurate with their actual criminality. The inverse relationship between their actual level of oppositional political organization or ambition and the magnitude of their visuality's impact on East German spaces is easily traced in the sweeping claims about subversion, enemy contact, and visual contamination found in the Stasi's theories of punk. From punks' transgressions of rules governing the uses (and usefulness) of bodies and spaces emerged a theory of punk and of the vulnerability of East German public spaces to punk's transgressive visuality. This theory's vehemence and sophistication offer more compelling testimony to punk's impact on the security of East Germany than any of the East German punks' own claims to represent a political danger ever could. Indeed, merely by asserting their presence in public—by producing punk spaces through the styling, positioning, and presentation of their own bodies— punks disengaged these spaces from the broader cityscapes in which they were emplaced, uncoupling punk sites from the ordered functioning of East German spaces and performing an inscrutable, unruly departure for their own benefit—and for the benefit of anybody who cared to look.

Notes to Chapter 4

[1] Lefebvre's work focuses mainly on mid-20th century France, and his debt to Marxist theories of production leads him to couch his arguments in terms which presume an advanced capitalist organization of the means of production, and also assume that the operation, legislation, and policing of public space and the mass media is undertaken by large corporations as a function of capitalist economics. Neither assumption holds true for the East German case, where a state entity that held the means of production in the public trust made decisions about the disposition and use of public space, and where a number of bureaucratic instances within that state entity controlled access to broadcasting, publishing, and other points of entry into the mass media. However, his distinction between the scales on which space can be conceived and delimited is of great heuristic value for my project. Providing the details of East German spatial theory and spatial practice, this chapter shows that Lefebvre's analytic distinctions do good work for the East German context, as well.

[2] Henri Lefebvre distinguishes those practices which produce representations of space from those which fashion representational spaces. The former yield "conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists […] and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent—all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived." Representational spaces, however, constitute "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants and users,' but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe." For Lefebvre, the relationship between representational space and representations of space is dialectical, insofar as each informs, negates, and produces the other in what Lefebvre dubs the total process of the production of space. See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 38-39.

[3] The report's fraught history has been retold and documented in Furian's book with Klaus Becker, *Auch im Osten trägt man Westen*. See Furian and Becker, *Auch im Osten trägt man Westen: Punks in der DDR—und was aus ihnen geworden ist.* (Berlin: Tilsner, 2000).

[4] The real problem with the document was the ambition Furian had to distribute it in the West, as well; his mother (a retiree) was apprehended leaving the country with a number of copies of the report, and the latter were confiscated as contraband in a move which catalyzed Furian's 1985 arrest and eventual expulsion from East Germany. See Furian and Becker, *Auch im Osten passim*, esp. 6; 44-55. An unannotated copy of the *Erinnerung* report survived in the central archives of the MfS, untouched. See BStU, ZA, MfS HA XXII Nr. 17742.

[5] See Furian 47, where the arrest order is reproduced in full. Furthermore, another file contains a summary statement concerning the Untersuchungsvorgang "Schreiber"—the operation under whose auspices Furian's place of work and home were searched, and his production of the *Erinnerung* document investigated—and strategic recommendations endorsed, with a signature, by Erich Mielke's deputy Rudi Mittig (who would later write the key *Information* which organized Stasi thinking about punk, its appearances, and its spaces) endorsing the recommendations made. See MfS, ZA, HA XX Nr. 6221 (1 of 2), 6-8.

[6] For example, respondent "E" (Micha from the band *planlos*) is in a number of the photographs. A comparison of the original pamphlet's text with the extended transcripts published in *Auch im Osten*, which later version features the names of the participants, is sufficient to demonstrate this.

[7] In my reading of the photographs, I make the conscious choice to ignore the microscopic—the detailed—aspects of the punks' testimony, while not ignoring the macroscopic power the interviews ascribe the photographs and vice-versa. Generally speaking, the punks' interviews reveal that they are active, self-aware navigators of their own environment—that the decisions they make with respect to the clothes they wear, places they inhabit, and things they say are made with an audience in mind. It is therefore reasonable to assume that while these interviewees are—within the confines of this text and the suspension of belief it solicits—to be considered safely anonymous. The subject-position (and self-representational authority) which the interviewees seize for themselves is thus reproduced within each of the photographs.

[8] When Lefebvre writes of dominated and appropriated spaces, he suggests that a dominated space is one which has been subordinated to an overriding (and abstractly formulated) usage imperative: "military architecture, fortifications and ramparts, dams and irrigation systems—all offer many fine examples of dominated space…dominant space is invariably the realization of a master's project" See Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 164-165. These endeavors functionalize spaces, and delimit their possibilities such

that they only do one thing: protect, irrigate, supply, retard. Lefebvre cautions the easy mapping of the public-works/private-space distinction onto the domination/appropriation pair; domination is not merely a macrological, but rather a thoroughgoing process. Following this lead, we might say that furniture does to a room what a palisade does to a field: distinguishes, functionalizes, delimits. For the case of the late GDR, where the functionality of (limited) domestic space was a topic of constant debate, and whole branches of government and industry were devoted to producing functional and affordable furniture (not to mention demand for it), the point hardly needs to be made anew that the rationalization of the uses of space was a process of some political significance.

[9] See Timothy Drescher, "The Harsh Reality: Billboard Subversion and Graffiti" *Common Ground? Readings and Reflections on Public Space* Eds. Anthony Orum and Zachary Neal. (New York: Routledge, 2006) 158-163. Drescher's article, which deals with the modification (addition of a meaning- or tone-altering difference to a pre-existing advertisement, or reproduction of a parody advertisement in a place or on a surface properly used for paid promotions), insightfully retheorizes graffiti—along with the spaces it occupies—as one element, with commercial representation being the other, in a struggle for the encoding of urban surfaces as meaningful (legible) ones. As a result, graffiti avoids becoming merely an inspiring protagonist for sanguine analyses which point to its potential as a vehicle for "self-expression," and instead assumes the more interesting role of advertising's shadow twin, the irony to its earnestness, the disturbing call-out to its more generous interpellations.

[10] See Ostkreuz Agentur der Fotografen, *Ostzeit: Geschichten aus einem Vergangenen Land* (Berlin: Hatje Kantz, 2009) 8-9. One photograph, from Harald Hauswald's collection in the volume, stages precisely the encounter which is operative in my East-West distinction when it comes to graffiti:

[11] For a description of the walker and his capacities, see Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) 100-103.

[12] See Michael de Certeau, "Walking in the City." *The Practice of Everyday Life*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984) 101. De Certeau's concentration on walking as a co-constitutive negotiation of space helps us to fashion a way of working through what LeFebvre means by *representational space* when he (as referenced above) he defines them as: "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and users'" (39). As this definition makes clear, Lefebvre contrasts these with representations of space by emphasizing the concrete practical (pragmatic) character which is proper to one and not the other. For Lefebvre representations of space are macrological by nature, and conceived in the abstract; by contrast, representational spaces are articulated as lived spaces, spaces which afford the routines of everyday practice (along with their associated images and symbols) an environment and which are practically, rather than theoretically, experienced.

[13] Though edging toward venerable, the work collected in the volume Thomas Lindenberger edited for the ZZF shows how "authority as a social practice" was constituted in the trade unions, community organizations, and other East German institutional contexts. See *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur: Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR*. As institutions, the sites of state-citizen interaction analyzed in Lindenberger's book served as vital points of contact between policy-makers and the individuals expected to realize their goals through appropriate productive practices. In the context of their own rhetoric, the trade unions and mass organizations included in their respective memberships individuals from all walks of life, and their regular meetings and communal events interpellated members as contributing citizens and participants in a unitary project—the building of Socialism. And while one certainly doesn't take them at their word, or assume that the way people experienced their membership in these organizations maps cleanly onto the ways these organizations' leaders and charters imagined or

hoped they would, the organizations communicated their goals to their members and provided a context in which individual actions could be taken or individual opinions could be expressed. Part and parcel of the state's (and its mass organizations') plan for its citizens was rendering meaningful the spaces in which East Germans lived their lives. An example should help illustrate what I mean. Famously accorded the epithet "Kampfplatz für den Frieden," workplaces were not only consistently thematized in GDR literature as sites of self-realization and places in which sociability between generations, or between workers, could be constituted. They were also the object of numerous longitudinal studies aimed at streamlining productivity by maximizing workspace's ability to keep people in close spatial (and therefore, the thinking went, social) proximity to one another without compromising their ability to work. Perhaps most famously, the laboratory-city of Eisenhüttenstadt was a place where radical reorganizations of urban space itself, and the suturing of residential and industrial spaces, was effected with the greatest emphasis placed on subordinating all human activity that occurred there to the imperatives of efficiency, industry, and productivity.

[14] Both are reproduced in Galenza's and Havemeister's *Wir wollen immer artig sein*, as part of Mark Westhusen's chapter on Halle, Eisleben, and Dessau punk. See Mark M. Westhusen, "Zwischen Händel und Chemie. Punk in Halle, Eisleben, und Dessau" *Wir wollen immer artig sein.* Eds. Ronald Galenza and Heinz Havemeister. (Berlin: Schwarzkopf und Schwarzkopf, 2005) 334-347. The photographs, of which prints are housed in Berlin's Matthias-Domaschk-Archiv and the collection of Geralf Pochop, respectively, are reproduced on pages 335 and 346 of Galenza/Havemeister; a number of other photographs from the same roll of film as contained the 1st May, 1987, photograph are reproduced throughout Westhusen's book *From Müllstation zu Größenwahn: Punk in der halleschen Provinz.* (Halle: Hasenverlag, 2007). They don't, in large part, differ greatly from the exemplary photograph analyzed in this chapter. As a result, I have excluded them from my readings—while acknowledging their corroboration of the general conclusions drawn here.

[15] See Galenza and Havemeister 335.

[16] See Dietrich Helms, "Westöstlicher Händel. Die 'Opernrenaissance' in den beiden deutschen Staaten." *Händel unter Deutschen* Ed. Ulrich Tadday. (München: edition text + kritik, 2006) 87-105.

[17] See Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. (London: Methuen, 1986) 20.

[18] Photo contained in BStU MfS-HA XX/Fo/849-Bild 1. Reproduced in Galenza and Havemeister 337.

[19] Jörg M. Colberg's exemplary annotation and partial reproduction of the Stasi analysis of the Hauswald book, in which he highlights the (for this dissertation crucial) role of the Stasi officer as art-critic, is available on his website. See Jörg M. Colberg, "Spotlight: Harald Hauswald, the images of others, and the Stasi" *Conscientious.* 13 Apr. 2009. Web. Accessed 10 Mar. 2011. <http://jmcolberg.com/weblog/2009/04/spotlight_harald_hauswald_the_images_of_others_and_the_stasi/>. The Hauswald book itself was initially published, as Colberg records, by Piper as *Ostberlin, die andere Seite einer Stadt in Texten und Bildern*. It has since been republished, with new introductory remarks, as Harald Hauswald and Lutz Rathenow, *Ostberlin: Leben vor dem Mauerfall* (Berlin: Jaron, 2005).

[20] About the *Moment*: Hauswald's "critic" has a theory of the capture of the inopportune, which (as Colberg's reproductions show us) he elucidates as follows: "*Je trostloser, desto begehrter. Man muß es dem Hauswald lassen, er muß fleißig und mitunter verzweifelt lange gesucht haben. Bis er "das vewitterte Symbol der führenden Partei" fand. Hätte das Symbol sonst überhaupt eine Chance gehabt, in den Band aufgenommen zu werden? Die Frage erübrigt sich.*" Fascinatingly, he accords photography ontologically documentary power, but only in order to then aver that in a singular moment between representative moments, an atypical *Augenblick*, a mis-documentation can occur—and that this fact has been turned to the end of malfeasance by Hauswald.

[21] No sociology of East German youth in general, this was instead a report, in response to the mounting tumult of the Rolling Stones and the Beatles, on the tendencies toward the formation of what the title of the brief's initial section calls "negative[] Gruppierungen und Konzentrationen jugendlicher Personen in der DDR." [Negative groupings and concentrations of youthful persons in the GDR.] The possibility that group-formation among youths is conditioned by the practices in which they engage, and in particular by music performance, is articulated in a section of the paper describing "Laienmusikgruppen, die eine ausgesprochen westlich-dekadente Musik darbieten und deren Auftreten geeignet ist, Jugendliche zu rowdyhaften Handlungen zu inspirieren." [Groups of lay musicians who offer a decidedly Western-decadent music and whose appearance is designed to inspire youths to rowdy behavior.] The report offered

what would become a standard strategic presumption: namely, that some musical performance (here, Beat performance) was a direct and purposive act of subversion aimed at East German youths. This report was published just months after the 11ᵗʰ Plenum demarcated in no uncertain terms the limits of the state's patience with respect to critical perspectives and formal experimentalism in film. It is therefore unsurprising that the outlook taken in this ZAIG report is dim, as the subversion-through-culture thesis had already been proposed, and accepted, for other cases. See BStU, ZA, MfS ZAIG Nr. Z4608, 3.

[22] See BStU, ZA, MfS ZAIG Nr. Z4608, 29.

[23] By carbon-copying this report not only to Security Minister Erich Mielke himself, but to several of his deputies and the commanding generals of two *Hauptabteilungen*, the ZAIG made its classificatory apparatus widely available to individuals working at the highest level of security administration in East Germany. Identifying *which* administrative units were copied on the report is instructive, as well; while HA XIX (Verkehr, Post, Nachrichten) inspected and oversaw personal correspondence and monitored broadcast and print journalism at home and in West Germany, HA XX (Staatsapparat, Kultur, Kirche, Untergrund) had direct contact with unwanted elements and those identified as subversive, and worked closely with VIII (Beobachtung/Überwachung) to systematize IM presence within "Untergrund" circles.

[24] See BStU, ZA, MfS ZAIG Nr. Z4608, 37.

[25] This assembly, like the steel-and-concrete wave de Certeau apprehends from the planner's perch in "Walking," may have homogenized and leveled the multiple and the manifold, but from it there emerged a representation of space which permitted the organization of forces, management of populations, erection of barriers and borders, and direction of flows on the grand (national) scale. De Certeau's essay is equally as concerned with attempting an epistemology of cities as it is with producing an ontology of them. The walker's and the planner's subject-positions, on whose distinctness de Certeau makes a point of insisting, emerge as related—but fundamentally distinct—experiential modes, with advantages and disadvantages. In what follows, the planner's position which was occupied by the Stasi's writers and theorists will be explored, in both its constitution and its defeat.

[26] See BStU, ZA, MfS JHS Nr. 21910, 133. Emphasis mine.

[27] See BStU, ZA, MfS JHS Nr. 21910, 278-358. Comprising eighty pages, this section of the report consists largely of expansions and explanations of the tactics more briefly conceived of in the 1965 ZAIG piece. Though broken down by sites (in public transportation, at concert sites, in police facilities) and operational contexts (immediately upon arrest, during ongoing reconnaissance by plainclothes police), the recommendations differ in no wise, and provide little additional detail for, those from fifteen years prior.

[28] See BStU, ZA, MfS JHS Nr. 21910, p. 7.

[29] See BStU, ZA, MfS JHS Nr. 21910, p. 19.

[30] See BStU, ZA, MfS JHS Nr. 21910, p. 29.

[31] See BStU, ZA, MfS HA XX Nr. 6107, 3-12; 44-47; 51-53

[32] See Karin Hartewig, *Das Auge der Partei: Fotografie und Staatssicherheit*. (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2004) 127-136.

[33] Additional photo-caching files exist, but see especially MfS HA Abt VII Nr. 1491 (esp. 13 and 14), along with MfS HA XX Nr. 6238 *passim*, to get a sense of what already by 1983 had become an interdepartmental effort to document punks and archive records of them inhabiting the different spaces they did.

[34] See BStU, ZA, MfS HA XX Nr. 6015, 51-58.

[35] See also BStU, ZA, MfS HA VI Nr. 12142, p. 24.

[36] See BStU, ZA, MfS ZAIG Nr. 3366, p. 2.

[37] See also BStU, ZA, MfS HA VI Nr. 12142, p. 24.

[38] See BStU, ZA, MfS ZAIG Nr. 3366, p. 3.

[39] See BStU, ZA, MfS ZAIG Nr. 3366, p. 3.

[40] See BStU, ZA, MfS ZAIG Nr. 3366, p. 4-5; 7.

[41] Mittig, from BStU, ZA, MfS ZAIG Nr. 3366, p. 3: "Dabei ist zu beachten, daß ein Teil der "Punks" in ihren Arbeits- oder Ausbildungsstätten ein normales Äußeres zeigen, um in diesen Bereichen nicht aufzufallen und nicht in Auseinandersetzungen verwickelt zu werden. Diese 'Punks' verändern für den Freizeitbereich ihr Äußeres und ihre Verhaltensweise entsprechend den zuvor beschriebenen Merkmalen." From this, we can ascertain that "auffallen" in professional or educational contexts is, in fact, prevented by the structuring of the social environment within workplaces and schools. The incentive not to stick out in

these places comes from a reluctance to receive punishment from superiors. And the JHS, from BStU, ZA, MfS JHS Nr. 21910, p.

[42] We recall that this document was filed with the ZAIG, and was not merely directed at Berlin.

[43] See BStU, ZA, MfS HA VI Nr. 12142, p. 22. "Es sind operative und weitere Maßnahmen zu veranlassen, die die Dokumentierung der An- und Abreise der Teilnehmer, des Ablaufes derartiger Punk-zusammenrottungen sowie weitere durch diese Personenkreise begangene Straftaten und Ordnungswidrigkeiten sichern und die Identifizierung der beteiligten ermöglichen."

[44] See John C. Schmiedel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party* (London: Routledge, 2008) 42.

[45] See BStU, ZA, MfS ZAIG Nr. 3366, p. 4.

[46] See Paola Valenti, "Body Art." *The Art of the 20th Century, 1969-199: Neo-avant-gardes, Postmodern and Global Art.* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2009) 159-177.

Conclusion: Post-Punk, Post-Soviet Spaces

This conclusion offers a proposal about punk's travel in space and time: that punk, which found iterative possibilities on both sides of the Iron Curtain, cannot be considered purely in terms of its Anglo-American *or* its Germanophone manifestations. Instead, punk's American, European, and Asian scenes must be theorized as outposts or waypoints of a lastingly impactful, *global* urban culture. Though it varied from place to place, and time to time, this cultural form was topically and thematically united by the search for a way *out* of the logic of mutually assured destruction, for an alternative to the progressivist historiographies of *both* the capitalist or communist varieties, and for an escape from the consumerist sociabilities that developed in *both* East and West. Our consideration of punk must extend outward from Berlin, New York, and London, and embrace Los Angeles, Moscow, Birmingham, and Krakow as sites for punk's emergence.

By moving beyond the limited (though important) East German context considered in this dissertation, but retaining the interdisciplinary close reading of multimedial materials modeled here, future work on punk will account for the formal variations between texts developed in the punk aesthetic's various ports of call. Such work can also contextualize punk's unified, transnational history within the broader cultural histories of the Cold War, its endgame, and its aftermath. This dissertation has examined individual East German punk texts in order to examine the politics and poetics of punk as it adapted itself to a new art-historical and institutional context. Future work on punk must consider many more texts, from more places, in showing how punk

appeared in a variety of geographically, organizationally, and historically distinct contexts, and took specific form in each. With a broader, more diverse text base, such a project can replicate punk's border-crossing at the level of analysis. Such an approach can better account for punk's stubborn if marginal appeal across all the geographic, economic, military, and political borders which divided the world against itself in the 1970s and 1980s, and can track punk's response to the radical redrawing of those borders which began in 1989/90, and continues to this day.

Beginning with a brief analysis of a book cover which highlights the transnational marketability of East German punk's "image," this conclusion then briefly examines a documentary film about an Einstürzende Neubauten concert which took place immediately after the *Wende*. Here a major industrial site's performance space, long used for rituals of comradely singing and intra-combine awards ceremonies, becomes a space in which harsh, discordant sounds inaugurate the plant's industrial slide into irrelevance. Drawing on Neubauten's punk elegy for Communism, I'll conclude with some thoughts on punk texts' and punk theory's broader utility for the analysis of the Cold War and its collapse.

Anders reisen / von Wegen: **Punk, a Traveling Aesthetic**

In March of 1986, Rowohlt published a guidebook to East Germany as part of its *Anders reisen* series, a travel guide imprint which, as series editor Ludwig Moos explains in a text box which opens the book, "heißt, sich einzulassen auf das tägliche Leben anderswo, zu lernen, welche historischen Wurzeln und gegenwärtigen Bedingungen es hat."[1] In keeping with Moos's invocation of everyday life as historically rooted and

conditioned by the present, the guidebook augments tips for finding lesser-trod hiking paths and out-of-the-way watering holes with commentary on the GDR's "innere Opposition," and on the semi-autonomous spaces of the evangelical church. But the most arresting aspect of the volume is its cover: a photograph, retouched with vibrant day-glo, of six punks standing under a statue of V.I. Lenin. With its ironic red for Lenin, and stark yellows for the punks' bleached-blonde hair, the image combines and contrasts iconic statuary with the lived East Germany to which the *Anders reisen* volume purportedly grants access.

In this sense, the pictured punks serve a commercial function, authorizing the book's claim to uniqueness, yet also having their disruptive force as uncommonly attired spectacles redirected into the mechanics of sales, market positioning, and the packaging of authenticity. The foregrounded punks serve as guarantors for *Anders reisen*'s claim to better, or more accurately, represent East Germany than its competitors. The Rowohlt editors grant the punks a metonymic power to represent the real life of the East German Republic existing beyond and between the acts of state agents—the power to reveal, merely by being-in-public, the presence of private culture in public spaces in the GDR. Written for a West German audience, this book about East Germany attests on its cover to punk's circulation as a kind of cultural currency. The punks testify to the exhaustiveness of the travel guide; in turn, the guide's use of them testifies to their legibility, on both sides of the German-German border, as a universal culture of the Cold War. Whether Marx's children or Coca-Cola's, punks' emblematic (and eminently marketable) status as protagonists of the cool persisted—into the mid-1980s, long after

Crass or the Sex Pistols had first served notice of punk's death, and all punk's historians had written its obituary.

This volume of *Anders reisen* trades off Germany's division by using a cultural property common to both Germanies—punk—to play up the authenticity of its account. The promise that travelers might find punks is the principal enticement of this 1985 guidebook's self-presentation. The 'real' East Germany, that of the punks, can be discovered between the pages of *Anders reisen*, and accordingly, across the Wall. This is one scenario of seeing, one fantasy that an authentic experience could be gained of the difficult-to-access physical and social space of East Germany. Another traveling scenario, Einstürzende Neubauten's 21st December, 1989, drive to East Berlin to give a concert, shuffles the components of the *Anders reisen* fantasy—punk, travel, the contrasts and commonalities of West and East German space—in an entirely different configuration.

The subject matter of the 2009 concert-film-cum-documentary *Elektrokohle / von Wegen* was an East Germany characterized by interregnum.[2] Arriving in East Berlin between the Wall's opening on 9th December and the 18th March, 1990, election of the center-right Allianz für Deutschland parties, which effectively dissolved the German Democratic Republic, Neubauten visited the GDR as it disappeared around them. Neubauten's first concert in East Germany, held at the VEB Elektrokohle, would also clearly be its last. In an opening sequence, the band negotiates a quickly dilapidating border-crossing between East and West Berlin; as Neubauten's van passes *Mauerspechte* chiseling pieces out of the Wall's western side, Alexander Hacke sarcastically eulogizes the passing of Germany's division. "Ich wünsch' mir 'ne neue Blockade," he chants, "Berlin soll wieder 'ne Insel sein."[3] Of course, only Berlin's Western half had ever been

an island. Hacke's sardonic critique of changing conditions therefore rejects for a moment the widespread vision of reunited Berlin then in circulation. He dwells upon West Berlin's unique Cold War position, surrounded by East Germany and yet distinct from both it and the Federal Republic, just as it is about to pass into history.

If West Berlin is an island of West Germany's, by traveling from West Berlin to "Berlin-die Hauptstadt der DDR" (as it was officially known), Neubauten goes from the outpost to the metropole in just a few seconds of driving. In the terms of contrastive stereotypy which Hacke's song draws upon, Neubauten move quickly from the diverse and crumbling cultural hothouse of Kreuzberg, the squatters' and artists' domain, to the hulking industrial structures of Lichtenberg, then still standing, though the Treuhandanstalt that would dismantle them would be created only six months later.

To emphasize the significance of traversing this city in transition, *Von Wegen* films individual acts of spatially oriented remembrance. Its title—colloquially understood as "no way," but also "of ways"—refers to the ways, or paths, taken by the concert's (East) German attendees in 1989. These are reconstructed, twenty years later, in speech and on foot, when seven or eight individuals speak with the camera as they retrace their steps to the VEB Elektrokohle. Remembering the trash cans or coal piles which cluttered the courtyard of their houses, or the close quarters of a streetcar filled with the sweaty bodies of industrial workers who had just come off the third shift, each East German attendee reflects on the impression that East Berlin, their city, made on them even as it was clearly beginning to disappear.

Interspersed with these reminiscences of the disappearance of Germany's Cold War division, short segments of handheld Super-8 footage present scenes from

Neubauten's journey and concert. The older material presents in grainier form the very spaces at stake in the retrospective narration. The contrast between the ordered residential rows of the present-day and the streets of 1989 Berlin, littered at various points with rubble and derelict vehicles, is striking. By intercutting these two kinds of footage, *Von Wegen* memorializes a concert, but that event's resonance clearly exceeds the quotidian fact that it was Einstürzende Neubauten's first in East Berlin.

Nor was the concert worth filming, or remembering in documentary fashion, simply because it was a novelty by the standards of its time and place. The Elektrokohle concert was certainly one in a long series of newly possible cultural events made possible for East Berlin, and to East Germans, by the opening of their country's borders. But if this had been all that was notable about the concert, *Von Wegen* would likely have been conceived, structured, and released like Neubauten's 1986 film *Halber Mensch*, which presented concert footage from the band's first visit to Japan. Or *Von Wegen* might never have needed to be a film. Another format could have served, like the three-band alternative concert featuring IchFunktion, die Firma, and Herbst in Peking, released as the live album *die letzten Tage von Pompeji*.

No, the documentary footage of the concert, and the commentary of its audience, hint at a greater importance for the concert than that it simply occurred. This importance lies in the venue, alternately called "ein prosaischer Ort" or "ein[] bizarre[r] Laden" by the reminiscing subjects of *Von Wegen*. As the patterns of economic, social, and spatial organization that had established and fortified Berlin's division dissolved around them, Einstürzende Neubauten and their audience inhabited the Wilhelm-Pieck performance

hall of the massive VEB Elektrokohle complex one last time, preserving its communal function even as the community that it purportedly served eroded around it.

Built more than a century earlier, the plant had changed hands several times before the Second World War, but since the founding of the GDR, had been a major site of industrial production. Its Wilhelm-Pieck-Saal, a space for meetings and cultural events, embodied the philosophy of art which underwrote the *Bitterfelder Weg*. Embedding the production of culture in the culture of production, it brought art to the jobsite. Taking their punk-inflected, avant-garde noise to an industrial site, Einstürzende Neubauten perform for an audience of first-time live listeners—and near-accidentally, for Heiner Müller, who visits, and even stands up onstage, after leaving a state dinner with a French detachment of diplomats and attachés. No music like this had ever been performed there, and the raucous crowd of black-clad, self-identifying members of the alternative *Szene* would never have been allowed to assemble in a venue at the very heart of productive culture in the capital. Neubauten and their fans thus *appropriated* a space, occupying it physically and filling it with novel sound, in a way which would not have been possible mere months before.

But by doing so when they did, they give the Wilhelm-Pieck-Saal and the broader complex around it a send-off, or memorial service. They are using the facilities as intended by the people who constructed them—for communal gathering and performance—even as the reason why the larger factory had existed, the construction and maintenance of socialist industrial power, was disappearing with the city-dividing Wall which had supposedly guaranteed that project's safety. Conceived of as a punk project a decade earlier, but operating outside the strict and simple boundaries of punk form, the

noise of Einstürzende Neubauten traveled to East Berlin and became part of the city's

sonic fabric, filling the spaces of industry, and performing the noises of production, just

before Germany's sweeping transition ensured that the VEB Elektrokohle would start to

fall silent for good.

If the punks on the cover of *Anders reisen* authenticate the book's account of the

inaccessible land from which they originate, East Germany, the VEB Elektrokohle and its

Wilhelm-Pieck-Saal ground these punk travelers' performance in a way that only

becomes clear by thinking of the concert in terms "of ways," *Von Wegen*—in terms of

paths through the shifting urban space of Berlin, in terms of a novel journey which

German post-punk's most *outre* protagonists took from East to West just as the

distinction between the two broke down. Though Hacke wishes for "'ne neue Blockade"

to guarantee the safety of his creative Kreuzberg and its status apart from West Germany,

only the disappearance of the previous *Blockade* makes the Neubauten's clearly

impactful trip possible. As Western punk tourists, they occupy a communal performance

space as embedded in the sounds and sites/sights of industry as their own music is, even

though their performance in that space would have been impossible just two months

prior. Or, as many an East German might have said: *vor der Wende undenkbar.*[4]

A Punk Theory of the Cold War

In this dissertation, I have theorized punk's presentation of an avant-garde

problem for the East German critical and security establishments. Western punk forms

had their own debts to the avant-gardes that came before them, and in particular to

Surrealism and Dada, which had long been expelled from the orthodox valuation of art in

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East Germany. East German criticism of punk seized upon its formalistic diffidence, its lack of clear and programmatic artistic commitment to social transformation, as symptoms of its intellectual illegitimacy and suspicious (a)politicality. This persistent and pervasive dismissal extended not only to punk texts' lyrical or prosaic content, but to its formal aspects as well. East German Punk, an unwanted avant-garde, challenged stylistic standards in the headlines, on the page, in its songs, and in the street. Each chapter of this dissertation has followed, via a different approach, the ways that a supposedly readymade punk aesthetic was adapted to, and received within, an art-historical and political context unlike any other it had encountered.

The first chapter, a discourse analysis of West German and East German punk theory, identified some surprising commonalities between class-based analyses of punk written in the Federal Republic and the GDR. By examining how sharply punks' degraded figures contrasted with configurations of the New Socialist Man, a decades-old project which had produced an embodied standard of political commitment and social engagement, the chapter shows that punk's hostile reception by culture-political authorities and intellectuals of the Stasi was inextricable from its modeling of a *disengaged* subjectivity which contrasted with predominant representations of normative *engagement*.

The second chapter considered the usefulness and adaptability of a *disengaged* punk subjectivity for evaluating the different poetic registers of Sascha Anderson's writing. This complicated figure who played punk music, composed poetry, wrote about his friends for the Stasi, and published a circumspect autobiography, assumed punk's distanced subject-position to balance the competing tendencies of his various endeavors.

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Anderson's writing about his own complicity in Stasi surveillance of the punk scene is cryptic. Identifying a position—any position—that Anderson is willing to take on guilt, complicity, responsibility, dissidence, or loyalty is difficult indeed. Nevertheless, this chapter's study of his poetics documents his unmistakable confidence in the transgressive and tendentially communal power of punk's play with recombination and recontextualization of the elements of language.

The third chapter argues that East German punks effected a *disengagement* of themselves from progressivist measurements of historical time, and that they did so in song. Lyrically and structurally, the punk songs considered in this chapter imagined alternative placements of the GDR on the timeline of human history. They rejected the sophisticated Marxist teleologies which the East German state deployed to fashion its thinking about—and rhetoric of—progress toward a communist future, socialist construction, and the historical retardation of the non-Communist West. In response to prevailing conceptions of the structure and flow of time which differed radically in tone and detail from those encountered by their Western counterparts, East German punks uncoupled themselves from mechanisms of progress, and mechanisms of its deferral or suspension, that they had come to regard with suspicion; they became *disengaged* from socialist time as it elapsed, existing in its midst but rejecting its premises. Like the Soviet avant-gardes of the immediate post-Revolutionary moment, they inaugurated a new kind of time: punk time.

Chapter four considers the embodied modeling of punk disengagement in the ordered, productive spaces of East German cities. After looking at photographs of punk spaces, and of spaces occupied by punks, the chapter turns to Stasi writing about the

policing of space and territory to reconstruct the impact which punk self-stagings was having on the valence of public space. As an embodied aesthetic, East German punk—like its Western parallels—worked as consciously with subverting hygienic codes and bodily norms as other avant-garde performers as early as the Dadaists had. In an East Germany where public and private spaces were coordinated according to a national fantasy of productivity and industriousness, punks staged themselves as an unproductive, slovenly, unkempt, and discombobulated assemblage of pierced skin, useless adornment, and garbage. Punks therefore inscribed their disengagement from the productive space around them on their bodies, highlighting their non-belonging by presenting a chaotic and useless appearance in public.

Even toward the end of the 1980s, when theretofore suppressed elements of Germany's (classical) avant-garde past began to be institutionally rehabilitated,[5] punk remained a dubious proposition for culture policy. Some performance strictures began to relax, and Amiga began to release records by "die anderen Bands," but the true ambivalence of East German punk policy is made clear by the fact that the Stasi continued, and even expanded, its efforts to observe and infiltrate punk groups until November 1989. The Stasi's operations on punk ended with the Ministry itself. As state-sanctioned outlets like Amiga recordings or a DEFA documentary were indeed found for punk-inflected performance and song, unsanctioned East German punk bands and their audiences remained of strategic interest for domestic policing and foreign policy—irrespective of their lack of political organization. The reason for the cultural gatekeepers' and civil authorities' continuing interest was simple: punks never proffered a programmatic statement of political purpose, dissident or conformist. If they had, such a

statement could have been addressed on its own terms—whether in good faith (less likely), or through prosecution and expulsion, as was the case with the writing and reformist rhetoric of Robert Havemann or Rudolf Bahro.

No dissidents like Havemann or Bahro, punks disentangled themselves entirely from what O.K. Werckmeister has called "an argumentative, critical culture that explicitly referred to contemporary history," whose protagonists, in East and West, "advanced unredeemable, utopian alternatives" to contemporary geopolitical circumstances.[6] Though disengaged and ostentatiously disinterested, punks in Germany were never *un*interested in the world around them. Performing in public, they communicated a clear divestiture from the programmatic politics of Cold War division. But their insistence on finding ways to continue to communicate, to continue to disclose their detachment in public, actually survived the very division whose terms they rejected. Einstürzende Neubauten, a group with clear punk roots, and for whom the division of Berlin had been a necessary condition and a nurturing geopolitical fact, took a trip to East Berlin to read last rites for the dying culture whose very existence had made possible their own. Punk tourists, they paid their respects on hallowed ground that literally combined culture with work, life with art, production with representation. While everybody else looked forward to reunification, Neubauten looked back upon division, and considered what it had meant. For them, and for the East German punks who were seeing them live for the first time, it had meant everything, prohibited or possible. Division had defined them, had created them, even though they rejected the impulse to choose a side. It deserved a final tribute.

*   *   *

In this dissertation, I have reconstructed East German punk's status as an "avant-garde problem" for the institutions of the East German state most closely involved with the management of culture. Specifically, I have reconstructed the ways in which a demographically marginal cultural phenomenon largely disinterested with programmatic politics was understood to pose a serious symbolic and cultural threat to the stability and order of East German politics and society, and shown how punk's vilification was in fact a result of its uncomfortable tactical and philosophical proximity to those disruptive, experimental aspects of the historical avant-gardes which had been expelled from official East German historiographies of vanguardist art and culture.

In a place where the involvement of the self in political progress, *engagement*, was key, East German punks claimed no Archimedean position from which they then agitated for universal human rights, freedom of expression, or freedom of movement. Such positive and specific political claims were absent from the texts examined here, and were also largely absent from other East German punk texts. East German punks *disengaged* themselves from the process of political claimancy at the same time as they refused to retreat into the putative autonomy of non-significatory art or truly private production. They performed in the spaces they could eke out, recorded and distributed their music informally, and fashioned themselves for display in public spaces.

Elsewhere, concurrent with East German punks' modification of avant-garde tactics to suit their unique (art-)historical situation, punks in Russia, England, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the United States, Brazil, and Britain developed their own strategic

negations: their own specifically calibrated, public performances of social and aesthetic alterity. And even though some elements of programmatic politics crept into punk performances, like anti-apartheid advocacy or anti-proliferation activism, punk was in no wise reducible to a single political goal, or even a set of them. This was because as a culture bred of the Cold War, which operated on the Cold War's margins, punk culture—in all its forms, all its iterations—refused the either/or of mutually assured destruction. Punk's publicly performed self-destruction may have modeled the Cold War's endgame—we recall Iggy Pop's "we learn dances / brand new dances / like the nuclear bomb"—but it never took a stance, picked a side. Moving between stances, ironizing them and picking them apart, the punks of the Cold War—whether in East or West—inhabited a noncommittal position between the capitalist and the socialist alternative, even as they recombined elements of both systems' political language in their songs about war, sex, death, consumption, and being young.

This dissertation, though, represents a starting point for the study of punk as a signal culture of the Cold War: as a border-crossing, portable, adaptable, but always recognizable way of doing things and being somebody which made its way to a thousand different cities, in East and in West, and went to work on their political cultures and individual aesthetics. As a gadfly, as a critical culture, as a nonsensical artform, as something the kids do when they get bored, punk found purchase from Los Angeles to Moscow and most places in between. Figuring out why will involve work like that performed in this dissertation—careful reading of how punk changed to fit a specific national, or urban context—at the same time as it will involve the study of the thing to

which all punk cultures, in some way or another, responded: the antagonistic politics of the Cold War.

Notes to the Conclusion

[1] See Ludwig Moos, "Anders Reisen" (Editors' Note). Per Ketman and Andreas Wissmach, *DDR: Ein Reisebuch in en Alltag*. (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1986) 2. In English: "[anders reisen] means opening oneself up to the daily life of someplace else, learning which historical roots and present conditions it has."

[2] Available as *Elektrokohle (von Wegen)*.

[3] In English: "I wish I had a new blockade…Berlin should be an island again."

[4] In English: "Unthinkable before [Reunification]."

[5] For an example of how this could be done, one could consult Günter Schade's and Willi Geismeier's articles on Expressionism in the catalog they prepared for a 1986 exhibition in the Nationalgalerie. See Roland März, Günter Schade, Anita Beloubek, Manfred Ohlsen. *Expressionisten : die Avantgarde in Deutschland 1905-1920* (Berlin : Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1986).

[6] See O.K. Werckmeister, *Citadel Culture*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) 9.

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