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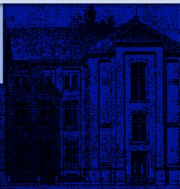
Claudia Simone Dorchain,
Felice Naomi Wonnenberg (Eds.)

CONTEMPORARY JEWISH REALITY IN GERMANY AND ITS REFLECTION IN FILM

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Contemporary Jewish Reality in Germany and Its Reflection in Film

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Contemporary Jewish Reality in Germany and Its Reflection in Film

Edited by
Claudia Simone Dorchain and
Felice Naomi Wonnenberg

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Introduction

"Who, if not we – when, if not now?" was the impetus for embarking on this project that combines the efforts of young academics from the Colloquium of Jewish Studies in this interdisciplinary anthology.

As a kind of hermeneutic introduction, the first essay, "Cusanus, Nietzsche, and Lacan – The Mirror as Philosophic and Political Concept," by *Claudia Simone Dorchain*, deals with the concept of reality created by visual acts and visual arts. It functions as the initial presentation of the concepts of "Jewish reality" and "Film," and shows how the imaginary Divine look produces either hatred or understanding, and thus provokes the idea of differences between individuals, groups, and religions.

Antonia Schmid pursues the question of whether, accompanying the political transformations of 1989/90, Germany's official stance on anti-Semitism and the Shoah have changed as well. Her essay deals with hegemonic images of victims and perpetrators as well as historically specific constructions of the respective 'Other.' By use of examples such as the ostensibly innocuous alpinist melodrama *Nordwand* (Philipp Stölzl, D/A/CH 2008) and the three-part miniseries *Krupp – eine deutsche Familie* (Carlo Rola, D 2009), Schmid illustrates how, in contemporary German discourse regarding their status as victims of National Socialism, Jewish victims are replaced by non-Jewish Germans. Concurrently, it analyzes how this development is connected to the resurfacing of anti-Semitic stereotypes when it comes to explicitly Jewish characters, and how images of 'other Others' serve to reinstate positive images of the German national Self.

In an interview with *Claudia Simone Dorchain*, *Tommaso Speccher* debates the importance of the widely discussed "iconic turn" in the theory of culture. They agree with Heidegger's statement about the age of modernity as an era of the instrumentalization of images, provide examples of this instrumentalization in visual acts and arts concerning Jewish life in Germany, both in everyday life and in the arts, and come to the conclusion that "modernity" is not so much an epochal but a philosophical and political notion that implies the use of images in order to create power.

The essay "Some Filmic Heroines and 'Others' in the GDR Documentary *Women in Ravensbrück* (1968)," by *Katja Baumgärtner*, addresses iconic, symbolic, gender-specific forms of memory in the that film. After the inauguration of the Ravensbrück National Memorial in 1959 conducted by the state of the GDR, the commissioned documentary was meant to legitimize an ideologized historical and political perceptive of the Nazi past. However, *Women in Ravensbrück*

installs a gender-specific version of that past by presenting particular female biographies, a feminized, and much more Christianized rhetorics and rituals of mourning at the memorial site. Remembrance at Ravensbrück became political. In this sense, the documentary is almost certainly a national *lieu de mémoire* (Pierre Nora), a space of memory that enables a visualization of the past, thereby creating a specifically gendered symbolic language.

In the next essay, "A City of Mind – Berlin in the Perception of Young Russian-Speaking Jewish Migrants" *Alina Gromova* explains how Berlin has been constructed as more of a symbolic than an actual, space. Within the framework of cultural and urban anthropology, this article deals with the interaction of ethnic identity and urban space. The protagonists are members of a young generation of Russian-speaking Jewish migrants from the former Soviet Union who live in Berlin. Gromova debates the issue of whether the negotiation of identity by these migrants is closely tied to the construction of city space, including Berlin's particular history, sociopolitics, and topographical nature.

Sociopolitical and historical elements are discussed from a different point of view regarding their filmic representation in contemporary movies in Germany in *Lea Wohl von Haselberg's* "Between "Self" and "Other" – Representations of Mixed Relationships in Contemporary German Cinema and TV." This paper explores popular movies that feature relations between Jewish and non-Jewish characters, and asks whether "mixed couples" provide a traditional or an innovative image of Jewish culture.

The essay "Unkosher Jewish" by *Mareike Albers* focuses on an alternative Jewish cultural scene in Berlin and gives examples of contemporary youth culture and humor. Thanks to events such as the "Berlin Meschugge!" party, a new Jewish-Israeli "party scene" has developed in Berlin, and Jewish comedians and bands have been growing in popularity. Their appearances and concerts are frequented by Jews and non-Jews alike. Concentrating on three examples, the essay illustrates how leading figures of Jewish popular culture in Berlin have taken on the themes of philo-Semitism, anti-Semitic clichés, and the dissemination of stereotypes with humor, irony, and sarcasm.

"'Morbid Beauty' as an Aesthetic Concept to Portray 'the Jew'" is a detailed interview between *Felice Naomi Wonnenberg* and *Claudia Simone Dorchain*. Here the minds of a philosopher and of a researcher in Jewish studies and film studies meet in a provocative dialogue. The two scholars examine the concept of "morbidity" – a cluster of notions comprising beauty, femininity, weakness, passivity, and the approach of death – as a topic in the visualization of Jewish life, and ask which ideological implications and consequences it includes.

Conversion to Judaism and the subsequent acceptance of Jewish converts are topics still being discussed at length among Jews in Germany today. In her essay,

"Between Guilt and Repression," *Barbara Steiner* demonstrates how conversion to Judaism continues to play a role in the construction of identities in Germany. Why do non-Jewish Germans convert to Judaism, and what connection might this phenomenon have with Germany's most recent past, the persecution of and murdering of Jews? This essay endeavors to reveal how German converts to Judaism deal with the Shoa, and to what degree they integrate it into their biographies as 'New Jews.'

Felice Naomi Wonnenberg queries guilt in a different context. By exploring filmic representations of "German guilt," she tries to show the role it as well as concepts of shame and vengeance play in contemporary German movies about the National Socialist past. Her research focus is the emotional interaction of Jewish and non-Jewish couples in German films, and with the impertinent title "Can't Get No Satisfaction," she tries to mirror the role of the Jewish man and the almost allegorical German woman in regard to the self-concepts they hold within their relationships with each other.

Self-concepts and "mixed couples" are research issues also pusued by *Katrin Köppert*, but from a more ethnographic point of view. In her essay, on the queer diaspora in Germany, she explains through the use of examples from subcultural contexts in Berlin-Kreuzberg how homosexuality, religious, and ethnic conflicts contribute to the ongoing, unresolved problems of identity.

Claudia Simone Dorchain looks at images of gender-based behavior and religious identity in Max Färberböck's movie *Aimée und Jaguar* (Germany 1999), the love story of a Jewish and non-Jewish lesbian couple living under the Nazis. From a philosophic point of view Dorchain stresses crucial filmic topics such as the meaning of space, name-giving processes, and the self-concepts demonstrated by Färberböck's heroines, and analyzes how German critics have reacted to this popular film.

Tommaso Speccher poses the question of whether the image of the Jew has had a certain philosophical impact, with or without diachronic changes, in his appraisal of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, which was built after a decade-long debate on the role of Holocaust memory within German culture, but whose physical presence possesses a significance beyond those debates. More than simply preserving historical memory, it engages the contemporary visitor in an inescapable confrontation with the process of memorialization. Speccher's article investigates the multiple narratives of this experience, ranging from its historical to its ethical meaning. Speccher ultimately decides that at the core of the monument lies the irretrievable absence of European-Jewish culture.

"Otherness" as a vehicle of discrimination is a topic of *Felice Naomi Wonnenberg's* recent research as well. She explores the filmic image of the Jewish man

as hero and the reception of this image in Germany, and asks, with allusions to Daniel Boyarin and Thomas Elsässer, whether a Jewish hero or Jewish heroism are different from other concepts of heroes, heroism, or heroic conduct.

Irit Dekel introduces her recent work as an ethnographer in her interview with *Claudia Simone Dorchain*, "Reflections on Social Transformation at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe," influenced by De Certeau, Lefebvre, Foucault, and Goffman.

Many thanks to Werner Tress, whose professional experience, knowledge and patience helped in all questions of editing and publishing. We feel the deepest respect for all contributors, not only for their proven creative minds as scholars, but also for their personal efforts.

Berlin, March 2012
Claudia Simone Dorchain and Felice Naomi Wonnenberg

Claudia Simone Dorchain
Cusanus, Nietzsche, and Lacan on Reflection
The Mirror as Philosophic and Political Concept

> Turn your eyes away,
> for your look overwhelms me.
> Song of Songs, 6:5

Our perception of reality and its reflection in film, or more generally in art, depends on whether we assume objects to actually be what they seem to be. From a philosophic point of view, we operate from the perspective of phenomenology or constructivism. Perhaps these different perspectives and their mental representations, or the possibility of difference in and of itself, define art as something more than mere mimesis. From a cultural history perspective, surely nothing is more significant – and more polyvalent – than the image of humanity and its reflection in the arts. Europe, according to Karl Jaspers,[1] paints the image of man in chiaroscuro style, with dark and bright colours, enlivened with Platonic, Aristotelian, and biblical traits, giving an impression of "what is, or seems," turning the essential question of ontology into one of perception and perspective, and ultimately, the right point of view. Therefore, European cultural theories deal with what is best described as the unresolved yet traceable construct of identity, which is artistic, even if not intentionally so.[2]

The image of man as *the* image and focal point of what we see, or what seems to be, raised a new cultural awareness centuries before the concept of "Europe" even existed in the (post-)modern sense, placing stress on the look or the gaze as the process of perception, or as perception itself. It was in 1426 that the Dominican father Nicolas of Cusa, better known by his Latinized name of Cusanus, began a challenging journey that he never completed. We cannot call it a pilgrimage, because that's not what it was. Rather, Cusanus embarked on an interior journey through the early psychology of human recognition, the climax of which has been found in contemporary sciences, arts, and movies. In this special year

1 Jaspers, Karl, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, Leipzig/ Berlin 1931.

2 See Jarvie, Ian, *Philosophy of the Film – Ontology, Epistemology, Aesthetics*, New York (Routledge) 1987, Elsässer, Thomas, *A Second Life*, Amsterdam 1996, Aumont, Jacques, *La mise en scène*, Bruxelles 2000, and Harms, Rudolf, *Philosophie des Films – Seine ästhetischen und metaphysischen Grundlagen*, Hamburg 2009.

the Dominican wrote his beautiful verses *De visione Dei*, which are about the love of God and the bliss of human nature.

Scholars from all over the world think that this work belongs to the most outstanding lines ever written during the entire period of the German mystical tradition, which extended from the early eleventh century until the "harvest of the Middle Ages" in the late fifteenth century. Kurt Flasch is of the opinion that the language of *De visione Dei*[3] is singular and poetic, that Cusanus never wrote anything else as perfect, and that this book, which occupies the pinnacle of his total oeuvre, is a masterpiece of medieval literature. Why is this work, in contrast to others, considered so outstanding, and why has it retained its attractiveness over the centuries? Why was it chosen over a multitude of other praises of God that are perhaps even more congenial, and of which the German mystical tradition is so full of? And how is it possible at all that a plain work of theology, the vision of a medieval scholar, remains a benchmark even in the superficial consciousness of the European "research business"?

Cusanus tells us, in short, about the mutuality of love and understanding. It depends on the point of view, either the look of God or the look of mankind. While God and his creation look at each other, *mirror each other*, and enjoy the lust of being looked at, they share the mutual love in which they dwell.

> Mein Herz ruht nicht, o Herr! Weil deine Liebe es mit solcher Sehnsucht entflammt hat, dass es nur in dir ruhen kann… Dein Lieben ist dein Sehen, deine Vatergüte ist dein Schauen, das uns alle väterlich umfasst; denn wir sagen: Vater unser… Die Liebe des Vaters kommt aber der der Kinder zuvor. Solange wir deine Kinder sind und dich als Kinder anschauen, hörst du auch nicht auf, uns mit väterlichem Blick anzuschauen… Dein Sehen ist Vorsehung.[4]

Cusanus writes about a topic which is at the same time personal and political. *De visione Dei* is a statement with a thrilling impact. In 2012, facing a world of new wars being fought under the flag of religion, it is not surprising that religious ideas *are* political and that an imagining of extraterrestrial bliss – or the total renouncement of it – influences social life. We understand that mystical thought does not end in the personal attachment of the soul united with its origin, the so-called *unio mystica*, of which Meister Eckhart and other authors in the mystical tradition dreamed, but that mystical thought also finds expression in everyday matters such as ethics, economics, and politics. Currently, we can foresee the special dynamics that are immanent in religious speculation. Rudolf Burger

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3 Flasch, Kurt, *Nikolaus von Kues – Geschichte einer Entwicklung. Vorlesungen zur Einführung in seine Philosophie*, Frankfurt a.M. 1998, 385.
4 Cusa, Nicolas of, De visione Dei, 8, in: Döring, Emil (Ed.), *Nicolaus Cusanus. Philosophische und theologische Schriften*, Wiesbaden 2005, 246.

(2005) speaks of a remarkable "re-theologization of politics"[5] in international political debates about ethical values. Although Europe had already waged the Crusades (between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries), in 1426 the combination of philosophic and political matters was quite a new idea.

What does the term *politically* influential actually mean in relation to Cusanus's lyrical work? Why do contemporary scholars such as Arianne Conty speak of a "mystical sociology"[6] hidden in the work? First, we see the special drive of poetry in general that speaks directly to what is called the heart, ground, or the inner self of men. The scholar from the western Rhine describes in very beautiful, poetic verses how the human soul loves God and how God appreciates mankind. This is, above all, not only what Flasch appreciates as beautiful language with a high level of lyrical expressivity,[7] it is a commonplace of contemplation, it is a political statement as well. So, the second and more essential aspect of Cusanus's work is not poetry *as* poetry or the linguistic regard of medieval vernacular poetry, but more philosophically, it is poetry about mankind's origin and worth. Valuing mankind is a political attempt because it means establishing values that are meant to be essential for our lives, and able to influence our self-esteem.

As for the political impact of creating values by valuing mankind on the basis of lyrical artwork, there remains the question about how *Christian* this attempt is. In general, using art, especially poetry, as a medium for the implicit creation of value, and thus spreading political values, is not the sole province of Christianity; examples can be found in all religions. In the *"Bhagavad Gita"* you can see evidence of the Hindu point of view when Ardjuna the warrior explains how brothers can be meant to kill each other by discussing whether the human soul is immortal or not. In the world-famous tales of *"One Thousand and One Nights,"* the anonymous Arabic author gives numerous instances in which the heroes and heroines interpret the value of a man's life in the eyes of Allah.

Although the correlation of poetical artwork and political ideas is not bound to any single religion, but may correlate with religion in general, Cusanus's point of view is, of course, a Christian one. The mystical speculation of the Dominican Cusanus is explicitly about the Christian God, and the use of the images of the visual connection between man and God or the symbolic mirror is commonplace, or what the cultural scientist Robert Foreman calls "pretty standard scholastic

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5 Burger, Rudolf, *Re-Theologisierung der Politik? Wertdebatten und Mahnreden*, Hannover 2005.
6 See Conty, Arianne, American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, at the Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion and Philosophy (ACERP) in Osaka/ Japan, 30 March 2012.
7 Flasch, Kurt, e.g.

psychology."[8] Christian theologians, especially in the Middle Ages, were fond of mirrors, so the image of a mutual look was a frequent topic in all kinds of theological writings, both tractates and poetry. The notion of "image" (Greek: eidolon) is already deeply rooted in platonic, even more so in Neoplatonic philosophy, because the Greeks saw nature as an image of ideas and human nature as an image of the divine origin. But the notion of "mirror" by far surpassed and transcended the notion of "image" and became a major theme in medieval epistemology.

The human being, in the biblical text of Genesis, is essentially an image of God and comes into existence as his likeness.[9] Cusanus sees it as a relationship similar to that existing between a loving father and his son. This *procedere ut imago*[10] of which Flasch talks, to proceed in existence like an image, as a model of human existence in general, is a so-called *theologoumenon* (a standard view of theology). When the source of being, God, is identical with human nature, the notion of mirror stands for an intimate complicity. This intimate complicity is explained as being an experience of immediate recognition, and thus one of joy and expectation. Cusanus describes it with the words "mein Herz ruht nicht"[11] (my heart cannot find rest). In short, the notion of "mirror" describes a *relation* whereas the notion of "image" describes an entity or, in the words of Leibniz, a kind of monad. Therefore, it's not surprising that mystical speculation about love recurs far more often on the notion of "mirror" than it does on "image" because the mirror exemplifies the dynamic of a mutual relation, not the essence of an "image," which is much more static and self-contained. Love, as the main relation in human culture, is closely connected with the philosophy of the mirror or with the mirror as a philosophic concept: when it comes to love the eyes of the lovers mirror each other, and this may well be where *Das Heilige im Alltagsleben*[12] (Michael Leiris 1938) occurs as an element of the sacred within our everyday life.

Not all speculation about mirrored existence is peaceful and encouraging, however, even though the mirror is often regarded as the symbolic representation of love, and therefore of relation in general. The mirror changes with the years, blurred with quietist patina or cleaned by the acids of doubt, and as side effects the notions of love and God alter their intimate quality. Or is it vice versa?

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8 Forman, Robert, *Eckhart, Gezucken, and the Ground of the Soul*, in: Studia Mystica (II), California State University, Sacramento 1988, 3-30.

9 Genesis 1, 27.

10 Flasch, Kurt, Procedere ut imago, in: Ruh, Kurt (Ed.), *Abendländische Mystik im Mittelalter*, Symposion Kloster Engelberg 1984, Stuttgart 1986, 131.

11 Cusanus, e.g.

12 Leiris, Michael, Das Heilige im Alltagsleben (1938), In: Id., *Die eigene und die fremde Kultur*, Frankfurt a. M. 1979.

It remains to us to describe this development because we do not know the reasons for these effects. While love has been considered to be a ghostly spume that plays upon a mere sexual relation since Ninon de Lenclos (a close friend of Voltaire), in the 17th century,[13] and the concept of deity as an irrevocable legitimacy of social relation, and thus of politics, had been dashed to the ground in the French Revolution of 1789, there seems no space for Cusanus's vision and no century more destructive than the eighteenth. Two years after the French Revolution the relation between the eye of God and the human being, more precisely the citizen, had changed in European literature most profoundly. The loving bond between God and the human being, idealized in mystical thought, and still an integral part of the love songs of the troubadours and the Renaissance cult of erotic passion in the visual arts, became suspect. "Was Gewalt heisst, ist nichts, Verführung ist die wahre Gewalt" (What you call violence is nothing. Seduction is violence)[14] cries Lessing's heroine Emilia Galotti, likening the eyes of the seducer to weapons. The philosopher Jeremy Bentham – on whom Michel Foucault's studies of justice drew – invents in *Panopticon* (1791) a dystopic society of control, where an omniscient eye brutally pervades the private life of everyone.[15] Love as a mirror of relation, actualized by the divine look, seems now a nonsensical, even tormenting theme.

It was long after the unveiling of love and deity as a political concept, from 1883 to 1885, when Friedrich Nietzsche wrote his famous verses in *Thus spoke Zarathustra,* which many scholars regard as his masterpiece, his chef-d'oeuvre. Nietzsche also writes about the origin of mankind and of a mutual connection between God and mankind. However, the quality of this connection is not love but hate, more precisely, flaming hatred and the wish to kill.

> Du ertrugst Den nicht, der dich sah – der dich immer und durch und durch sah, du hässlichster Mensch! Du nahmst Rache an diesem Zeugen! Aber er, er musste sterben: er sah mit Augen, welche Alles sahen – er sah des Menschen Tiefen und Gründe, alle seine verhehlte Schmach und Hässlichkeit.(...) Er sah immer mich: an einem solchen Zeugen wollte ich Rache haben – oder selber nicht leben. Der Gott, der alles sah, auch den Menschen: dieser Gott musste sterben! Der Mensch erträgt es nicht, dass solch ein Zeuge lebt...[16]

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13 See Lenclos, Anne (Ninon) de, *Die Briefe der Ninon de Lenclos*, Ed. H. Broichstetten, Berlin 1925.

14 Lessing, Gothold Ephraim, *Emilia Galotti* (1772), Stuttgart 1994, 77.

15 Bentham, Jeremy, *Panopticon, or the Inspection House*, Dublin 1791.

16 Nietzsche, Friedrich, Also sprach Zarathustra, in: Colli, Giorgio/ Montinari, Mazzino (Eds.), *Kritische Studienausgabe (KSA)*, Volume 4, Munich 2011, 328.

Killing the bystander or loving the onlooker? Treasuring the gentle view of the intimacy of a truthful relation or hating its piercing look at our own deficiencies? Could two interpretations ever be as contradictory as those of Nietzsche and Cusanus, the "look" as a staring perpetration versus visual caress? Could two interpretations ever cause more contradictory consequences?

Cusanus enjoys the bliss of the divine love, which he understands as an intimate look accompanied by a loving attitude: "dein Lieben ist dein Sehen, deine Vatergüte ist Schauen"[17] (your love is your vision, your paternal benevolence is in the gaze). Nietzsche, on the other hand, intends to exact vengeance for a look that he perceives as an insult: "an einem solchen Zeugen wollte ich Rache haben"[18] (I want to take revenge on such a witness). From the scholar's peaceful vision in the early fifteenth century to the most violent *showdown* of a nihilist in the late nineteenth century, the "look" loses and gains its philosophical impact. The Dominican father feels at ease and most secure with a supreme entity who has the power to mirror mankind; Nietzsche feels provoked. Between the quiet vision of the "look" as a loving understanding and the "look" as a declaration of war, and thus as an invitation to violence, as two extreme points of the same recognition, something dynamic occurs.

What is it that happens, what is this special dynamic? I would call it the eye of God, which is more active than static, an energy with a multifarious character that is transformed into a kind of TV screen today. The eye of God *happens*, it is an event, imagined as a perpetual gaze. The eye of God is the camera. The eye of God shows the public what it is looking at in itself: the loving vision for the appreciated friend or the hatred for the despised enemy.

Why is love or hatred represented by the look, the eye of God at all? Could God's hand or ear also represent emotions just as effectively? The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan explains why the eye is something special. He sees the look as an invocation or evocation.[19] Thus it is, strictly speaking, a magical act. He explains that the cultural evaluation of the look is ambivalent, for the benevolent look would be rare, the imagination of the "evil eye" would be much more common. This explanation of the malevolence of the look is explained by Lacan by its effects. The look has an immediate effect, it can bestow an idea of power, and it may cause a movement to stop,[20] and this is where psychoanalysis and filmic sciences meet, for the power held by *Blickregime*[21] (Thomas Elsässer 2007)

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17 Cusanus, e.g.

18 Nietzsche, Friedrich, e.g.

19 Lacan, Jacques, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, London 1977, 115.

20 Ibid., 118.

21 Compare to the filmic presence of the eye, look and gaze and their ambivalent powers

can be life threatening. In the most extreme case, the "evil eye," the so-called *fascinum* of the deities of antiquity, for example, the petrifying look of Gorgo, the snake-haired vision of Medusa, or the frantic thrill of the Orphean abyss, causes life to stop. Nietzsche could interpret such a killing fascinum in his anger-ridden *Zarathustra*.

And Nietzsche is not alone with his – albeit highly secular – renewal of this ancient horror. On the contrary, the notion of modernity is marked by the immanence of violence (that is what so irritated Freud, as evident in his famous 1930 essay *"Das Unbehagen in der Kultur"*)[22] and it is no coincidence that the look or the gaze, formerly defined as an element of a loving bond, becomes the reticle of violence on the threshold of modernity. Modern times as violent times became a major issue in sociology and psychology, and is also mirrored in the arts, and especially in the filmic arts, where the Blickregime[23] often indicates the direction of destruction. Sartre also thinks that the look has a killing quality. Lacan explains that in Sartre's theory the construct of objectivity as such would be manifest,[24] and accordingly, that every man is thereby reduced to feelings of misery, inferiority, and meaninglessness.

Consequently, in Lacan's opinion, Nietzsche and Sartre imagine, what could be at once culturally common and modern about the interpretation of the look. The modern interpretation of the look veers off significantly from the benevolent loving eye of God imagined by the mystic Cusanus, off to the realm of the postmodern individual who is left outside, alone in cosmic space where the ancient bliss of the divine onlooker turns into the self-reducing laser beam that is turned on by society. The look as the presence of power turns out to be a notion of historical stability; what changes is the validation of power, whether benevolent or malevolent. While George Didi-Huberman contends that beauty and love have been mixed with cruelty over the centuries,[25] that this commingling has been essential for the visual arts as such, there is much evidence for the rise of cruelty in visual acts and arts since the dawn of modernity. A passage through cultural history, from Cusanus to Nietzsche to Lacan is an odyssey through the transformation of perception: from love to hatred, from gaze to laser beam. We may add that this self-reducing laser beam is not unidirectional because the "authoritar-

Elsässer, Thomas, *Filmtheorie zur Einführung*, Hamburg 2007, 103-137.

22 Freud, Sigmund, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur und andere kulturtheoretische Schriften* (1930), Frankfurt a.M. 2009.

23 Elsässer (2007), e.g.

24 Ibid., 84.

25 Didi-Huberman, Georges, *Venus öffnen. Nacktheit, Traum, Grausamkeit*, Berlin 2006.

ian personality,"[26] as Theodor Adorno famously defined it in 1950, critically turns this laser back onto others.

Still, there remain several open questions about the functionality of the look and whether it is representative in a general way or in this very specialized frame of contemporary research offered in this volume, *Contemporary Jewish Reality in Germany and its Reflection in Film*. Nietzsche, the author of the *Antichrist,* was, in fact, the son of a Protestant clergyman. Neither Cusanus, as a Dominican father and an excellent Christian theologian in the tradition of Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle, nor Nietzsche, as the nihilist philosopher who knew so much about Christianity (and the cult of Zoroaster), can be expected to represent *Jewish* reality, and neither ever claimed to do so.

That said, should I be regretful about not having chosen Maimonides or Avencelbrol as representatives of medieval thought, especially in regard to the notion of the mirror as a philosophical and political concept? Does it blur our sight to consequently consult these Christian – at least socialized as such – philosophers like Cusanus and Nietzsche in an introduction to discussions about Jewish reality?

This anthology deals with Jewish reality *in Germany* and its representation in film. When we talk about any reality in Germany, whether Jewish or not, mirrored in film, it is useful to remember the ways in which some influential German philosophers thought about what does and does not constitute reality and objectivity in the first place. "Reality" is not a one-dimensional notion but is a cluster of notions. Peter Burger (2001) speaks of a large discursive field philosophers defined and redefined over a long period of time.[27] It makes sense to explore how these philosophers defined the topic of the "eye of God," which sees and describes, at the very least, "what is real," which construct of reality can be chosen, and who holds and maintains the power inherent in the look. The most basic philosophical definition of power is the certainty of finding obedience, as defined by Herfried Münkler,[28] and it is exactly that certainty that makes the mystic, the seducer, the politician, and the film director – who each represent totally different categories of people who use the look or the gaze as instruments of knowledge and perception – *powerful*. Cusanus and Nietzsche, these different brothers, were undoubtedly relevant philosophers – they were not only German, or more specifically, German philosophers because of the simple fact that they

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26 See Adorno, Theodor, Frenkel-Brunswick, E., Levinson, Daniel, Sanford, Nevitt (Eds.), *The Authoritarian Personality*, Berkeley 1950 .

27 Bürger, Peter und Christa, *Das Verschwinden des Subjekts. Das Denken des Lebens*, Frankfurt a.M. 2001.

28 Münkler, Herfried, *Gewalt und Ordnung*, Frankfurt a.M. 1992, 60.

lived in Germany, which would be the most trivial characterization, but above all they served as benchmarks in the history of the German tradition of describing the power of the look.

The power of the look, or the eye of God as a metaphysical instance of valuing human life, has had its most chilling impact in fascist politics. Omer Bartov (2000) brilliantly describes how a "mirror of destruction"[29] resulted in genocide, using the example of the fanatical masses in National Socialist Germany, whose distorted perceptions and swallowing of propaganda redefined all social relations between Jews and non-Jews. Bartov's analysis of the interdependence of perception, fascism, and the glorification of war leads to the conclusion that the construction of identity during the twentieth century had to do with identifying and eliminating "enemies." To have an enemy, even an "enemy from within," seemed to be not only the pretext for war, but more generally it seemed to be the basic principle of identity, thus an ontological necessity for the masses and a psychological need of the individual. But the construction of enemies through the eyes of the earliest forms of mass media was not a strategy independent of history, but rather followed a tradition found in Christian theories of perception, in mysticism, as well as in its antagonistic opposite, nihilism. The political work of Julius Hans Schoeps in the 1980s explains how National Socialist demagogues strategically abused soteriological ideas and transformed "alle einschlägigen Formen des christlichen Erlösungsdenkens,"[30] thus Christian eschatology, into a racist philosophy. We can add that the fascist demagogues actually used only a part of Christian soteriology in order to establish guidelines for a set of highly discriminative policies. In the mystical thought of Cusanus – and of Eckhart and Johannes Tauler as well –a family of mankind, flowering from one ground, where every human being is equally worthy because of their common origins in God, is often mentioned. Discrimination is not automatically a part of Christian soteriology, although it has certainly been abused in the course of creating and shaping fascist movements, much as Nietzsche's radical point of view has obviously been perverted. It is remarkable that the eye of God, whether it carries positive or negative associations, whether it is experienced as a source of solace or as a provocation, produces psychological ambivalence that may easily lead to fanaticism – in the case of its misuse – or, on the contrary, to the establishment of rules that regulate social life that is peaceful and full of mutual respect.

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29 Bartov, Omer, *Mirrors of Destruction. War, Genocide and Modern Identity*, Oxford University Press 2000.

30 Schoeps, Julius Hans, Erlösungswahn und Vernichtungswille. Die sogenannte „Endlösung der Judenfrage" als Vision und Programm des Nationalsozialismus, in: Id., Ley, Michael (Eds.), *Der Nationalsozialismus als politische Religion*, Bodenheim 1997, 268.

In the following essays we find a multitude of examples of the eye of God, a God who, in fact, need not be a Christian God or even a divinity at all, but who can also be a camera, the most secular of political leaders, or even the current "divinity" of economics, and they can make beautiful visions or issue cruel provocations. When film scholar Gertrud Koch concludes in her well-known statement "Die Einstellung ist die Einstellung,"[31] she alludes to this very parallelism of a political stance and the camera's direction, what was once known as the eye of God and today is whatever postmodern data gathering and broadcasting *techniques* we may choose to employ. We will see how the "eye of God" creates friends and enemies. We will ask how the creation of friends and enemies is modified by different means and places, whether film, literature, science, or even youth culture.

"Jewish Reality in Germany" has obviously come to encompass a wide variety of representations over time, and the discussion of the ambivalence of God's eye, a topic taken up by Christian mystics and nihilist iconoclasts, has been intensified by prejudices that perceive the Jewish religion as one of what Daniel Finkelde (2007) terms a "religion of difference."[32] However, this reality is also constructed, built by time and space in the general Kantian view, but more precisely, built by what is held as the eye of God – the politics, the economics, the camera – and that perpetually reflects what it sees, lovely visions of mutual understanding or degrading insults stirring up emotions of hatred. This mirror has been broken many times.

Who is the beloved person Cusanus imagined? Who is "der hässlichste Mensch"[33] (the most ugly man) against whom Nietzsche raged? We are. The beloved and the ugly, it is us, Jewish, Christian, atheist, or otherwise. In the controlled society delineated by Foucault, in which he presents a dystopic picture of human relations disciplined by the omnipresent gaze of the onlooker,[34] the power of the gaze, multiplied by mass media, is no longer a privilege available to only a few. On the contrary, the power of the everlasting, ubiquitous gaze no longer belongs solely to an entity alleged to be divine, omnipotent, and unique, but is democratically divided among all citizens since everyone controls everyone and everyone is responsible for what he or she sees and shares. We hold the camera in our hands.

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31 See Koch, Gertrud, *Die Einstellung ist die Einstellung,* Berlin 1997.

32 Finkelde, David, *Politische Eschatologie nach Paulus: Badiou, Agamben, Žižek*, Santner, Vienna 2007, 95.

33 Nietzsche, Friedrich, e.g.

34 Foucault, Michel, *La vérité et les formes juridiques*, Paris 1994.

Cusanus, Nietzsche and Lacan are touchstones in the history of the look as symbolic mirror that constructs realities. This ambivalent site is where philosophy and politics converse, and where the visual arts are dually affected: as *techniques* of representation (in other words, as visual archives) and as modes of consciousness (the realm of the rebel, dreamer, or secular mystic). We cannot expect that this debate over whether the look is benign or malign, which carries the philosophical query of whether human nature is basically good or evil – which in turn prompts the political questions of what is the "self" versus what are "others," who are friends, who are enemies – will be solved today.

Science is justified through its service to humanity. Therefore sciences, especially studies of cultural theories, have to contribute to what has been defined since the Renaissance as human dignity and its potential for free will, tolerance, and variety within the human family.[35] So if there is any common ground in the numerous philosophical takes on the look and its challenging political rise, it is, in my opinion, a very practical one, one that can be reduced to the short moral of take care how you look at others. "Turn your eyes away, for your look overwhelms me,"[36] from the biblical Song of Songs, a text that is basically about love and control, issues a warning cry that has echoed throughout the centuries. We will, today, not turn our eyes away for we are aware that it is thus that we construct objectivity, or rather, what we consider as such. Hopefully, the following essays will critically show – or even mirror – what kind of "reality" is meant to be.

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35 About human dignity and its interaction with arts and mysticism on the threshold of modernity or modern society see Wirszubski, Chaim, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism*, Cambridge (Massachusetts) 1989.
36 Song of Songs, 5:6.

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Antonia Schmid
Alterophilia or Appropriating the Other

Images of 'Jews' and 'Gentiles' in Contemporary German Film

Accompanying the political transformations of 1989/90, Germany's official stance on antisemitism[1] and the Shoah has changed as well. Its commemoration has become, instead of a matter of national disgrace, a featured mark of international distinction. However, this development implies significant shifts concerning hegemonic images of victims and perpetrators as well as historically specific constructions of the respective 'Other.'

Since 2001, there has been a remarkable surge in German films depicting narratives set during the period of National Socialism. This paper investigates which characters to identify with are currently made available by these films, and how features presented as 'Jewish' are used to position these characters as part of collective in- or outgroups. Examples such as the ostensibly innocuous alpinist melodrama Nordwand (Philipp Stölzl, D/A/CH 2008), and the three-part miniseries Krupp – eine deutsche Familie/Krupp – a German family (Carlo Rola, D 2009), demonstrate that in terms of their status as victims of National Socialism, Jewish victims are replaced by non-Jewish Germans in contemporary German discourse. Concurrently, this essay analyzes the ways in which this development is connected to the resurfacing of antisemitic stereotypes when it comes to explicitly Jewish characters, and how images of 'other Others' serve to reinstate positive images of the German national Self.

Introduction: Discursive Shifts since 1989

Regarding minority politics in Germany, the Shoah represents *the* negative reference point when it comes to its Jewish population. In what Dan Diner once called a "negative symbiosis," collective identities of both (non-Jewish) Germans and Jews in one way or the other refer to this ultimate crime against humanity that has established precedence for developments in global human rights ever since.[2]

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1 The common spelling "anti-Semitism" suggests that there could possibly be something called "Semitism" or, even more problematic, a "Semitic race." To avoid such essentializing notions and to stress the constructed character of both, in this paper I have chosen the spelling 'antisemitism' for the phenomenon in question.

2 Wenzel, Mirjam, *Gericht und Gedächtnis. Der deutschsprachige Holocaust-Diskurs der*

Following the so-called "reunion" of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1990,[3] Germany's political culture changed dramatically. A new, 'normalized' nationalism has been evolving over the last two decades[4] that has influenced the politics of memory and, accordingly, the discourse on Jewish-Gentile relationships as well. Speaking in terms of discourse theory, this shift can be conceived as a conflict of two mnemonic discourses, one Jewish, one non-Jewish German. Gilad Margalit describes them as characterized by "the motif of guilt, whose most widespread manifestation in the West German political culture was the Jewish Holocaust narrative, and the motif of suffering expressed by the reconciliation narrative."[5] The discursive competition of these two tends to be neutralized in the relatively young, but in the meantime having become hegemonic discourse that accepts responsibility for the Shoah and even *includes* it in a new German national identity: The 'unified'[6] Germany has integrated its past into national narratives of identity. It has turned the Holocaust into a distinguishing mark in the politics of history,[7] and thus, in contemporary politics as well.[8]

In this paper, I want to argue that one of the consequences of these changes – and the motor that drove them – has been an adjustment of those available images to make them more congruent with these structural changes and the related new narratives, the latter of which can be described as Germany's growing assertiveness in international relations, beginning with its participation in military actions abroad.[9] With a cultural lag of approximately ten years, these shifts

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sechziger Jahre, Göttingen 2009, passim.

3 Since the two nation-states in question had never existed previously as one 'unified' state, the political transformation in question was *per definitionem* an annexation. Usage of the term 'reunion' is in itself an ideological effect of the structural changes. Strictly speaking, it implies an affirmation of the era in which the regions in question had been under a single governance – the most recent of which would be the regime of National Socialism.

4 Hawel, Marcus, *Die normalisierte Nation. Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Außenpolitik in Deutschland*, Hannover 2007.

5 Margalit, Gilad, *Guilt, Suffering, and Memory. Germany Remembers Its Dead of World War II*, Bloomington/IN 2010, 291.

6 The term 'unified' represents an ideological part of that discourse itself insofar that it camouflages the fact that the Federal Republic of Germany of 1990 never existed before within those borders.

7 Bergem, Wolfgang, *Politische Kultur und Geschichte*, in: Salzborn, Samuel (Ed.), *Politische Kulturforschung: Forschungsstand und Forschungsperspektiven,* Frankfurt a. M. 2009, 201-227, here 203.

8 Regarding these changes and their effects on visual culture, see also Ebbrecht, Tobias, *Geschichtsbilder,* l.f., 32ff.

9 This nexus of present policy and the politics of memory is probably best illustrated by the

have begun to be reflected in popular German film. Since 2001, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of films with narratives set during the reign of National Socialism and that feature stories of German victimization as well as of the common image of the 'good soldier.'[10] The flip side of this development is the state of the true victims in this discourse. Margalit concludes his study about German remembrance of World War II with the disturbing proposition that the amplification of the discourse of German suffering is concomitant with a neglect of the (true) victims of Naziism. Moreover, he assumes that this amplification is probably also linked to a resurgence of antisemitism, racism, and anti-American-ism in Germany.[11] Margalit's findings in his transdisciplinary study parallel and confirm the tendencies represented by the bulk of German films on the topic of National Socialism from the last two decades.

Current representations of this historical period are highly relevant for images of the past, and for identity politics of the present. Furthermore, due to the specific qualities of film as a medium – such as the potential to generate emotional identification – filmic representations have a particular influence on conceptions of the world.[12] This paper will therefore conceptually investigate discursive ten-

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justification offered by then state secretary of the Green Party, Joschka Fischer, for Germany's participation in the war in Kosovo in 1999. He directly linked the first military action of German troops abroad since WWII to the Holocaust and claimed he had learned from Auschwitz that it should recur "never again."

10   This paper draws on research of approximately forty films. The corpus being investigated consists of films that have been commercially released since 2000 and were German produced, that is, completely funded or co-funded, and that in some way refer to the topic of either National Socialism or Israel. In addition to this thematic limitation, the ongoing project only investigates fictional films, produced either for television or for the cinema.

11   Margalit, Gilad, *Guilt*, 292ff.

12   Remarkable evidence of this influence is represented by the findings of Welzer et al. about the integration of media images in family narratives about the war. Welzer et al., *"Opa war kein Nazi"*, l.f.,105ff. I have given a detailed account of the possibilities and the limits of filmic representations of National Socialism in my essay „Idolatrische Mimesis oder Wölfe im Schafspelz. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Spielfilms für Repräsentationen des Nationalsozialismus." In: Steinberg, Sven, Meißner, Stefan, Trepsdorf, Daniel (Eds.), *Vergessenes erinnern. Medien von Erinnerungskultur und kollektivem Gedächtnis,* Berlin 2009, 83-103.

dencies with regard to relationships between 'Jews'[13] and 'Gentiles',[14] specifically their images in contemporary German films about National Socialism. The productions on which I will draw, particularly the film *Nordwand* (Philipp Stölzl, D/A/CH 2008) and the three-part television miniseries *Krupp – eine deutsche Familie* (Carlo Rola, D 2009), are exemplars of the tendencies I want to discuss insofar as their *sujet* is not explicitly focused on National Socialism; in each case the story is set in this period almost incidentally. *Nordwand* tells the tragic story of a young woman and her two alpinist friends, who try to climb the Eiger North face in 1936. *Krupp – eine deutsche Familie*, a family epic about the German industrialist dynasty of the same name, spans a whole century, which includes the two World Wars and National Socialism.

I have chosen these two films because they contain most of the elements typical of the discourse in question: an ongoing victimization of ordinary Germans on the one hand, accompanied by an ,externalization of Nazism as 'absolute evil' and a reinstatement of the supposedly good, 'ordinary soldier' on the other hand. Concurrently, images of Jewish Holocaust victims are appropriated for the depiction of non-Jewish German victims, a strategy I have called Idolatric Mimesis.[15] Since my findings and arguments rely on particular theoretical and methodological premises, I will first give a brief outline of the approach taken with these images. Second, in order to put my arguments in perspective, I will sketch the developments referred to above with regard to filmic discourse. And, since antisemitic *topoi* resurface simultaneously on several different levels in the same films, I will elaborate on this aspect in the third section of this paper. Furthermore, a remarkable new development has been emerging lately upon which I want to dwell on in particular in the following, namely, a tendency to show non-Jewish Germans as being drawn to characters that represent Otherness in terms of the dichotomies of hegemonic Western culture, most notably, of German *völkisch*

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13 It is important to stress that the category of 'being Jewish' underlies the same problematic limitations as any other socially constructed collectivizing category, which is why these terms are only used in a distancing way here. For a thorough examination of 'Jewishness' as an analytical term, see Silverman, Lisa, Reconsidering the Margins. Jewishness as an Analytical Framework. In: *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* Vol 8, No. 1 March 2009, 103–120. Silverman suggests using 'Jewishness' as a relational term, similar to the category of 'gender'. I am grateful to my colleague Dekel Peretz for indicating this article to me.

14 When using these categories not in an essentializing, but in a differential way, the term 'Gentile' in the context of this article means not only 'not Jewish'. Rather, since the reality these films refer to is Nazi Germany, it at the same time refers to being 'German' as opposed to 'Jewish'. As imagined and constructed as this dichotomy has always been, it was nevertheless put into murderous practice.

15 See Schmid, Antonia, *Idolatrische Mimesis*, l.c.

values. To wit, the protagonists of these films are not only depicted as themselves being the 'Other' of their time but they also embrace the 'Other' of our time, as I will argue in the fourth section. The fifth section will explore the implications of these representations in terms of contemporary visual politics, while the corollaries of these tendencies will be discussed in the sixth and concluding section.[16]

The Dialectics of Representation

When analyzing images with regard to 'Jewishness' and antisemitism in Germany today, a gap between private and public opinion has to be taken into account methodologically[17] since open antisemitism in its traditional forms is usually considered as illegitimate in public discourse, rendering it difficult to detect in any new or latent strains. This is where the special qualities of film as a mass medium communicating "daydreams of society," as Siegfried Kracauer has put it, come in. The fundamental analytical move I want to adopt for my analysis is enclosed in his following statement: "Stupid and unreal film fantasies are the *daydreams of society*, in which its actual reality comes to the fore and its otherwise repressed wishes take on form."[18] Kracauer further bolsters his argument by showing how historical films realize such wishes by setting them in the past, just as the current films on National Socialism do. He writes: "The courage of these films declines in direct proportion to their proximity to the present. The most popular scenes from World War I are not a flight to the far reaches of history but *the immediate expression of society's will.*"[19]

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16 In this paper, I am trying to conceptualize findings of my ongoing research on antisemitism in contemporary film, so what follows should be considered as preliminary results and work in progress.

17 While, depending on the definition applied and the items used, between ten and sixty percent of the population hold antisemitic opinions, antisemitism is marked as illegitimate in public discourse – that is, antisemitism in its open and "traditional" forms. Decker, Oliver et al., *Vom Rand zur Mitte. Rechtsextreme Einstellungen und ihre Einflussfaktoren in Deutschland*. Berlin 2006, 43, Heitmeyer, Wilhelm (Ed.), *Deutsche Zustände. Folge 4*. Frankfurt a.M 2006, Zick, A. (2010), Aktueller Antisemitismus im Spiegel von Umfragen – ein Phänomen der Mitte. In: Schwarz-Friesel, Monika et al. (Ed.), *Aktueller Antisemitismus – ein Phänomen der Mitte*. Berlin/ New York 2010, 225-245.

18 Kracauer, Siegfried, "The Little Shopgirls Go to the Movies," In: Id., *The Mass Ornament. Weimar Essays*. Translated, Edited, and with an Introduction by Levin, Thomas. Cambridge, MA/ London: Harvard University Press, 1995 (1927), 291-304. Here: 292, italics in the original.

19 Ibid., 293, italics added.

According to Kracauer, that which is shown in a film represents a daydream, a wish, a *desire*. This approach towards filmic representation offers a strong potential for its analysis because it treats images not as theses, as mere depictions of society, but as its antitheses. This dialectical perspective becomes applicable when we turn the point of departure of analysis upside down. Staying inside the psychoanalytical terminology, this means to read the dreamer from its images: Which kind of society, which discourse constellation, which particular socio-political situation has created this desire, these images of Self and Other?

Kracauer thereby provides means to examine ideological contents of media texts that at the same time preclude arbitrary readings. In contrary, the possible "dreamer's positions" are very few in number, as I am going to show in the next section. Consequently, to ask "which constellation has produced this desire? Which specific absence, which deficit generates this particular presence?" not only restores the category of desire for analyses of media images but offers a way to overcome positivist approaches by applying a dialectical perspective. Kracauer himself puts it like this:

> In order to investigate today's society, one must listen to the confessions of the products of its film industries. They are all blabbing a rude secret, without really wanting to. In the endless sequence of films, a limited number of typical themes recur again and again; *they reveal how society wants to see itself*. (The quintessence of these film themes is at the same time the sum of the society's ideologies, (whose spell is broken by means of the interpretation of the themes).[20]

Apart from a remarkable proximity of Kracauer's perspective to present discourse theory – "the sum of the society's ideologies" can be read as a description of a 'hegemonic discourse' that accounts for the "limited number of typical themes" –, this paragraph also sums up why his approach enables the detection of latencies, namely, because these themes "reveal how society wants to see itself". The dialectical approach Kracauer sketches here thus becomes very helpful when it comes to investigating ideologies such as antisemitism, its aftermath and its present forms, as well as other forms of Othering.

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20 Ibid., 293, italics added.

Appropriating the Other I: Victimization of Non-Jewish Germans

To begin with, 'traditional' German antisemitism constructed 'the Jew' as the negative counterpart of the image of 'the Aryan.'[21] The characteristics of this figure are well known, not least because antisemitic stereotypes live on and resurface with disturbing timeliness in current forms of global antisemitism.[22] The consolidation of the "Holocaust discourse" since the 1980s has been accompanied by a growing public interest in Jewish topics and Jewish life that has always borne signs of philo-Semitism – the other side of the coin regarding constructions of the Other in antisemitic discourse.[23] This development in Jewish-Gentile relations, from total neglect of the Holocaust at first, followed by the percolation of Jewish narratives of the Shoah into public discourse[24] and educational curricula, until it became *raison d'etat* after 1990,[25] has received an additional spin lately with the appropriation of Holocaust iconography for non-Jewish narratives.

This tendency was first described as *Wechselrahmung* (changing frames) by Harald Welzer, Sabine Möller, and Karoline Tschuggnall in their social psychology study *Opa war kein Nazi* (Grandpa was no Nazi) in 2005. In their investigation of the position of the Holocaust in German family narratives, they found that stories about German victimhood were illustrated using images from Holocaust iconography. Such images had initially become part of cultural memory through their publication as documentary photographs or inclusion in films made after WW II, and later on by fictional narratives such as the televison miniseries *Holocaust* (Marvin J. Chomsky, USA 1978) and the movie *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, USA 1993). These images from cultural memory were then transferred into non-Jewish German family narratives,[26] and therefore into communicative memory.[27]

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21 Stögner, Karin, *Zum Verhältnis von Antisemitismus und Geschlecht im Nationalsozialismus*. In: Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (Ed.), Jahrbuch 2008. Schwerpunkt: Antisemitismus. Wien, Berlin 2008. 70-85.

22 Rabinovici, Doron et al. (Eds.), *Neuer Antisemitismus?,* Frankfurt, 2004.

23 For notions of philo-Semitism as reversed antisemitism, see Diekmann, Irene (Ed.), *Geliebter Feind – Gehasster Freund. Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Berlin 2009.

24 Margalit, *Guilt*, l.c., 289ff.

25 Ebbrecht, *Geschichtsbilder,* l.f.

26 Welzer, Harald et al., „*Opa war kein Nazi*". *Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis*. Frankfurt a.M., 2005 [2002].

27 For a brief outline of Maurice Halbwachs's notion of 'collective memory' and its further elaboration by Jan Assmann into 'cultural' and 'communicative memory,' see Welzer et al., l.f., 12ff.

Yet the victimization of non-Jewish Germans takes on a new quality regarding its hegemonic force by the phenomenon to which I referred earlier, that of 'Idolatric Mimesis',[28] meaning a double transfer of iconography that originates in the Shoah and its aftermath. Then it was transferred from media artifacts of cultural memory into transgenerational communicative memory – the above cited *Wechselrahmung* – and, at present, it is being transported back into cultural memory. This means that not only images in the stories told to each other in German families, but moreover, *mass media* images of non-Jewish Germans are nowadays constructed by use of images that have been globally circulated via pictures of Jewish suffering during the Shoah. This process can be called idolatric because of the adaptation to an *image*: the image of *the* victim, the Holocaust victim that is mimed thereby.[29] In a second shift, these images of victimhood are now being transferred back into cultural memory by fictional narratives such as the films I investigate here. In his analysis of Holocaust films, Tobias Ebbrecht calls this process a "migration of historical images."[30] Thus, Idolatric Mimesis involves a double shift of collective pictorial or visual memory – Holocaust imagery – that updates traditional stereotypes to the extent that non-Jewish characters are depicted as analogous to Jewish Holocaust victims.

For example, at the end of the two-part made-for-television film *Dresden* (Roland Suso Richter, D 2006), about the bombing of that city in 1945, the protagonist Anna, a German nurse, wanders through the gray debris of the city in a red dress – a scene invoking the little girl in the red dress walking through the Warshaw ghetto in the otherwise black-and-white film *Schindler's List*. Likewise, in another two-part television film produced for German public television, *Die Gustloff* (Joseph Vilsmaier, D 2008), German refugees trying to board a ship of the same name are filmed using shots that alternate between long shots from a bird's eye perspective and close-ups. They are carrying suitcases, are being watched over by mean-looking guards and surveilled from watchtowers, are confined by barbed wire fences, and they enter through gates that make them appear like detainees of a concentration camp.[31] I will come back to the corollaries of such

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28 For a detailed derivation of this notion, see Schmid, Antonia, *Idolatrische Mimesis*, l.f.

29 A precondition for and paralleling this kind of adaptation has been the universalization of the Holocaust as a master narrative of suffering in global Western culture, as Tobias Ebbrecht emphasizes. Ebbrecht, *Geschichtsbilder*, l.f., 33. The emergence of this universal model has been described by Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter: Der Holocaust*, Frankfurt am Main 2007 [2001].

30 Ebbrecht, *Geschichtsfiktionen*, l.f., 314.

31 I have given a more detailed description of this scene, including screenshots, in my essay *Idolatrische Mimesis oder Wölfe im Schafspelz. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Spielfilms für Repräsentationen des Nationalsozialismus*, In: Steinberg, Swen / Meißner, Stefan /

'image takeovers' below. At this point, it is important to stress that this discursive strategy, the victimization of ordinary Germans by use of images of 'Jewishness' in the context of National Socialism, is concurrently accompanied by two accordant phenomena regarding Jewish-Gentile relations. To wit, the first involves an externalization of Nazism as 'absolute evil' on one hand and a reinstatement of the 'good German.' and, moreover, the supposedly good, 'ordinary soldier' on the other hand. But, as Tobias Ebbrecht has indicated, this figure of the 'good German' as a historical exception, actually points to the standard of real behavior during that time.[32]

The historically distorting externalization of National Socialism mainly consists of depictions of unambiguously evil characters, such as the sadistic physical education teacher Josef Peiner in *Napola – Elite für den Führer* (Dennis Gansel, D 2004), the equally repellent Lt. Commander Petri in *Die Gustloff* (Joseph Vilsmaier, D 2008), and the *Gauleiter* Mutschmann in *Dresden* (Roland Suso Richter, D 2006). All these characters share distinct, unappealing characteristics while at the same time they are explicitly shown as staunch Nazis. They are often portrayed negatively, to such an extent that they almost seem mere caricatures of Nazis: they yell, they torture innocent (non-Jewish German) people, and they are ideologically so misguided that it would be easy to believe that nobody could ever have wanted to participate in carrying out their agenda. Referring to Kracauer's notion of society's daydreams, these characters represent the wish for exculpation of the majority of the German population, carried on to and by the now third generation. This strategy also makes use of all dimensions of filmic representation – visually by showing the mimic of the villains, their grimaces, on the level of sound e.g. by the yelling, and on the level of the plot unfolding, for example, by their diegetical "punishment", meaning that most of these villains die throughout the films. The strategy of externalization works in the same direction as Idolatric Mimesis in depicting non-Jewish Germans as very different from 'the Nazis' and as their victims – just as, or even more than, the Jewish victims since the latter are seldom to never shown visually. This strong effect of how the presence of the visual dominates representation and can make absent any cognitive knowledge about the historical context – the Shoah – is very important yet can only be touched on here.

To summarize, this first aspect of appropriating images of the 'Other' or images of those formerly marked as Other – 'the Jew' – is for the purpose of pro-

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Trepsdorf, Daniel (Eds.), *Vergessenes erinnern. Medien von Erinnerungskultur und kollektivem Gedächtnis*. Berlin 2009, 83-103.

32 Unfortunately, due to the limited scope of this paper, I can only touch on this matter very briefly here. For an account of the recent tendencies, see Ebbrecht, *Geschichtsbilder*, l.f., 276ff.

viding constructions of the present national *Self*, while images of the *historical* national Self – the perpetrators, National Socialism, its followers, and ordinary Germans who supported the regime – are today split off and marked as 'other.' In this kind of representation of National Socialism, the ubiquitous antisemitism of that time seems to have been a product of a few mad minds, and the 'good German'[33] becomes the hegemonic image of non-Jewish Germanness. At the same time, antisemitism continues to be prevalent in the same films that supposedly disapprove of it by projecting it onto the ultimate 'bad guys.' the Nazis. Since National Socialism and open forms of antisemitism are externalized onto characters marked unequivocally as 'evil.' these existent inherently antisemitic stereotypes become all the more covert, which I am going to turn to in the following.

Skeletons in the Closet? Persisting Antisemitism in Contemporary Film

Regarding Jewish characters as alleged 'perpetrators' in antisemitic discourse before 1945, several *topoi* can be found in contemporary film that function as an update of "traditional" antisemitic stereotypes. For example, the topos of the 'vengeful Jew' is reproduced (*Dresden*, Roland Suso Richter, D 2006) as well as the topos of the 'treacherous Jew' (*Die Gustloff/Ship of no Return*, 2008), and the well-known medieval accusation that Jews poisoned wells, as depicted in *Paradise Now* (Hany Abu Assad, D/ F/ NL 2005). There is also a certain dehumanizing way of depicting Jewish Holocaust victims, portraying them as animal-like in *Krupp – eine deutsche Familie* (Carlo Rola, D 2009) which, on a pictorial level, repeats the dehumanization implemented historically. The generally pejorative depictions of Jewish characters, drawing on pre-Holocaust stereotypes, exemplified by the overweight, fun-spoiling stock trader in the alpinist drama *Nordwand* (Philipp Stölzl, D/ A/ CH 2008), continue to operate as well.

However, maybe even more noteworthy in this context is the recurrence of a coded or latent antisemitism regarding the ensemble of characters in a film that draws on long established codes, thereby reproducing basal structures of antisemitic discourse.

This phenomenon concerns the occurrence of patterns that reproduce dualisms that are integral to antisemitic discourse without openly referring to Jews, structural homologies to antisemitism that use common dichotomies without explicitly naming Jews. This a kind of latent antisemitism that constructs the

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33 Ebbrecht, *Geschichtsbilder,* l.f., 276.

same patterns as the customary forms but leaves out the last step of assigning the descriptor "evil" to the Jews. Such antisemitic statements do not work overtly; they are camouflaged, e.g., as in the chiffre or phrase, very common in current German media, "the 'American East Coast' rules the global economy," meaning "the Jews rule the global economy."[34] Employing Lisa Silverman's use of the category of 'Jewishness', I suggest perceiving this form of antisemitism as "within the framework of 'Jewishness' – despite the absence of an actual Jewish victim",[35] or, it should be added in this case, an actual Jewish perpetrator. Using the category of antisemitism as a differential one that takes into account the relations between its parameters allows for a detection of otherwise overlooked, yet important forms of discursive arrangements.

With regard to film, this implies the depiction of characters alongside antisemitically coded binary oppositions, such as in *Die Gustloff/Ship of No Return*, 2008. The reason for the sinking of the *Kraft durch Freude*-turned-refugee-ship has never been cleared up historically, yet the film introduces a fictitious character – Hagen Koch – who betrays the ship's position to the Russians, who then torpedo it shortly thereafter.[36] Koch's virtuous counterparts, the hero/heroine-couple of civilian captain Hellmuth Kehding, another fictitious character, and his girlfriend, the naval assistant Erika Galetschky, are only interested in saving as many civilians as they can. Posed in opposition, the evil Nazi characters, whose sole purpose is either to carry on an already lost war or, later, to save themselves during the sinking of the ship. Moreover, Erika is depicted by several motifs using Idolatric Mimesis, e.g., she deserts her unit in order to escape on the ship together with Hellmuth. This inner structure of the ensemble reproduces the well-known antisemitic pattern of the in- and the out-group: treacherous villains endanger the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the community, heroes and heroines save it. Characterizations are constituted parallel to antisemitically coded binary oppositions ('innocent victims' versus. 'evil perpetrators') and the plot lacks (overtly) Jewish characters. Combinations of antisemitic elements are used to construct pejorative characterizations of the Other. Today, interestingly, these depictions of Others nowadays include portrayals of Nazis (!) as selfish cowards who destroy the community, which I have referred to as externalization above.

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34 Jaecker, Tobias, *Antisemitische Verschwörungstheorien nach dem 11. September. Neue Varianten eines alten Deutungsmusters*, Münster 2005.

35 Silverman, Lisa, *Jewishness,* 114.

36 The paralleling of German/ic and Jewish narrative *topoi*– that make up the practice of Idolatric Mimesis as explained below – is further complicated since in Richard Wagner's *Nibelungen Ring*, Hagen is also the name of the traitorous character. Due to space limitations, I can only touch on this similarity here.

Another 'merely' structural update of antisemitic discourse concerns anti-semitic fantasies regarding the rape of 'the Aryan woman,' who represents the nation, except that in *Anonyma – Eine Frau in Berlin/ Anonyma – A Woman in Berlin* (Max Färberbröck, D 2008), a recounting of the raping of German women by Russian soldiers, the figure of the lecherous Jew is replaced by 'the Bolshevik.' Since antisemitic ascriptions traditionally include holding Jews responsible not only for liberalism, but at the same time for Bolshevism, the replacement is not far-fetched, judged by the twisted inner 'logic' of antisemitic discourse. This is a textbook example for coded updating of antisemitic discourse in contemporary Germany – covert enough not to cause reproaches while still drawing on well-known *topoi* that have been passed on through generations.

Recapitulating these findings with regard to present Jewish-Gentile relations and the correspondingly different narratives of memory, this implies that images of Jewishness have become the model for the construction of the national Self, while the Jewish narrative has become more and more neglected, to the point where antisemitic representations recur in the same films that seem to be part of a German coping process. Gilad Margalit describes it as follows: "the new preoccupation with German victims has come, explicitly, at the expense of the Nazi's victims."[37] Regarding contemporary constructions of Otherness, this development also facilitates a resurgence of antisemitic stereotypes of 'the Jew' that work covertly but draw on the same patterns as "traditional" antisemitism insofar as Otherness implies exclusion from the in-group, the national collective of victims, or, beyond that, these Others being characterized as a menace to the community. Hence, while the image of the Other has been appropriated for images of the Self, 'the Jew' in its anti-Semitic composition becomes again the Other of contemporary identity constructions – skeletons in the closet of a seemingly German method of coping with its Nazi past.[38] The focal point of the following section is that the accordant discourse has been consolidated to a point where films dealing with this past now concentrate, on the one hand, on other, 'ordinary' aspects of this historical period, and, on the other hand, thereby succeed in fulfilling further ideological functions of current representations of Otherness.

37 Margalit, l.f., 292.
38 This might be considered an example of a form of antisemitism that is a specifically German reaction to the Shoah, namely, so-called secondary antisemitism. See Rensmann, Lars, *Kritische Theorie über den Antisemitismus. Studien zu Struktur, Erklärungspotential und Aktualität.* Berlin, Hamburg, 1998, 231ff.

Appropriating the Other II: New Others, Alterophilia, and Antisemitism

Having outlined the larger background of constructions of Otherness with regard to images of 'the Jew' in current German film, I am going to turn to some rather new developments in this discourse. A remarkable trend concerning recent productions set in the era of National Socialism is that first, they actually are no longer centered around the topic of National Socialism but treat this period en passant, that is, almost casually.[39] Related to this process of normalization[40] of Germany' s Nazi past in contemporary visual culture are two developments that are also relevant in terms of images of Jewishness and their function in present discourse, namely, the appearance of images of 'other Others' and the compromised status of Jewish characters, a growing invisibility of Jewish victims, and an increase in pejorative images of 'the Jew.'

The two examples that I have chosen represent this constellation quite well. In the alpinist drama *Nordwand* (Philipp Stölzl, D/A/CH 2008) set in 1936, female protagonist Luise, a newbie photographer for a Berlin-based newspaper, is assigned the task of reporting on her two friends' attempt to climb the north wall of Eiger mountain. Both Andi and Toni die tragically, and in the aftermath, Luise becomes a fierce opponent of her country's nationalistic exploitation of what was supposedly a private challenge. The two mountaineering friends are depicted as likeable "guys-next-door" who failed to fulfill the militaristic requirements of their regiment since they didn't take their tasks as *Gebirgsjäger* (German mountain troopers), seriously enough. The dichotomy of decadent urban culture versus a positively connoted countryside, a traditional matrix of antisemitic imagery, is an important frame in this setting: Luise returns to the countryside from the big city and discovers her true values, while at the same time, warding off her colleague Arau's advances. After the tragic death of her friends she refuses to return to Berlin because "there are too many of your kind," as she tells Arau. The film ends showing Luise in her New York studio, taking pictures of a black saxophone player. This final image, of Luise embracing a black musician, is an iconic aggregation of the *topos* with which I want to conclude: the turning of non-Jewish German protagonists, themselves portrayed as victims of the Nazi regime, into characters who represent the Other of hegemonic Western discourse.

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39 Another example of the tendency to focus on ordinary people and their lives during National Socialism is *Die Entdeckung der Currywurst/ The Invention of the Curried Sausage* (Ulla Wagner, D 2008).

40 Hawel, *Die normalisierte Nation,* l.f.

The second example for this new *topos* is the character of Arndt von Bohlen, the last heir to the Krupp German steel empire, who heroically abdicates his legacy so that the company can be turned into a foundation, and thus live on. The miniseries *Krupp – eine deutsche Familie* (Carlo Rola, D 2009), produced for the public broadcasting channel ZDF, spans more than a century, and Arndt represents the 'new' Germany: he is openly gay and exhibits queer behavior, such as dressing in a burlesque, dramatic way. In the last scene of the film, his face is shown in close-ups, wearing make-up, crying, and wiping off his tears with a feminine gesture before putting on his sunglasses and driving away in his convertible into the Moroccan desert. A reverse image is that of his father, the well-disciplined Alfried, who throughout the film is depicted as having suffered from having to subject himself to patriarchal German culture. Von Bohlen pater sets von Bohlen filius free from the traditions that demand being a tough paternalistic entrepreneur who must sacrifice his whole life to the company's interests. While the father, victim of the constraints of his gender, class, and national identity, dies at the end of the film, Arndt will continue to live well off of his inheritance and lead a very liberal, hedonistic, or even decadent life.

The character of Arndt represents the topos of 'embracing the Other' as opposed to 'becoming the Other,' a move similar to Luise's affinity for liberal, multiethnic American culture. Just like the nameless black saxophone player in *Nordwand*, Arndt is not the main protagonist but represents an image of contemporary, postwar, postreconciliation Germany that can be seen as the *telos* of the now supposedly overcome German society. Alfried, who had to serve time as a convicted and then refined war criminal, and Luise, are representatives and victims of that "old" Germany that has now been retroactively overcome. The 'other Others' are not figures with whom to identify, but they represent images upon which the audience's fantasies can be projected. For the non-Jewish (*as* Jewish) German audience,,Luise and Alfried, as representations of German victimhood, stand for the true victims of National Socialism.[41]

This turn toward images that once represented the Other in colonial discourse cannot be conceptualized in the usual terms of theories about antisemitism. With regard to the recent developments in the visual politics of memory, however, I

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41 In the case of *Nordwand*, it is first and foremost the alpinists Toni, Luise's beloved, and Andi who become victims of the Nazi regime since they actually die. Toni's agonizing and slow death is shown in particularly devastating detail. In spite of their deaths, however, they accomplished the feat of finding a navigable route through the North face. In the film's closing credits, this achievement is framed as having been abused by the Nazi regime. After this catharsis, Luise takes an explicit stance against that regime, representing the nation as a whole. For further discussion of matters of representation, see below.

do believe that this phenomenon is also relevant for the status of 'the Jew' in German political culture. Therefore, to investigate the relationship between this seeming embrace of the Other and anti- or philo-Semitism, I want to introduce the notion of 'heterophobia,' as coined by sociologist Albert Memmi.[42] Memmi conceptualizes racism as an *ideological legitimization of actually existing differences*. However, since this kind of rationalization of what are, in fact, unjust practices is applied with regard to other differences as well – differences of class, sexual orientation, gender, and so on – he attempts to find a term that encompasses all of these ideologies that legitimize discrimination. Accordingly, his notion of heterophobia is meant to signify all those phobic and aggressive constellations that are directed toward others and legitimized by several psychological, cultural, social, and metaphysical 'arguments.'[43] Based on this broader approach to processes of Othering, I want to suggest calling the respective phenomena of 'positive' constructions of Others, as described above, *alterophilia*.[44] Analogous to philo-Semitism as a positively turned version of antisemitism, it will signify the construction of images of Others that are connoted positively.[45] The implications of such representations will be discussed in the following section.

Tracing the Absent of Alterophiliac Representations

As I have already indicated, the turn toward positively connoted representations of 'other Others' signifies a qualitative change with regard to representations of Self and Other, a change that can best be described as a consolidation of the discourse of reconciliation.[46] I want to argue that, moreover, this current appearance of 'other Others.' as elaborated in the preceding section, obviously discloses a

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42 Memmi, Albert, *Rassismus*, Frankfurt am Main 1987 [1972].

43 Id., *Angst vor dem Anderen*. In: Claussen, Detlev, *Was heißt Rassismus?,* Darmstadt 1994.

44 Out of an explicit linguistic purism, Memmi uses the term 'heterophobia' instead of the equally reasonable 'alterophobia,' which comprises both Greek and Latin components (cf. Memmi, ibid., 222). Yet, since the concept of alterity has meanwhile become widely used, especially in that aspect of postcolonial studies that seems relevant to me for this field of investigation, instead of calling the respective positive-turn phenomenon "heterophilia," I will refer to it as alterophilia here.

45 Diekmann, Irene (Ed.), *Geliebter Feind – Gehasster Freund. Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Berlin 2009.

46 Gilad Margalit suggests a similar change in German political culture, cf. Margalit, *Guilt*, l.f., 293ff.

second function that these films fulfill in the present. Concerning a dialectical approach to these images that attempts to explain their appearance at this specific historical point, instead of only describing them, it is important to go back to Kracauer's notion of films as "daydreams of society." If these images represent contemporary society's wishes or dreams, if they are viewed as a desire, what can they tell us about the present? What contradictions of present German reality are synthesized by these images?[47]

In view of the images in question, their emergence at this time and their positioning in relation to the victimized protagonists hints at specific contradictions that these images neutralize. The features of these particular Others can be characterized as that side of Western culture that has traditionally been devalued: femininity, being colored, being queer. Seeing how these features are embraced in *Nordwand* and *Krupp – eine deutsche Familie*, it seems as if colonial history has finally been overcome. Yet if these images are not seen as mere depictions of reality but as representations of certain desires and, at the same time, as representing particular interests that do not necessarily conform to these desires, then they point to a different constellation. To wit, in present-day Germany, a conflict persists between societal norms, such as human rights discourse, on the one hand, and factual national politics on the other hand. While antidiscrimination laws are passed and Germany engages in a worldwide human rights discourse that has essentially been shaped by Holocaust discourse,[48] at the same time it has implemented policies that fundamentally contradict these values.

Without being able to lay out a thorough analysis of postcolonial world politics here, these practices should at least be summed up briefly: while, on an international level, national wealth and political power are constituted along the North-South axis of former colonial powers and former colonies, on a national level, migration policy has become extremely repressive. In 1993, Germany abolished the basic right to political asylum by introducing the Third Country Regulation. Refugees are excluded from most parts of public life, for example, the so-called residency obligation forbids them from leaving the country and then being able to return. To sum this up: of course, racism, as well as antisemitism in its old and new forms, also persists in Germany today, as does inequality regarding gender, sexual orientation, and a lack of protection from hate crimes.

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47 I have elaborated in detail elsewhere the dialectical approach to image analysis I am applying here. See Schmid, Antonia, "Bridging the Gap: Image, Discourse, and Beyond – Towards a Critical Theory of Visual Representation." In: *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Special Issue, 2011 (forthcoming).
48 Wenzel, *Gericht und Gedächtnis*, l.f., 365ff.

The point I want to make is that the images represented in contemporary German films about National Socialism make use of the Nazi past, not only suggesting that ordinary Germans were *mainly* victims, and that today's Germany has overcome its heterophobic politics and culture. Above all, the images in these films suggest a continuity of a liberal political culture that distorts history. The negative images represented serve as a counterpart against which the positive characters can unfold, representing not contemporary Germany but *how it wants to be seen*, or rather how it needs to be seen regarding its positioning in international relations and its internal policies.[49] Nevertheless, the presence of these seemingly positive images of the Self produces particular absences. It makes invisible daily racism as well as common antisemitism and the concrete politics of exclusion. The absence created by current representations thus consists of the factual Othering contemporary society carries out every day. In the case of *Krupp – eine deutsche Familie*, the company that is shown to outlive its old, now allegedly eclipsed patriarchal traits represents the nation in a nutshell, while persisting conflicts of interests and conflicting narratives of memory are neglected by this synthesis. In *Nordwand*, the presence of the victimized protagonist, Luise, who is drawn to a racialized Other, makes invisible the factual treatment of those who were marked as Other by the Nazi regime, whose politics of annihilation were actually carried out.

Conclusion: The Impact of Visual Politics

The latest developments regarding images of the Self and images of the Other in the context of Jewish-Gentile relations in Germany suggest that the discourse of suffering and victimization of non-Jewish Germans has reached a point of consolidation. Moreover, the films I have discussed above cannot simply be viewed as products of individuals. Rather, they are products of a culture industry, and as such are part of a hegemonic discourse. Financed mainly through public funds, their production is part of a political action that can be called visual politics. As an instrument of these politics, they mirror present German society, and they do so in a far broader sense than just by depicting reality. As I have tried to show, they represent "the daydreams of society" (Kracauer), and the images they offer

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49 Without being able to expatiate upon this matter further, it should be noted that any nationalism works in favor of neutralizing existing internal differences by homogenizing the majority of the population against an outside. Hobsbawm, Eric, *Nationen und Nationalismus. Mythos und Realität*, Frankfurt am Main 2004 [1990], 40ff.

serve as fantasies that point to persisting contradictions that this society pro-duces – and, of course, they provide models for conceptions of reality.

To conclude, in contrast to "classic" antisemitism, the counterimage of the German nation today, its Other, is not 'the Jew' anymore but Nazism as the alleg-edly defeated regime of Others who are constructed as fundamentally different from ordinary Germans. At the same time, in current films about National Social-ism, these ordinary Germans are represented as the primary victims of the Shoah, often by adaptation of the image of Jewish victims through the process of Idolatric Mimesis. While the victimized protagonists thus represent a non-Jewish audience by appropriating images of the former Others, the first and foremost victims of the Nazis become more and more absent. Regarding the visual strategy of Idolatric Mimesis, this takeover of Holocaust iconography is blatant, if not to say outra-geous, since it blurs existential differences between those who were annihilated and thus excluded from the human family, and those who, after all, remained part of the *Volksgemeinschaft* and were therefore considered worthy of rescue. Being a victim of war and being a victim of the politics of extermination is a dis-tinction that these images fail to make. In the now hegemonic universalist view that everyone, Jewish or Gentile, was a victim of National Socialism, particular-ities that once determined whether one lived or was murdered, are overwritten.

Concomitantly, antisemitic stereotypes are reproduced in the same films, often in coded or camouflaged forms. Thus, the ideologically constituted Other to antiliberal, nationalist communitarianism persists concerning the structuring of character ensembles and the dichotomies of Self and Other of the national collec-tive: those who pose a threat to the image of the national Self – the true victims of National Socialism – become invisible, or they are reinstated as a menace to the collective by use of antisemitic imagery.

In addition, the new phenomenenon of *alterophilia* as embracing the 'other Other' can be disclosed as a reaction to a normative pressure to incorporate present images of a 'good' national Self into images of national history, not the other way around. Hence, the ostensible anti-antisemitism these films feature, the discourse of reconciliation they represent, distorts images of history to a point where existential differences become invisible and the former Others undergo a secondary process of Othering in which they are excluded from hegemonic narra-tives of memory. Considering the 'other Others.' the exploitation of their images is not less problematic since it disguises existing racialized and gendered politics in a postcolonial world.

Moreover, projection of the present values of political culture into the past creates the illusion of a democratic continuity that renders invisible the fact that the process of democratization of German society was initially forced top-down onto the German population by the Allies, and that it took decades to percolate

through all levels of German postwar society. Furthermore, in spite of having integrated itself into the democratic West by now,[50] a democratic culture is a process that needs to constantly be sustained and reinforced. Especially with regard to its living Jews, persisting antisemitism in new but often not yet acknowledged forms, such as antizionism and Germany's role in international politics, the films discussed here and their strategies of Othering do not contribute to a raising of consciousness in this context. Instead, they work in the opposite direction: they make invisible continuing practices of domination by suggesting that the Self has not become but always has been the Other.

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50 Margalit, *Guilt*, l.f., 289.

- *Idolatrische Mimesis oder Wölfe im Schafspelz. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Spielfilms für Repräsentationen des Nationalsozialismus*, in: Steinberg, Sven/Meißner, Stefan/Trepsdorf, Daniel (Eds.), *Vergessenes erinnern. Medien von Erinnerungskultur und kollektivem Gedächtnis*, Berlin 2009, 83–103.

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A Passage to Modernity –
The "Iconic Turn" and "Jewish Reality"

Interview with Tommaso Speccher

> *Whether we have chosen chisel, pen or brush*
> *we are but critics, or but half create.*
> William Butler Yeats,
> "Ego Dominus tuus" (1936)

Claudia Simone Dorchain: The title of this anthology, *Contemporary Jewish Reality in Germany and its Reflection in Film*, evokes once more the scientific discussion about the "iconic turn," the rediscovering of the importance of images in the theories of culture.

Tommaso Speccher: The imaginary has also constantly played a central role in the history of philosophy. The core of this productivity resides in the fact that images "fix" and "freeze" the world, thus resisting both the discursive impulse and the Heraclitean Logos and the Deleuzian insight concerning the production of concepts as a dynamic movement. The presence of the imaginary and the use of images is one of the themes underwriting most philosophical speculation. Nowadays, images are endlessly reproduced, circulated, and consumed. This perpetual collective exchange, that informs the important political and ethical debates, is crucial to many disciplines.

CSD: Are we actually speaking of a short moment in time, by regarding what Walter Benjamin already stated about the *Kunstwerk* (work of art), and its quality of being reproduced endlessly? When did the philosophic insight in the use of images start?

TS: Benjamin's "*Das Kunstwerk*" points to two crucial issues with respect to the reproducibility of cultural artifacts in modernity. That is, so to say, the disappearance of the aura of symbolic forms – which can be aligned with the process of secularization – and the usage of "works" as functional to mass politics. We could, otherwise, term these aspects as the problem of the transcendental as a warranty of the historical imaginary, and the problem of the materiality of the representational media that concretize the imaginary. When it comes to philosophy... well, we could say that already with Plato images are indissolubly correlated to the relationship with knowledge. Yet, philosophy today has developed and keeps

interrogating new incarnations of iconic instruments, instigated by new forms of representation and by the complexity of the social imaginaries.

CSD: We are speaking of the "iconic turn." It was in 1992, when the American art historian W.T.J. Mitchell rediscovered the power of images in contemporary sciences. He used the notion of "iconic turn" as a contrast to the famous notion of "linguistic turn" Richard Rorty, considered by many as a star philosopher, stated before. Two years later, in 1994, the German scientist Gottfried Boehm described how the "iconic turn" works: images, not words, should serve as a key to the interpretation of language, and this revaluation of knowledge very soon became *en vogue*.

During the years 2002–2003, the well-known German editor Hubert Burda organized a series of lectures at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich about the "iconic turn." The rooms have been literally crowded. An interdisciplinary audience seemed fascinated by the influence of images on what we call consciousness. What turned out that fascinating after all?

TS: Without specific differences and declared turns there would be no cultural debate: this disruptive force leads to the (re)-discovery of themes and topics as, for example, the role of the imaginary. What are the platonic wax tablet or Heidegger's "In der Welt sein" if not representations and metaphorical images that encapsulate and fix conceptual insights?

But it is also true... We should take a step forward and say with Mitchell, and Sartre, that "it is one thing to apprehend directly an image as image, and another thing to shape ideas regarding the nature if images in general." That is exactly the iconic turn. Modernity requires questioning the function, the structure, and the specific quality of the images in their collective use.

CSD: It's not that new, actually. It was in 1938, when Martin Heidegger described the image as a benchmark of modernity: "Das Wesen der Neuzeit ist die Eroberung der Welt als Bild." It means, modernity is the conquest of images, the use of images in order to create power.

TS: We should understand Heidegger's take on Modernity in two ways: On the one hand, it offers the Idea of Modernity as an epochal intuition on the part of a strong subject – the *Entwurf* – or better, the subject of the hermeneutics. On the other hand, we have another more complicated idea of modernity as a world constituted of independent objects, all disconnected and detached from the subject – a world made of images. This conclusion would be actually unacceptable and unthinkable for Heidegger, but it is the world we live in.

Modernity is no more "the world of the object that should be thought," the world of modernity is "the world of the object that makes us think." Following your question on power, I would say that the images, rather than their use, are the place of power. The authenticity of the image precedes the power to manipulate it. Paraphrasing McLuhan ("the medium is the message") we could say that power exists insofar as it is represented. The power is representation and glory.

CSD: A very ambivalent power, Tommaso, as far as it concerns *Contemporary Jewish Reality in Germany*. I remember how Barbara Steiner showed in her essay about conversions to Judaism, called "Between guilt and repression," how some of her German interview partners felt attracted and somewhat flattered by the image of "Jews" to be clever-clever, and therefore they longed to become Jews. Thus, conversion could be a means to enhance one's representation and glory for some of them. However, the basic philosophic idea of enhancing one's glory via the imaginary is different.

TS: To me this evokes the parable of St. Paul's conversion: the potency of divine Grace blinds him, and makes the man then called Saul, who is unable to see until the moment of conversion to Christianity. In Paul-the-converted, faith and God's calling are combined in their glorious power, as power whose reflection can be perceived by the people who surround him but which cannot be fully apprehended since Paul alone is capable of "hearing" what the light says.

I believe that many conversions to Christianity are marked by some version of this experience, equally composed of blindness and revelation. Quite on the contrary, the process of conversion to Judaism (*Gyiur*) is radically different, marked (as it is) by a personal progress of individual adherence, physical comprehension (circumcision for men, immersion in a ritual bath for men and women), and quotidian exercise of the Torah.

CSD: The use of images in order to create power, in order to rule, first started as a contrasting program to the essence of mystic. If we consider the Middle Ages to be "mystic", or coined by the spirit of mysticism, then Heidegger is right.

The very essence of mystic is the abolition of images, the detachment. That is what Kurt Flasch and Hans Urs von Balthasar describe as the dynamic of the mystical thought: the representation of the world, seen as a mixture of images or icons, should be annihilated, reduced to the open space of interior knowledge. This kind of "negative theology" in the tradition of Plotin and Dionysos Areopagita, which leads to what the mystics call "the inner self" (Meister Eckhart), is, in fact, a program of abolishing images and provoking the creative power of the mind to stop. The aim is not to think, neither in words nor in images. That is why

the Japanese philosopher Shizuteru Ueda states how close Meister Eckhart is to Zen Buddhism.

TS: Plotin's project is present in many other ancient philosophical experiences: for him, "to know" means "to go beyond the ideas," beyond the noemata (as Husserl would say) in order to discover the real knowledge and to reflect in *solitaria patris caligine*. The Plotinian mystic is the ecstatic abandonment of the world in favor of an interior world. The subjective practice of reflection into the inner self is also encapsulated in a famous, as enigmatic, aphorism of the *mishnah*, whose injunction targets "those who investigate four things": these people would have been better off not being born at all because what is above is above, what is beneath is beneath, what is ahead is ahead, and what is behind is behind.

Gershom Scholem quotes it in his *Zur Kabala* that we are thus redirected to the experience of the mystic Cabala, in which the mystic is fixed in his self-centered position and truly experiences knowledge. Following this two ideas, we could say that modernity is the place of an obverse mysticism in which the subject is interrogated by the world out there. For this reason, in Heidegger and in Nietzsche modernity is the time of nihilism: the modern subject is the site of finitude because he/she is only allowed to reflect himself/herself in the multitude of traces produced by various historical imaginaries. Modernity is the time of the definition of imagines into imaginaries: it is the time of the Glory not of the Grace.

CSD: The detachment, the abolishing of images as the essence of mysticism, can be seen as the essence of the philosophy of the Middle Ages as well. Thus, as a contrasting program, the active use of images, what Heidegger called "die Eroberung der Bilder," cannot be anything else but modern.

TS: The appearance, the productivity, the power of the images constitutes the core of modernity, not their use. The imaginary of modernity is stronger than the subject who tries to control it. The medieval God, the God of transcendence, is completely under the control of the subject. It is functional to the human interest in order to build the world. The God of Modernity, the God made substance by Spinoza and then pronounced dead by Nietzsche, is an independent God: it leaves us stunned, it shows itself, but it is unintelligible because of its infinite reproducibility.

CSD: The conquest of images as a program has something adventurous in it, and it recalls the conquest of space. The conquest of space can be seen within a macro or a micro perspective. The macro perspective is the conquest of a territory, and thus a political impact, while the micro perspective is the process of architecture,

and thus an artist standpoint, or the standpoint of the Aristotelian *techné* (know-how). Therefore, your essay on the architectural design of museums called "The dead Jew as the eternal Other," reminds me of the capture of space, as an analogous concept to the conquest of images.

A museum, then, is an architectural artifact where the capture of space has become evident, its definition, distribution, classification as an asylum of imaginaries…

TS: Well, I believe the problem of the matter resides in the atomization of narratives. Many of the experiences connected to the representation of Judaism in Europe today, especially in Germany, are defined by a parcellization of its history, its tradition, and its religious manifestation, as well as by their very destruction and erasure. As a consequence, we are faced with the impossibility of retracing their formation, if not in a prejudicial and idealized form. The dominant representation of Judaism in the variations of the "dead European Jew," as I envisioned it, is not only a result of the Holocaust but its reemergence in this fragmented, impalpable form.

CSD: But without any idea about the *Dieu caché*, this modern program of building the world and capturing of space remains somewhat rootless, useless and, in its last consequence, terrifying, like Blaise Pascal stated it when he once became frightened by the endless volumes within the infinity of space: "Le silence éternel de ces éspaces illimites m' effraye."

To me, building the world – by using imaginaries – is more than just surviving Pascal' s horror of the empty space, this image of negativity, because it needs an additional effort, the effort of the question of God, a modern effort.

TS: This can be said to be a direct consequence of secularization: their materiality has made them autonomous and completely respondent to the logic of a purely reproductive techné. Memorial sites, for example, almost seem to have replaced churches in their function, becoming the space of a certain nonconfessional religious experience where the role of the sacred is rethought collectively. In my essay I interrogate the representation of Jewish culture in Europe as destroyed: multifarious traces speak its presence without indicating the logic that should keep them together.

In this respect, the Shoah often becomes instrumentally emblematic. The congeries of references that the Shoah offers – of images, events, dates, names, faces – is surprisingly similar to the function that Girard gives to the scapegoat. Judaism as a sacrificial victim, as the last possibility to legitimate transcendence

– such a vanishing point, and a yearning, for a Western world deprived of God and of revelations.

CSD: Hans Blumenberg wrote his book *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit* in 1966, nearly thirty years before the "iconic turn." In his book, he describes how the Middle Ages and the modern times could be contradistinguished philosophically. In his point of view, the gap between the Middle Ages and modernity is caused by the psychological human need to revolt against the imagination of an omnipotent God. So, the legitimacy of the modern times is the emancipation of the human being, so to say, the use of all means in order to create power, "all means" includes images.

TS: On the contrary, I believe that the legitimacy of modernity is not only the emancipation of the subject but the emancipation of a world made of objects, images, and imaginaries! These things expose themselves to us... they interrogate us. The human being in modernity is no longer the question maker but the one who is questioned. Blumenberg's concept of *Metaphorologie* explains exactly this aspect.

CSD: I see, and therefore Heidegger' s notion of modernity as the voluntary use of images is conventional as the Middle Ages can be seen as a "mystical," imag-es-abolishing, era and their end as the rise of nonmystical thought. Nonmystical thought means a different use of images.

See, for example, what Felice Naomi Wonnenberg discovers in her essay on the contemporary image of the "Jewish hero." Heroism is an old, established phil-osophic notion, for some think it derives from mystic and ascetic because of its immanent abolishment and overcoming of the ego, and even the nihilist point of view Nietzsche once held gives relevance to what he calls the "heroic life" as a way to cope with the ever undefined human problem of identity. So, heroism remains an open philosophic question, but take a look on its outcome in films today. In films like *Lebanon*, Wonnenberg states how the formerly mystical notion of heroism changes radically.

TS: In contemporary Jewish literature, a different type of heroic figure is often proposed, far removed from the classical models. Zionists, for example, were, to a certain extent, heroes; but also the fighters in the Jewish Infantry brigade group, who came to Italy for the liberation of Rome; or Emanuele Artom (1915–1944), a Jewish martyr of the Italian *Resistenza* (The Freedom Fighters), whose letters have been recently republished.

The heroic figure is predicated on the notion of "extreme" but where this extreme points to, is subject to epochal and cultural change. In this respect, I think of Felice Wonnenberg's reading of "morbidity" as the almost "antiheroic" quality that underpins the construction of the Other as Jew.

CSD: Thus, images have always been a part of human knowledge and creativity, and what has changed during the ages is not the image in itself but the use we make of it.

TS: Exactly… the problem is the use of images rather than their creation. Especially today! The world that we live in is crossed by constellations of organized and autonomous imaginaries: they are infinitely replicated in a variety of material expressions (we should also rethink the materiality of our media, despite all apocalyptic predictions on the death of writing). The materiality of the space of modernity generates ethical and political questions, but it generates, first of all, an urgency. It is the urgency to let the world speak, to let the traces and the narratives speak to us. For this reason, Emmanuel Lévinas speaks of a "need to listen to." The idea of listening to is the possible alternative to the power of Glory, to the power of images.

CSD: The idea of listening to is a standpoint, I dare not say a *viewpoint*. Was it Heidegger who first found out that Judaism would have more to do with listening, and Christianity with seeing?

TS: The tension between seeing and listening is structured on a classic binary that defines the relation between Athens and Jerusalem – between the Greek-Christian world and Jewish thought from Leo Strauss to Rosenzweig to Lévinas. The central idea is that "listening to the Other" is the way we have to go if we want to suspend the totalizing representation of the Greek-Christian Logos – intended as image, power, and totality.

CSD: We should keep that in mind. Of course, Lévinas is right by stating that the creation of glory has more to do with the eye than with the ear, it is visual rather than audible.

As I have tried to show in my short essay on Cusanus, Nietzsche, and Lacan, the man as an image of God has never been a static idea in European philosophy. The evaluation of the image of man has altered so many times, and the image of man is *the* image. So, whether the image of man is evaluated positively or negatively, influences politics, and politics, as we know, do exactly what Heidegger described as "modern" – the use of images in order to rule.

TS: Yes, the image of man is the image of modernity!

From the Vitruvian man of Leonardo, to the descriptions of Bovillo, Ficino, Campanella, and then Cusanus, he is in the center of the "New World." The foundation of modern political sciences was also defined in correlation to the human body (see the *Leviathan* of Hobbes and then Rousseau with the concept of social body....). However, we should not forget the admonishment of Pico Della Mirandola, who described the image of the man as an "indiscretae opus imaginis" (work with an undefined image), and I would also say "a man with an undefined position."

CSD: The image of man is the image of modernity, yes, and thus, an image of discrimination. Creating images in order to disqualify an individual or a group often turns out to be basically the negation of their being human. The negation of the image of man, projected to an individual or a group, is a paramount strategic means of propaganda.

By declaring someone as being "not human," thus animal-like, which implies the association of ferocity, aggression, anachronism, there is a justification for doing him wrong, for literally disfranchising him. That was, as a well-known fact, the key propaganda against Jews, but also against handicapped people, homosexuals, or gypsies, in German National Socialism. Jan Phillip Reemtsma shows in his recent work *Vertrauen und Gewalt* (Hamburg 2008) how this strategy works out. Focusing on a reciprocity between confidence and violence, he explains how the rhetoric about claimed "not human" individuals or groups actually arises archaic fears.

TS: The strategy to represent the Jew as an animal is rudimentary but also extremely effective. In addition to the humiliating reduction of the human to the animal realm, the chain of references multiplies the ramification of meaning. The pig (*Judensau*), the fox, the snake, the bat, and the spider all correlate to a taxonomy of the imaginary that goes from sagacity, to sleekness, to crookedness.

CSD: Not only the image of the "witch" but also most of the anti-Semitic images and prejudices – the claimed child-murder or the poisoning of wells – have been founded and inspired by in the Middle Ages, but let us consider the special historical framework where they first took place.

TS: Actually, the casting of the Jew into animal symbolism is a stylistic passage that happens after the end of the Middle Ages. Medieval stylistic canons would not have allowed for the reduction of Jewish people to an inferior cast of subhumans.

During the Middle Ages, the tension was resolved in the opposition of theological categories rather than sociological or anthropomorphic ones; suffice it to think that one of the best-known dualistic representations during the Middle Ages consisted of the allegory that juxtaposed Synagogue and Ecclesia fashioned in two beautiful women. Actually, I would argue that no sooner than with the advent of modernity, the theological paradigms were gradually "trivalized" into the instrumental markers of base social debate.

CSD: Let us take one step beyond. Is it possible, Tommaso, that "modernity" is not an era but, what Aristotle in his ethical work called *hexeis* (an attitude)?

TS: But if we take hexeis to mean skill and capacity, we could contend that modern human beings need to be capable of interpreting, of interrogating, of critically transforming the world but also, at the same time, of letting themselves be questioned and of listening.

CSD: Not listening to is modern, to draw on Lévinas, better said**:** making others listen to is modern, which is the creation of glory, as it has always been then, because the speaker seems to be more powerful than the listener, and the creation of images seems to excel their reception.

It is not by coincidence that the two competing orders of the Middle Ages, the Dominican and the Franciscan order, have had contrasting attitudes toward the use of images. The Franciscans were not that into manipulating power of images, understanding themselves as "the order of the poor" with less influence. The Dominicans – the order nearest to the Pope – became the most influential order of these times mainly by the use of images, occupying the chairs at Sorbonne University, playing the major role in the Inquisition, by using an imaginary which aims at power.

TS: Talking about the function and the use of images in the Middle Ages implies considering the existence of hierarchies as religious organizations. The imaginary of the Middle Ages is essentially religious. The Dominican Thomas of Aquinas was a master in developing images but only because he could draw on a well-structured world of levels, dispositions, and hierarchies.

The Scrovegni Chapel in Padua for example… a masterpiece of late medieval hierarchical power… you have there also the exhibition of the seven virtues together with the images of Christ's and the Virgin Mary's life, and of the Universal Judgment. It's a perfectly designed cosmogony, a totalizing discursive imaginary.

CSD: A cosmogony never stands for itself, and the question "cui bono?" is allowed. Of course, creating a cosmogony means to establish guidelines.

Reemtsma calls it *Erwartungssicherheit*, an expectation of things to come. The bestowing of expectations of things to come to the people, in order to give them a certain feeling of stability, is not motivated out of altruism but out of the will to power. There was an intellectual elite, as the Dominican scholars have been the most learned people in these times, with a strong will to rule or to support the rulers by the creation of images ready to evoke emotions, fears, resentment. The only thing that was lacking then, were mass media.

TS: But we are talking of the late Middle Ages, an era in which European societies begin to open up, relative mobility starts to be possible but, on the other hand, illiteracy is vast. Therefore, images and symbols play a crucial role. Just to give you an example, in the allegory which I mentioned previously, "Synagogue" is a blindfolded woman, while "Ecclesia" wears a crown, and that is enough to determine the social perspective on the relation between the two monotheisms.

CSD: If "modernity" is not an era but an active attitude towards the use of images, what did the film industry do with this explanation?

TS: The function of cinema is probably not different from the symbolic architecture of the Christian Middle Ages, a semiotic system whose organization plotted a precise narrative. The thing that is probably missing is the experience of "passing," of physically "going through." This "immersive" insufficiency is maybe a limit of the silver screen and the real asset that churches and cathedrals exploited for centuries – immersion as the feature which allowed these sites to become the site of consensus.

CSD: I agree, film is a dream of reality, but as a dream it is connected with the ground of a deathlike sleep. Film has something morbid in itself, as Felice Naomi Wonnenberg stated. She calls it "a resurrection machine." Therefore, we do not need to wonder why an imaginary of death, vanity, and mortality occasionally wavers around cinematography and evokes a certain uneasiness, not the Freudian uneasiness within culture, but an anthropogenic uneasiness by cultural artifacts.

TS: But the cinema is also "kinema," a rolling film, *Lethe* and *Mnemosyne*, the memory of an oneiric past, or of the present itself, if the film is boring.

CSD: Mnemosyne was the mother of the muses, as the Greek mythology tells. Once again we return to the memory, no matter if it is collective or not, and to the memorial acts and arts. See what some GDR documentaries did when alluding on "Jews," that unilateral stereotypical image of "Jews" (Wonnenberg calls it "textbook Jews"), and the idea of morbidity – an archaic fear associated with film in general – that is directly projected to "Jews," as if they would represent it. It is a pars pro toto process of projection, taking one example as a rule.

Using the imaginary in order to rule could also mean playing with fears. The psychological connection between the imaginary, fears, and recognition has, not without reason, always been a crucial point in clinical studies, long before the "iconic turn," let it be C.G. Jung's work on the archetypes or Piaget's discovery of the development of the human consciousness during infancy.

TS: I believe that in the cinematic medium it is more difficult to create exemplary images of glory than fear.

CSD: That is a question which has still to be answered. Glory and fear are diachronically changing notions but they are not totally different from each other: The meaning of "grotesque" comes near to the point where the two notions meet.

Playing with fears can be transformed into humor, for humor is a means to cope with reality, to survive fears, and there we find ourselves confronted with a challenging issue of research. Mareike Albers shows in her essay on contemporary Jewish youth culture in Germany, citing a pop event named "Unkosher Jewish" in Berlin, how close the psychological connection between humor, fears, and the voluntary use of images still may be.

TS: The representation of the Jew is often situated in the third space… of an inglorious grotesqueness – no reference to Quentin Tarantino is intended of course.

CSD: I also remember a documentary by the German national broadcasting agency Deutsche Welle about the popular Jewish stand-up comedian Oliver Polak in 2010. Polak introduced himself to the audience in a very fuzzy style and later explained to the interviewer: "People are really cross when they first hear that I am a Jew. They do not expect it, they somehow fear to react. Many German people have, in fact, never seen a Jew."

They have never seen a Jew. That means, the use of images is somewhat virginal to them… do you agree? Can any imaginary be virginal?

TS: I could read anything in this sentence, anything but a perception of virginity. There is no such a thing as a virgin imaginary. There are things like the frankness

of a comedian, or the authenticity of a sentiment, but imaginaries today are structured filiations of articulated stories. The fact that the great majority of Germans does not know Jewish people, if not through the media, is pretty eloquent with respect to the construction of the "imagined European Jew."

CSD: In philosophy, the voluntary use of images or the imaginary never had any "innocence" in my opinion, for "innocence" as an ethical notion implies knowledge, or rather the absence of knowledge. "Immaculate" actually means "without knowledge," nondiscursive, and I always felt that the notion of Maria, Schechina, *Parousia*, in an epistemological point of view, is the same.

But let us go back to the basic philosophic interdependence between knowledge and innocence. Ethics derive from epistemology, that means the more developed the knowledge base is, the louder sounds the call for responsibility. Philosophers, if they take their ambitious self-concept of "knowing better" for serious, should be the most responsible people in science, if not in the world, and that's why Plato imagined a future republic ruled by philosopher kings.

TS: What you say makes me think, once more, of the fundamental paradoxes of philosophy. On the one hand, there is the need to deconstruct every single imaginary in order to unearth a certain original formation, on the other hand, the fact that operation is only allowed through the usage of other, superior, more conceptual imaginaries – almost imaginaries of glory. The example of Nietzsche is exemplary in this sense – a life spent in the effort to liberate the subject, and then instrumentalized within the Nazi imaginary in function of the new man, the Aryan man, the subject in a status of serfdom to power.

CSD: Actually, philosophers have often disappointed in regard of their own personal ethics. Some of the most advanced intellectuals in Germany followed dangerous ideologies and the glorification of war, such as Gerhard Hauptmann, Ernst Jünger, or Martin Heidegger. There is no obligation for a philosopher to make his choice right, and no warranty that a highly-developed epistemology leads to an ethic of human understanding. To quote another example, remember what Georges Bataille stated biographically – he had always been a fool in political regards.

TS: This is for me a question of responsibility. Everyone has their own responsibility: the philosopher needs to pursue the discourse of origin, and by discourse I also mean the compound of the various imaginaries and of collective representations. Producing a critical survey on the imaginaries that permeate our world is a difficult and important task which requires, first of all, competence and vision

but also the awareness that every representation is, potentially, a misrepresentation that risks generating forms of regression because it resists, it resists to the flow of time, of becoming… it is, to a certain extent a kind of violence against the real.

CSD: That depends on your definition of reality, whether a meta-base of thought could be its destruction, or rather its refinement. I believe the latter to be true, reality refining a meta-base of thought. Violence, in Walter Benjamin's point of view, is a reaction against the actual or claimed threat to a system of order and stability – but look closer, a system of order and stability cannot be anything else than a meta-base of thought.

Nevertheless, we have clearly seen now – not heard, not listened to – that there is no innocence in the philosophy of images, no immaculate snow white field no one ever passed over.

We already know too much. Philosophy implies, if it is not the right choice in itself, for this may actually be a demand much too exigent to be fulfilled by every philosopher under every possible circumstance, *at least the search for the right choice*, the eagerness to search.

Katja S. Baumgärtner

Some Filmic Heroines and 'Others' in the GDR Documentary *Women in Ravensbrück* (1968)

Memorials and Memories

In 1959 East Germany inaugurated the Ravensbrück National Memorial as one of three major concentration camp memorials.[1] Each, in its way, primarily honors the communist struggle against fascism through specific architecture – monuments or sculptures – and mourning rituals, but each also serves as a place of commemoration. In contrast to other similar locations, the Ravensbrück memorial to the former women's concentration camp, is more concerned with the mourning for maternal womanhood.[2] The famous writer Anna Seghers empathetically said of the women murdered in Ravensbrück:

> They are the mothers and sisters of us all. Today you wouldn't be able either to learn freely, nor to play, in fact, you may not have been born at all, if during all the time of the fascist terror those women hadn't used their tender, lank bodies as steely shields to protect you and your future.[3]

These words have been incorporated – and eternalized – in the memorial by its architects, like an epitaph, and may still be read to this day. Additionally, they also influenced subsequent figures of remembrance.

In this manner, the rhetoric of the memories of Ravensbrück has been feminized, something which, as Insa Eschebach noted, was not originally the case. Observable is for instance, according to Insa Eschebach, that shortly after the lib-

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1 The Buchenwald National Memorial was opened 1958 and the Sachsenhausen National Memorial was opened 1961.

2 For an excellent overview of the history of the memorial site, see the anthology Eschebach, Insa, Jacobeit, Sigrid, and Lanwerd, Susanne (Eds.), *Die Sprache des Gedenkens. Zur Geschichte der Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück, 1945-1995,* Edition Hentrich, Berlin 1999. For the history of the camp, see Strebel, Bernhard, *Das KZ Ravensbrück. Geschichte eines Lagerkomplexes. Mit einem Geleitwort von Germaine Tillon*, Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, Zurich 2003.

3 Anna Seghers in: Eschebach, Insa, *Zur Formensprache der Totenehrung Ravensbrück in der frühen Nachkriegszeit,* in: Insa Eschebach, Sigrid Jacobeit, and Susanne Lanwerd (Eds.), *Die Sprache des Gedenkens. Zur Geschichte der Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück 1945-1995*, Edition Hentrich Berlin 1999. 31. [All German originals my translation.]

eration of the camp, the language of memorials – initiated by survivors – lacked any references to gender, while later, paralleling an overall nationalistic incorporation and contextualisation of the camps into a particular East-German national death cult, the place in itself gradually became feminized by an explicit gender-specific language.[4] In different national memorials to the Nazi past, heroes and heroines were established, as Detlef Hoffmann pointed out, to strengthen the notion of *Never again!*[5] This notion has been created in monuments in specific ways. The image of the self-sacrificing maternal heroine became a significant master narrative in the memory of Ravensbrück. Moreover, the sculpture *Tragende/Burdened Woman/Woman, carrying* by Will Lammert was often Christianized by calling it the *Pietà of Ravensbrück.* This was in spite of the fact that the sculpture was primarily referred to by its architects as the *Benario Group*, in honor of Olga Benario Prestes, a Jewish German-Brazilian communist. Strikingly, the fact is that this latter connotation has fallen into oblivion[6] – a result of intentional modifications in the memory, as noted by Janet Jacobs. *This 'Christianization' of women's memory at Ravensbrück invokes a religious narrative of suffering in which the persecution of Jewish women remains obscured.*[7]

In this article, I would like to address symbolic, gender-specific forms of memory in the documentary *Women in Ravensbrück*.[8] Alongside monuments, the medium of film further established several symbolic characterizations of heroes and heroines. Additionally, as Siegfried Kracauer has emphasized, a film is able to reflect, in ways superior to other arts, particular sensitivities and national ways

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4 Ibid. 32. Insa Eschebach said: *Whereas, at the end of the 1940s the 'warning boards' referred to those who died in Ravensbrück still as 'brothers and sisters' and the memorial of 1948 still called the dead 'anti-fascists,' without reference to gender, in the following years there was talk only of women, mothers, and girls.* The reason, according to Insa Eschebach, is that the *[...] progressive integration of the graves into the political death cult, which [...] contextualizes the forcible death of the individual with the struggle for liberation of nations, [...].* This gender-specific memory is, for example, responsible for the forgetting of the existing men's camp in Ravensbrück.

5 Hoffmann, Detlef, *Das Gedächtnis der Dinge,* in: Id. (Ed.), *Das Gedächtnis der Dinge. KZ-Relikte und KZ-Denkmäler 1945-1995*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, New York 1998. 23.

6 Apel, Linde, *Olga Benario – Kommunistin, Jüdin, Heldin?,* in: Insa Eschebach, Sigrid Jacobeit, and Susanne Lanwerd (Eds.), *Die Sprache des Gedenkens. Zur Geschichte der Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück 1945-1995*, Edition Hentrich, Berlin 1999. 196.

7 Jacobs, Janet, *Memorializing the Holocaust: Gender, Genocide and Collective Memory,* I. B. Tauris, London, New York 2010. 70.

8 *Women in Ravensbrück,* GDR 1968, directed by Joop Huisken and Renate Drescher. The Netherlands-born filmmaker Joop Huisken (1901–1979) – the brilliant old man of East German propaganda film – and the young East German documentarian Renate Drescher (*1932) worked together on this project.

of thinking.[9] In *Women in Ravensbrück,* we were able to find notable gender-specific imaginations and characterizations. These narratives result from a collectively modified commemoration, as described by both Maurice Halbwachs and Aleida Assman.[10] My thesis is that gender plays an important role, nay a key role, in the process of the visual construction and *re*-construction of the past, which can be vividly examined in cinema.

On Propaganda

Designed to be used for specific purposes at the memorial site, the documentary *Women in Ravensbrück* is an overtly propagandizing and fomenting educational film. More importantly, its intent is to point an accusing finger at West Germany. Emmy Handke, a member of the Ravensbrück Committee of the Antifascist Resistance Fighters, wrote in connection with her invitation to the film premiere at the memorial on 1 August 1968 that the film is an important contribution to the history of the resistance against Nazism and an appropriate *[...] weapon against neofascism in West Germany.*[11] The policy of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands / SED) exploited the memories of the camps as a means of legitimizing its hold on political power while accusing the 'other', West Germany of being both capitalist and fascist. While the universalization of the past through the myth of antifascism served to separate the Nazi past from the GDR, and legitimized the GDR as an antifascist state, the cultural nation legitimized historical and cultural links between German history and the GDR.[12] Due to the fact that *Women in Ravensbrück* was thus intended for international cinema and television screenings,[13] the documentary was on the one hand meant

9 Kracauer, Siegfried, *Von Caligari zu Hitler. Eine psychologische Geschichte des deutschen Films*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1979. 11.

10 See Halbwachs, Maurice, *Das Gedächtnis und seine sozialen Bedingungen*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1985, and Assmann, Aleida, *Geschichte im Gedächtnis. Von der individuellen Erfahrung zur öffentlichen Inszenierung*, Beck, München 2007.

11 Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück/Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten. Slg. MGR/StBG-RA-I/6-2-7. Bl. 204. Handke, Emmy. Komitee der Antifaschistischen Widerstandskämpfer. Arbeitsgemeinschaft ehemaliger Ravensbrückerinnen. Einladung. Berlin, 09. 07. 1968.

12 Kattago, Siobhan, *Ambiguous memory: the Nazi Past and German National Identity,* Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, London 2001. 111.

13 *Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück/Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten*. Slg. MGR/StBG-RA-I/6-2-7. Bl. 154.

to demonstrate the moral integrity of the GDR, and on the other hand to establish boundaries between political antagonists.

The border between the two Germanies encouraged a specific form of reasoning. It can be seen, as Eva Hohenberger has alluded, that these sorts of films were usually embedded *[…] in a system of different practices*, *which intentionally create knowledge, perspectives and opinions about a specific time of national history.*[14] The film presents rituals at the memorial site and accompanying exhibitions or books. In this sense, film is almost certainly a *lieu de mémoire (*a place of memory), as it was described by Pierre Nora, and enables a visualization of the past, thereby creating a specific *symbolic aura.*[15]

Furthermore, the intentionally political postion of *Women in Ravensbrück* permitted a different view. From this perspective, it is important to recognize the political context of the GDR, as well as of other countries such as West Germany, the so-called Eastern bloc states, vis-à-vis, for example, the political context of the United States: The 1960s saw such significant events as the Eichmann Trial in Jerusalem in 1961/62 and the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials in the following years, but also the construction of the Berlin Wall, the fall of Khrushchev, the storm of demonstrations, especially by students, against the Vietnam War, and the suppression of the liberation movement in Prague in the summer of 1968. This brief listing of these events will probably suffice for the moment. What I am more interested in is whether or not such ramifications appeared because of a lack of political coherence, and what individual ambitions within these complex (political) systems were eventually concretized in the filmic language of the documentary.

Framing 'The Heroine' in *Women in Ravensbrück*

Firstly, I will briefly clarify the disposition of *Women in Ravensbrück*. The documentary is thirty-six minutes in length. It can be divided roughly into three parts, each of nearly the same duration and importance. The first part describes the memorial site, including the museum. The second part presents five women who detail their experiences in the camp. The third part comprises and assembles 'found' footage, original photographs, sketches, and films to acompilation

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14 Hohenberger, Eva, *Gedenken als Gebrauch. Über die Auftragsfilme der KZ-Gedenkstätte Buchenwald*, in: *montage AV Zeitschrift für Theorie und Geschichte audiovisueller Kommunikation. Gebrauchsfilm* (2), 15/1/2006. 154.
15 Nora, Pierre, *Zwischen Geschichte und Gedächtnis. Aus dem Französischen von Wolfgang Kaiser*, Taschenbuch-Verlag, Berlin 1990. 32.

film.[16] The three parts, once assembled and interleaved, are mutually sustaining and beneficial. The documentary is consolidated through the use of a principal melody and voice-over.[17] I will concentrate on the footage component, in which, I suggest, the fomenting *raison d'être* is formulated. This part is strongly connected with the description of the memorial site and is therefore comprehensible independently. Nevertheless, the film must be seen in total, so I will certainly refer to several aspects of all three parts.[18]

No individual personalities were more central to acts of remembrance in the GDR than heroines, who became, in the case of Ravensbrück, female martyrs. It was the romantic imagination of martyrdom related to thoughts of female death.[19] Women became symbols and a metaphor for the entire nation for which they died.[20] One stark depiction is the figure of an altruistic mother who cares for others, especially for children. Insa Eschebach pointed out that the GDR honored communist women as *'founding mothers' for the socialist nation*.[21] Monuments, written texts, and the particular architecture of the memorial sites have implicated conventional and gender-stereotypical metaphors and symbols. *The Texture of Memory*[22] is much more gender-specific.

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16 See Leyda, Jay, *Filme aus Filmen: eine Studie über den Kompilationsfilm*, Henschelverlag, Berlin 1967.

17 James Monaco refers to the complex relation between music and visual narration; melodies often manipulate or (pre-)define images. Monaco, James, Bock, Hans Michael, and Westermeier, Brigitte, and Lindroth, David, *Film verstehen: Kunst, Technik, Sprache, Geschichte und Theorie des Films*, Rowohlt, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1980. 49-53. Bill Nichols wrote about the central importance of different rhetorical forms of speaking to transport messages in documentaries. *Rhetoric courts the viewer as style reveals the author*. Nichols, Bill, *Representing reality: issues and concepts in documentary*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1991. 136. The voice-over in *Women in Ravensbrück* has a strictly persuasive function.

18 Baumgärtner, Katja, *Mediale Repräsentation des Frauenkonzentrationslagers Ravensbrück im historisch-politischen Kontext nach 1945 – Interdependenzen von Erinnerung und Geschlecht*, Magistraarbeit zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades Magistra Artium (M.A.) im Fach Gender Studies. Berlin, (Unpublished Work): Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin 2009. 18-54.

19 See Bronfen, Elisabeth, *Nur über ihre Leiche. Tod, Weiblichkeit und Ästhetik*, Kunstmann, Munich 1994.

20 Although the GDR did use gender-specific symbols, allegories, and metaphors, the practice was prevalent in countries of the 'West'.

21 Eschebach, Insa, *Vergangenheitspolitik und Erinnerungsgeschichte*, in: *Tagungsbericht. Die Erinnerung an die Shoah an Orten ehemaliger Konzentrationslager in West- und Osteuropa. Geschichte, Repräsentation und Geschlecht. Europäische Sommer-Universität Ravensbrück. 15.09.2008-19.09.2008*. H-Soz-u-Kult 2009 [http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=2469]. (Accessed September 27, 2012).

22 See Young, James Edward, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1993.

Are there any differences between the 'official' memory and the documentary? I will analyze this aspect by a close reading of the construction and the rhetoric of the language. *Women in Ravensbrück* says, *Heroines, female martyrs – great words, too often uttered thoughtlessly. What an unimaginable scale of physical power and self-conquest belongs to them, to maintain the will to live. In addition, to sustain comrades who are also suffering by encouraging them and supporting them in their dignity and self-respect for humanity.* [14:01–14:18] The film narrative stresses the universal stereotype of selfless and nurturing women by connecting it to a more general discussion about violence, war, and oppression. The figure of the mother, which was hinted at, is a powerful and frequent metaphor for peace.

However, the film also questions the political exploitation of the concise and static, but by now unfulfilled phrase concerning anti-Fascist martyrdom: great words, too often uttered thoughtlessly. Nevertheless, what else did the film questions? Who are these heroines? The camera gazes at several huge black-and-white portraits of women. The portraits form one part of the museum exhibition, which opened at the same time as the memorial site. The photographs are arranged on a wall and each of them has a caption – where the person's name would usually appear – which simply informs the visitor about the individual's nationality. Accompanied by piano music – a variation of Frederic Chopin's *Funeral March* – we see some of the photographs in detail, others from a distance. The camera puts the viewer in the position of an orchestra and in the role of a spectator of the memorial as well as of the exhibition.

At the end of this scene, one photograph is singled out. It is a portrait of Olga Benario-Prestes. From this point in the film, her individual history/story plays an important role. In her youth Olga Benario was already a member of the German communist organization, and worked with the German Spartacist Otto Braun. In 1926 she was imprisoned, but managed to escape and flee to Moscow. After establishing contacts with the Red Army, she was to organize, with the help of Carlos Prestes, a communist uprising in Brazil, which failed. In 1935 she was imprisoned again, and, under public protest, delivered to Nazi Germany. In the spring of 1939 she came to Ravensbrück as one of the first Jewish prisoners. Little is known about the conditions of her imprisonment. Maybe that was the reason for the growing myth about her personality. Especially in the memories of German communist survivors of Ravensbrück, she was described as an outstanding and highly moral and responsible leader in the Jewish Block. In the spring of 1942 she was murdered in the Nazi Euthanasia hospital Bernburg for anti-Semitic reasons during the so-called '14f13 extermination action.'[23]

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23 All biographical data in: Apel, Linde, *Olga Benario – Kommunistin, Jüdin, Heldin?*, in: Eschebach, Insa, Jacobeit, Sigrid, Lanwerd, Susanne (Eds.), *Die Sprache des Gedenkens. Zur*

Her photograph is displayed in a special glass cabinet surrounded by papers and other documents, all of which is staged as a kind of holy shrine. The most famous document concerning Olga Benario-Prestes is a sketch of an atlas in which she presumably, according to the GDR narrative, had plotted the frontline movements of the allied forces.[24] In the GDR these objects – and thus her personality – were treated like relics and highlighted within the narrative of a communist heroine, without mentioning the fact – and that is the emblematic point – that she was Jewish. Her murder functioned very well as a prototype of a communist martyr. Linde Apel describes this rigorous reinterpretation of the memorial of the murdered Jewess and communist Olga Benario-Prestes, *The specific anti-Jewish aspects that shaped her imprisonment in the camp were connived. The anti-Semitic motif of her murder has been silenced, the destiny of the Jewish inmates obscured. Instead of that, Olga Benario became despite her murder a victress of history.*[25]

Similarly, the framing of the documentary *Women in Ravensbrück* clearly categorizes her as aligned with other communist women as, the commentary accentuates, *[...] soul*[s] *of resistance.* [14:36–14:44]. Within this extremely gender-stereotypical image, the documentary erases not only female political activities but particularly the anti-Semitic aspects of Olga Benario-Prestes' murder. Both visual strategies must be seen as interconnected. The memory of the Jewish women in Ravensbrück was subsequently merged with different national narratives, especially in the East German national narrative. This scene vividly illustrates how this happened. A homogeneous community/state/nation was constructed by the implementation of individual pictures. This 'incorporation' deals with comparisons, analogies, and descriptions – and universalizations. A fundamental egalitarianism of all those who were imprisoned and murdered is constructed by the invocation of universal metaphors, such as dignity, self-respect, and power.

The Romantic Imagination of Female Martyrs

The narrative of female solidarity in the camps was portrayed for the first time in the famous Polish feature film *Ostatni Etap (The Last Stage),* directed by camp survivor Wanda Jakubowska in 1948. This movie, with its impressive depictions and narrations – despite a strong ideological base – influenced subsequent film productions in many ways. *Women in Ravensbrück* emphasized the metaphors

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Geschichte der Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück 1945-1995, Edition Hentrich, Berlin 1999. 197.
24 Linde Apel doubts that Benario-Prestes was the author of this atlas. Ibid. 215, footnote 86. The so-called 'World Atlas' can currently be found in the Ravensbrück archive.
25 Ibid. 212.

that were established in *Ostatni Etap,* through structuralizing and dramatizing rhetoric, melancholic piano music, and the high-contrast black-and-white of the cinematography. All the photographs shown evoke, for example, a female homogeneity in the camp – a kind of idealistic awareness of a women's Nazi camp, which had previously been depicted in the feature film. The entire documentary renders the metaphor of a female heroine/heroism, the principal characteristics of which are altruism and solidarity in the face of suffering; (physical) power and courage in the face of despair, death, and atrocity. It generates a historical consciousness of a specific part of the national past and an awareness of the 'Places of Terror' – the concentration and extermination camps.

However, what else does this metaphor of heroism imply? What kind of consciousness of the past does it also construct? Nancy Leys Stepan wrote about the key role of metaphors in the formation of scientific knowledge – which in this case can be seen as historical knowledge: *The metaphorical system provided the "lenses" through which people experienced and "saw" the differences between classes, races, and sexes, between civilized men and the savage, between rich and poor, between the child and the adult.*[26] In *Women in Ravensbrück* a central metaphor of female heroism/martyrdom is such a 'lens' through which people comprehend the past, and through which people can begin to 'judge' a concentration camp. It implies a range of meanings. Hanno Loewy expounds on the problem from another perspective as follows: *Consciousness of history is not formed in schools or universities, but rather on the editing tables of movie production companies, on stages and sometimes in novels, sometimes in memorial places, whose pictures and concreteness are developing a narrated and dramatic history.*[27]

Nevertheless, the metaphor of female heroism/martyrdom in Ravensbrück has overshadowed historical complexities. Memories of Jewish victims, or other groups such as the Sinti and Romanies, Jehovah's Witnesses, or people who were discriminated and persecuted for other reasons, have been overshadowed. In the official memory of the GDR the specific characteristics of the Holocaust/

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26 Stepan, Nancy Leys, *Race and Gender: the Role of Analogy in Science*, in: Harding, Sandra (Ed.), *The "Racial" Economy of Science: Toward a Democratic Future*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1993. 362.

27 Loewy, Hanno, *Faustische Täter? Tragische Narrative und Historiografie*, in: Paul, Gerhard (Ed.), *Die Täter der Shoah. Fanatische Nationalsozialisten oder ganz normale Deutsche?*, Wallstein-Verlag, Göttingen 2002. 255.

Schoah[28] were suppressed,[29] a suppression that was flanked by and based on explicit effects. *Women in Ravensbrück* insistently asserts the processes of building a 'collective body' a *Kollektivkörper*,[30] through the use of female allegories and metaphors, which symbolize a new – and better – nation.

According to Kathrin Hoffmann-Curtius the figure of the maternal heroine in Ravensbrück is much more an allegory for the nation, associated as it was with female charity and the notion of the suffering of the communist, antifascist resistance fighters.[31] The figure of the 'mother' – representing a wounded mother – and the fatherland – *the German nation* – was therefore exposed. In contrast, such framing simplified real historical events in the camp(s). Hence, as Hoffmann-Curtius points out, it became much more of a political strategy than an examination of the past.[32] The gender-specific *Language of Memory*[33] has precise functions. Primarily, gender plays a significant role in the erasure of the Jewish inmates of Ravensbrück in memory over a long period. Accordingly, the medium of film does the same.

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28 It's also much more important to recognize that neither term was used in the GDR. For the complex pitfalls and strategies of using these terms, compare Heyl, Matthias, *Von den Metaphern und der geteilten Erinnerung – Auschwitz, Holocaust, Schoah, Churban, „Endlösung",* in*:* Schreier, Helmut, and Heyl, Matthias (Eds.), *Die Gegenwart der Schoah: zur Aktualität des Mordes an den europäischen Juden*, Krämer, Hamburg 1994. 29-31.

29 Thomas Haury wrote about the Soviet interpretation of 'fascism' Haury, Thomas, *Antisemitismus von links. Kommunistische Ideologie, Nationalismus und Antizionismus in der frühen DDR*, Hamburger Edition, Hamburg 2002. 310.

30 Christina von Braun emphasized that the 'nation' took on maternal characteristics. Braun, Christina von, *Versuch über den Schwindel. Religion, Schrift, Bild, Geschlecht*, Pendo, Munich 2001. 385 f.

31 Hoffmann-Curtius, Kathrin, *Caritas und Kampf: die Mahnmale in Ravensbrück*, in: Eschebach, Insa, Jacobeit, Sigrid, and Lanwerd, Susanne (Eds.), *Die Sprache des Gedenkens. Zur Geschichte der Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück 1945-1995*, Edition Hentrich, Berlin 1999. 66.

32 Aenne Saefkow, Marga Jung, and Lise Krüger, survivors of Ravensbrück, were at one time involved in the project of the memorial. But after criticizing the architectural concept of the memorial site, especially the Tragende sculpture, their participation was more and more marginalized by the architects and political leaders. Dost, Käthe, *Die 'Tragende' von Will Lammert. Geschichten zur Geschichte*, in: Lagergemeinschaft Ravensbrück / Freundeskreis e.V. (LGRF), Dost, Käthe, Gothe, Lotta, Radosh-Hinder, Silke, Pilath, Monika, Pilath, Ina, and Vollherbst, Gerhild (Eds.), *ravensbrückblätter*, Berlin, Stuttgart 2010. 20.

33 See Eschebach, Insa, Jacobeit, Sigrid, and Lanwerd, Susanne (Eds.), *Die Sprache des Gedenkens. Zur Geschichte der Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück, 1945-1995*, Edition Hentrich, Berlin 1999. For new aspects concerning gender-specific critiques on memory, see Paletschek, Sylvia, and Schraut, Sylvia, *The Gender of Memory: Cultures of Remembrance in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, New York 2008.

However, what else does this national representation stands for? It is, of course, deeply connected with the processes of national identification and the exclusion of others. By verbalizing a collective 'we' the existence of those who do not fit into the narrative of the antifascist fighters – like 'Jews,' 'Sinti and Romanies,' 'homosexuals,' 'criminals,' or 'asocials,'[34] etc. – will either be denied or their entire biographies will be obliterated. This collective 'we' also stands for a specific national territory that implies home, homeland, *Heimat*. For this reason the female metaphor symbolizes a specific whole and it became its function to specify the East German homeland. After the Berlin wall was built – nominated the Antifascist Protection Wall (*Antifaschistischer Schutzwall*) – the GDR needed to defend itself, particulary within a transnational context. The inner configuration, the unstable self-image of the GDR, affects the visual language of *Women in Ravensbrück*. The filmic motif of the heroine of Ravensbrück has to be comprehended in the historical and political context of the late 1960s, which is, e.g., responsible for several connotations, hence subtexts.

Subtexts

The documentary *Women in Ravensbrück* mostly represents the conflict of the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past) of a divided Germany. It concerns the official interpretation, the *Lesart*, of the past but remarkable subtexts as well. The symbol of the exploited but unbroken hero or heroine[35] became an overused icon in East Germany (and not only there). The idea of the heroic antifascist resistance fighter arose simultaneously with the founding moments of the new state of East Germany in 1949. From the beginning, the image was monolithic. This legend had a specific function, and was accordingly used by the GDR – in a simple way – to legitimize the new state's order. It was similarly a self-perception created by specific people or groups. This image is as much a distorted self-image as it is an outspoken desire, a hyperbolical scheme, which does not have a lot to do with real individual life or real events or structures. Nevertheless, it can be seen as a catalyst[36] for a specific assemblage of certain people.

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34 I have used quotation marks here to underscore that these terms comprise Nazi categories.

35 Hoffmann, Detlef, *Das Gedächtnis der Dinge*, in: Id. (Ed.), *Das Gedächtnis der Dinge. KZ-Relikte und KZ-Denkmäler 1945-1995*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, New York 1998. 23.

36 Christina von Braun wrote: *Not only has every historical epoch developed a different image of gender, which gives us information about unconscious fantasies of this age. But it is more important, [...], that behind every image of gender lies an impetus for removing time and consciousness – which is the key motor of occidental thinkings and occidental 'advancements.'*

The advance of a significant Ravensbrück filmic motif can be comprehended as a certain dynamic in social and political processes.

The idea of heroes and heroines was deeply intertwined with concepts of a binary heterosexual order. This gender order concerns a delineated concept of femininity and, in contrast, a static and separate masculinity. Christina von Braun argues that the symbolic gender order refers to Christian concepts.[37] In memories of the Nazi past and the camps in East Germany, a 'Christianization' as mentioned above, means much more. Claudia Koonz observes that, *In the commemorative statues at Ravensbrück, women appear as enduring and noble victims, usually with arms at their sides, level gaze, and proud tilt of the head. In the historical iconography of GDR sculptures, heroic males resist, and women (if depicted at all) perserve. Jews are absent.*[38] Memory has its gender-specific order. This symbolic order of a binary sexuality also refers to real terms in a society. Symbols became – in a sense – material, and vice versa.[39]

This is easily seen, for example, through a topographical presentation of the memorial sites in the GDR. Geography became hierarchical in memory. Irit Rogoff wrote about the complexity of the term 'geography': *Geography is both a form of common knowledge and academic discipline: its language of cartography and topography is so familiar that it seen natural and incontestible. But it is far more than a mode of charting the known world; geography is a source of authority in the fundamental questions of inclusion and exclusion and plays a crucial role in the determination of identity and belonging.*[40]

Topographically situated close to what was the northern end of the GDR, Ravensbrück is more than 80 km from Berlin, on the 'periphery.' In contrast, the memorial sites Sachsenhausen and Buchenwald are situated near political and cultural centers – and borders. They represent another kind of political power.

Braun, Christina von *Die schamlose Schönheit des Vergangenen. Zum Verhältnis von Geschlecht und Geschichte*, Verlag Neue Kritik, Frankfurt am Main 1989. 11.

37 According to Christina von Braun the symbolic order of gender reflects a Christian understanding of unity and 'divine eternity'. Concepts of masculinity and femininity are inseparable terms. Thereby *[...] death and mortality, suffering and wound were connoted with femininity, whereas resurrection and overcoming death are read as signs for masculine power.* Braun, Christina von, *Glauben, Wissen und Geschlecht in den drei Religionen des Buches*, Picus-Verlag, Wien 2009. 37. This opposition can be found in memory as well.

38 Koonz, Claudia, *Between Memory and Oblivion: Concentration Camps in German Memory*, in: Gillis, John R., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey 1994. 267.

39 It has much to do with involvement and marginalization in social and political processes. Even while gender equality was being proclaimed in the GDR, in reality there was no gender equality at all. It is obvious that the gender of memory depends on this.

40 Rogoff, Irit, *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture*, Routledge, London, New York 2000. 1.

The former, Sachsenhausen, is located near the capital, Berlin, and the latter, Buchenwald, near the town of Weimar with its great humanist and philosophical tradition. What I would like to emphasize is the gender-specific, discriminative attention and significance that the memorial sites in the GDR received. Without a doubt, there was probably a different focus on the other memorials than on the memorial in Ravensbrück. In other words, does the peripheral location of Ravensbrück make it possible to inscribe complex subtexts and place a different emphasis on the filmic proposition?

Adopting the thoughts of a hierarchical, gender-specific, and geographical order in memory, I would like to focus on a certain aspect of the collective GDR memory. Concerning the official memory of Ravensbrück, Insa Eschebach suggested [...] *that gender categories structure not only memorialisation of national socialism, but also the strategies of forgetting. Put strongly, one might say that the use of gender images at Ravensbrueck (and other memorial sites in the GDR) served the specific purpose of forgetting.*[41] The Jewish inmates of Ravensbrück have fallen into oblivion by and through such a gender-specific commemoration.

Nevertheless, what does the film *Woman in Ravensbrück* do beside this? Are the Jewish women of Ravensbrück mentioned or forgotten? It has to be said that, beyond the official discourse, which focused on the antifascist myth, the Jewish female inmates were not only sagaciously mentioned but also described in the film. Although the film was commissioned by the memorial site in Ravensbrück, and supported by the GDR committee of the Antifascist Resistance Fighters, the persecuted and murdered Jews were indeed remembered. One question arises: Why should *Women in Ravensbrück* say so much more about the Jewish female inmates in Ravensbrück than that offered by the official rhetoric? When official policies repressed the topic of the Jewish victims, why was it not entirely absent in the documentary *Women in Ravensbrück*?

Present/Absent Jewry

Omer Bartov's analysis of the functions of different images of the *'Jew'* in cinema offers some guidance for my analysis of *Women in Ravensbrück*. Bartov understands for instance the role of the Polish Jewess Marta Weiss, who appears in the movie *Ostatni Etap (The Last Stage/Last Stop)*, as follows, *The Jews, however,*

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[41] Eschebach, Insa, *Engendered Oblivion*: *Commemorating Jewish Inmates at the Ravensbrueck Memorial 1945-95*, in: Baumel, Judith Tydor, and Cohen, Tova (Eds.), *Gender, place, and memory in the modern Jewish experience: re-placing ourselves*, Vallentine Mitchell, London, Portland, Or. 2003. 128.

though they may be victimized as such, have no language, religion, or culture of their own. And, if they happen to manifest a particularly striking heroism, they must be assimilated into the national communist camp.[42] Marta Weiss died in the extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau not as (...) *a Jew, but as a Polish and communist resistance fighter.*[43] Her commemoration is highly connected with national concepts of memory. An outlined image fits into a narrative of a particular national history.[44] Thus images of the 'self' and the 'other' – concerning Jewish 'assimilation' and their voicelessness – became central to the visual language in *Women in Ravensbrück* as well.

In the following section I will examine this rhetoric and visual framing of the remembrance of the Jewish victims of Ravensbrück embedded in the documentary. The persecution of Jews is firstly shown – but not mentioned – about midway through the first third of the film. In a very fast-paced and short scene, we can see images from the *'Kristallnacht'*. Jewish stores are being demolished by the Nazis while groups of 'bystanders' observe and laugh about it. Although the original filmic footage is very dark, we can still see a store with the name Mendelsohn, and in the next scene, a Star of David smeared onto the façade of another store. The voice-over commentary says nothing about the specifics of this footage – an extreme overwriting and covering of historical facts.

In the first third of the documentary we view another scene – but now the explanation is explicit. The voice-over commentary notes that *Women and girls from twenty-three European countries arrived at Ravensbrück, which was for many of them simply a transit station. The Jewish women and the Gipsy women went from here to Auschwitz and Lublin. And, from there to total annihilation. Women who were unable to work had to take the same route – and under the circumstances in the camp most of them rapidly became unable to work.* [10:33–11:05] Shortly after this observation, and again it is still in the first half of the film, the commentary points out *And, when they say they have been kept like animals, even so, this is an inadmissible extenuation. Animals were never kept and treated like these people, whose 'crimes' only lie in their parentage, in their religion, in their nationality, in their political attitude.* [11:43–12:00]

We can surely comprehend those scenes as an attempt to depict and describe the history of the camp in a more differentiated way. However, we have to ask if

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42 Bartov, Omer, *The "Jew" in Cinema: From the Golem to Don't Touch My Holocaust*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indianapolis 2005. 173.

43 Ibid. 171.

44 Even today her story is embedded in a specific Polish-Jewish narrative. See the comic book *Episoden aus Auschwitz. Liebe im Schatten des Todes*, by Michał Gałek and Marcin Nowakowski, published in 2009 by the memorial site Auschwitz-Birkenau.

these differentiations were the results of a substantiated historical exploration of the past or even results of a more and precise general knowledge about the Holocaust/Schoah in the 1960s? Even when one realizes that the montage of original film footage is a montage of filmic 'icons of extermination' – to use Cornelia Brink's phrase – one can discern much more from it today? But why were these images not also comprehendible at that time? Were those scenes really 'unreadable' beside an official political subsumption – which is indubitably more than an interpretation – of the historical past?

According to a particular GDR apprehension of 'Fascism' as being a result of the aggressive desire of certain financial capitalists, working class Germans were therefore the foremost victims of Hitler, who, in the context of this ideology, was a marionette of financial capitalism.[45] This misinterpretation, as Thomas Haury has stressed, demonstrated a total inability on the part of the Moscow KPD leadership to recognize the breakdown of civilization, the *Zivilisationsbruch* (Dan Diner), in the Nazi extermination camps.[46] In addition, by the 1950s the GDR had unashamedly established a hierarchy of victimhood. Susanne zur Nieden considers this as the beginning of the silence concerning victims who do not fit into the narrative of the antifascist resistance fight.[47] The gender aspects of this 'order' are remarkable – an active, aggressive, masculine fight against a passive, feminine suffering. The murder of the European Jewry because subsumed to the latter.

How does the documentary refer to the Jewish victims in Ravensbrück? It is conspicuous that the filmmakers placed such trust in the found footage scenes of the film and in original photographs and sketches. Each format had its own narrative quality while giving evidence or an argument. Most of the photographs used in the film were not taken in Ravensbrück, but at Auschwitz-Birkenau. It is an iconographic montage, probably intended to evoke an emotional reaction in the viewer. The historical authenticity of places, facts, or people was less important than the generating of a sense of tragedy and sympathy using this material.[48]

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45 The Soviet's definition of 'Fascism' was formulated by Georgi Dimitrov. Lexikon, Meyers Neues *Lexikonredaktion des VEB Bibliografisches Institut Leipzig* (Eds.), Leitung Göschel, Heinz, Leipzig 1972. 499.

46 Haury, Thomas, *Antisemitismus von links. Kommunistische Ideologie, Nationalismus und Antizionismus in der frühen DDR*, Hamburger Edition, Hamburg 2002. 310

47 Nieden, Susanne zur, *Unwürdige Opfer: die Aberkennung von NS-Verfolgten in Berlin 1945 bis 1949*, Metropol, Berlin 2003. 292.

48 Doosry, Yasmin, *Vom Dokument zur Ikone: Zur Rezeption des Auschwitz-Albums*, in: Id. (Ed.), *Representations of Auschwitz. 50 Years of Photographs, Paintings, and Graphics. Exhibition at Pałac Sztuki. Kraków, 11. July-20. August 1995*, Published for the department of European Studies Jagiellonian University, Kraków with the support of the Tempus Project 'Civil Society and Social Change in Europe after Auschwitz'. Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Oświęcim. 103.

The twelve impressive sketches, which illustrate the last scene (above), unfold an especially idiosyncratic narrative. They 're-present' what happened in the camp – in their own way and contrary to the official narrative – in a manner which is much more differentiated than that of the commentary or the eyewitnesses in the film. That is my point. The ideological focus of the memorial is inexorable and unyielding. It is primarily committed to educating the younger generation concerning the political orders of the SED. Nevertheless, the film strives to differentiate historical events with a sense of equipoise. I suggest that in spite – or because – of the high ambitions of the authorities, the documentary *Women in Ravensbrück* has acquired a life of its own.

Whether it was recognized by viewers from the beginning or not, the imposed political interpretation has eroded by degrees. Today's viewers seem to be surprised by those scenes, not expecting this historical complexity. It is obvious that this was intended by the filmmakers from the start. The complex scenes portraying the persecution and murder of the European Jews demonstrate other filmic implications – even if most of them were implemented in a national narrative. Several other subtexts can easily be found in the documentary.[49] Without a doubt this was a subliminal criticism by the filmmakers. Moreover, regardless of the importance of this official contribution to the national East German memory this filmic strategy in *Women in Ravensbrück* can be seen as a political critique. However, one might ask, maybe this official framing presents an opportunity – to look beyond official arguments.

Finally, I would like to come back to the formation of the filmic – and acoustical – *lieu de mémoire*: *Women in Ravensbrück*. In 1964, at the peak of the Cold War, the famous pianist Artur Rubinstein gave a powerful concert in the renowned Moscow Conservatory. The concert, whose recording was released as Artur Rubinstein's *The Recital in Moscow*[50], was generally interpreted by the West as an attempt to mediate between political antagonists. Rubinstein performed, apart from other piano works of Frédéric Chopin, Robert Schumann, Claude Debussy and Heitor Villa-Lobos, Chopin's elegiac Piano Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor, Op. 35, CT. 202. This piece of music includes the famous *Marche Funèbre*. This particular funeral march was played during obsequies held for high-ranking politi-

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49 Most remarkable is a direct reference to the ongoing events in 1968 in Prague.
Baumgärtner, Katja, *Mediale Repräsentation des Frauenkonzentrationslagers Ravensbrück im historisch-politischen Kontext nach 1945 – Interdependenzen von Erinnerung und Geschlecht*, Magistraarbeit zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades Magistra Artium (M.A.) im Fach Gender Studies. Berlin, (Unpublished Work): Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin 2009. 52-53.
50 Rubinstein, Artur (2008) *The Legendary Moscow Recital 1 October 1964, Chopin, Debussy, Schumann, Villa-Lobos*, DVD, Ideale Audience International.

cians, throughout the Eastern Bloc, but particularly in the Soviet Union. Was the use of this funeral march as a leitmotif by the makers of *Women in Ravensbrück* really a simple case of coincidence? In this regard, one could hear/read/see the *Marche Funèbre* as a political statement – ostensibly ideologically correct but within a specific subtext. This is one form of a historical dynamic that was not at all directed by authorities. I would like to repeat my note above: One might ask, maybe the official frame of the film presented an opportunity to explore further – particularly for those viewers who were interested in it.

Conclusion

Film – and particularly documentary film – is a basic medium for generating national identities and coherence. Film can also have inherently progressive or subversive tendencies. Intellectuals often use film to elaborate new, sometimes abstract, criticisms or statements about human relationships and societies. For the Surrealists, film meant much more than a representation of reality – it was a revolution, a critique of values. It is clear to a certain extent, as Siobhan Kattago has asserted, *[...] that intellectuals are one of the important carriers of collective identity. Intellectuals such as novelists, public historians, filmmakers and philosophers represent different – often competing – conceptions of identity and memory.*[51]

In the case of East and West Germans' coming to terms with their past after 1945, films and filmmakers play an important role. On the one hand, filmmakers, writers, and other artists create diverse and ambitious views of the past.[52] On the other hand, intellectuals also promote intentionally political and ideological objectives. It is quite clear that subversive tendencies may be discerned (even) in ideological works. In the case of the commemoration of Ravensbrück, female characters/femininity became a space for explorations concerning the past. While the suffering of the Jews during the first twenty years after 1945 was widely ignored in official memory, it was not always so.[53] The 1968 documentary *Women in Ravensbrück* generated new and manifested old views on the past. Conceptions

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51 Kattago, Siobhan, *Ambiguous Memory, the Nazi Past and German National Identity*, Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, London 2001, 3.
52 They also create specific strategies to defend or transform German guilt, the figure of the 'mother' particularly acts as such. See Heukenkamp, Ursula, *Das Frauenbild in der antifaschistischen Erneuerung der SBZ*, in: Stephan, Inge (Ed.), *"Wen kümmert's wer spricht"*. *Zur Literatur und Kulturgeschichte von Frauen aus Ost und West*, Cologne, Vienna, 1991, 10 f.
53 See Niven, Bill, and Paver, Chloe, *Memorialization in Germany Since 1945*, Palgrave Macmillan 2010.

of gender are specific and essential projections *(Aushandlungsflächen)* to make history comprehensible for contemporary and successive generations, especially during times of significant cultural changes, to wit, note the year that *Women in Ravensbrück* was originally released, 1968.

Despite the strong ideologies of the GDR and despite the border between the two Germanies, both countries created ambiguous strategies concerning forgetting and memory while simultaneously observing and evaluating each other. Films reflect this. The case of the women's concentration camp at Ravensbrück acts as a kind of motor for the collective memory – Ravensbrück is a kind of 'landscape' that enables the conducting of progressive debates. Film creates a policy of metaphors concerning this. However, maybe it is the easier or even the only possible way. Maybe it is important to consider that the medium of film always has to do with a specific subjective perception of reality. Watching scenes or images on film is probably the easier way to relate to one's own historical knowledge and awareness than looking at art or reading books. This direct impact is what makes film the perfect medium for propaganda. To understand the tension of memory in the East German memorial Ravensbrück, one has to notice the documentary and the assertions made concerning the memorial. *Women in Ravensbrück* is a *lieu de mémoire*, a result of a collective memory in negotiation with gender, identity, and a highly specific order of society.

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Alina Gromova

A City of Mind

Berlin in the Perception of Young Russian-Speaking Jewish Migrants

> At every instant, there is more than the eye can see, more than the ear can hear, a setting or a view waiting to be explored. Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings, the sequences of events leading up to it, the memory of past experiences.[1]

Jewish Experience or Why Bother About Space?

In the beginning of the 1980s the so-called 'spatial turn' entered the humanities and social sciences. This innovative view replaced an understanding of space as a mere container for people, things, and ideas that remains stable over time, with a concept of space as a fluid and permanently (re)constructed notion.[2] Thus, space itself became a focus for research and an analytical category in itself. Within Jewish Studies, the spatial approach has been neglected for a long time, and it was not until 2008 that the first anthology on Jewish space, entitled *Jewish Topographies. Visions of Space. Traditions of Place,*" appeared.[3] Prior to that publication, time rather than space was what scholars analyzed within the framework of the Jewish experience. Time was regarded as the metaphorical eternal wandering of the displaced and thus placeless people, whose home – if they had one at all – was located within their evanescent spirituality.

However, when approaching Jewish experiences from the vantage point of anthropology, it becomes a touchstone for the changed meaning of the residence in the postmodern, globalized world we live in today.[4] In the age of migration and mobility, characterized by such phrases and terms as 'transnational culture

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1 Lynch, Kevin, *The Image of the City*, Cambridge et al. 1960, 1.

2 Döring, Jörg /Thielmann, Tristan (Eds.), *Spatial Turn. Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*, Bielefeld 2008.

3 Lipphardt, Anna / Brauch, Julia / Nocke, Alexandra (Eds.), *Jewish Topographies. Visions of Space. Traditions of Place*. Aldershot et al. 2008.

4 The following argumentation was published previously in German in the Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde, 1/2012, Basel.

flows'[5] and 'global ethnoscapes',[6] the place where people live, their home, the (local) residence has acquired a new meaning. Today, the Jewish diaspora experience, which has been formative for Jews for millennia, stands prototypically for the deterritorialization of the world and for the relocation of culture.

Interestingly, the proverbial 'homelessness' of Jews is spatialized in the context of specific territorial units. The recent example of Jewish migration demonstrates this situation very well. The 'exodus' of Jews from the former Soviet Union, which began to occur en mass in the late 1980s to early 1990s, was deeply rooted in questions of territory. With the establishment of the state of Israel, the Soviet government began accusing Jews of having not just one homeland but two – the Soviet Union and Israel – which according to Soviet ideology was regarded as traitorous and Jews, therefore, were considered enemies of the Soviet people.[7] After the parting of the iron curtain, the decision to stay in or to leave the former Soviet Union was strongly influenced by this territorial dichotomy.

Young Russian-Speaking Jews in Berlin: Background and Methodology

To a large extent, because of those territorial issues in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Jews, as they had countless times before, became emblematic of a prototypical ethno-religious mass migration. Out of over 1.6 million Jews from Russia, Ukraine, and other Soviet successor states who have left their home country during the past twenty years, more than 200,000 (including Jews and their non-Jewish kin) have chosen Germany as their destination.[8] And in terms of numbers, the influx into the German capital has been unrivaled. Whereas prior to

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5 Hannerz, Ulf, *'Kultur' in einer vernetzten Welt. Zur Revision eines ethnologischen Begriffs*. In: Kaschuba, Wolfgang (Ed.), *Kulturen – Identitäten – Diskurse: Perspektiven europäischer Ethnologie*. Berlin 1995, 64-84.

6 Appadurai, Arjun, *Global Ethnoscapes. Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology*. In: Fox, Richard G. (Ed.), Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present. Santa Fe 1995, 191-210.

7 Pinkus, Benjamin, *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority*. Cambridge et al. 1988.

8 Haug, Sonja, *Soziodemographische Merkmale, Berufsstruktur und Verwandtschaftsnetzwerke jüdischer Zuwanderer*. Herausgegeben vom Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2007, 8. http://www.bamf.de/cln_101/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/ Migration/Publikationen/Forschung/WorkingPapers/wp8-merkmale-juedische-zuwanderer,te mplateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/wp8-merkmale-juedische-zuwanderer.pdf.

the fall of the Wall Berlin had been home to only about 6,000 Jews and its Jewish life had largely been stagnating, the number of its Jewish residents quadrupled following the events of 1989, and has increased to approximately 25,000 residents today.[9] Thus, thanks to the post-Soviet migration, Berlin took first place as the fastest growing Jewish community anywhere, not just in Europe.

In my ethnological research I am analyzing the 1.5 Generation of Russian-speaking Jews who live in Berlin and who are today between eighteen and thirty-five years old. The term 1.5 generation refers to those who were born in the Soviet Union or its successor states and left for Germany between 1990 and 2010, when they were school students or younger. These young Russian, Ukrainian, Baltic, and Caucasian migrants brought with them their different cultural identities as Jews and as post-Soviets, which they have had to renegotiate in the context of German and German-Jewish culture. Referring to the work of Gupta and Ferguson, who claim that the processes of 'people-making' and 'place-making' go hand in hand,[10] I argue that for these young Jewish migrants the negotiation of their identity is closely tied with the construction and acquisition of the city space in which they live. For those who live in Berlin these processes are influenced by its decidedly urban nature, as well as by the specific history, sociopolitics, and topography of the city itself.

While a considerable number of studies have been conducted on the processes of integration, identity-formation, and the lifestyles of Russian Jews in Germany, these studies have dealt almost exclusively with the first generation.[11] We know hardly anything about the younger generation and nothing about the interaction of identity and urban surroundings in that context. It seems likely, that this is, first, because the older generation still constitutes the largest segment among Russian-Jewish migrants, and secondly, most of the analyses have been sociological in nature, drawing their information from Jewish official organizations. The sources of firsthand data have almost exclusively been generated from among members of these organizations. However, according to various surveys, the majority of young Russian-speaking Jews in Germany are not affiliated with

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9 Hegner, Victoria, *Gelebte Selbstbilder. Gemeinden russisch-jüdischer Migranten in Chicago und Berlin*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 2008, 124.

10 Gupta, Akhil / Ferguson, James, Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era. In: Id. (Eds.), Culture, Power, Place. Explorations in Critical Anthropology, Durham/London 1997, 1-29.

11 Bodemann, Michal Y. (Ed.), *The New German Jewry and the European Context. The Return of the European Jewish Diaspora*, Hampshire/New York 2008; Larissa Remennick: Russian Jews on three continents: identity, integration, and conflict, New Brunswick 2007; Julius H. Schoeps/Willi Jasper/Bernhard Vogt (Eds.), Fremd- und Eigenbilder der russisch-jüdischen Einwanderer, Potsdam 1999.

any Jewish organization, instead using informal networks to keep in touch with their ethnic peer groups.[12]

In order to find out more about the interaction of the migrants' practices and their urban environment, I have chosen a mental mapping approach, a methodology promulgated by Kevin Lynch. In his work *The Image of the City*, Lynch claims that in order to evoke the image of a city one has to ask the actual inhabitants how they perceive the city they live in. Lynch assumes that "[e]ach individual creates and bears his own image, but there seems to be substantial agreement among members of the same group."[13] According to Lynch, these 'mental maps' are located at a symbolic level and are the results of the interaction between the individual agents and their physical environment. Applied to the topic of my research, these images of the city reflect cultural representations and metaphorical states of belonging for these migrants, which are, in turn, influenced and codefined by the urban character of their personal metropolis. In order to gain access to such mental maps, I am using a mixture of data collecting methods, which include map drawing, participant observation, personal interviews, as well as so-called perception walks.

In what follows I will introduce some strategies related to specific urban features that I have found to be characteristic for young Russian-speaking Jews in Berlin.

"Ku'damm is the most beautiful tusovka"

Lynch speaks of image elements into which we conveniently divide the master image of our city. Around such elements we create various defining systems or grids in order to organize our world. One of these salient elements is, according to Lynch, a *district*. He describes districts as "relatively large city areas which the observer can mentally go inside of, and which have some common character. They can be recognized internally, and occasionally can be used as external reference as a person goes by or towards them."[14] In one mind-mapping session

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12 Bodemann, Michal Y. / Bagno, Olena, *In the Ethnic Twilight: the Paths of Russian Jews in Germany*. In: Bodemann, Y. Michal (Ed.), *The New German Jewry and the European Context. The Return of the European Jewish Diaspora*, Hampshire/New York 2008, 158-176, Kessler, Judith, *Homo Sovieticus in Disneyland: the Jewish Communities in Germany Today*. In: Bodemann, Michal Y. (Ed.), *The New German Jewry and the European Context. The Return of the European Jewish Diaspora*, Hampshire/New York 2008, 131-143.
13 Lynch, Kevin, *The Image of the City*, Cambridge et al. 1960, 7.
14 Ibid., 66.

Leonia, a 17-year-old migrant from Ukraine was asked to draw the places in Berlin that are relevant to his life. He starts with the western Berlin district of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf and uses the term 'my district' when describing it. His description coincides with recent statistical data that identify Charlottenburg as the place where most of the Russian-speaking Jews in Berlin live.[15] In some studies Charlottenburg is nostalgically called "Charlottengrad" an allusion to this area having been the cultural center for the Eastern European Jews in Berlin in the 1920s.[16] Then Leonia marks Kurfürstendamm (or Ku'damm), a street in Charlottenburg, as his most important place in the city:

> Because this is for me Berlin. I live in this city and Ku'damm shows simply how beautiful it is, and I love meeting my friends there. And yes, I like to hang around there. It is just that there are always a lot of things going on, and it shows perfectly what a big city Berlin is, a center, a metropolis. It is nice there and you meet a large variety of people. It is just perfect to show somebody the city there. Because I just think that Ku'damm is the most beautiful and the loudest, how you say it in German, *tusovka* (uses a Russian word for 'youth scene').[17]

For Leonia, the variety of stimuli and attractions a metropolis has to offerwhat Georg Simmel calls the 'tempo' of a city,[18] is concentrated along Ku'damm. The fact that he is looking for these attractions, rather than being concerned or repulsed by them, identifies him as an urbanite. When As Leonia goes on drawing his map of Berlin, it is becoming apparent that the Ku'damm he has in mind does not coincide precisely with the 'real' Ku'damm. When asked to draw places he goes to on Ku'damm, he draws a totally different street, Tauentzienstraße, which at its western end turns into Ku'damm. He also draws various side streets, the names of which names he does not remember but which he describes as also being Ku'damm. It is obvious that in his mind Ku'damm loses the character of a street. While Leonia draws, this street is literally extending and absorbing, one after another, the neighboring streets, alleys, and squares. It becomes a district – a relatively large city area that he can mentally enter, and which, for him, has common characteristics. Ku'damm becomes a synonym for Charlottenburg itself; it becomes his own 'Kurfürstengrad.'

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15 Kessler, Judith, *Charlottengrad oder Scheunenviertel – Zum (räumlichen) Lebensumfeld älterer jüdischer Migranten in Berlin*, 2004. www.berlin-judentum.de/news/2004/12/altern. html.

16 Ibid.

17 Interview and mental mapping session, 8 January 2010.

18 Simmel, Georg, *Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben*, Frankfurt am Main 2006, p. *9* [primary publication in: *Die Großstadt. Vorträge und Aufsätze zur Städteausstellung. Jahrbuch der Gehe-Stiftung zu Dresden,* Band IX, Dresden 1903, 185-206].

What does Leonia's perception of Ku'damm tell us about his identity? For Leonia, Ku'damm is also the place where the Jewish Youth Center of a Jewish community is located, where he goes occasionally to meet his friends. When he is asked to give the directions to this Youth Center, he says immediately: "It is easy. It is on Ku'damm." But then he explains where to turn and which street to cross in order to reach the Center if you actually come from Ku'damm. In reality, the Center is located on Joachimstaler Straße . He says that the Youth Center is located in the 'synagogue' where nearly everyone speaks Russian. For him, this is one of the places in Berlin where he can talk in his mother tongue and meet his Russian-speaking friends:

> We were a group, a community of, let's say, ten people, ten Jews, sometimes more. And we used to discuss different topics, sometimes we used to play, sometimes we used to talk about important political issues or anything like this.[19]

Leonia's mental map shows us that, in order to deal with the complexity of his identities, he uses a coping strategy that I would like to call a 'strategy of extending': he is extending and projecting one street onto the entire district. In terms of identity, this strategy allows him to order his self-image, which consists of many parts, such as being Jewish, Russian, and German at the same time. In his mind he places Tauentzienstraße, where he hangs around with his German-born school friends, Joachimstaler Straße, where the Jewish Youth Center is located, and a synagogue where "everybody speaks Russian" at Ku'damm. Therefore, he unconsciously uses topographical conglomeration or extension to bring order into the chaotic plurality of choices for identity construction that Berlin offers him.

"We live in a Jewish district, and you in a Russian-German one"

While talking about 'his district.' Leonia uses the word 'border' several times. When pointing out the location of his school on the blank map of Berlin, he says: "I am not sure whether my school is located in Charlottenburg or in Spandau. It is on the border between these two." What Leonia describes as *border*, Lynch calls the *edge*. In addition to *district*, Lynch recognizes the *edge* as another image element that individuals use in order to apprehend their city. He defines edges as "linear elements not considered as paths: they are usually, but not quite always,

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19 Interview and mental mapping session, 8 January 2010.

the boundaries between two kinds of areas."[20] This definition is a relevant one for Diana, a 29-year-old migrant from Ukraine. For her, the boundary between the two districts, Charlottenburg and Spandau, plays a central role in her perception of Berlin. As she is showing me her Berlin, on the way to her flat we catch the Underground train that goes in the direction of Spandau:

> Actually I live in Charlottenburg, not in Spandau, directly on the border between the two districts. My house is the last house in Charlottenburg. Behind this house Spandau begins. Also in my passport it says: Berlin-Charlottenburg. When I came to the central district council in order to register my place of residence, a man who worked there asked for my street. Goebel Street, I answered. And then he said to me: "So what are you doing here? You should go to a district council of Spandau." Then he looked it up in the computer and said: "Oh, indeed, your house is still in Charlottenburg." My husband has a big family and all of them live in Spandau. And sometimes I say to them, we live in a Jewish district and you live in a Russian-German one. And then they are offended.d[21]

The fact that Diana's house is 'still in Charlottenburg' clearly has a symbolic meaning for her. Compared to Spandau and its residents, Charlottenburg, has somehow attained a higher status, and so has Diana because she now lives there. This becomes clear in her last sentence: Her husband's family is offended when she tells them that they live in a Russian-German district, and not in a Jewish one. At this point, Diana's image of Berlin's topography is strongly interwoven with an ethnic, topographic inscription. The borderline dividing two ethnic groups turns out to be the borderline between two districts.

In order to understand the dynamics of this division, we need to know Diana's biographical background and explain the formation of the Russian-speaking minority within German society. Diana's husband is, like herself, a migrant from the former Soviet Union, but is not Jewish. While Diana arrived in Germany under the special law for Jewish refugees, the so-called 'Contingency Refugee Act.' her husband belongs to the group of ethnic German repatriates (*Aussiedler*), who were invited to come to Germany from the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Although the members of both migrant groups speak Russian and have the same country of origin, Jews and ethnic Germans carry, in many respects, different cultural and religious values. The fact that they entered Germany through two different migratory gates, which assigns them different legal status within German society, emotionally charges their awareness of each, including reciprocal prejudices and sometimes open hostility.[22]

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20 Lynch, Kevin, *The Image of the City*, Cambridge et al. 1960, 62.

21 Perception walk, 11.11.2009.

22 Baerwolf, Astrid, *Identitätsstrategien von jungen ‚Russen' in Berlin. Ein Vergleich zwischen russischen Deutschen und russischen Juden*. In: Ipsen-Peitzmeier, Sabine / Kaiser, Markus

Although married to an ethnic German, which necessarily results in shared values, Diana still perceives her husband's family as proponents of values starkly different from those she and her own ethnic group hold. According to Bourdieu's distinction theory, youth and young adults in particular find it necessary to put up or use existing lines of demarcation between themselves and other groups in order to enhance their own sense of belonging.[23] Diana describes her city using a strategy of distinction. This even takes a physical form when we are on the way to her flat. In order to get there we have to negotiate a pedestrian tunnel underneath the house, about which Diana says:

> Do you see this tunnel? It divides the house into two parts. On the right side is Charlottenburg, on the left side is Spandau. You see, here it is even written 'SD' for 'Siemensdamm.' a synonym for the Siemens factory in Spandau. The other side is already Charlottenburg.[24]

So, every time Diana comes home, she is reassured of her Jewishness by literally diving deep into the architecture of her own house. A physical experience of identity becomes possible through the material structure of the city.

How to Become a "Real" Berliner

The story of Charlottenburg continues when I call Fabian, a 29-year-old Russian migrant to ask him for an interview. He agrees immediately, gives me his address, and invites me to his place for the next evening. I get off the train in the heart of the old borough in the west of Berlin, Charlottenburg. In Fabian's flat, I feel like I am in a palace: four-meter-high ceilings covered with fine stucco, huge airy rooms, lit brightly through wide windows. In the middle of a bookshelf an Israeli flag and a silver menorah mark the place unmistakably as Jewish. I put a white sheet of paper in front of Fabian and ask him to draw Berlin with the places that belong to his everyday life. He doesn't even need a minute to think about the task, grabs a pencil, and the first thing comes out: "Well, here in the middle there was a wall. It divides Berlin into two parts, Eastern and Western." He uses the line where the wall used to be as the grid for his drawing.

(Eds.), *Zuhause fremd. Russlanddeutsche zwischen Russland und Deutschland*, Bielefeld 2006, 173-196.

23 Bourdieu, Pierre, *Die Feinen Unterschiede: Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Urteilskraft*, Bielefeld 2007.

24 Perception walk, 11 November 2009.

The idea that many Germans are still aware of that line, that replaces the Berlin wall, is not new. For those who grew up in the divided city, the division of Berlin is still stored in their memory. It is interesting that for many young migrants who, like Fabian, came to Germany after the wall came down, the East-West dichotomy also influences strongly their perception of the city. Marta, a 30-year-old migrant from Lithuania, starts her story with the sentence:

> When I lived in Düsseldorf and used to come to Berlin to visit my friends, my Berlin used to be the western part. I liked this part very much. When I first came to Berlin, I arrived at the Zoo station. Then I knew the Zoo area very well, I know Ku'damm and so forth. But by now, after I moved to Berlin [...], I started loving the East more than the West – everything that starts at Hackescher Markt and goes in the direction of Alexander Platz. For me, this is real Berlin.[25]

The fact that young migrants use the nonexistent wall as a grid for their perception of the city's space is remarkable. It demonstrates that a space does not exist *per se* but is produced by people in cultural and social interaction, and, as Bernd Hamm correctly observes, exists in the first instance in people's interpretation.[26] In this context, Michael Mayerfeld Bell talks about 'the ghosts of place'.[27] By which he means that people or artifacts that are not physically present anymore constitute an inextricable aspect of the phenomenology of the place that is reflected in the experience of this place.

For most of my interviewees, the awareness of West or East Berlin does not loom large but is rather projected onto specific districts within the city. It is striking that many Russian-speaking Jews live in a western borough of Berlin – Charlottenburg – as Fabian does. While there are statistics that show that the majority of the elderly members of the Jewish community live in this area[28] there is no information on another aspect: Where do their children go when they move out of their parents' home? Based on my experience, a large number of them stay in the same area. It seems that one of the reasons for choosing Charlottenburg as a place of residence is a strong identification with the 'real' Berlin and its citizens. As a matter of fact, Charlottenburg is often described as an old Berlin borough. As one of my informants, Alex, says about Charlottenburg:

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25 Interview, 19 March 2010.

26 Hamm, Bernd, *Einführung in die Siedlungssoziologie*, Munich 1982.

27 Mayerfeld Bell, *Michael, The Ghosts of Place*, in: Theory and Society, Nr. 26, 1997, 813-836.

28 Kessler, Judith, *Charlottengrad oder Scheunenviertel – Zum (räumlichen) Lebensumfeld älterer jüdischer Migranten in Berlin*, 2004. www.berlin-judentum.de/news/2004/12/altern.html.

> The kind of people who live here is really classical West Berlin. [...] It is an area where people know each other and have lived together for a very long time. It is rather unspectacular, though. There is hardly anything here that catches your eye, but you have everything you need – a good infrastructure and great public transport connections.[29]

Fabian, whom I mentioned earlier, spoke similarly about Charlottenburg:

> You can live here very well although there is nothing to do in this area. It's a boring, respectable quarter. I am really sorry for you if you grew up in Charlottenburg or Wilmersdorf. It is great to live here, it has a healthy infrastructure, no youth gangs who create problems, it is quiet and you don't have a number of other conflicts. But if you want to go out for dinner, you need to go to Prenzlauer Berg or Mitte.[30]

So, it is solid infrastructure, good transportation, and peace and quiet that are valued in Charlottenburg by young Russian-speaking Jews. When one reads the above descriptions, it resonates with what Gerhard Schulze, who analyzed milieu specific structures used in cities, calls 'high level milieu.'[31] In contrast to the category of 'harmony milieu.' whose members prefer to stay in the area they live in all the time, those classified as 'high level milieu' value good transportion connections because those connections allow them to use the whole city area and to get quickly from one place to another.

However, the description above could apply to any group of people and is therefore only one part of the story. So I turn to Jewish religious life in Charlottenburg to look for a specific cultural and ethnic context. Most of my Charlottenburg-based interviewees would put the community center of Chabad Lubawitsch, a Hasidic branch of ultraorthodox Judaism, on their Berlin map. Chabad Lubawitsch opened its synagogue and community center in 2007 in Berlin-Charlottenburg and soon became the favorite destination for many Russian-speaking Jews.[32] While it is obvious that Chabad chose their location on Münstersche Straße because of the large number of Jews who live in that area, only a few Russian Jews would claim that they moved to Charlottenburg in order to be closer to the Center. However, since Chabad is located there, and its services and lectures attract a lot of young people, it plays a large role in the construction of Jewish space in Berlin-Charlottenburg.

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29 Interview, 31 July 2010.

30 Interview, 28 June 2010.

31 Schulze, Gerhard, *Milieu und Raum*, in: Noller, Peter (Ed.), *Stadt-Welt:Über die Globalisierung städtischer Milieus*, Frankfurt am Main et al. 1994.

32 Brumlik, Micha, *Der christliche Gedanke. Chabad Lubawitsch: Hilfe, Bedrohung oder beides?* In: Bodemann, Michal Y./ Brumlik, Micha (Eds.), *Juden in Deutschland – Deutschland in den Juden. Neue Perspektiven*, Göttingen 2010, 112-119

For most Chabad visitors, the community center is not so much a place of religious inspiration as a place where they meet other Jews. It is also a place where Jews from the former Soviet Union can talk in Russian with each other. As one can hear at Chabad center, the Russian language dominates this space. Chabad also runs an extensive internet presence in Russian advertising the youth club, kindergarten, and religious learning center.

When I ask Fabian where he meets other Jews in Berlin, he says:

> At Chabad of course. For people like me, who are not particular[ly] religious, a Kabbalat Shabbat is a cultural activity. The idea here is tradition and a certain rite. When I go to Kabbalat Shabbat at Chabad it is as if you went together with your German friends out of politeness to listen to the Gospel of Matthew in their church. Besides, in this case the liturgy has a different meaning for me than to my friends. Chabad gives me a Jewish tradition which I can pass on to my children in the future."[33]

Chabad, of course, is just one religious Jewish sect out of many that exist in Berlin. Many of the commentators on the Jewish religious landscape in Germany stress that Berlin is home to an incomparable plethora of orthodox, ultraorthodox, and progressive Jewish movements, which is only possible because of the specifically metropolitan character of the capital city. Hartmut Bomhoff, one of the organizers of the progressive rabbinical seminary Abraham-Geiger-Kolleg, recently noted that the activity of Jewish religious organizations in Berlin is strongly defined by the rivalry for new members. "In Berlin," Bomhoff oserved, "we have a conflicting situation which you won't find in such a strong form in other German cities." And concerning Chabad: "Chabad gives people a warm and welcoming atmosphere, Chabad meets people in person, gives them a family. Russians also go to Chabad because they look for immediate answers. No easy answers but immediate ones."[34]

One of the reasons that many young singles and young families from the former Soviet Union choose Chabad when it comes to religious services is that Chabad is often the only Jewish religious movement they know from their experience in the Soviet Union. With the Iron Curtain's fall, it was the Chabad Lubawitsch movement that became very active in that vast territory of the former united Soviet republics. Another Jewish organization that arrived in the Soviet Union very quickly was the Jewish Agency for Israel, which was of course Zionist and explicitly secular. That is why for those young Jews, who left the Soviet Union when they were in their teens, Chabad often soon became familiar and intimate,

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33 Interview, 28 June 2010.
34 Talk on "The Progressive Jewish Movement in Germany", Berlin, Centrum Judaicum, Germany-Close-Up Program, 14 July 2010.

a place from back home. Growing up in an atmosphere of financial hardships, having both parents working full time, for the Soviet Jewish teenagers Chabad frequently became a place where they could get extra food, and a warm welcome, and enjoy the safe family atmosphere for which Chabad is well-known (and often criticized as an obvious strategy of inter-Jewish proselytizing. Thus, young ex-Soviet Jews construct their Jewish Charlottenburg by using childhood memories and experiences they had as children and teenagers prior to migrating.

Conclusion

Young Russian-speaking Jewish migrants in Berlin use their spatial environment in order to structure and form their identity. For Leonia, Ku'damm has become a symbol for the unification of his Jewish, Russian and German allegiances. Extending one street to the status of a whole district, he has succeeded to surround bits and pieces of his identity with one circumference and weave it into a single garment. For Diana, the border between Charlottenburg and Spandau is symbolic for the border between two ethnic groups, Jews and Russian-Germans. In setting the boundaries between these two districts and distinguishing her home district from the one of her husband's family, she reassures herself of her own group integration. Both Leonia and Diana are creating 'their' places and using topographical features in order to cope with the diversity, flexibility, and chaos that Berlin offers.

    The construction of space is strongly dominated by personal and collective memory and perception. In the case of the East-West dichotomy, the memory at work is based on social communication and interpretation. Such a divided perception of the city goes hand in hand with the strong desire of young Russian-speaking Jews to perceive themselves as 'real' Berliners – a desire motivated by their migration experience and a specific German-Jewish context. In the case of the Chabad Community Center, the construction of space is defined by personal memories of preimmigration life and childhood. The Chabad center is associated with a family atmosphere. As such, it contributes significantly to the construction of Jewish Charlottenburg as a home and family district. My assumption is that in the space-constructing processes of young Russian-speaking Jews, different Berlin boroughs are assigned other functions, e.g., providing party life or places in which to spend leisure time. However, this topic provides the basis for another story.

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Lea Wohl von Haselberg
Between *Self* and *Other*

Representations of Mixed Relationships in Contemporary German Film and Television

It is not just the influx of Russian Jews from the former Soviet Union since the early 1990s that has shaped the Jewish way of life in contemporary Germany, but also the fact that approximately half of all Jews have a non-Jewish partner. This illustrates two things: firstly, that mixed partnerships are a central component of contemporary German-Jewish reality; and secondly, that the separation between Jews and Gentiles is a construction that was quite possibly always nonfunctional and remains so since in this construction children from these 'mixed relationships' or 'mixed families' are disregarded. Whereas the former aspect is a frequent topos in filmic presentations, the latter is rarely represented in German film and television, and thus remains essentially invisible.

In talking about sexual relationships between Jews and Gentiles in this essay, we are not speaking primarily of social realities[1] but rather of cultural constructions (or sexual stereotypes) and their filmic representations. However, it is important to realize that these constructions are not without repercussions, as David Biale emphasizes: "When certain images are eroticized and others are deeroticized in literature, movies, or even theological writing, romantic expectations are unconsciously channelled: discourse creates desire."[2] Consequently, these filmic presentations influence social reality and the circulating images of Jews, as well as images of relationships between Jews and Gentiles. The presentation of mixed relationships is, however, not a phenomenon tied specifically to contemporary German film, which means that this topos appears both in contemporary and historical literary works, just as there are also older filmic presentations that are significant. For example, Paul Wegener's silent film *Der Golem oder wie er in die Welt kam* (engl. The Golem: How He Came into the World; 1920), with its portrayal of desire between Jews and Gentiles and the depiction of an

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1 In this respect, the reference above should be enough to show that mixed relationships are a decisive part of the social reality of the Jewish way of life in Germany, independent of whether or not it is negotiated publicly/ openly. The statistics also look similar in the U.S. context, that is, approximately half of U.S. Jews live with non-Jewish partners; however, the social implications and identitary consequences are more visible than in Germany due to the founding of such groups as Interfaith.Family.com and Half-jewish.org.

2 Biale, David, *Eros and the Jews*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1997, 205.

erotic Jewish-Christian relationship, can be seen as iconic, one that has certainly shaped later portrayals.[3] In the contemporary U.S. film and television landscape, portrayals of mixed relationships are so numerous that only a few exemplars from the realm of television series can be mentioned here, for example *Sex and the City* (2000–2008), in which Charlotte, a WASP, converts to Judaism for her Jewish husband Harry Goldenblatt; or *The Nanny* (1993–1999), which revolves around the Jewish nanny Fran Fine, who is in love with her non-Jewish boss Maxwell Sheffield. These examples are significant, inasmuch as the effect of intertextual references between filmic and televisual texts (that is, audiovisual but also literary texts) cannot be underestimated.[4]

It becomes apparent in German examples, which will be examined in detail later,[5] that the filmically represented constellation is usually that of a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman. In contrast, relationships between Jewish women and non-Jewish men occur far less often as the object of filmic presentations. In those few cases in which this configuration is dealt with, it is treated as a 'forbidden love' that has to be covered up or kept secret from the respective families – especially from the woman's Jewish family. Jewish men seem to enjoy far more free-

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3 Omer Bartov describes Wegener's Golem adaption as the "earliest and most influential extant cinematic depiction of European images of Jews." He stresses that this early film seizes upon existing concepts or notions of Jews, makes them accessible to a wider audience, and in doing so popularizes them. The film provides images and models that generations of filmmakers, whose goals and intentions covered a wide spectrum, have either used or tried to avoid. At the same time, the obsession with sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews is one of the principal motifs of the film. Bartov, Omer, *The Jew in Cinema*, Bloomington: Indiana 2005, 3.
4 "[...] a process whereby certain cinematic types and images are constantly informed by each other, creating a kind of treasure house or arsenal of representations that can be drawn upon irrespective of the ideological or artistic predilections of the filmmaker and the social, political, or cultural context in which the film is made." Bartov, Omer, *The Jew in Cinema*, x.
5 In its analysis, this essay concentrates on German feature films that were produced after 1990. Even more than documentary films, feature films tend to make cultural constructions visible and can therefore be considered particularly valuable sources of cultural stereotypes. A focus on the period prior to Germany's reunification would certainly have been interesting in terms of taking both the ideological and societal differences between East and West Germany into account. However, concentrating on the time since the 1990s has the advantage that Jewish characters and topics have appeared much more often in popular culture since then and have thus attained much greater visibility in both cinema and television. This can be understood in terms of a global development: "In contrast to these earlier decades, this post-1990 cinematic shift was *global*." (Abrams, Nathan, *The New Jew in Film. Exploring Jewishness and Judaism in Contemporary Cinema*, London 2012, 9.) So while German (television) films stand at the center of this analysis, American films and television series are also included for comparison. This allows both global relations and references of the filmic depictions and specific aspects and connotations of the German context to be taken into account.

doms and are less bound by the views or beliefs of their families. At the same time, they appear to exert a considerable power of attraction over non-Jewish women, which is why their relationships with these women are much more sexually denoted.

Forbidden Love Across Boundaries

Both of the television programs that will be examined here deal exemplarily with the love between a Jewish woman and a non-Jewish man. In both cases, the relationship portrayed is marked as a romantic one that ends happily. However, before this happy ending takes place the characters experience conflict concerning if and how they should inform their respective families – particularly their Jewish families – of this *forbidden love.*

In one episode of the television crime series *Pfarrer Braun* (Pastor Braun; 2002 to present) entitled "Die Gärten des Rabbiners" (The Gardens of the Rabbi; 2008), the forbidden love between Alisha Grün and Gerd Kruschke leads to a kind of religious dispute. Although Pastor Braun and Rabbi Seelig agree that the young couple should be allowed to be together and also to marry for love,[6] a teasing sort of duel flares up around which of the two young lovers should be the one to convert to the religion of his or her partner. To this end, the men of God mutually instruct the lovers in the religion of the respective other. Catholicism and Judaism are contrasted with each other here, in a way similar to the U.S. romantic comedy *Keeping the Faith* (2000), in which two friends, a young rabbi and a priest, compete for the same (non-Jewish) woman. "Die Gärten des Rabbiners" does not even consider the option of a mixed marriage in which both parties maintain their own religious convictions. After a long period of time, during which Alisha and Gerd have kept their relationship secret from their families, the two men of God help them plan a talk with their families. At the end, Gerd and Alisha decide to defer their decision about conversion and in the meantime get married at the register's office instead. This solution, portrayed as provisional, illustrates one of the consequences that a mixed marriage without conversion would entail and,

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6 As Pastor Braun says: "Eure Liebe ist ja nichts Verwerfliches, auch wenn Konventionen die Liebenden trennen. [...] Wenn wahre Liebe zum Problem wird, dann ist nicht die Liebe das Problem." ['Your love is nothing reprehensible, even if convention is dividing the lovers. [...] If true love becomes a problem, it is not the love that is the problem.' L.W.] Rabbi Seelig agrees with this. However, neither of the two wants to lose a member of his congregation to conversion, which is why Braun tries to convince Alisha to become a Catholic and Seelig tries to convince Gerd to convert to Judaism.

especially in the setting of romantic love, can become perturbingly conspicuous: only a civil ceremony is possible.

However, in *So ein Schlamassel* (What a Mess; 2009) forbidden love is staged against a less religious background. Being Jewish offers a different kind of background here, which implicates other traditions and, above all, a different kind of family history (particularly in relation to National Socialism). Jil Grüngras and Marc Norderstedt do not conceal their relationship as Alisha and Gerd do in "Die Gärten des Rabbiners." Instead, they pass Marc off to Jil's Jewish family as the Jew Jonathon Rosenzweig. In this way, forbidden love becomes the background for, on the one hand, a comedy of mistaken identity and, on the other, a didactic piece about the Jewish traditions and customs that Marc has to study in order to carry off his masquerade. Pretending to be Jewish is a motif around which Dani Levy configures a large part of the humor in his exceedingly successful comedy *Alles auf Zucker!* (engl. Go for Zucker!; 2004). Here it is Jackie (Jakob) Zucker's non-Jewish wife, Marlene, who passes herself off as being Jewish and has to transform her household into a Jewish, kosher one before Jackie's orthodox relations arrive for the burial of his mother.

Alles auf Zucker! is not about the solution to a *mixed* relationship constellation that is being portrayed as problematic. The relationship between Jackie and Marlene Zucker is strained by other difficulties, like Jackie's gambling addiction. But ultimately there is no disagreement about having a nonreligious or even atheist lifestyle; the compulsion to perform Jewishness comes from external sources.[7] In *So ein Schlmassel,* the question of possible everyday differences and implications of different religions convictions and traditions is not even posed. The pressure to adapt or change seems to come from outside and the differences experienced are also shown. In a kitschy reconciliation sequence, the happy ending camouflages all of the conflicts and differences that had been touched upon during the film. It declines the opportunity to suggest options for action and possibilities for encounters with others.

The Jewish women in these two films have nothing in common with the well-known stereotype from the U.S. context, that of the Jewish American Princess (JAP), who is described as beautiful, boldly styled, and obsessed with sprucing herself up, but who is simultaneously characterized by a lack of sexual desire or sexuality. Her body exists to be decorated and adorned, she doesn't hold a job,

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7 It is interesting here that Jackie Zucker in *Alles auf Zucker!* seeks a greater proximity to Judaism at the end of the film after his ploy has been revealed and decides not just to take care of his family more responsibly, but also to go to the synagogue more often / occasionally. The reunion and the reconciliation with his (orthodox) brother and the discussion of Jewish traditions have led him closer to his Judaism.

and is first and foremost interested in her own needs.[8] These are spoiled, pampered girls who refuse to grow up.[9] The portrayals here have just as little to do with reality as the trope of the overprotective Jewish mother, who is also shown as nonsexual, but solely consumed by her own motherhood.[10] Only the aspects of being sheltered by the family and deified by the father – which produces the phenomenon of the spoiled Jewish Princess – are even rudimentarily present. In this respect, the relationship between Jil and her father Benno in *So ein Schlamassel* becomes particularly close due to the early death of the mother, and at one point, when he presses her about whether or not she wants to get married, she replies affectionately that she would most like to marry him. It thus becomes clear that for her, the sexual component of marriage is not in the foreground. The adult Alisha is also sheltered by her parents: she lives with them and works in the family business. Her father, Adam Grün, calls her "meine Alisha" (my Alisha).

These filmic portrayals seem to revolve around a mixture of the image of the *beautiful Jewess,* who is seductive and desirable but still remains a stranger,[11] and the sheltered and family-oriented daughter of good Jewish breeding. Both Jil Grüngras and Alisha Grün are depicted as being educated and having a close relationship to their families. Both are attractive, dark-haired women with long, slightly curly hair. In spite of their explicit attractiveness, the focus of their relationships is shown to be primarily nonerotic. During a sex scene between Jil and Marc in *So ein Schlamassel* – which is fittingly, however, romantically framed – they lie in bed together and talk about children and family, whereas the characters in "Die Gärten des Rabbiners" exchange only stolen kisses and tender looks. In both cases it is apparent that we are dealing with romantic love that is intended to end in marriage and family. Taken as a whole, what is striking in both films is that Judaism, thought of in terms of demarcation, is construed as a reason for

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8 Prell, Riv-Ellen, *Why Jewish Princesses Don't Sweat. Desire and Consumption in Postwar American Jewish Culture*, 331, in: Gilman, Sander 1994.

9 Kalmar, Ivan, *Trotskys, Freuds, and Woody Allens. Portrait of a Culture*, Toronto 1994, 216.

10 The discussions of stereotypes of Jewish women that are encouraged and cemented through U.S. Jewish popular culture demonstrate that popular Jewish culture is sexist. Jewish wit, for example, spares Jewish men to the greatest possible extent, whereas Jewish mothers, wives, and daughters are perhaps the most frequent targets of such humor. As Kalmar explains, it has to do with a strategy of dealing with anti-Semitism by giving priority to sexist treatment: Jewish women are exposed to ridicule, but as women, not as Jews. Kalmar, Ivan, *Trotskys, Freuds, and Woody Allens. Portrait of a Culture*, 206.

11 According to Martin Gubser, the beautiful Jewess is a key component in the arsenal of Jewish characters in literature and vacillates between untouchability and oriental eroticism, located between virgin and courtesan, forever remaining other because the societal spheres from which she stems are distant and other to both the author and the recipient. Gubser, Martin, *Literarischer Antisemitismus*, Göttingen 1998, 110-111.

secrecy. Hence, Jil's Jewish family has a problem with her going out with a Goy, a non-Jewish man, not to mention her marrying him. Although there are anti-Semitic tendencies in Marc's family – the problems of which are expounded upon in one scene in which Jil visits them at home and an open conflict arises after an uncle's anti-Semitic joke – Marc's parents express no reservations about his Jewish girlfriend. Even in "Die Gärten des Rabbiners," Gerd's father's rejection of the relationship is more due to economic competition and personal antipathy between the fathers than reservations he has about his daughter choosing a Jewish partner. For Adam Grün, Alisha's father, in addition to personal motivation, he also just wants a Jewish son-in-law.

Erotic Attraction and Forbidden Affairs

In the reverse constellation, the focus is on Jewish men and their powers of attraction over non-Jewish women, which is why sexual stereotypes of the Jewish man in this context are significant, just as the reflections are on what makes Jewish men attractive for non-Jewish women, specifically in a German context.

A powerful and inherently ambivalent sexual stereotype is the image of the Jewish man as a "sexual Shlemiel."[12] Although already established through literature and the Yiddish theater since the turn of the century, this image has been frequently repeated and reinforced in American culture, in particular by Philip Roth and Woody Allen. "He [Woody Allen; author's note] gets a lot of the credit for disseminating many of the popular stereotypes of the Jewish male, his sexual self-doubt and obsession with gentile women."[13] In an ambivalent construction, Jewish men are neurotic and impotent, self-conscious and self-doubting, but also very sexualized. Here, this stereotyping collides with the anti-Semitic image of the perverted, sex-hungry Jew who threatens the chasteness of Christian women.[14]

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12 Biale, David, *Eros and the Jews*, 205. Ivan Kalmar also describes the "sexual shlemiel" as the *Jewish nerd*: "And every Jewish man has to come to terms with being potentially thought of as an unmasculine, sexually placid shlemiel, or, to use a very rough yet in this context appropriate translation, a nerd." Kalmar, Ivan, *Trotskys, Freuds and Woody Allens. Portrait of a Culture*, 224.

13 Biale, David, *Eros and the Jews*, 206.

14 This image of the neurotic, sexually inhibited Jewish man is set in opposition to the omnipotent Israeli, who has escaped being unmanned by the Diaspora. The Israeli is not only militarily but also sexually potent, which is why Zionism can also be described as a sexual revolution: "One of the central claims of Zionism was that the Jews lived a disembodied existence in exile and that only a healthy national life could restore a necessary measure of physicality or materiality. This political ideology was not only used on the body as a metaphor;

Both of the following examples deal with highly erotically connoted relationships or affairs, which are, by way of the story's plot, construed as doubly forbidden and therefore cannot end happily. Whereas in the television series *Berlin, Berlin* (2001–2004) the Jewish restaurant owner Moshe, for whom the female (non-Jewish) protagonist Lolle works, is married, in the fim *Liebe unter Verdacht* (Love under suspicion; 2002), the police superintendent Eva Bartoc begins an affair with Daniel Kahana, a suspect in an ongoing case. It becomes clear just how strongly the (erotic) power of attraction of these Jewish men effects the non-Jewish women who cross boundaries for them: Lolle steps over a moral boundary by getting involved with a married man, and Eva violates her professional ethics and ultimately crosses the boundaries of legality by covering up for Daniel at the end of the film. Moshe is a religious man who runs a kosher restaurant in Berlin. The tall, dark-haired and strikingly serious man is married to Sarah and has two children with her. He promises Lolle that he will leave his wife, something he keeps putting off using various excuses. The relationship between Moshe and Lolle is portrayed as highly sexual, even if there are romantic ambitions that ultimately remain unfulfilled. They separate at the end of the episode "Die Geliebte" (the lover), after Moshe decides to move with his family to the United States in order for his son, who is suffering from a cardiac illness, to get treatment from the best specialists. *Liebe unter Verdacht* is about a not quite so stereotypically sketched Jewish male. Daniel Kahana is the son of the murder victim, Baruch Kahana, who is portrayed as an important orthodox religious figure in the Jewish community in Berlin. Daniel is in fact well versed in Jewish religion and traditions, but identifies himself as an atheist. He neither eats kosher food nor observes the Shabbath, much to his father's disdain. At the same time, Daniel Kahana is depicted as educated and cultivated; he quotes from the Talmud, he is a pediatrician, and a superb cook. Therefore, it is not surprising that it is not just Eva Bartoc who

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it sought, in addition, to transform the Jewish body itself, and especially the sexual body. [...] In the spirit of the literature of national renaissance, Zionism promised an erotic revolution for the Jews: the creation of a virile New Hebrew Man but also the rejection of the inequality of women found in traditional Judaism in favor of a full equality between the sexes in all spheres of life." Biale, David, *Eros and the Jews*, 176-177. A satirical, excess application of this image to Israelis can be seen, for example, in the U.S. comedy film *You Don't Mess with the Zohan* (2008). Admittedly, in the context of this article the image of the Israeli is of subordinate significance, but it is an active trope in German films in which the plot leads to Israel. For example, in an episode of *Rosa Roth* (1994 to present), "Jerusalem oder die Reise in den Tod" (Jerusalem or the Trip toward Death), the police superintendent, Rosa, begins a short, passionate holiday romance with an Israeli, Uri, who works for the military and is frequently shown in uniform. Moreover, this image of the Israeli is significant as the antithesis of or foil for the Jewish man in the Diaspora as a sexual *Shlemiel*.

succumbs to his powers of attraction; one of his medical colleagues also lies for him and provides him with a false alibi.

Ivan Kalmar accounts for the interest of Jewish men in the Shiksa, i.e., the non-Jewish woman, with recourse to Woody Allen, who acts out this motif both on and off the screen.[15] The Jewish *eji man*, Kalmar's acronym for "Embarrassed Jewish Individual,"[16] is marked by a lack of self-confidence. He fears that he is unattractive to Gentiles and to women in general, and believes that the best way to counteract these fears is in relationships with non-Jewish women.[17] Jewish men's obsession with having non-Jewish partners, and the powerful motif of the (blonde) Shiksa as the object of desire is founded in the sexuality of the Jewish man a being delineated as neurotic, self-doubting, and ultimately shaped by impotence (symbolized by circumcision). In the end, it is not just about overcoming the image of the effeminate, impotent Diaspora Jew, but also about the overcoming of Otherness. If one asks the question the other way around, what is it that accounts for the attractiveness of the Jewish man for the non-Jewish woman, one stumbles upon two significant aspects of this question: first, on which general image of the Jewish man is this interest founded? Second, how can this interest of non-Jewish women be localized and interpreted within a German context?

The attractiveness of Jewish men can generally be explained by their image as responsible husbands and fathers who promise security. They are viewed as good spouses, who do not drink or hit their wives,[18] and are considered to be kind and nonmacho.[19] Combined with the anti-Semitically motivated stereotype that all Jews are extraordinarily clever and educated and, in addition to this, earn a lot of money, their attractiveness can be explained in spite of the stereotype of their neurotic sexuality. Furthermore, the Jewish man in the German context – more than in the U.S. one – is exotic, is the *Other*. Daniel Kahana's character in *Liebe unter Verdacht* is in accordance with this image is: he is educated, he listens, and he is very attentive to Eva, who has plunged into a crisis of belief. Thus, he takes off her gold crucifix necklace – which she has thrown away in deep shock at the start of the film after the death of a young colleague – and sends it to her at the end of the film although their relationship has already ended. She cannot cook so he cooks for her; his fathering qualities are shown in his profession as a pediatrician, which he practices lovingly and passionately. Ultimately, Moshe also corresponds to this image of the kind man. Although he begins an affair with Lolle,

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15 Kalmar, Ivan, *Trotskys, Freuds, and Woody Allens. Portrait of a Culture*, 234.
16 Ibid., 9.
17 Ibid., 236.
18 Ibid., 220.
19 Ibid., 222.

he does not leave his wife and he continues to meet his responsibilitie to her and his family, especially when his son becomes sick. In spite of the slip-up of infidelity he remains a dependable husband and father as well as a conscientious and engaged businessman.

An interpretation of the interest of non-Jewish women in Jewish men, specifically in the context of German society, cannot be undertaken without consideration of contemporary German-Jewish relations. In doing so, one must consider not only the perpetual significance of the Shoah, but also the German interest in Jewish culture, which has been increasing since the late 1980s/ early 1990s. This interest should not be mistaken for an actual flourishing of the Jewish way of life in Germany,[20] which, according to Ruth Ellen Gruber, would lead to a *virtual Jewish culture*,[21] to a supposed Jewish culture that would, however, be primarily produced by non-Jews for non-Jews. There are various reasons for this rising interest in and increasing attention to Jewish issues. For one thing, from the early 1980s, after years of focussing on "dead Jews",[22] young Jews became more prominent in cultural and political contexts, and thus became more visible. This second generation born after the Shoah started looking into its identity as Jews and Germans.[23] Furthermore, this interest is of course significant in relation to German national identity, although the reasons for the wish to have a visible, lively Jewish culture in Germany need to be questioned. Katharine Ochse describes these reasons as contiguous with the National Socialist past and its continuous influence: " They

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20 "In the first place, speaking and writing about Jewish culture proves nothing except that there is an interest in having such a culture." Ochse, Katharina, *"What could be more fruitful, more healing, more purifying?" Representations of Jews in the German Media after 1989*, 118, in: Gilman, Sander 1994.

21 "This is a process [the process of universalization of the Jewish phenomenon; author's note] that in turn encompasses the creation of a 'virtual Jewishness,' a 'virtual Jewish world,' 'virtual Jews who perform – or, as Bodemann put it, enact – Jewish culture from an outsider perspective, alongside or often in the absence of local Jewish population. In doing so, they may take over cultural and other activities that would ordinarily be carried out by Jews. In other cases, they create their own realities that perpetuate an image of Jewish presence." Gruber, Ruth Ellen, *Virtually Jewish*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 2002, 11.

22 "From 1945-80, it appeared that there was no such thing as a true German-Jewish culture any more. Germans paid homage to dead Jews, émigrés, outsiders, or exceptions" Zipes, Jack, *The Contemporary German Fascination for Things Jewish. Towards a Jewish Minor Culture,* 18, in: Gilman, Sander 1994.

23 This tendency was especially apparent in the field of literature, e.g., in Lea Fleischmann's *Dies ist nicht mein Land. Eine Jüdin verlässt die Bundesrepublik*, Henryk M. Broder's *Fremd im eigenen Land. Juden in der Bundesrepublik,* or more contemporary examples like Maxim Biller's and Doron Rabinovici's latest novels. Sander L. Gilman speaks of a regenerated/new self-confidence that has been increasingly articulated. Sander L. Gilman, *Reemerging Jewish Culture in Germany. Life and Literature Since 1989*, New York 1994, 1.

are to be traced back to the non-Jewish Germans' need to break free from the victim/persecutor relationship in which they seem locked."[24] The invisibility and absence of Jews in Germany has become a visible sign of the Shoah and its consequences, filling this void would thus mean deleting this visible sign.

Mixed Families and Mixed-Jewish Backgrounds as a Void in Filmic Representation

The notion that Jewish and non-Jewish Germans can be distinctly differentiated between is an illusion that is not exclusive to contemporary Germany. During the Weimar Republic there was a substantial number of mixed marriages, which meant that National Socialists were faced with the task of subverting these associations, preventing 'mixing' or 'hybridization,' staging Jews specifically as Others distinct from Germans, and bringing about an ethnic rupture by way of propaganda and laws.[25] The number of Jews in Germany with Gentile (marital) partners illustrates that the separation of Jews and non-Jews as it is staged in the filmic presentations analyzed here, represents at the very most *one* part of the reality of the contemporary Jewish way of life in Germany. Hybrid Jewish identities remain a filmic void: people with part-Jewish backgrounds, who are to some extent held to be Jews (if they have a Jewish mother), even if they are not religious or were not brought up religiously, can also be held to be non-Jews (if they "only" have a Jewish father). Such hybrid or fragile Jewish identities are barely represented in the contemporary German film and television landscape. They can be characterized by the fact that they are ambivalent, they cannot be precisely assigned to one category, they cannot be set in opposition to the non-Jewish German as exotic or Other and, above all, with respect to the (various) categorizations as Other – for example, Jews and Gentiles – their images of self differ starkly. In films like the coming-of-age teen film *Max Minsky und ich* (Max Minsky and I; 2006/2007), in which the adolescent, Jewish protagonist Nelly Sue Edelmeister grows up in Berlin with her Jewish-American mother and her non-Jewish father, even when such mixed familial constellations do emerge they are mentioned peripherally rather than explicitly broached as subjects or problematized in relation to the localization of the character's identity. For Nelly, the questions that are posed

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24 Ochse, Katharina, *"What could be more fruitful, more healing, more purifying?" Representations of Jews in the German Media after 1989*, 120, in: Gilman, Sander 1994.
25 Beck-Gernsheim, Elisabeth, *Juden. Deutsche und andere Erinnerungslandschaften*, Frankfurt am Main 1999, 53-55.

in the course of her growing up are related to the role family, Jewish tradition, and her Bat-Mitzvah play and should play for her; these questions, however, are not brought into the context of her non-Jewish father and her mixed background. They are more or less continuously, and quite in accordance with Halakha, signified as being Jewish. In Dani Levy's *Meschugge* (1998), the paternal role is also not expounded upon: Lena Katz is brought up as a Jew and correspondingly considers herself to be one, until she finds out that her maternal hereditary line is not Jewish, and her grandfather, the Nazi Max Weiss, passed himself and his family off as Jewish in 1945 in order to escape prosecution for his crimes. After this discovery, Lena, now non-Jewish, gives her Jewish friend David her necklace with a Star of David pendant, which continuously appears during the film as a symbol of her Jewish identity. It is only at the periphery, on the level of the characters' names, that the spectator finds out that Lena Katz possesses the last name of her father, who her mother, named Ruth Goldberg, has divorced. That her Jewish identity is not based solely on deceit, and is therefore not completely false because she has a Jewish father, is not elaborated upon, even though the film explicitly asks, or rather, hints at the question of what constitutes Jewish identity. Whereas Lena's non-Jewish first name already refers to the discovery at the end of the film, and this identitary complexity is already alluded to from the beginning, it is her Jewish last name that delivers the reference to her (only) part-Jewish ancestry.

In Dani Levy's aforementioned comedy *Alles auf Zucker!* one also finds such references on the level of characters' names: Jana, the – in the Halakhic sense – non-Jewish daughter of Jackie and Marlene Zucker chooses the name Sarah for her daughter. It is not just that she chooses a Jewish name, which might refer to a more strongly felt proximity to Judaism than her (not practicing Jewish) father might embrace, a running joke in the film is that Jackie always accidentally calls his granddaughter Sandra. Other side issues show that Jewish and non-Jewish spheres are not segregated and that questions about who is actually Jewish and what constitutes Jewish identity are not so easy to answer, although the Halakha, on the one hand, provides a clear answer and, on the other, the non-Jewish German side, if anything, also shows an interest in preserving a clearly defined, folkloric, *other/different* Judaism. Thus, the old and sick mother of the Jewish murder victim Michael Schulmann in "Die Gärten des Rabbiners," Sarah Schulmann, converts to Christianity, which is why Michael Schulmann secretly took care of her. And the waiter in the bar into which Eva Bartoc in *Liebe unter Verdacht* frequently takes flight, proves, in the course of an incidental conversation, to be Jewish. In spite of this, he cannot help her with her questions about Judaism, God and religion not really being his 'thing'; he has not been to the synagogue since his Bar Mitzvah. Fragile Jewish characters appear on the periphery of filmic por-

trayals. In the center of the plot, on the other hand, one tends to find more exotic, *other* Jewish characters, who appear to be both folkloric and traditional, while at the same time evoking American-Jewish characters from Philip Roth's or Woody Allen's arsenal.

Conclusion

By way of the above film descriptions, it is clear that a power of attraction between Jews and Gentiles is a construction in German film and television that ultimately depends on a differentiation between the two. The identitary implications of these mixed relationships, which arise on a long-term basis for these couples and families, are therefore hardly broached as issues. As Sander L. Gilman notes, the construction of the Jewish body is characterized by a proximity to an anti-Semitic world view and to an understanding that the Jewish body is inherently different from that of the Christian and, later, the German, the British, that is, the nationally constructed body. The body is thereby a mere visible symbol of the absolute otherness or difference of the Jews.[26] The construction of Jewish characters as different is thus necessary if one is to understand their power of attraction for the non-Jewish characters in the context of philo-Semitism and a strengthened German interest in Jewish issues and Jewish culture. The wish to make the last visible consequences of the Shoah – the visible absence of the Jewish way of life and Jewish culture – invisible and to close this remaining void may be linked to the wish for clearly demarcated, exotic-attractive Jewish characters. At the same time, the frequency and the schematism of the topos of the (romantic) relationship between Jews and Gentiles cannot be exclusively accounted for in the German context; too many stereotypes of contemporary Jewish popular culture from the U.S. realm are seized upon and processed for this to be the case. This shows how aspects of relations between a Gentile majority and a Jewish minority that are specific to Germany merge with stereotypes and topoi of a global popular culture.

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26 Gilman, Sander L., The Jewish Body. A Foot-Note, 223. In: *People of the Body. Jews and Judaism from an Embodied perspective*, Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (Ed.), Albany, N.Y: State Univ. of New York Press, 1992, 223–242.

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Filmography

Alles auf Zucker! (GE, 2004, dir. Dani Levy)

Berlin, Berlin (GE, Television Series, 2001–2004)

Der Golem oder wie er in die Welt kam (GE, 1920, dir. Paul Wegener, Carl Boese) (English Title: *The Golem* or *The Golem: How He Came Into The World*)

Keeping the Faith (USA, 2000, dir. Edward Norton) (German Title: *Glauben ist alles!*)

Liebe unter Verdacht (GE, 2002, dir. Jorge Papavassiliou)

Max Minsky und ich (GE, 2006/ 2007, dir. Anna Justice)

Meschugge (GE/ CH/ U.S., 1998, dir. Dani Levy) (English Title: *The Giraffe*)

Pfarrer Braun. Die Gärten des Rabbiners (GE 2008, dir. Wolfgang F. Henschel)

Rosa Roth. Jerusalem oder die Reise in den Tod (GE, 1998, dir. Carlo Rola)

Seinfeld (USA, Television Series, 1989–1998)
Sex and the City (USA, Television Series, 1998–2004)
So ein Schlamassel (GE, 2009, dir. Dirk Regel)
The Nanny (USA, Television Series, 1993–1999)
You Don't Mess with the Zohan (USA, 2008, dir. Dennis Dugan)

Mareike Albers

"Unkosher Jewish" –
Jewish Popular Culture in Berlin

> There are so many young Jews in Germany. They don't fit into one drawer. They're not like me. They're like you: different.[1]

Interest in Judaism and Jewish culture in Germany has been growing for several years. But while the theme of "Jewish Popular culture" receives increasing international media attention, it has basically evaded the radar of researchers in German-speaking countries. At the same time, this field has made a significant contribution to Jewish culture in Germany and certainly deserves more attention. Cultural events such as "Berlin Meschugge! The unkosher Jewish night" party have developed a Jewish-Israeli "party scene" in Berlin. Appearances by Jewish comedians and concerts with Jewish bands are growing in popularity and are frequented by Jews and non-Jews alike. These developments, which may be observed primarily in Germany's capital, are relatively new.

In a country where synagogues and institutions of Jewish life – schools, museums, book stores, food shops, and restaurants – require police protection against anti-Semitic attacks, Jewishness is not taken for granted. Anti-Semitism in media, in politics, and on the street is an everyday problem for Jews in Germany. "To be a Jew in Germany today is still not 'normal,'"[2] writes Jeffrey M. Peck in *Being Jewish in the New Germany* (2006). "For Jews in Germany, homeland (…) remains, perhaps more than for any other Diaspora Jewish population, an unachievable or at least an ambiguous goal. (…) The shadow of German history to this day darkens even the most optimistic efforts toward reconciliation."[3] However, Peck detects a new development: "In fact, it has even become trendy to be Jewish or to associate with anything Jewish." In 2000, the *National Post* in the U.S. reported that it had suddenly become "cool" to be Jewish in Germany.[4] According to Peck, this trend, while it still may be more popular in the United States, reflects a changed attitude among the third generation of Jews in post-Shoah Germany, "most of whom do

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1 Lena Gorelik in the documentary *Die Judenschublade – Junge Juden in D.* (Mehring-Fuchs, Margarethe, Laur, Stephan, Bonn 2005).

2 Peck, Jeffrey M., *Being Jewish in the New Germany*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, London 2006, 4.

3 Ibid., 160.

4 Ibid., 19.

not have the same relationship as their parents, the children of the Holocaust survivors, to memory and identity."[5]

At the start of the new millennium the cultural practices of a group of mostly secular young Jews associated with "The New Jew Phenomenon"[6] began attracting the attention of both scholars and media. The lifestyle magazine *Heeb – The New Jew Review* is the center of this emerging "Alternative Jewish culture"[7] or "Jewish counterculture"[8] in the U.S. Founded in New York in 2001, the publication is considered a "mouthpiece" for the various so-called "New Jews,"[9] "Heebsters,"[10] "Rejewvenators,"[11] and the "Heeb Generation,"[12] and they represent a kind of "guerrilla Judaism that is ironic, funny, entertaining, contemporary, playful, and empowering."[13]

Observing the developments in the U.S., *die tageszeitung* newspaper in Berlin concluded in 2004: "To rise up and rediscover yourself in society, to swim along with mainstream pop culture and yet find your own style – that seems to have been the norm in the USA for quite some time now. Here [in Germany] it's barely imaginable."[14] The weekly paper *der Freitag* writes in 2003: "It will probably take some time before young Jews in Germany allow themselves to indulge in the same kind of self-deprecating and reflected ethnicism as the *Heebsters* do."[15]

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5 Ibid.

6 Itzkovitz, Daniel, *"They're All Jews,"* in: Brook, Vincent (Ed.), You Should See Yourself. Jewish Identity in Postmodern America, New Jersey 2006, pp. 230-247, 239.

7 Cohen, Steve M./Kehlman, Ari Y., *Cultural Events and Jewish Identities: Young Adult Jews in New York*, New York 2005, 20.

8 Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara, *"New Jews": Reflections on Emerging Cultural Practices,* Paper zur NYU-Konferenz "Re-thinking Jewish Communities and Networks in an Age of Looser Connections" on 6 and 7 December 2005 in New York, 2.

9 Aviv, Caryn/Shneer, David, *New Jews – The End of Jewish Diaspora*, New York 2005.

10 Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2005, 2.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Cohen, Steve/Kehlman, Ari p. 6. In 2010, the quarterly print edition of the magazine was discontinued. Since then, *Heeb* has been published online.

14 Hyam, Judith, *"Shabbat Shalom, Motherfuckers!"* in: tageszeitung online, 1 April 2004, http://www.taz.de/index.php?id=archivseite&dig=2004/04/01/a0199.

15 Stadthaus, Steffen, *"Sind die Meschugge? Superjuden: Das Heeb-Magazin zelebriert Jiddischkeit als Popkultur,"* in: Freitag online, 05.12.2005, www.freitag.de/2003/50/03501301.php.

"The New Generation: Young, Jewish, and in Berlin"[16]

Only a few years later one can observe a major change. In spring 2011 the German weekly *Die Zeit* reported on Jewish musicians in Berlin: "Shtetl goes global: After years as a protected minority, the younger generation has taken its position in the mainstream."[17] Even the cultural events run by young Israelis in Berlin attract media coverage: "Partying under a Star of David,"[18] "Young Israelis take over Berlin night life,"[19] "Unkosher Nightlife and humor – Israelis learn to love the New Berlin"[20] or "Nonstop Meschugge"[21] read the headlines of articles that picked up this theme.

The large amount of media attention that the "Jewish boom" has been attracting also prompts scepticism and criticism among some observers. "The expansion of Jewish themes in the media and the public sphere across Europe has been interpreted as an oppressive form of philo-Semitism, producing low-quality entertainment, spreading stereotypes, and being detrimental to local Jewish communities," observe Magdalena Waligórska and Sophie Wagenhofer in their publication *Cultural Representations of Jewishness at the Turn of the 21st Century*. Furthermore, they suggest that: "The translation and the incorporation of the 'ethnic other' into a cultural product, readable to the majority, risks simplification, misinterpretation and omissions."[22] Without wanting to decide whether one can actually speak of a "young, Jewish scene" in Berlin, I will use three examples to illustrate how leading figures of Jewish popular culture in Berlin take on with humor, irony and sarcasm the themes of philo-Semitism, anti-Semitic clichés, and the dissemination of stereotypes.

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16 Mayer, Simone Andrea, *Generationswechsel – Berlins jüdische Kulturszene boomt. Eine neue Generation Juden in Deutschland gibt ihr ein attraktives Gesicht,* DPA report, 17 March 2010.
17 Gross, Thomas*, Großstadt, Kneipe, Punk,* in: Die Zeit/14, 56.
18 Altmann, Wolfgang, *Feiern unterm Davidstern,* in: Berliner Zeitung, 25 February 2010.
19 Idem., *Junge Israelis erobern das Berliner Nachtleben,* in: TIP, 30 September 2009.
20 Halutz, Doron, *Unkosher Nightlife and Holocaust Humor – Israelis learn to love the New Berlin,* article, 21 January 2011 on www.spiegel.de/international.
21 Lanzke, Alice, *Nonstop Meschugge,* in: Jüdische Allgemeine, 16 September 2011.
22 Waligòrska, Magdalena, Wagenhofer, Sophie (Eds.), *Cultural Representations of Jewishness at the Turn of the 21st Century*, European University Institute, San Domenico di Fiesole, 2010, 1-2.

"Let's all be Jews!"

"Jewish humor is back in Germany!" announces the Web site of comedian Oliver Polak. Polak is in his thirties, lives in Berlin, and has become Germany's most well known Jewish comedy star by telling stories about growing up in the only Jewish family in town. After seeing Polak's stage show, author Maxim Biller convinced him to write a book. It was published in 2008 under the title, *Ich darf das, Ich bin Jude* (I'm Jewish, I dare to). In 2011, Polak went on tour with his second show, "Jud Süß-Sauer" (sweet and sour Jew, a play on the title of the 1940 anti-Semitic film *Jud Süß*). His tour poster reads: "Now available in Aryan – even more feelings of guilt!"

Part of the show is the song "Lasst uns alle Juden sein!" (Let's all be Jews!). In the associated video clip the comedian lopes through Berlin in a "Ghostbusters" suit and turns *goyische* Berliners into orthodox Jews – and a German shepherd dog into a pug. The music video and song also play with the artist's ironic self-presentation and with anti-Semitic clichés. At the start of the clip, a depressed Oliver Polak sings about his loneliness and his longing for a better world in which everyone is Jewish. To shake himself out of his mood, he sets about making everyone Jewish: "Auch du und du und du, auch du gehörst dazu!" ("And you and you and you, you belong to us!"). As Berlin passersby stare suspiciously, he dances around the city in skin-tight overalls, throws confetti, and promotes the benefits of Judaism: "Juden können besser einparken/Juden müssen sich die Zähne nie putzen/Juden dürfen sogar bei McDonald's, ohne was zu essen, das Klo benutzen" (Jews get better parking spaces/Jews never have to brush their teeth/Jews are even allowed to use the loo at McDonald's without having to buy anything to eat).

On stage, in sweatpants and hooded sweatshirt, with scruffy hair and a soda can in his hand, Polak intends to illustrate German clichés: "As soon as people read the word 'Jew' they think: 'Oh, culture, cabaret!' And then along comes a trashy guy like me on the stage."[23] Basically, German up-tightness around Jews is a frequent target of his derisive humor. Polak is confounded: "I ask myself what are people afraid of (...) Obviously it's really true that many people in Germany have never seen a Jew. I can really tell when I'm on stage. As soon as I say the word 'Jew,' people get confused."[24] Instead of cracking jokes about the Holocaust, he makes fun of how Germans deal with the Holocaust. But he does not want his casual, ironic approach to this theme to be misunderstood. He rejects the attitude of many Germans that "it's time to stop talking about the Holocaust." That's why

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23 Quote from a video and radio program *On 3*, Bayerischer Rundfunk, 24 November 2010.
24 Quote from an interview in *TIP-Magazin* on 8 February 2010 with Heiko Zwirner.

he recently added a new slogan to his tour posters and buttons: "Schlusstrich – Nein danke!" (Stop talking? – No thanks!)[25]

Polak casts an ironic eye not only on anti-Semitic clichés or the tense relationship of Germans to Jews. In his performances he confronts his own Jewish identity with irony by using negative Jewish stereotypes. He represents himself as the unathletic, clumsy, and overprotected child. He makes fun of his neurotic and dominant mother and his stingy father. Wielding his sarcastic commentary, he barely spares any aspect of public, cultural, or religious Jewish life – the Central Council of Jews in Germany is just as much a target of his ridicule as is his local rabbi or German Jewish celebrity Michel Friedman. "My humor is often turned against myself, my family, against Jews and non-Jews, against do-gooders."[26] Polak uses elements of traditional Jewish humor, inspired by his idols Woody Allen and Mel Brooks.

Shtetl Superstars: "A new Generation of Jewish Musicians"[27]

It is not easy to define "Jewish music." Is it enough if the artists are Jewish? Or is it more about a certain kind of music? Anyone who associates "Jewish music" solely with klezmer is overlooking the many different styles that have developed in recent years in Eastern Europe, Germany, Israel, and North America. "From chassidic punk to glam rock from Tel Aviv,"[28] there are a lot of sounds that don't fit the common notion here in Germany of what constitutes "authentic" Jewish music. One glance at Jewish musicians in Berlin shows that "Jewish music" here can be anything – klezmer, hip-hop, pop, punk, electro, or everything mixed together.

A good example is the sampler *Shtetl Superstars* released by Berlin DJ and musician Yuriy Gurzhy in 2006, together with Lemez Lovas, member of a London band. It features many different Jewish artists from around the world. "So what is real Jewish music? What does it sound like? Where, how and by who is it played today? There's no simple answer to this question. (...) The idea that a typical

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25 From the radio program *On 3*,Bayerischer Rundfunk, 24 November 2010.

26 Quote from an interview in *TIP-Magazin* on 8 February 2010 with Heiko Zwirner.

27 Gross, Thomas, 56.

28 Ibid.

Jewish band of today originates from Israel and plays klezmer music is so far from reality as to be almost absurd," writes Gurzhy about the collection.[29]

By now, the monthly "Russendisko" that Ukrainian-born Gurzhy has put on since 1999 with the Berlin writer Wladimir Kaminer is well-known in their home city, and his band, RotFront (Red Front}, has a serious following in Berlin. Twenty years ago Gurzhy couldn't have imagined that Jewish music would make him a star. It was by accident, while he was spinning CDs, that the DJ first noticed how well the "Russendisko" clientele responded to both traditional and newer Jewish songs. In 2009 RotFront put out its first album, *Emigrantski Raggamuffin*. Rot-Front sees itself as a political band: "We may never actually sing about politics but by our own example we prove how naturally and harmonically the exchange between different nationalities, musical directions and cultures can function." In their songs, a Ukrainian, two Hungarians, an American, an Australian, and five Germans mix ska, reggae, dancehall, and cumbia sounds with klezmer, sassy hip-hop, a dose of Berlin snobbism, Eastern European turbo-polka, Mediterranean melodies, and rock riffs. The texts, in Russian, Hungarian, German, and English, are about daily life in Berlin, about the adventures of immigrants in a big city."[30]

In a report about Jewish musicians in Berlin, the weekly magazine *Die Zeit* declared "Jewish music" to be an expression of the search for cultural identity: "There are themes and traditions that resonate in the forms of music that Jews make, and that are perhaps better understood when your own childhood reverberates in it." Jewishness is something undefined, vague, something that can be recognized, felt, and expressed in music. "Jewish music" is ultimately just as hard to define as the term "Jewish": "The very fact that the Jewishness of being Jewish cannot be clearly determined neither ethnically, nationally nor sociologically leads to a surprisingly simple conclusion: Jewish music is just music. You like it, or you don't."[31] So it is not the traditional musical style that makes modern Jewish music "authentic" but rather an artist's constant confrontation with her or his own cultural identity.

Music plays an important role in the lives of young people, and "new Jewish music" is one of many vehicles that can convey Jewish identity. Artists reach back to familiar traditional elements like klezmer and mix them with contemporary sounds. The great popularity of "new" Jewish music is no accident, suggests Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. The manner in which artists sample music, mixing old and new, Jewish and non-Jewish, traditional and modern, may be

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29 http://www.trikont.com.
30 http://www.rotfront.com/de/band/.
31 Ibid.

seen as analogous to the relationship that many young Jews have to their Jewish identity.[32]

"Berlin Meschugge! The Unkosher Jewish Night" – Another Way of Relating to Judaism

Thanks to the generous attention of German media, the "Berlin Meschugge!" party series produced by 28-year-old Aviv Netter of Tel Aviv – aka "DJ Aviv without the Tel" – has been considered a major attraction and the flagship of Berlin's "Jewish party scene" for a few years now. "It is young, wild, colourful, funny, optimistic and definitely not always politically correct: Berlin's emerging Jewish night life begs to be discovered," reported *Deutschlandradio* about just one of the many parties that the Israeli DJ throws in Berlin Mitte with a new theme each month.[33] Netter invited a Catholic "hot latino" DJ to a "Chanukah v.s. Christmas" party last December; they took turns playing Christmas and Chanukah hits alongside the usual pop songs. The Christmas decorations and Menorah next to the DJ booth fit in with the pending holidays, and a beamer projected family photographs of Chanukah and Christmas celebrations from the 1970s and 1980s.

"Netter (...) clearly gets a kick out of being the post-post-modern Jew in the disc-jockey's chair," writes the Israeli daily newspaper, *Haaretz*.[34] He is proud of the success of his events, his "Jewish project" is making history, and bringing young Berliners closer to Jewish culture: "I actually take the old tradition and 'update' it, I bring it to the young people. I think that it's doing a great service to the Jewish culture. Jewish music now is a popular music here in Berlin that you can hear from time to time in clubs."[35]

Jews and non-Jews, Israelis and Germans, Berliners and tourists dance at Aviv Netter's "Meschugge!" parties to a pop version of "Hava Nagila" under garlands of Israeli flags; they light the candles on a Menorah and get a kick out of the *dreidels* (wooden tops), that are handed out when one orders a drink at the bar. In this context the Israeli flags and national anthem are not a sign of national pride, the Menorah is not an expression of religiosity. Removed from their original context these symbols are primarily party decorations in the new context of

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32 Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 7.

33 Lanzke, Alice, *Hava Nagila unter der Disco-Kugel,* 01 April 2011, http://www.dradio.de/dkultur.

34 Halutz, Doron*, Hip, hype and hora*, www.haaretz.com, 11 March 2011.

35 In "Jewish in Berlin" www.journeyman.tv, 13 September 2010.

Berlin nightlife. Just like the music itself the symbols contribute to the image of "Meschugge!" as a "Jewish" party and thus are a natural expression of cultural affiliation. However, the separation of national, cultural, and religious symbols from their source mostly leads to the deliberate deconstruction of their actual meaning. By the way, the Star of David can also be found stamped on the wrists of all the partygoers upon entry.

The "orthodox Jewish" costumes with earlock-wigs and yarmulkas that some guests wear to the event, which is known as "queer," may be seen as an ironic commentary on the homophobia of many orthodox Jews or as an allusion to the common German cliché of "typical Jews." The image of a pig as a symbol for "unkosher" on early party flyers sent its own message: "I wanted to demonstrate that you can print a pig on a flyer for a Jewish party and nothing happens. We didn't even create a mini-provocation, although the embassy did call to ask whether this was really necessary," Netter tells *Haaretz*.[36] The music that the Tel Aviv DJ plays is part of his "unkosher Jewish" concept. He mixes dance classics like the Pet Shop Boys and Mariah Carey with chassidic music, the Israeli national anthem, and – in the case of the "Chanukah v.s. Christmas" party – traditional Chanukah songs. Although Netter insists he primarily wants his parties to bring fun and a good mood to Berlin night life, and he is delighted when visitors party down and dance, he makes one thing perfectly clear: "No one has a monopoly on Judaism. As I see it, 'Meschugge' is a new, modern way of being Jewish. The party's also meant to crack the German myth that Judaism is only a religion."[37]

Irony as Trademark

What might seem at first glance to be a disrespectful "alienation" of Jewish symbols should not be seen as devaluation or outright rejection, but rather as an expression of the ambivalence with which members of "Generation Y" regard their own Jewishness, say Steve M. Cohen and Ari Y. Kehlman, authors of the 2005 Cultural Events study.[38] At cultural events attended by young Jews in New York, the authors found that humor, irony, and sometimes outright contempt for Judaism provide a needed excuse to confront Jewish culture. Irony, humor, and disrespect create a distance that this population needs to get involved in aspects of Jewish culture.[39] The initiators of that study link this ironic and playful-dis-

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36 Halutz 2011.

37 Ibid.

38 Cohen/Kehlman, 84.

39 Ibid., 85: "Irony becomes a kind of fulcrum that opens the door to participation."

respectful attitude toward Jewish culture with Clifford Geertz's notion of deep play. What seems "playful" initially may have a very serious background – irony, apparent disdain, and ridicule can be interpreted as a sincere confrontation with Jewish identity.[40] Participants "play" with their Jewish identity by getting involved with it and at the same time pushing it away. So no one has to fit a mold; cultural identity can remain undefined, open, and changeable. Even so, this process cannot be branded "shallow" or superficial – ultimately, the approach via parody or irony also affords a good look at the object of scorn.

The fact that many participants and presenters at cultural events consider themselves to be "nonreligious" does not mean they are rejecting Judaism. In interviews, Aviv Netter stresses that he is not religious and does not believe in God, but he does feel Israeli and Jewish. Despite his rather loose connection to Judaism, the "Meschugge!" evenings are actually an expression of long ruminations over his Jewish identity. When he is asked what "makes you Jewish," he tells an interviewer: "The way that my finger claps on the table when I hear Jewish music, and enjoying Jewish food, family dinners – that's what's making me Jewish."[41] For Netter, the "Meschugge!" parties are part of the process by which he examines his Jewish identity to find out what "Jewishness" means to him. Besides, they are a way to express and "celebrate" his Jewish culture.[42]

In New York, the initiators of the Cultural Events study observed that the "easygoing atmosphere" of the events they visited served to enhance this feeling of identity and can become a release for "honest enjoyment." Participants may appreciate specifically Jewish content in music, literature, films, and events but it has to be kept "easygoing."[43] The presentation of Jewish culture as "open-ended, welcoming and accessible"[44] also makes it easy for non-Jews to participate in these events. One can see this aspect in Berlin, whether at Aviv Netter's parties, RotFront concerts, or performances by Oliver Polak – just like Polak's call for everyone to "Come, let's all be Jews," the "Berlin Meschugge!" parties cannot be seen as merely jocular confrontations with one's own cultural identity; they also convey this identity to others – to non-Jews.

The ironic and self-assured playing with clichés and mainstream anti-Semitism are typical within the generation of "New Jews," observes Daniel Itzkovitz: "What makes more recent Jewish performativity different is its self-consciousness,

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40 See ibid., 86.

41 In "Jewish in Berlin" at www.journeyman.tv, 13 September 2010.

42 Quote from the interview, "Ich bin Jude and mache Witze über Schweine" in: *die tageszeitung*, 28 March 2010.

43 Cohen Kehlman, 85, 83.

44 Ibid., 79.

its knowingness and its celebration rather than defensiveness over the capacity to deconstruct identity, so that now it is Jewishness itself that the so-called new Jews – in heretical fashion – perform."[45] What Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls "In Your Face-Judaism"[46] can now be found in Germany, too: the RotFront anthem, "I'm Gypsy, Jewish and Gay," is to be seen as an attack against racism, homophobia, and anti-Semitism.

Conclusion

In Germany, Jewish popular culture is evolving under different conditions from those in the U.S., although the developments in the latter may be seen as ground-breaking, and the two Jewish communities have many elements in common. Most consumers of Jewish popular culture in Germany are non-Jewish, and therefore artists must appeal to a non-Jewish audience in order to be successful. In the U.S., Jewish music, film, literature, and cultural events – in short, Jewish culture – have a long tradition, and Jewish popular culture is not a new phenomenon. After its destruction in Germany, Jewish culture has had to establish itself here anew. While fewer and fewer young people visit synagogues and community centers, the popularity of concerts and musical performances with Jewish content is growing. Those who reject institutional communal life can seek out connections to Jewish peers without any religious obligations or pressure to participate regularly – "to be among Jews without an agenda."[47]

Thus, young Jews in Germany today have various ways to find, define, and use their identity. "What's new about it is that it no longer has anything to do with a Jewish monologue: Anyone with legs to dance on and a bit of sense is invited."[48] This is how Jewish culture and Jewish traditions are transmitted to non-Jewish Germans – just by chance. Who knew before the "Purimspiel" parties began in Berlin's "Suicide Circus" that you dress up in costumes for Purim? Who knew how many arms a Chanukah candelabrum has, or what a dreidel is? Jewish popular culture, so easily accessible, nurtures cultural dialog between a young generation of Jews and non-Jews in Germany – independent of official programs and with events designed to promote exchange and improve understanding. The fact that most of the events take place in Berlin nightspots and have become a fixture of this cultural aspect of Berlin helps to ensure that Jewish popular culture does

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45 Itzkovitz, 247.

46 Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 3.

47 Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 5.

48 Gross, Thomas, 56.

not develop apart from non-Jewish society but rather in dialogue with it. The pop culture realm offers youth a forum for contact and confrontation, for dealing with difficult or complicated themes in a playful, "easygoing" manner. In this unique space, far from everyday conversations or formal events, inner-Jewish and interfaith dialogues may flourish.

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"Morbid Beauty" as an Aesthetic Concept to Portray "the Jew" in German Film

Interview with Felice Naomi Wonnenberg

> *Bodily decrepitude is wisdom,*
> *young we loved each other and were ignorant.*
> William Butler Yeats,
> "After long silence" (1936)

Felice Naomi Wonnenberg: When considering the aesthetics used to portray "the Jew" in Germany it is striking to see how often "the morbid" plays a key role in terms of aesthetics. There is evidence given in Horst Seemann's *Hotel Polan*, a film that could be considered the East German answer to Marvin Chomsky's *Holocaust*. As such it is a milestone production in film history and a film that plays an important role in creating a memorial culture of Jewish history in Germany, especially at the time of National Socialism. From the reception of this film I understand that it was commented with the words that it would show "eine längst versunkene Welt" (a world sunk long ago) with "schönen, schwermütigen Gesängen" (beautiful, melancholic enchantments) and "geheimnisvollen Ritualen" (mysterious rituals).

"A world sunk long ago." This phrasing is suggestive in terms of psychology and its mechanisms of repression. The words "long ago" evoke a fairy tale setting, and push the time of the Shoah into an ahistoric realm, beyond the threatening implications that "contemporary" would signify in relation to/between the speaker and his self-conception. A fairy tale world is a realm in which evil is not an issue of personal or historical culpability but symbolic, perhaps in the forms of dragons or witches. It transports the listener to a romantic children's book world and the story of "The little mermaid" – unfocused, under the waves of oblivion, including its toned down melancholy. It glosses over history in a multitude of shimmering layers of water that will smudge and wash away historic consciousness.

Claudia Simone Dorchain: Water is an ancient symbol of femininity, it contains "the element of maternity," as the alchemists believed. It is trivial to add that human life starts aquatic, in utero, so the alchemists have not proven great creativity in their identification of water and maternity. The French painter Odilon Redon's symbolist landscapes include light blue or black water, waves and boats because water symbolizes the primordial thing, origin, source, birth, intuition,

psychology. Water is often used as an allusion on our memory, on the subconscious mind so to say, the place where history as a chronology of events, good or bad, can be treasured or become toxic. The source of life is symbolized as the source of conscience. Besides, water is, of course, the element of beauty, as the birthplace of Venus was the sea.

FNW: The motif of water is found repeatedly, and not by coincident in Shoah memorial films. Water was a key motif symbolizing melancholy at the time of the Romantic period, the nineteenth century. The official GDR Ravensbrück memorial film, Katja Baumgärtner writes about, opens and ends with shots of water. The opening just shows water of the lake near Ravensbrück, the end is a commemoration ceremony for the dead of the camp. In the film *Ehe in Schatten* (Marriage overshadowed, by Kurt Maetzig, 1947) the doomed love relationship starts with the couple looking at the sea, roaring, dark wild waves, and the lonesome beach in the icy German winter.

Romanticism, this very German art and literature style, celebrated melancholy as one of the most divine emotions and expressions of the human soul. The *Liebestod* – unfortunate unrealized love, romantic relationships leading to death – were celebrated as the highest and purest form of love that could be attained. This glorification of love is enacted in the East German film *Ehe in Schatten* about a German-Jewish mixed couple in the Third Reich.

This is why Shakespeare's model of the "star-crossed lovers," Romeo and Juliet, had a revival as a popular love story in the time of the Romanticism. The same holds true for the Ophelia motif, an image of a woman drowning herself because she realizes that she cannot does not realize that she cannot make her love longings reality. Ophelia's death in the water, the *Wasserleiche* (water corpse; drowned body), and the motif of water as the expression of melancholy are the motivation for the speaker when they allude to Jewish fate in Germany as "a world sunk long ago." I actually find this statement symptomatic in a very cynical, morbid way.

CSD: What is that special "morbid" notion in the aesthetics of the Jewish characters in *Hotel Polan*? I mean, it is very conventional at first sight, plain, full of stereotypes, one-dimensioned – but what is that morbidity in itself, and why does it allude to the idea of what is considered "Jewish," and how is this effect created in films?

FNW: The Jewish characters in *Hotel Polan* appear to be secluded in "splendid isolation," but it is actually an isolation leading to death. They act in an exclusively self-referential framework. The only character that breaks out of this "Jewish

universe" is the changeling, the bastard Peter, the one fathered by a non-Jewish lover. In the "racial sense" *Hotel Polan* is truly anti-Semitic: The only person who is allowed to survive in Germany by grace of the spectators' sympathy is someone who is "racially-genetically" non-Jewish. The real Jewish fate, on the other hand, is a morbid one, according to the internal logic of the film.

CSD: The so-called "morbid" is an overused scheme of stereotypes; strictly speaking it's *kitsch. Kitsch*, as Slavoj Žižek states in *Living in the end times* in 2010, is art which gives the illusion of a whole, of a wholeness which is artificial because it is most unnatural, unreal, and cannot be anything but a hoax.

FNW: Wholeness... the Hebrew word Shalom stems from the word root *Shalem*, which means wholeness. To be at peace means to be in wholeness. So the shattered peace of mind in post-Shoah Germany was desperate to reevoke a wholeness, no matter if it is an artificial one. Of course this reconstruction of wholeness amounts to kitsch. The characters in *Hotel Polan* are picture book Jews.

CSD: These characters in *Hotel Polan*, without the least ambivalence, this total lack of *nuance*, that is kitsch, and that creates the "morbid" effect as well. Morbidity is, at first sight, artificiality in a retrospective, artificiality of an imaginary wholeness which, as we know, never existed. "The" Jewish citizen as provincial *rebbe* with long side locks, sinisterly handling a mohel knife while all the veiled women bend their heads in awe and fear, hissing "Oooow!" That's kitschissime.

FNW: The film director of *Hotel Polan*, Horst Seemann read through numerous "religious textbooks" about Judaism to get his characters really "Jewish." The problem is that it caused the actors to be too correct to be real, textbook Jews, they act like little Jewish wind-up birds. They are as unattractive as characters, as unsexy as the mechanic wind-up bird in Pasolini's *Casanova*.

CSD: "Morbid" does not only mean, as we have said, artificiality in a retrospective, a hoax wholeness, kitsch, *nostalgia*. No, morbidity is proximity to death. It is an ontological point of view, the moment when an individual or a group trespasses on the frontier between life and death.

FNW: Trespassing, or rather being pushed into the realm of death. Well, many German Jews were so emotionally attached to Germany, to their *fatherland*, as true patriots that they took great pains to ignore the imminent danger in a moment when they should have fled from Germany. Their love for Germany made

Germany so very dangerous for them. It seems Jewish film characters are most likely to be constructed "in the shadow of death."

Even Dani Levy could not get around the trap of the "open grave" waiting for the Jewish character. He found a very humorous solution to deal with the seemingly inevitable: he has his Jewish character jump into the grave. The character is actually faking a heart attack to get away from the funeral to join his gambling friends in time for the big showdown competition. The point is: Dani Levy had this brilliant idea to deal with the German Retro-Romantic expectation to see the Jew in the grave. He has him fake the scene, jump right into the open grave but only to really live it up.

CSD: The person who is going to die but who is not yet dead, who is still living, is morbid. This is the ontological definition: morbidity is the approaching death, the wake of death, not death itself. *Todgeweiht* (that is, consecrated for death, doomed, moribund) is the German word.

FNW: This shows the religious esteem that German culture, especially German culture of the era of the Romanticism, accords to death. Death is perceived as something valuable in a religious sense. *Weihe* (consecration) as a ritual, not life itself, is something highly staged.

CSD: Whenever we think of todgeweiht, that means consecrated for death in art, the famous image of Shakespearian Ophelia immediately comes to mind. She is a girl in her first beauty, the beauty of youth, inanimately floating in the waters as a "beautiful" corpse surrounded by the different flowers she has picked – roses, lilies, forget-me-nots, all symbols of drowned ideals.

In short, the association of morbidity with what is seen as Jewish also has the implication of the approaching death, and at the same time of femininity, and also of something that is perceived as "beautiful," although it has an element of weakness, too. As we can clearly see, this is not an aesthetic program in itself, *it is the use of an aesthetic program*. Why do we use this program?

The "beautiful corpse" evokes compassion, and maybe Martha Nussbaum is right in her opinion that tragedy has had a propaedeutic function for the masses as a kind of extra-tuition in feeling compassion (*Upheavals of thought*, 2001). However, I think that's not enough. The image of the drowned beauty, incorporated by a young girl, is a snapshot within a sequence which is well-known in European culture. We take a look on the snapshot and immediately know what lies behind and what comes after because we know the film. Female beauty is closely connected with cruelty, it often serves as a foreshadowing of cruelty, death, and

sacrifice, as Georges Didi-Hubermann puts it. And that is, in my opinion, why the "beautiful corpse" becomes that effective on our consciousness.

FNW: This is a very important icon – the "beautiful" corpse; Elisabeth Bronfen wrote about this fetish in her book of the same title. The "beautiful" corpse is the romantic's favorite element, the water, the Wasserleiche. However, it is topped by the *Reichswasserleiche* (drowned corpse of the Reich), Kristina Söderbaum. Veit Harlan's wife had to drown in several of his Nazi propaganda films to perform this form of death of the Romantics. One of these films was *Jud Süß*.

Here she is *consecrated* to death because *Jud Süß desecrated* her femininity. Christina von Braun writes about the nation, *Volk*, to be incorporated symbolically by a woman figure. In *Jud Süß* this female sacrifice has a function: death elevates, death renders the *Volkgemeinschaft* (the German people) sacred. Death considered as the paramount goal, and moreover a form of death in the favorite element of Romanticism – water. The icon of the Wasserleiche is a female allegoric figure to represent this world of morbidity. As different as Ophelia and the Reichswasserleiche Kristina Söderbaum are, in the eyes of the Romantics or retro-Romantics they fufill the same ontological function: nobody has ever died more beautifully, and at the same time more punctually and reliably than Söderbaum in the propaganda films. The Wasserleiche was one of the favorite icons of the Romantics and retro-Romantics – the paintings showing Ophelia in the water were too beautiful to be resisted.

Werther's suicide for love was also popular, though not in the water because he is not feminine. However, people even bought tailor-made yellow suits, as the one Werther wore when he shot himself, to style-fully reenact the suicide as their own. The Liebestod, the love suicide, elevates the love affair to a metaphysical level because death is perceived as something sacred in this cultural context. The Liebestod is an *Opfertod* (a scared sacrifice). To put it more bluntly, one could say, the deader – the better.

CSD: Ophelia is not the only example of todgeweiht or morbid in arts. I remember Alfred Tennyson and his ballad "The Lady of Shalott," very popular in Victorian times. The lady is doomed by a magic curse to lifelong isolation in a tower. In fact, she breaks the spell and escapes from the tower when she falls in love with the handsome knight Lancelot, but in the instance of flight, she dies and drowns in the waters. So, we have another beautiful female corpse floating in a river, but it is not Ophelia's body. The topic of that dark power of love is the same in *Hamlet* and "The Lady of Shalott," and, of course, the tragic end is the same, but Tennyson's poem is much more foreshadowing and threatening. While Ophelia had a life of her own before the tragic turn, the Lady of Shallott was always doomed.

FNW: Doomed moreover to live inside a phallic symbol, a tower, caught and locked-up in a chauvinist fantasy. There are, of course, more examples. The wife Dracula had when he was still a Romanian count for instance, a living human person. She is said to have been misinformed, betrayed, mistakenly told that her husband was killed on the battlefield. She drowns herself in a river, which was, of course, the expected and correct thing to do for a wife imagined at the time of Romanticism – the time when Dracula was renarrated by Bram Stoker. This incident triggers Dracula's wrath against God, he curses God and is doomed to eternal life in darkness. Dracula became the artistic icon of love leading to death. The vampire is not a "monster" that hunts, he erotically lures his victims towards him. They are drawn to their death by their own desire. Love that leads inevitably to death, mingled with an extreme fear of sensuality as the inner erotic drive in oneself.

Terry Eagleton points out that in the Romantic's philosophy there is no real artistic creativity without the demonic. He says: "In the 19th century one believed that the evil is necessarily part of the creative. One had to be either mad or evil." The vampire is the paramount expression of the Romantic passion, he is madly in love and in this drives him inherently and tragically – because against his own intention – evil. The vampire kills by – erotically and passionately – kissing his victim. This is actually the very method of death that God granted Moses: according to Jewish tradition, God killed Moses by kissing him. By Torah standards this is considered a supreme way to die, bestowed on Moses as a sign of honor. On the other hand, most female protagonists in vampire stories accept this convention. In the spirit of true romantics they accept death as the (super)natural, inevitable consequence of love.

CSD: This Victorian fascination for the "Gothic" novel with its "bridegroom from the dark side" is not that new; it derives from an ancient source, from superstition. What Tennyson shows in his remarkable ballad is the aspect of magic, doom, and the inevitability of destiny. This cluster of ideas is close to Greek tragedy, it is *Antigone*, *Medea*, and, of course, *Oedipus*. All these heroes and heroines are irrevocably condemned by fate. The protagonist cannot escape. He is, like the unhappy Lady of Shalott, tight in the hand of fate, which strangles him.

FNW: ...or soul-quenched, doomed to thirst for the soul, the blood of other living beings, like the vampire where passion leads to death.

CSD: This idea of passion leading to death incorporated in the vampire could be Greek but is actually – if you look closer – much more deeply rooted in Christian ideas. The leading passion in Greek tragedy, as well as in the psychology of

Homer's heroes and heroines, is not sexual lust but vengeance, and vengeance causes all that anger, bloodshed, patricide, infanticide.

The Christian point of view is different, as the Sermon on the Mount deals explicitly with vengeance and interdicts it. A good Christian, according to the Sermon on the Mount, should forgive his enemies. Nevertheless, "bad feelings" can never be denied totally, and this mingling of passion and death becomes yet evident in the Christian fear of sexuality. To me, the vampire is a very special iconic type of Christian sexual neurosis. Wilhelm Reich, this most unconventional student of Sigmund Freud, explored in his early work, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, which first appeared in 1933, how sexual neurosis creates an ill effect on people, how it fanaticizes and leads them to cruelty by the process of mingling sexual fear and violence.

FNW: Is that effect Christian or anthropogenic? And by the way, if it is not a fanaticized crowd, what is the meaning of these murders in ancient times, in the Greek tragedy, then?

CSD: It's not vengeance, actually, for vengeance is not an aim in itself. Vengeance finally aims at peace, as well as even court decisions are subtle "rituals of vengeance," as Michel Foucault puts it.

René Girard shows that the idea of inescapable death is not a mere stage-managing of cruelty but also a social and political appeasement. In *La violence et le sacré* (1972), Girard demonstrates how the Greek tragedy aims at peace by offering the protagonist as a sacrifice. The death of the hero, his sacrifice, brings peace into a formerly stress-ridden society. It is a *Sühneopfer*, a sacrifice being said to smoothen guilt, and leading to civil peace. There remains the association of Sühneopfer, sacrifice of atonement, with the aesthetics of what some regard as "Jewish."

FNW: In post-Shoah German memorial culture the sacred icon is shifted to the scared – dead – Jew. Again the citation comes to mind: "A world sunk long ago" as a euphemism of religious quality, for what should more bluntly have been called a mass murder. To come to terms with the enormous monstrosity of the Shoah, it was given the name "Holocaust," a sacrifice, and as such, sanctified. The Jewish side advocates the usage of the term "Shoah" (Hebrew for catastrophe) instead of Holocaust. Holocaust is the Greek word for animal sacrifice, in which the animal is completely burnt, *holo kauston*, a practice used in the temple in Jerusalem in antiquity. Jewish mainstream does not consider the Shoah as an event in which the sacrifice of Jewish people would make any theological sense whatsoever.

CSD: Morbidity is retrospective, morbidity is kitsch, and morbidity is the inevitability of death, of fate, of death *as* fate. There is in fact an additional notion. It has to do with the reflection of time, with activity and passivity, as we can clearly see that morbidity is an aesthetic concept without any remarkable dynamic, very passive, calm. Morbidity is passivity, "dead man walking," still standing.

FNW: I think that is one of the reasons why *Judentum* (Judaism), is so immensely popular in Germany: it is subconsciously perceived as something close to maximum passivity, it is considered almost entirely dead. At the same time this proximity to death shines a noble light onto Judaism past, according to the above mentioned mechanisms. And that is why it can be portrayed so beautifully, serve as a screen to project longings onto, so pleasing for a Retro-Romantic-view. And that is also why Israel, in comparison to Judentum, Judaism, is so highly unpopular among people in Germany today. N.B. there is an official sympathy for Israel attested by the politicians in official speeches. On the other hand among people in Germany there is a special carefulness not to say something wrong, something that could be judged – and, according to existing German law, prosecuted – as anti-Semitic and on the other hand virulent anti-Israelism uttered behind the hand. Israel is not passive enough to please the needs. Israel is alive and kicking. At times it is even kicking right into faces, and willing to do many things but certainly not to die in celestial passivity.

CSD: Let us go back to the artistic example. The famous Pre-Raphaelite painters Elizabeth Siddal and William Holman Hunt displayed the Lady of Shalott in a waiting position, sitting motionless in front of a magic mirror – yes, even here the mirror is a symbol of distorted reality...

FNW: ...the mirror is often the window or door to the netherworld. Cocteau's Orpheus goes through the mirror into the land of death and even Lewis Carroll's Alice goes "Through the Looking-Glass." But glass is also the symbol of a hoax, as E.T.A. Hoffmann states in his *Die Elixiere des Teufels*. Crystal would be the natural thing. Glass is something artificial, and since the eighteenth century it actually has become a symbol for artificiality in general. Hunt, Siddall, Cocteau, or even Carroll stage-manage their characters while dealing with glass, with mirrors, like puppets on a string. It seems as if dealing with glass or mirrors has a deafening quality, the characters dealing with glass become somewhat numb, waiting for the death blow .

CSD: *Waiting is masochism*, as Gilles Deleuze defines it, or vice versa, masochism is waiting. Deleuze (1968) gives an unconventional idea of masochism in

his astonishing analysis of masochism in his interpretation of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's erotic classic *Venus in furs*: Masochism is more as, and essentially different from, tolerating and even desiring pain.

By analyzing what Sacher-Masoch wrote in his novella, Deleuze comes to the conclusion that the truly "masochist" scenes are not those of Wanda whipping Severin, you know. The essence of masochism, in his view, is not whipping, but waiting. Severin is tormented by waiting for the blow much more than by the blow itself. The whole book, in a certain regard, is a frame for the expected blow, the tension which lies within, the *anticipated pain*. So, back to our concept of morbidity, it is passivity, thus waiting for the blow, and this implicates weakness or masochism.

FNW: Waiting is the freezing of the moment of life. Translated into aesthetic terms this means for media: Photography is a moment of life frozen to death, therefore, photography always encompasses the aura of death. Film on the other hand is twenty-four photographs per second "animated" into motion. It tricks our slow human eye into the illusion of life. Our imperfection causes us to fail to notice that we are actually only seeing a succession of numerous flickering deaths. To us it looks as if the subjects on film are made alive again. Gertrud Koch said "dass das gestern Gefilmte wie die Rückkehr der Toten ins Leben wirken kann," "that what was filmed yesterday can have the effect of the dead come alive again," in other words, film is a little resurrection machine.

Concerning this, Gertrud Koch states in her lecture about Cinema and mortal fear: "Gerade weil das Bewegungsbild des Films Lebendigkeit asoziiert, ist es zum Medium der Untoten, der lebendig Begrabenen und der Unsterblichen Körper geworden," (that means it is the very association of the moving image of film with liveliness that made film the media of the undead, of the ones buried alive and of the immortal bodies).

Photography on the other hand is more melancholic. We are looking directly at the moment of death, the moment when life was halted, when "all smiles stopped together" as in Robert Browning's poem, an ode of a man who dearly loves his wife – under the condition that she is dead. In film all the characters come back to life, little dead puppets that can be resurrected as often as the spectator pleases; rising out of the coffin time and again, like a vampire. Koch comments on this phenomenon: "Lange nachdem die Vampire die populäre Literatur (des 19. Jahrhunderts) endgültig verlassen haben, springen sie aus den filmischen Gräbern, als wäre gestern heute," (it means long after the vampires left popular literature (of the nineteenth century) forever they jump out of their filmic graves as if yesterday were today).

The Christian motif of the Dance of Death tradition is a dance, one big tango around morbidity. "It takes two to tango," yet, the ideal tango partner is the woman who dances beautifully but in absolute passivity – in fact passive as if she were dead. That is where the "dead Jew puppet" comes in so handy as a partner; also in the film business.

CSD: Would you agree that photography is an act of virtual killing? Strange as it seems, there is strong evidence given for a widely spread subconscious fear of photography and filmmaking. E.M. Cioran told us that in post-war Romania people literally fled from photographers because they actually feared that "they could take their soul." And as we know from Sergius Golowin and his ethnological studies of Switzerland, Germany, and France in the fifties, traveling gypsies thought alike and avoided the camera. So, the scholar's view seems to be rooted in archaic fears.

In the concept of morbidity, used as an aesthetic mode of what should be "Jewish," there is beauty used as a phenomenon of weakness and the approach of death. Therefore, *beauty is not the key notion, it has only a propaedeutic function to show what goes further*, the idea of inescapable death, of female-associated passivity, of a masochist waiting for the death blow.

FNW: One could say Christianity is all about playing around death. Take the Catholic Easter processions or the Easter plays. The *Oberammergau Passionsspiele*, literally playing death with passion, reenacting it again and again, for hundreds of years, the whole village, a pilgrimage to join the spectacle of death. The very symbol of Christianity, the cross, is the instrument of fatal torture, *passion* to a slow death. Death is something very intimate in Christianity. There is the traditional crucifix over the matrimonial bed. Even the vampire is iconographically linked to Christianity, the cross or the inverted cross, he is designed as a subversion of Christian passions, he is the reliquary of the holy patrons in churches. The blood of the holy martyrs becomes liquid again if you only play, pardon, pray hard enough.

CSD: No, Christianity is not "playing" about death and blood. Death and blood of Jesus Christ, transformed by resurrection, by *transubstantiation*, is the essence of Christianity. That is all taken very seriously, deadly serious so to say, although it may actually amuse in some regards, such as reliquary. Martin Luther already bantered about the credulity of his contemporaries who believed in "holy" bones, "holy" tunics, and "holy" nails of the Holy Cross, for in his opinion these adored reliquaries contained enough "holy" nails to shoe every horse in Europe.

However, apart from matters of credulity, there remains the vital connection of death and blood in the Christian religion. As Christianity is pretending to be the religion of love, the association of love and death, of Liebestod, is nearer than in other religions. That is, by the way, why the theme of the Dance of the Death (*Totentanz*) is basically Christian. Every religion, mono- or polytheist, deals with the mortality of the human race, and every religion found its own iconic way to show their believers what they have to expect after death, for example, the man-eating and strangling Goddess Kali Durga in the Hinduist religion. However, in Judaism you will not find images of dancing skeletons embracing men and women, or the personalized death as *Gevatter Tod* seducing a young girl, or Edvard Munch's female vampire entangling a pale young man.

The theme of seduction and death, the enthralling Dance of Death is typically Christian, and thus a pioneer idea leading to the special genre of vampire or "Gothic" novel you are so fond of. Philippe Ariès held the opinion that the Dance of Death illustrated the mass mortality in the Middle Ages caused by the plague, the Black Death. However, the iconic dance of skeletons is far more than a mirror of medieval epidemics. It stage-manages the Christian association of love and death by the pictorial means of seduction and dance, sometimes very poetical, tender, utterly "lovely," and so a mortal play, as you called it, has to be taken very seriously.

FNW: Don't get me wrong, playing is something very important. Schiller, to quote another German, said "Der Mensch spielt nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Wortes Mensch ist, und er ist nur da ganz Mensch, wo er spielt" (which means We are only human in the true sense of the word, when we play, enact). Playing and reenacting is extremely important. Death is played out and by witnessing it the spectators touches the trauma, yet is offered the chance to go through the trauma by watching the passion play; the spectator or participating actor offers a way to *survive death*. The animal sacrifice of Judaism in antiquity presents exactly the same thing: the animal dies instead of the human, it is sacrificed. The resurrection of Jesus in Christian theology is another solution for the same terrifying fascinosum.

CSD: Maybe that is why the Pope, John Paul II, the predecessor of today's Benedikt XVI, addressing a Christian audience, once called the Jews "our elder brothers." Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, that sarcastic contemporary of Goethe, mocked about Christians as "a Jewish sect." Dealing with sacrifice, animal or human sacrifice, and its interpretation is something theologically vital, especially in both the Jewish and the Christian tradition. Death, sex, and parties are the only events you have to attend in person, no stooges. So dealing with sacrifice

as the celebration of mortality is constructing identities, no matter if individual or collective ones.

Sacrifice still remains an interreligious "fascinosum" because it has to do with immortality. The meaning of "fascinatio" in ancient times has been the petrifying look of the Gods, and even today we call something "fascinating" in case there is a thrill in it, which just recalls our mortality. Immortalizing, that means to escape from the fascinating divine look which eventually causes life to stop, has been a motivational key to *Kulturschaffen* (cultural contribution).

To immortalize the human being, there have been three traditional high ways, and one low way. The three high ways are devotion in arts, spirituality, and love, the low way is destruction. To have an enemy, that's a new helix of identity, it's immortalizing. To me, wars – especially the new wars fought under the flag of what is called cultural difference, Samuel Huntington and Francis Fukuyama wrote about – are not initiated out of the reasons propagandized, even not out of the short-sighted financial interests our analysts interpret, but out of the human need to immortalize. Back to our topic of the "morbid beauty": this image evokes mortality, being too weak to confront enemies. And this idea is very close to your research on the image of the Jewish man in war films.

FNW: Well, as the soldier says in the German-French-Israeli coproduced film *Lebanon*: "I don't care about being your comrade or not, I just want to live. And by the way, we have never been friends." It is a swan song to the high ideals of brothers in arms, of the philosophy on the beautification of death. This attitude has materialized into a Jewish iconic sign: the *Hai*, meaning "Live." The Hai has become a graphic sign of Judaism. Worn as a pendant on necklaces it has become more popular among Jewish girls and women in Germany than the Star of David pendant.

Wearing the Star of David pendant in public is almost taboo among the Jewish community in Germany, it is usually worn on a long chain so that it can be hidden under the clothing inside the synagogue and inside the clothing in public space. Like the kippa, it is often quite simply considered too dangerous to wear an obvious Jewish symbol in public. In addition it evokes the allusion to the Shoah, the allusion of death, which again makes the Hai, the sign that reflects Judaism's emphasis on life, the preferred choice. In regards to death, the Jewish perspective was summarized ingeniously by Woody Allen: "I am not afraid of death, I just don't want to be there when it happens."

Barbara J. Steiner

Between Guilt and Repression – Conversion to Judaism after the Shoa

Conversion to Judaism and the subsequent acceptance of Jewish converts are topics that are still discussed at length among Jews in Germany today. Is it actually possible to become a Jew? How should a Jewish convert conduct herself or himself? And the most significant question of all: Why do non-Jewish Germans convert to Judaism, and what connection might this phenomenon have with Germany's most recent past, the persecution of and murdering of Jews? Do Jewish converts simply want to change sides in order to belong to the victims and their successors, thereby distancing themselves from their own possibly disreputable family histories? Do they simply want to make everything all right again? Do Germans who convert to Judaism do so because they feel guilty?[1] These are the questions that I will thoroughly investigate in my dissertation, which deals with the conversion of Germans to Judaism after 1945.[2] I intend to illustrate how German converts deal with the Shoa, and how far they integrate this into their biographies as 'New Jews.'

From a religious perspective, it is possible for anyone to become a Jew. According to *Halacha* (the law of Judaism), a Jew is a person who is either born of a Jewish mother, or a person who has been converted to Judaism before a *Beit Din* (a Rabbinical court) after a period of religious instruction. *Giur* (the process of conversion) can take years, and is considered by many converts to be tiring and arbitrary.[3] The conversion process is a test of the seriousness of the candidate; he or she must learn about the Jewish religion and Jewish history and make every effort to fit into the community. One is only allowed to become a Jew after passing an examination administered by a rabbinical court and immersion in a *mikvah* (a water bath, large enough for a grown human being); men must also be circumcised. The requirements of Halacha are quite clear. One gets the impression, however, that the affiliation of Jewish identity is tenuous: if, for example, a new rabbi is appointed within the community, one can lose everything. Even within

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1 See also, for instance, Brumlik, Micha; Kiesel, Doron, Unter Gleichen: Wer zum Judentum übertritt, gehört genauso zur Gemeinschaft, wie einer, der hineingeboren wurde. *Jüdische Allgemeine*, 22nd Oktober, 2009. Broder, Henryk, M., Zur Hölle mit den Konvertiten! In: *Nicht durch Geburt allein: Übertritt zum Judentum,* Homolka, Walter; Seidel, Esther (Eds.), 22-28. Munich: Knesebeck, 1995.

2 I intend to submit this dissertation to the University of Potsdam by end of 2012.

3 See the interviews in my dissertation *"When I noticed I was Jewish…" – Conversion of Germans to Judaism post 1945.*

the convert's own community, where the convert has been accepted, the validity of the conversion – even generations later – can be put to the test.[4]

Orthodox Judaism does not accept, on principle, conversions to Judaism that have been carried out by Liberal rabbis. Even within different groups of Orthodox Jews there are differences of opinion concerning the validity of completed conversions. The State of Israel recognizes all conversions, but the Orthodox Rabbinates of Israel do not. It is possible as a Liberal Jewish convert to emigrate to Israel, but to the Orthodox Rabbinates of Israel, one remains non-Jewish. There is no guarantee that one will be recognized as a Jew, even though one commits to a life governed by commandments and prohibitions. It is not easy to become a Jew, to be a Jew, or even to remain a Jew.[5]

Initially, the conversion to Judaism after the Shoa seems an unlikely option for Germans – especially those without any Jewish family connections. For decades, Jews were looked upon as victims and the majority of Germans were considered perpetrators, who, if not actively involved in murdering Jews, had tacitly approved such actions. After 1945, Germans continued to convert to Judaism and were taken in by the Jews as members of their community, which – in the shadow of recent German history – was not always easy for either side. Jews and Jewish converts had to learn how to relate to each other. Jews accepted that there were people who wanted to belong to their religion. Germans who had converted to Judaism not only had to live with distrust concerning their origins, but also with the suspicion that many of them only wanted to convert in order to be "on the right side of history."[6]

After the Shoa, it was nevertheless desirable – for various reasons – to be Jewish. In 1950, Nathan Peter Levinson, then Rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin, received some 6,000 applications for conversion to Judaism; a special commission was then established in order to check all applicants for possible involvement in National Socialism. Among the applicants were people who hoped to gain advantages from their conversion to Judaism; for instance, they hoped to receive a *Care-Paket* (a gift of emergency supplies from the American allies) or to gain financially in the form of compensation payments. Many former Nazis also wanted to become Jews – whether from genuine regret and the desire

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4 See www.welt.de/regionales/berlin/article1868431/Juedische_Gemeinde_feuert_ Rabbiner.html. [Accessed 4th March 2011], and also: www.hagalil.com/archiv/2000/09/ lauder.htm. [Accessed 4 March 2011].

5 See also, for instance, Trepp, Leo; Wöbken-Ekert, Gunda, *Dein Gott ist mein Gott: Wege zum Judentum und zur jüdischen Gemeinschaft*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005, or Lamm, Maurice. *Becoming a Jew*. New York: Jonathan David Publishers, 1991.

6 Broder, 23.

to put things right, or with the intention of disappearing unnoticed by taking cover in the Jewish community. Many people wanted to belong to Judaism for religious reasons, but just as many Germans, who, horrified by the crimes committed against Jews, wanted to convert out of solidarity with the Jewish people.[7]

It was not easy for Germans to convert to Judaism after the war. Applicants had to prove they were genuinely religious, and above all, that they had moral integrity. All applicants were considered suspect on principle; the communities and personnel who were responsible for conversion quite rightly reacted with distrust, which they also extended to Jews who had abandoned their religion during the Nazi regime, but after 1945 wanted to return. It should not be made easy for those who had survived persecution, but had turned their backs on Judaism in horrific times, to return.[8] After 1945, mixed marriages, especially between German Jewish men and Christian women, were still relatively common. Therefore the majority of people who wanted to convert were women who were married to Jewish men and had stood by them throughout National Socialism. Women who had met a survivor after 1945 and had married or wanted to marry him, were also accepted. After the war, most applicants without Jewish family members were still rejected.[9] Even today, the proportion of women converts is much greater, which is due, above all else, to the requirements of Halacha that state that a child inherits its Jewish birthright from the mother. Although from a rabbinical perspective a conversion should be permitted primarily as a result of religious conviction, 'love conversions' have long been a part of Jewish everyday life.

Jewish converts frequently state that reflection upon the extermination of the Jews was the starting point that led them to Judaism.[10] That is not to say, however, that Germans feel guilty about their past; if one studies the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany, it is only natural that one concerns oneself with the Jewish reli-

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7 Levinson, Nathan Peter, *Ein Ort ist, mit wem du bist. Lebenssituationen eines Rabbiners*. Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1996. See also Dani Levy's film, *Meschugge* (1998), which deals with the attempts of Nazi perpetrators to seek cover in the Jewish community, or Hilsenrath, Edgar, *Der Nazi und der Friseur*. Munich: Piper, 1990.255

8 Geis, Jael, *Übrig sein – Leben danach*. Berlin: Philo, 2000. Strahtmann, Donate. *Auswandern oder Hierbleiben? Jüdisches Leben in Düsseldorf und Nordrhein*, *1945-1960*. Essen: Düsseldorfer Schriften zur neueren Landesgeschichte und zur Geschichte Nordrhein-Westfalens, 2003, 213.

9 Levinson, Nathan Peter, Konversion oder Camouflage. Ein Bericht über Proselyten im Nachkriegsdeutschland. In: Levinson, Pnina Navè: *Aus freier Entscheidung. Wege zum Judentum*. Teetz: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2000, 96.

10 See interviews in my dissertation *"When I noticed I was Jewish…"* – *Conversion of Germans to Judaism post 1945*, and also Eigner, Antje. *Ich bin Jüdin geworden*. Hamburg: Rotbuch Verlag, 1994.

gion and its history. After the war ended, former members of the SA (the armed storm troopers of the German National Socialist Workers' Party) sought out the company of Jews, and much to the annoyance of survivors of the Shoa, prayed alongside them in the synagogues in an effort "to be the better Jews."[11] Many children and grandchildren from families who had been particularly involved with National Socialism also converted to Judaism, and it was they who were most strongly suspected of being driven by guilt to change sides.[12] It seems to be too narrow, however, to understand the phenomenon of Germans converting to Judaism entirely as a reaction of guilt, but it can logically be considered *one* possible motivation. Conversion to Judaism may be a strategy for *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (the process of coming to terms with a disreputable past, and particularly with National Socialism); it is impossible, however, to determine whether it is a successful one. It makes more sense to raise the question: How was it possible for German converts to become Jewish? To what extent did converts manage to feel – despite their different experiences of recent history – a strong enough sense of belonging that they could then reveal their uneasiness due to guilt about their past? These questions will be investigated through the biographies of two women who lived part of their respective childhoods and youth under National Socialism, and who succeeded in becoming Jewish converts after 1945.[13]

Ruth: Joining the Victims

Ruth was born in 1927 in Berlin, and grew up in modest circumstances. After the war, she worked as a dressmaker and photographer's model. In 1949, she met Carl, who was 18 years older, and they married in 1953. Carl had been married before, and came from a liberal German-Jewish family, who, although conscious of their Jewish heritage, did not maintain its traditions. Carl was the only surviving member of his family; his parents and three brothers were murdered at Auschwitz. Carl's first wife also survived, but their two children did not. In 1947, Carl's first wife died; she had contracted tuberculosis during her incarceration. Her illness also delayed their planned emigration to America. It was due to these experiences, and the subsequent wishes of Carl, that the marriage to Ruth was to

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11 Levinson, Pnina Navè, *Aus freier Entscheidung: Wege zum Judentum*. Teetz: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2000. 259
12 A well-known example is Veit Harlan's daughter, Susanne Körber, who married a Jew and converted to Judaism. Her sister, Maria Körber, also married a Jewish man, but did not convert.
13 The interviews with Ruth (name has been changed) conducted on 15 February 2006, and Judith (name has been changed) on 24 May 2009, form the basis of this research.

remain childless. At first, Carl did not consider remarrying. In 1956, after a year of religious instruction, Ruth converted to Judaism. Carl was initially against it, because he feared the religious fervor of Jewish converts, but in the end he was pleased that Ruth 'belonged' to the community. Ruth's conversion to Judaism took place after the war, and its peculiar form was due to a lack of necessary personnel. She was allotted a teacher from the community, and then a rabbi from Switzerland was appointed, and he alone made the decision, quite independently, as to whether Ruth would be accepted.

After Carl and Ruth married, their life together revolved exclusively around the Berlin Jewish community. They went to the synagogue together and participated in the lively social life. There was hardly any contact with the non-Jewish world outside. In 1958, they wanted to emigrate to Brazil, where an uncle of Carl lived, but much to Ruth's relief, they did not go due to lack of money. It was not easy for Ruth at the beginning. She admits she was welcomed and accepted by Carl's friends – all married couples who had survived the Shoa. Other women, however, either single, or in many cases, widows who had lost their husbands and children in the camps, were not pleased that the few Jewish men who had survived and returned often chose to marry Christian women instead. Women like Ruth were often regarded as the enemy and treated with suspicion of engagement in the National Socialist movement. Although Ruth found their treatment unpleasant, she could also understand the women's behavior. She still felt comfortable being part of the community, however, and actively took part in all the activities, and also helped the elderly and the sick. Today, sitting across from her in her living room surrounded by the tomes of Heinrich Heine and portraits of Napoleon and Beethoven, and hearing her life story – which she tells quite compellingly with a Berlin-Jewish slant – it is hard to believe that she is a Jewish convert, because she is exactly how one would expect a German Jewish woman of her generation to be.

Ruth began by saying that, as a in the 1930s, she was already acquainted with Jews; her parents had Jewish friends, and she therefore grew up in the company of Jews:

> [...] Even as a child, I had contact with Judaism in the area I grew up in. Our dentist and our doctor were both Jews. My parents were friends with Jews. My father had a lot of friends, no aristocrats of course, they were all just simple people. Men, who were Jews. So, even as a child I had contact with Jews. So, that was nothing special to me. There was Mr. so-and-so and whether he was a Jew or not didn't make a blind bit of difference.[14]

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14 Interview with Ruth.

Ruth attempts to establish herself and her parents as people who did not support the anti-Semitic policies of National Socialism: Ruth and her parents could not have had any resentment against Jews because they had Jewish friends. She presents a picture of everyday life between Germans and Jews that is not tainted by marginalization and persecution. The 'evidence for the defence' that non-Jewish Germans present – that they always had Jewish friends – is something that Ruth takes pains to illustrate, and something she complains about throughout the interview. She describes an altercation between her husband and a non-Jewish German and thereby confronts the issue of post-war anti-Semitism:

> [...] and when people knew we were Jews, they said, "[O]h that's nice, we have lots of Jewish friends" – then they were as nice as pie. But if they didn't know we were Jewish, then there was just no stopping them. Some of the comments they sometimes made, you just had to swallow hard and turn around and leave.[15]

Ruth is well aware how non-Jewish Germans exploit the claim of having "Jewish friends"; in fact, she exploits it herself, in order to elide her experiences of National Socialism. Further into our conversation – without uttering a word about the fate of the Jewish acquaintances from her childhood days – she moves on to 1949, the year she met her future husband, as though the extermination of the Jews had never taken place. That relationships to Jews could not have been quite so familiar and commonplace as Ruth described at the beginning of the interview becomes clear as she goes on to talk about meeting her husband and her attraction to Jews:

> [...] Straight away, I had the feeling that they were good people, the Jews. They were funny, they had a sense of humor. They weren't narrow-minded or snooty. And straight away I felt I'd be able to get along with them. I don't know what it was exactly, I couldn't put my finger on it at the time. But I just had the feeling, I like them, and I'd like to be one of them.[16]

Throughout the entire interview, everything German is considered negative or narrow-minded.[17] At the same time, a new, more relaxed, Jewish world opened up for Ruth, which she found both remarkable and appealing. Ruth says very little about her life as a non-Jew. She does not relate any of her experiences of the war or how it was living among the ruins of Berlin, despite the fact that these experiences must have been the most influential of her youth. Her life seems to have begun in earnest after she met her husband. Only then is it possible to talk about

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15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Only the German 'need for order' was mentioned as a reason here.

incidents in postwar Germany and the Shoa – but exclusively from her perspective as Carl's wife: his experiences have become hers. Ruth's frame of reference changed completely after meeting Carl, and she turned her back on her previous non-Jewish life:

> [...] My husband only had contact with other Jews. We had nothing to do with Christian people, or our Christian neighbours, never had them to our house even, not once. We said hello to them to be polite, but we kept our distance from them. The only Christians my husband knew were my parents. My father and mother. They were the only ones. And he accepted them completely, without question, because over the years he got to know them. And he knew they were good people, that they were above all that, that they were decent. I did have a lot of girlfriends, but the moment I got married, all that changed. I moved over to the Jewish side, you see. We bumped into each other once in a while, and chatted a bit, but the friendship was gone. I didn't have any other relatives anyway, so on my side there was nothing left. It was all on the Jewish side.[18]

Carl's way of life was to determine everything else, and it was a challenge for both of them, Ruth admitted. They shared times of poverty and uncertainty, built a new life together, and preserved the memories of Carl's dead relatives, his dead wife and children. Every two years they did a *Kur* (prescribed medical treatment at a health resort), the costs of which were reimbursed to survivors of the Shoa. Ruth had to keep a constant eye on Carl because he was no longer in full health after his incarceration at the camp. They had only Jewish friends. Their common religious life followed Carl's liberal, German Jewish traditions.

Ruth describes her life as a Jew as a symbiosis – a dependency on her husband. It was only after Carl's death that she took up various activities that he may not have approved of. She joined the WIZO and traveled to Israel several times.[19] It was not unusual for women of her generation to adjust their lives according to the wishes of the man. In Ruth's case, however, this had particular consequences. After marrying Carl, she limited her social circle solely to that of the Jewish community; she ended her friendships with Christians in recognition of her husband, who, after the Shoa, refused to have any contact with non-Jewish Germans. She also evolved from a temperamental young girl into a dutiful wife who did everything to suit her husband. Ruth is aware of the influence Carl has had on her, but she does not consider it to be negative:

> [...] Well, you know how it is. When you're that young and the man is 18 years older, you automatically go along with what the man wants – without him saying you have to do it, of course. I've turned out to be just like my husband. I've changed. I was pretty wild when I was

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18 Interview with Ruth.

19 WIZO: Women's International Zionist Organisation.

was young, completely different. But when you're married and happy, you just accept that, don't you? When my husband said it was black, then I said it was pitch black, although it was actually red, you know? And that was a good policy to have, it served me well. So, I've turned out just like my husband – he made me the way I am today. He never forced me, of course. To be completely honest, I never even noticed. Everything I am now, and everything I do, is a result of my husband.[20]

This marital symbiosis made it possible for Ruth to feel like she belonged to the survivors of the Shoa. When she talks about the feelings of the Jewish community who survived the Shoa, one would never suspect that she had ever been a non-Jewish German: "[...] We've survived, we're still here, we're a community. When we saw each other, we hugged and kissed each other, we were happy to all be together."[21]

Ruth felt such a sense of belonging, that she no longer deemed it necessary to distinguish between the feelings of the victims and her own, or to acknowledge that she came from outside and had never experienced the persecution to which the victims had been subjected. Ruth's conversion to Judaism meant she could step out of the non-Jewish German (perpetrator) community and into that of the victims. Even though she did not consciously want to make herself into a victim, she identifies with them completely. The symbiotic nature of her marriage supported this development: her husband was himself a victim, and without reservation, Ruth entered into the Jewish reality of Carl's life, and continues to live out his legacy to this day. She considers herself Jewish-German, and regularly visits auctions in order to buy Jewish religious objects that she wants to protect from non-Jewish buyers.

Judith: Between Repression and Confrontation

Judith now lives in one of the coastal towns in Israel. In contrast to the more practical and spartan Israeli homes, her flat is located in a Bauhaus building, and is furnished with art and antiques. This betrays her European origin. She is a friendly woman, and just like her home, she is noticeably distinguished in a European way. Judith was born in 1939 in the Ruhr region in North Rhine-Westphalia, six months before the outbreak of war. She is the daughter of a solicitor, and comes from a Protestant family. Her father died when she was 18 years old. She began studying law in southern Germany, where she met her future husband,

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20 Interview with Ruth.

21 Ibid.

Reuven. Reuven studied architecture and came from a German aristocratic family. They married in 1961. After the birth of their first child, Judith dropped out of university. They had two more children, and then in 1968, after a period of religious instruction lasting ten months, they converted to Judaism. Encouraged by the swift resolution of the Six-Day War of 1967, they emigrated to Israel in 1970.

The country fascinated them: it was large, sparsely populated, and socialist, a place for intellectuals and unpretentious individualists. The family decided to start a completely new life. They were only acquainted with two families in Israel, and were not quite sure how to go about their lives. At the beginning, the family led a religious life within Modern Orthodox circles in Tel Aviv. After living in the country for some years, however, the family – at Reuven's instigation – began to give up the Orthodox way of life. The children were taken out of their school and sent to a secular state school instead. Judith describes leaving the Jewish community as a second immigration. Friendships with religious families came to an end, and she had to build a new social circle for herself. Reuven worked as an architect, painter, tutor, and publisher of an architectural magazine. Judith obtained a diploma in interpreting, and then worked as a translator at the German Embassy for many years. Reuven and Judith divorced in 1988, and Reuven returned to Germany, where their son also now lives. Since then, Judith has lived alone. She would like to return to Germany – not least because of security issues – but feels obliged to stay in Israel to support her two daughters. Judith now questions her decision to convert to Judaism and to emigrate with her children. Looking back, she feels it was a "horrendous struggle."[22] She finds it frustrating that her daughters must today bear the consequences of their parents' actions from long ago, which means a safe future and better career chances in Germany remain closed to them.

Notably, after my request for her to talk about her conversion to Judaism, and after some introductory biographical details, Judith talks about the extermination of the Jews, which she spontaneously mentions throughout the remainder of the interview:

> [...] To put it bluntly, I had no particular interest in Judaism. Even when I was at school, we didn't learn about the Shoa. We were maybe one of the last groups of pupils that weren't taught much about the extermination of the Jews or the horror, the Nazi-horror. I finished school in 1958. Thankfully, I didn't know that much about it all.[23]

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22 Interview with Judith.
23 Ibid.

Through these admissions, Judith distances herself from two possible motives for her conversion: since she at first had "no particular interest" in Judaism, there is no reason to believe that she was driven to convert after experiencing an epiphany.[24] Judith equally disclaims that knowledge of the Shoa and resultant feelings of guilt were behind her decision to convert. She believes that her husband's enthusiasm for Judaism was contagious. Eventually, out of her own religious conviction, she converted along with her husband and children. An evening class for laymen given by the local rabbi was to prove the crucial turning point. Judith said she did not believe she was seeking some form of "relief."[25] At the beginning, it was her husband who sought out Jewish topics and also the company of Jews, especially survivors of the Shoa. Judith says her husband "had a thing" about them, and frequented the city cafes visited by older Jews, mostly Polish survivors, who also sold watches or jewelery.[26] She cannot explain what caused Reuven to do this; his attraction to Jews was simply considered a 'quirk' – similar to a passion for collecting stamps, for example. Reuven's interest intensified after an uncle told him there might have been Jews in the family. The supposed existence of Jewish ancestors is a frequent topic in interviews with Jewish converts, which is then reflected in their desire to have a historical right to change religion.[27]

Even today, Reuven is still looking for the Jewish ancestors mentioned by his uncle, and this has led to a rift within the family:

> [... The interest in Judaism] had something to do with the Holocaust for my husband though. He also felt uncomfortable about his parents ... And then of course the story of having Jewish ancestors, I don't know ... his parents were perhaps ... they weren't Nazis, but a bit nationalistic, maybe. A bit more than mine were.[28]

Although Judith talks of her husband's unease regarding National Socialism, she notably describes Reuven's family not as Nazis, but as merely a "bit nationalistic."[29] While her relationship to her husband's parents was extremely difficult, and she therefore had no reason to remain loyal to them, Judith avoided any further specific discussion about the family's past involvement in National Socialism. It became clear that Reuven's mother could have been anti-Semitic, as Judith described her reaction to her son wanting to convert to Judaism:

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24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 References to the possibility of having Jewish ancestors were made in almost all of the interviews I conducted as part of my research.
28 Interview with Judith.
29 Ibid.

> [... Reuven's mother] said to the rabbi, "Don't take my son on, he's lying to you, we never had any Jews in our family." She was of the opinion that we'd sneaked our way into Judaism through the back door, and if she made her son look bad, then the rabbi would send us away. And then of course it was in the newspaper, that we had emigrated [to Israel]. And then she wrote to the Chief Rabbi in Jerusalem and sent him some sort of *Ariernachweis* [a legal document in National Socialist times which proved a person to be of Aryan descent.] [Reuven's mother] also employed a young historian to go through various documents in order to prove without a shadow of a doubt that there had never been any Jews in their family. And the letter she sent the Chief Rabbi was somehow completely absurd – her son had lied, he was in no way whatsoever of Jewish descent, it was all complete lies.[30]

Reuven's mother could not accept that her son had become a Jew – and even worse – that the impression was given that there might possibly have been Jews in their family. Judith interpreted her mother-in-law's behavior as merely an attempt by a difficult woman to prevent her son's conversion to Judaism; Judith discounts that the intervention may have been borne out of hostility against Jews. One suspects that Judith's parents were also nationalistic to a certain extent, at least with regard to her conversion. It remains unclear how sympathetic Judith's parents were to National Socialism, since her father died before she could "ask him all those questions."[31] To avoid any further discussion of her family history, she evades the suggestion that her mother might have been able to shed light on the subject, thereby allowing the matter to be swept neatly back under the carpet.

In 1970, it was such a rarity that a family of five from Germany would convert to Judaism and emigrate to Israel that it was even reported in the newspapers, and Reuven and Judith received a great number of letters in response. Admittedly, they were often assumed to be a bit crazy; their immigration was met with curiosity certainly, but was also considered to be a sign of their commitment to Zionism. People sent them Yiddish records and dolls, but it was the hand knitted socks for the children that Judith and her husband found especially overwhelming. They were both grateful for the positive reception and glad to at last be able to lead their lives in a Jewish majority – to be Jews among Jews. The family would later come to experience the limits to *belonging* in Israel however – because they were Germans who had chosen to become Jews:

> [...] You immediately notice, that as a convert, you have to do a lot of explaining
> ... Firstly, you're German, people can tell by your accent anyway. Then you simply have to ask, where were you during the war? You always ask that here. What did you do during the war? And then I recite my usual story: yes, we also lived through the war and nothing hap-

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30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.

pened to us, but we weren't Jews ... we had to move out of our house, we were bombed out during the air raids and everything, but we weren't Jews.[32]

Reuven and Judith were asked about their experiences of National Socialism with the explicit aim of hearing an account of persecution – it was expected. Judith's response therefore appeared to be confusing: she certainly did not present herself as a Jewish victim, but rather described how she suffered as a German girl in the war, which she repeatedly complained about in connection with the wars in Israel throughout the interview. Whether Judith considers herself to be a German victim of National Socialism remains unclear; drawing attention to the suffering of the Germans during the war, in contrast to that of the Jews, could be considered an attempt to counterbalance the atrocities of the Shoa.[33]

It was not easy for Judith's children either: their son was called a Nazi, and their youngest daughter suffered, especially during school services held on Holocaust Memorial Day; she felt she could have "collapsed due to feelings of guilt."[34] It was only after recounting these memories of her daughter that Judith admitted to having her own feelings of guilt that come to plague her every year at *Yom HaShoah*: "[...] And then on the day, I don't know, you stand there, you listen to the siren with tears in your eyes, you know, and then you light a candle ... "[35]

Germans who have converted to Judaism, and now live in Israel, are often suspected of wanting to distance themselves as effectively as possible from their origins, and to live among Jews so that they might overcome their Germanic qualities.[36] Life in Israel though merely offers a seeming normality, and makes repression of the past possible only in a very limited way. As the example of Judith's family shows, Israel is simply not the country where Germans can escape their past in order to repress possible shame and guilt. The presence of victims of the Shoa and their successors, as well as the public reminders, ensure that Germans (of all ages) who have chosen to become Jews come face-to-face with their past wherever they go: whether at school, in the military, or shopping in the supermarket.[37] Although Judith and her family actually wanted to achieve the opposite

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32 Ibid.

33 See, for instance, Bodemann, Michael Y., *Gedächtnistheater: Die jüdische Gemeinschaft und ihre deutsche Erfindung*. Hamburg: Rotbuch Verlag, 1996, or in the literary work: Grass, Günter, *Im Krebsgang*. Göttingen: Steidl, 2002.

34 Interview with Judith.

35 Ibid.

36 See, for instance, Gold, Tanya, The Sins of their Fathers. In: *The Guardian*, 6 August 2008.

37 Jewish converts of all ages, with whom I spoke, and who live in Israel, talked about the limits of acceptance: within the born-Jewish community they will always remain Jewish converts.

by emigrating to Israel, the born-Jewish majority consigned them to a particular status in Israeli society. In contrast to many other Jewish converts whom I questioned, Judith and Reuven only did the minimum necessary: they took on Hebrew forenames after their conversion, but held onto their aristocratic surname, thereby both eliciting and reinforcing their 'special' status. Perhaps they did not want to give the impression that they were Jews by birth.

It fits into the general scheme of things that Judith – who is herself surprised by the fact – has never fallen in love with another Jewish man (or Jewish woman, for that matter – she casually mentions her bisexuality at this point) since separating from her husband. Since their divorce, neither one of them has become involved with a Jewish partner, as though they have somehow forbidden themselves to have any private, personal connection to Jews. Both daughters, however, have married Israelis, although one is now separated from her husband and the family has fallen apart. Judith looks upon this as a failure, and considers it to be a result of the difficult living conditions in Israel. She believes that she herself made the wrong decisions in life: "[...] I've now been here in Israel longer than I was in Germany. I left when I was 30, and I've been here for forty years now. But if I could have my life over again, I wouldn't move here. The conversion to Judaism, that's something else. It may be that I would do that again. But I'm not entirely sure."[38]

Judith questions her conversion to Judaism; her enthusiasm for Israel has dwindled to resignation. She is frustrated that a once socialist country has turned into a right-wing state, and that a peace settlement with the Palestinians seems to have slipped further and further away. The struggle did not pay off; she is disappointed in the country now, and because she chose to become a Jew, this disappointment may overshadow her retrospective evaluation of her conversion more than she would like to admit. Alongside the uneasiness she feels about her German origins – uneasiness she cannot escape – she now feels dissatisfied with her Israeli homeland.

These examples from Ruth and Judith show that a successful conversion to Judaism, free of guilt and the urge to make things all right again, and the ability to live a satisfactory life among other Jews, very much depends on whether one has a Jewish partner (and family) with whom the convert can identify.[39] Ruth had a reasonable sphere of integration: her husband's life and the Jewish community. Ruth's marriage to Carl, the reason for her wanting to become a Jew, paved the way for her recognition by the members of the Jewish community; the personal

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38 Interview with Judith.

39 German converts whom I questioned, who had connections to a Jewish family, claimed to be more satisfied with their conversion to Judaism than those who had made their own way.

contact within the community helped to dispel any reservations the Jews might have had about her. A conversion such as Ruth's – out of love for a Jewish partner – was by no means an exception. Ruth's acceptance within the Jewish community had to do with her genuine willingness to fit in. She broke away from her own origins and took on the language, disposition, and history of the Jews. She made such great efforts to fit in that the community honored her loyalty with their approval. The community made it possible for Ruth to achieve the much longed for change to the other side. The fate of her husband and the community was to become her fate. If guilt had influenced Ruth's decision to convert at that time, there is no trace of it now, and it seems to have played no part in her being accepted by the Jewish community.

In contrast to Ruth, Judith was always between two worlds, and still remains so to this day. Even her children, who grew up in Israel, have assumed this position: they are somehow Jewish, somehow Israeli, somehow German, and the ambiguity is a burden for them. Since the whole family had converted to Judaism, they lacked the familiar, Jewish way of life – they lacked a positive Jewish role model or sphere of reference. They stumbled through life, without direction. The family carried out the conversion very quickly, emigrated to Israel and lived an Orthodox life that they eventually abandoned. They struggled on, but the family disintegrated and father and son returned to Germany. Judith talks of a restlessness that leaves her no room for contemplation. This unrest is symptomatic of her less-than-successful strategy for coming to terms with her German origins: Judith only manages to repress her guilt and uneasiness superficially. During the interview, Judith never speaks directly about her family's relationship to National Socialism, or about her confrontation with the Shoa in Israel. It is only when she speaks of her husband and children that she takes a closer look at her family history and her own feelings; she represses her uneasiness about her German origins. Finally, Judith admits that her method –conversion to Judaism and subsequent emigration to Israel – was not an entirely successful one. Even though she wanted to become a Jew, and did, she will always remain a German convert.

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Felice Naomi Wonnenberg

Can't Get No Satisfaction

The Desexualization of the Jewish Man in Contemporary German Film

Over the last decade numerous German films have as a topic the troubles of the German people in the aftermath of the Second World War – in this context these films dedicate special attention to and highlight German suffering to a point that a whole genre of "German suffering" has been established in the German cultural landscape. Often these films include "a Jewish man" as a marginal character who is – in spite of the historic situation – usually portrayed as absolutely emotionally controlled, of angelic moral standards, and not at all vengeful, but forgiving. This essay will investigate how these Jewish men are often portrayed as "desexualized" men, fractured and insufficient in terms of classical masculinity. In this historic setting the figure of "the Jewish man" is drawn as being overshadowed by the Shoah and remarkably meek in his suffering. He is often shown – in pursuit of love, partnership, and eroticism – courting German women. However, the script never seems to grant him the fulfillment of his amorous or sexual desires, or recognition as a masculine lover: he is portrayed as being outright desexualized. The films that I will analyze in detail in order to trace this phenomenon are Dresden, Hilde *and* Liebe Deinen Feind.*

This article will show the relationship between this modern-day image of the Jewish man as desexualized and the stereotypes of nineteenth century anti-Semitism and the Nazi ideology that claimed the Jewish man to be "effeminized" or sexually perverted. The function of this filmic character in the context of questions of historic guilt and desire for forgiveness in Germany will also be analyzed. The "the Jewish man" character is allotted a function in the genre of the "German suffering" films, namely to fulfill a historic need: to provide atonement and forgiveness for the German "Aryan" characters.

The Film *Dresden* – The Fruit of Germania's Womb and the Jewish Man as a "Side Issue"

The film *Dresden* (Roland Suso Richter, Germany, 2006 television version, 2010 cinema version) is the most expensive German television film production to date and describes the suffering of German civilians as victims of the bombing of

Dresden in 1945. What message was so important that German, publicly funded television stations would invest this record amount? First of all, *Dresden* is one of the films belonging to the relatively young *"German suffering-genre"*: films and other cultural phenomena dedicated to German suffering during the Second World War, a perspective that only made its appearance quite recently. As discussed in *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern*, the fact that for a long time, Germans were incapable of mourning their own losses caused considerable psychological problems in postwar German society. The "Ausbleiben von Trauerreaktionen nach einer nationalen Katastrophe größeren Ausmaßes" (the absence of a reaction of mourning after a national catastrophe of such magnitude), was a phenomenon in Germany. This "Störung dieser Trauerarbeit" (disturbed labor of mourning) in turn crippled the "seelische Entwicklung, seine zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen und seine spontanen und schöpferischen Fähigkeiten" (development of the soul, interpersonal relations, and the spontaneous and creative faculties). The authors diagnose the Germans as "hartnäckig aufrechterhaltene Abwehr von Erinnerungen, insbesondere der Sperrung gegen eine Gefühlsbeteiligung" (stubbornly upholding the denial of memories, especially refusing to be emotionally involved."[1] As the authors make clear, it is a natural reaction to "lick one's own wounds," and not to do so is a symptom of psychological trauma. It is remarkable that this refusal to acknowledge one's damage was, according to Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich, a national discipline.

However, the recent countermovement, the new dedication to German victimhood as mirrored in the films of the contemporary "German suffering-genre" is remarkable in its new approach to this chapter of history, as it took the problem from one extreme to the other. For a long time the guilt feelings of historic responsibility, and their uncomfortable implications, psychologically blocked Germans and made deep emotions, such as mourning, impossible. On the other hand the recently expressed mourning seems to overwrite consciousness of historic facts. The original cause of German suffering, that is, that the Germans started the war, is blanked out of the picture and guilt gets redistributed in an effort to legitimize and make room for self-pity.

The onset of this trend was Günther Grass's novel *Im Krebsgang*, which describes the flight from the occupied eastern territories of the Reich, and that opened up a wide discussion about the fate of German refugees. This topic as well as other dire consequences that Germans had to suffer toward the end of the war, such as the bombardment of German cities and the internment of German soldiers (men), have since become repetitive themes in recent German public debates, and

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1 Mitscherlich, Alexander and Margarethe, *Die Unfähigkeit zu Trauern. Grundlagen kollektiven Verhaltens,* Munich and Zurich: Piper, 1977, 9.

are also mirrored in film. Some examples of this German suffering-genre include the films *Dresden*, *Die Flucht*, *Hilde*, *Liebe deinen Feind*, and *Die Wilhelm Gustlow*, a film recounting the above-mentioned plight of German refugees.

In *Dresden* the theme of "the German as the victim" is played out and illustrated quite effectively against the backdrop of the bombing of the city of Dresden in 1944. Conveniently, the filmic narrative in cinematic productions of this genre is always set at the very end of the war, in 1945, when Germans painfully began to feel the consequences of the hostilities, those that they themselves had initiated. Yet these films portray German suffering with little indication or depiction of cause and effect. Antonia Schmid writes: "The narrating of authentic world history is based on the 'cutting-out' of a piece of a temporal continuum, the framing: a frame is set for a visual image that becomes a mental image. This produces a perspective that limits the cause and reason of events to the framework of the narration."[2] In *Dresden* the bombings of the city are portrayed as acts of cold-blooded cruelty against German civilians on the part of the British army. The only mention of German aggression toward the British is a nonchalant, half-sentence reference to the German bombing of Coventry, which is a weak excuse, but serves as a safety valve for the filmmakers. It is neither a sincere recognition of the historical facts nor a truthful cinematic rendering of the German attack on that city, which resulted in British civilian suffering.

Gertrud Koch wrote *Die Einstellung ist die Einstellung*[3] – the title a German play on words that can be loosely translated as "the standpoint of the camera is equal to the political standpoint, the stance of the filmmaker." The rearranging, highlighting, and omitting of historic facts is a deception of the Einstellung (the attitude) of this film, and it points to the assumed political and psychological Einstellung of the audience to which these filmmakers are catering. In this film the German characters are introduced as civilians, nurses, and doctors, whereas the British characters are all shown as members of the military, scheming attack after attack on civilian areas that "will burn easily." The framing of a film can be chosen to include or exclude relevant parts of the whole historic picture to such an extent that even documentaries or other films seemingly based on his-

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2 Schmid, Antonia, *Idolatrische Mimesis oder Wölfe im Schafspelz. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Spielfilms für Repräsentationen des Nationalsozialismus,* paper based on the presentation *Auf schmalem Grat: "Der Spielfilm als Medium nationaler Erinnerungskultur,"* presented on 6 December 2008 at the conference Erinnerungskultur und ihre Medien in Dresden, Germany.
3 Koch, Gertrud, *Die Einstellung ist die Einstellung*, Suhrkamp Publishing House Berlin, 1997.

toric events become subjective. Ultimately, a film mirrors the subjectivity of its filmmaker.

According to this logic, the film takes place at the end of the war, at which point the bombardment of the city of Dresden occurs, backlash for the suffering that the German state had inflicted on the targets of its self-launched juggernauts. The film's central character is a young female German nurse named Anna, who is fighting for the lives of her patients during an air raid. She is portrayed as a woman of seemingly superhuman goodness, high energy, and irreproachable morals. She thus offers the perfect projection screen for the German audience's compassion; she invites the spectator to sympathize and identify with her. This character functions as a *Germania*, the allegorical woman figure symbolizing the German people. Christina von Braun points out that "Die modernen Nationen werden allegorisch durch weibliche Figuren dargestellt: als Britannia, Germania oder Marianne."[4] The nurse is a perfect Germania figure in this context; portrayed as free of all problematic implications of the Third Reich, she serves as an angel in white who has come to alleviate the suffering of the wounded German nation.

The next scene of the film introduces the British, reckless pilots cheerfully celebrating in a British bar the results of their bombing mission. Next, they are shown conducting another attack on Germany, reciting a biblical passage of wrath from the Old Testament: "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven."[5] This harsh and cruel citation chosen from the "Jewish" part of the bible functions as a subconscious linking of the cruelty of the war with "Jewish" style revenge in this archetypal celebration of sadism against German civilians. In the course of the film, the character of "a Jewish man" is usherd in. As it has so often been presented in recent German films, the Jewish plight is shown as a "side issue," quite as Roosevelt classified it.[6] This Jewish man, the husband of another German nurse, Maria, is a marginal character. Although they have been married for twelve years, they have no children, presenting their union as infertile. Moreover, his wife

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4 Braun, Christina von, *Der schejne Jid. Das Bild des "jüdischen Körpers" in Mythos und Ritual*, Vienna: Picus, 1998. 99.

5 Bible, Genesis 19:24.

6 On 28 July 1943, President Roosevelt received an extensive briefing on the Nazi persecution from Jan Karski, a member of the Polish resistance movement who had repeatedly crossed into Nazi-held areas and, in disguise, had entered a concentration camp in Poland where he witnessed the execution of Jews. When Jan Karski presented the Jewish plight to Roosevelt, making him aware of the crimes being perpetrated in the ongoing Holocaust, Roosevelt gave the famously embittered answer that the United States would have to concentrate on winning the war and could not be concerned with "side issues"– such as the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

remains a sanctified virginal' character, a trait furthermore underlined by her name: Maria. In contrast to this barrenness of the Jewish-German marriage, the German nurse Anna becomes pregnant after a single act of sexual intercourse with an apparently highly fertile British pilot. This British character for a long time goess "nameless" and "speechless," which qualifies him as "a" British pilot, symbolically responsible for the British bombing of the city. The film narrative bends over backwards to explain its fabrication of the encounter between the German nurse and the British pilot: the script has the pilot crash and parachute into Germany, cross through German territory incognito, and end up in Dresden, where he witnesses the bombing together with the German nurse.

On this occasion, the morning after the bombardment, Anna feels entitled to entreat him to, "Say nothing. I love you!" – as if it was his personal fault that war brings suffering even to those who start it. Furthermore her love is shown as mercy, a characteristic traditionally considered as a female quality, which brings atonement and forgiveness for Europeans who come after. In the film this new union is symbolized by their common child. In this figurative arrangement, this woman becomes allegorical for the German nation, a female figure willing to forgive and fraternize with its former enemies. In fact, the historic German women were most willing to engage in carnal relations with the occupying allied U.S. soldiers right after the war, to such an extent that the U.S. ran massive campaigns to warn their soldiers about contracting venereal infections (or VD) from the Fräuleins, with their most prominent figure being the cartoon character named Vera D. (VD). Conquering Germany included the conquering of the German *Volkskörper* (the body of the people) through the sexual possession of German women. Women in the east of Germany on the other hand suffered organized, or at least unofficially legitimized, mass rape by soldiers of the Red Army – sexual aggression as a means of warfare and destruction.

The ideology of the Nazis demanded heightened attention to matters of the German womb: after all, the *Reinhaltung der arischen Rasse* (purity of the Aryan race), depended on the sexual discipline and selectiveness of the German woman. Women played a special role in this context: the Volkskörper was imagined as the *Gemeinschaftskörper* (communal body). Christina von Braun points out, "daß der Gemeinschaftskörper immer als weiblich repräsentiert wird" (the communal body is always represented as being female),[7] therefore avoiding *Blutsschande* (shame of blood), code for the "mixing of races," which was policed through the use of criminal prosecution. The "wrong" kind of sex became a matter of high treason.

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7 Braun, Christina von, *Der schejne Jid. Das Bild des "jüdischen Körpers" in Mythos und Ritual*, Vienna: Picus, 1998. 98.

In *Dresden* the voice-over epilogue concludes with the moral of the story: the British pilot dies in his plane while on the way to his German nurse. At the moment she gives birth to their daughter, he crashes into the North Sea and is never found. As such, he becomes an unreal, invisible, mystical father, and a symbolical *Wasserleiche* (drowned corpse). He dies a *Liebestod*, a German term for a phenomenon of German cultural history – "to die for love," a concept central to the era and ideology of Romanticism and Gothicism. The classic hero role demands a self-sacrifice, a heroic death of the fertile male fighter, dying for his ideals, in this case for "European reunification." This is an idea that clearly does not stem from the year 1944, when the story is set, but from 2006 when the pan-European spirit was at its height and the unifying of Europe seemed sure of success. Out of this enthusiasm, the motif of "Europe" as a new political concept replacing that of National Socialism is "born" in this film, instead of a much less improbable plot like simply showing the enormous suffering of German children in the bombardment, a historic fact, which, without a doubt, would have merited compassion from any humane spectator. Yet in an effort to stress their claim of authenticity, the makers of this fiction film went so far as to add an epilogue comprising newsreel documentary material about the *Weihe* (consecration) of the reconstructed *Frauenkirche*, and a speech that opens with "Peace be with you" in different languages. By stressing the aspect of internationalism, the fear of a rebuilt and reborn German nationalism is overwritten with this celebration of European unity and peace: in the filmic narrative this "unity" is celebrated with the "birth of a child of Europe." This plot line is as kitschy, schmaltzy, and ridiculous as it is far-fetched. Regarding the kitschy role of "the allegoric German woman," Gelfert writes: "in kitsch it is not so much sexual satisfaction that is expected of the woman, but much rather redemption in the sense of an almost metaphysical being sheltered 'Aufgehobensein,' being sheltered in the motherly womb."[8]

On the other hand, compared to the virile British pilot, the Jewish man in *Dresden* seems elderly and frustrated; the counterimage of European heroism. He is always shown in the classic female sphere of private life: in the kitchen of the apartment. He is not shown in bedroom scenes, let alone engaged in love making, erotic, or other activities that would demonstrate masculinity. His character is constructed as completely unheroic. Instead of protecting the Aryan woman, his wife, he is portrayed as in fact placing her in mortal danger by his mere exist-

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8 Gelfert, Hans-Dieter, *Was ist deutsch? Wie die Deutschen wurden, was sie sind,* Munich: Beck, 2005. 103. Translation Wonnenberg original text: „…im Kitsch wird von der Frau nicht so sehr sexuelle Befriedigung, als vielmehr Erlösung im Sinnes eines quasi-metaphysischen Aufgehobenseins in einem mütterlichen Schoß erwartet."

ence. His wife's insistence on staying with him instead of going into the air raid shelter, where Jews are forbidden, only highlights German suffering, and again uses a young German woman figure as the heroine, in contrast with the Nazi and war evil, while simultaneously bringing about redemption through her agony. Of course, even though in the film many Germans die in the bombings, even when inside the air raid shelters, the Jewish man miraculously survives. Furthermore, the film portrays him as a collaborator, delivering letters with Nazi deportation orders, an immoral act that creates an emotional gap between the spectator and the figure of "the Jewish man." The film is not interested in showing a Jewish victim. However, the German nurse's willingness to sacrifice herself calls for the spectator's sympathy, and the choice of this character's name is, not surprisingly Maria; her martyrdom is a deeply venerated Christian motif.

Nazi propaganda tried to build the image of the Jewish man as lecherous and obsessively engaged in immoral sexual activities. These common stereotypes were expressed in terminology coined as part of a totalizing, anti-Semitic propaganda, which trumpeted phrases such as *Verführer deutscher Mädels* (seducer German girls), *Rassenschande treibend* (bringing shame to the race by interracial fornication), endangering the *Reinheit der arischen Rasse* (purity of the Aryan race). In their sexual fantasies, anti-Semites got carried so far away as to believe that a single sexual encounter between an Aryan woman and a Jewish man would result in irreversible changes to her blood and soul. In their racist paranoia, the Nazis so demonized Jewish sexuality that their descriptions of allegedly Jewish sexuality sound much like the sexuality of a vampire, whose kiss will change his human victim into another vampire, infect, and irreversibly change the blood of the victim "through a single touch (sic!)... The sperm (of the Jewish man) will dye the Jewish spirit into the (Aryan) girls and this (Jewish) spirit will cause an indelible impression on all (her) later offspring." Replacing the word intercourse with touch only further illustrates that this scene was believed to be so horrendous that it was literally unutterable. "In the course of fornication the male semen is partly or completely absorbed by the *Mutterboden* (womb; lit. mother ground, another example of the Nazi's clumsy inventions of a new vocabulary), and *geht so in das Blut über* (becomes one with the blood). "A single intercourse of a Jew with an Aryan woman is sufficient, to poison her blood forever..." she even absorbs it into her soul..." "afterwards she can never have pure Aryan children."[9] In his alleged abililty to poison the blood and the soul through his semen, the Jewish man is ascribed a demonic fertility of remarkable longevity.

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9 *Deutsche Volksgesundheit aus Blut und Boden,* edit. by Julius Streicher., 1.1.1935, cited after Hentschel, Gerhard, *Neidgeschrei. Antisemitismus und Sexualität,* Hamburg: Hoffman & Campe. 2008. 41-42.

It seems that contemporary films are eager to build a counterimage to this supposedly corrupted and dangerous Jewish sexuality. Therefore, the Jewish man is now portrayed as decisively desexualized, engaged only in such platonic deeds of superior moral quality as forgiveness and the reestablishment of respect and justice among humanity.[10] The sexual characteristics attributed to "the Jewish man" in the Third Reich's propaganda were an important factor within the system of anti-Semitism as such, a means to defame the Jewish man as the "other," the negative foil of Aryan masculinity. To avoid all suspicion of anti-Semitism it seems contemporary filmmakers have chosen to circumvent the mined territory of Jewish sexuality altogether, nobly solving the erotic problem by elevating him to a state of celibacy. In a way, the character of the "Jewish man" is thus "Christened." In terms of sexual culture, he is made one of the *annusim*,[11] that is, a man raped and forced into symbolic conversion to Christianity: he is portrayed as a Christian icon, a Christian saint, pure and untainted by the stain of carnal lust. In this way one could argue that in contemporary films the Jewish man is elevated precisely by being rendered less Jewish.

His apparent desexualization has a logical consequence: the barrenness of this film's German-Jewish union. Whereas the all-European, carnal unification between the British pilot and the German nurse bears fruit, the German-Jewish relationship remains without a future.

Hilde – It was All a Mere Coincidence

Hilde is a filmic biography of the star German actress and singer Hildegard Knef (her U.S. stage name was Hildegard Neff). This film is another example of the "German suffering" genre. The central character of the film, Hildegard Knef, became the venerated idol of the generation of German women now in their late seventies.[12] A once beloved film sensation, she is another perfect candidate for

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10 Compare the filmic presence of the "weak" Jewish man to Jurek Becker's Aron Blank, who is described as being like a helpless child, in: Id., *Der Boxer*, Suhrkamp Publishing House Berlin 1998, 113.

11 *Anussim* is the Hebrew term used for Jews forcibly converted to Christianity after the Christian Reconquista of the Iberian peninsula. Another term for anussim is *marrano* a derogatory term (it literally means 'swine,' someone who pretended to have converted to Christianity, but was suspected of still "practicing" Judaism in secret).

12 Without going into the difficulties of transgenerational war trauma and transgenerational transmission of guilt feelings, today we are of course facing several spectator groups of different post-war generations. Discussing the emotions occasioned by parents' or grandparents' guilt is essentially different from coming to terms with one's own young adult

representing *Germania*. In the context of this film genre, her Jewish husband is assigned the role of absolving the German woman of her "German guilt." Other than serving this function, he is merely the boyish first husband, who is later replaced by a "real man," one who is fully sexualized and appears in numerous erotic scenes in the course of the film. In an intradiegetic conversation with film producer Erich Pommer, the Knef character comments in a sarcastic tone on this first marriage "Armer, alter Kurt. Es war ein Fehler ihn zu heiraten" (Poor, old Kurt, it was a mistake to marry him). To this Pommer replies, "Weil sie ihn aus den falschen Gründen geheiratet haben!" (because you married him for the wrong reasons).

The husband is Kurt Hirsch, a German-speaking Jew from Czechoslovakia who fled to the United States in time to escape the Nazis, and returned as an American GI to Germany, where he met and married Hilde. Later in the film, he comments on their divorce with the proverbial words: "Der Mohr hat seine *Schuldigkeit* getan, der Mohr kann gehen" (The Moor has done his duty, the Moor may go now). This line is revealing in several ways: First of all, Kurt makes clear that he was never really loved and desired as a man, as an individual, but that he merely fulfilled a function – "Mittel zum Zweck, nicht Selbstzweck"(a means to an end; he himself was not respected as a person in the Kantian sense), namely, to help her escape war-shattered Germany for Hollywood, as well as alleviate her of her German guilt complex. As such the film does not introduce him as an individual, his name is not mentioned as long as their marriage lasts, and only when they start to break apart does the spectator hear his name, Kurt Hirsch, for the first time. The namelessness operates as an instrument of deindividualization, he becomes "the Jew." As such his "function" is to forgive the allegoric figure of Germania its German guilt over the murder of the Jews of Europe. This is shown in the film as the foundation of their relationship; a relationship between a German woman and a Jewish man. On their first date he invites her to join him for a film evening at the allied Russian military base. What seems to be the setting for a romantic date, an evening at the movies, turns out to be a Red Army documentary of the liberation of Auschwitz. On the way home, Hilde sits next to him in the U.S. Army jeep, frozen in historic guilt. He is the one who breaks the ice by stating:

> Sechzehn Verwandte von mir sind so gestorben. Sie sagen ich soll dich hassen, weil du deutsch bist, aber das werde ich nicht tun. Ich weigere mich. Es ist doch alles nur Zufall. Ich hätte du sein können und du ich. Die wollen nicht, dass wir so denken, aber sie haben

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life. Striving to attain atonement for parental guilt is doomed to fail: one cannot be forgiven a sin that one has not committed. Even so, a new terminology, *historische Verantwortung* (historical responsibility), was introduced into German memorial culture to circumscribe the psychological complexity that still exists for subsequent generations.

> Unrecht. Ich weiss, dass sie Unrecht haben. (Sixteen of my relatives died this way. They say, I am to hate you because you are German, but I won't do it. I refuse. It is all a mere conincidence. I could have been you and you could have been me. They don't want us to think this way, but they are wrong. I know that they are wrong).

Kurt smothers Hilde's burning feelings of guilt by conveniently declaring it all a *Zufall* (coincidence). The roles might well have been reversed, he claims. Note the use of the words *Schuldigkeit* (debt) and *Unrecht*. In German, Schuldigkeit is very close to and invites an allusion to *Schuld* (guilt), a "guilt that has to be made up for." On the other hand, Unrecht (guilt) is the opposite of *Recht* (righteousness). In both conversations the distribution of historic guilt is inverted. It is the Jewish husband who has to make up his Schuldigkeit to the German woman, the debt he owes of having caused her to suffer a bad conscience. This psychological mechanism is an instance of "secondary anti-Semitism," the precise definition being hatred against Jewish people, anger as a result of perverted feelings of historic guilt. The one who reminds the person of their guilt is subconsciously seen as the perpetrator, the one inflicting the painful feelings of guilt. The roles of perpetrator and victim are inverted in "secondary anti-Semitism."

The target audience for *Hilde* is the generation of Germans born around 1930. Like their idol Knef, this generation found themselves in the uncomfortable, unenviable position of having their biographies intertwined with the Nazi era. The question of guilt is addressed in *Hilde* but only in order to be resolved in an apologetic way. For example, the Knef character says, "ich war zu jung, um eine Revolution zu starten" (I was too young to start a revolution). Yet in the same conversation she neglects to mention that she was old enough to start an affair with a married man, Dewandowski, a leading Nazi film politician (*Reichsfilmdramaturg*), in a move to boost her career as an actress in Nazi Germany. She also volunteered for the German army as late as 1945, collaborating in time for the *Endsieg* (final victory), as promulgated by the Nazi regime. Even though the film shows Knef's active contributions to the Third Reich, these activities are portrayed as acts of romantic love for Dewandowski. So again, rather than showing her as a young, yet active Nazi actress and fighter for National Socialism, she is represented as a young woman in love who becomes the victim, persecuted for her lost lover's crimes.

Her Jewish husband does not seem to have a right to his own feelings, let alone satisfaction of his sexual longings. Even while he tells her about the loss of his sixteen murdered family members, he is not entitled to pain, but has to alleviate the pain of his guilt-ridden German date, holding her quite platonically in

his arms.[13] Whereas the prior relationship with Dewandowski is illustrated with scenes of them both naked in bed or in erotic silk morning gowns, her marriage with her Jewish husband seems to be void of eroticism.[14] If he is shown in bed at all, he is alone there, fully clothed, either weathering Hilde's verbal attacks or waiting for her to come home. When her career as an actress begins to sky-rocket, he follows her around like a shadow, jealously watching the shooting of the famous nude scene in *Die Sünderin*, a film that caused a scandal in Germany because it featured a very brief nude scene – the first in the history of German cinema. Excluded from the erotic action, Hirsch is left sitting alone in their apartment while his wife goes out to dine with her producers and male admirers. His sphere is the house; he is rendered effeminate, analogous to the classic female role, he is a "house-husband." Knef, in turn, is the femme fatale, her space is the public sphere of the spectacle. Furthermore, even his "professional" manliness as her manager is discredited by her words, "Oh Kurt, tu doch nicht immer so, als hättest du die Situation im Griff. Das hattest du noch nie. (Don't pretend to be master of the (professional) situation. You never were). "Armer, alter Kurt" (Poor old Kurt), is her summarizing final judgment of their relationship, hardly an expression of admiration of virility.

In the film *Viehjud Levi* (Didi Danquart) the same set-up is played out. "The Jud," as he is addressed, is shown courting the German farmer girl Lisbeth throughout the film. She likes him, as is proved in her comment, "Du bist ein

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13 Other films such as *The Night Porter* have dared to approach the psychological crossover of sexuality, power, and violence in extreme situations. This film "keeps its legs crossed at all critical times."

14 From a different point of view, from the standpoint of traditional Jewish religious philosophy, tenderness was expected of a Jewish man as appropriate behavior toward his wife. However, in the Jewish context, tenderness was also understood as an aspect of successful sexuality that would lead to carnal satisfaction. The Jewish text Iggeret ha-Kodesh offers the following instructions: "At first speak to her in words that will calm and rejoice her heart and her thinking. In this way, your thinking and your intention will be in harmony with hers. Speak words that will awaken passion, unity, love, longing and lust in her and words that will induce in her the respect of God, piousness and sexual purity." Note that in Jewish thinking the linking of tenderness, piousness, and sexual fulfillment is the paramount expression of marital harmony. This attitude is lacking completely in *Hilde*. On this point, the perspective presented in the Iggeret ha-Kodesh is decisively different from the one constructed in the film.
In this context it is interesting that the Torah, the Talmud, and the text of the Jewish marriage contract, the *ketubbah*, each explicitly instruct the man in how to attain sexual fulfillment by making *the woman* happy. "It is the *duty* of the man, to give his wife sexual joy," declares the Talmud. The focus seems to be entirely on providing female erotic contentment, with men receiving actual instructions on how to achieve this. Compare to Levinson, Pnina Nave, *Jüdische Religion*, **In:** *Ethik der Religionen – Lehre und Leben Volume 1: Sexualität,* Klöcker, Michael, Tworuschka, Udo (Eds.), 22. Göttingen: Kösel, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984.

guter Mensch, Levi!" (You are a good soul, Levi!). But she does not desire him. *Ein guter Mensch* (a good person), is hardly an expression one uses to describe an object of sexual lust. On the other hand, she entertains an erotic relationship with a German man from the village even though she holds Levi in higher esteem when it comes to morality and humaneness. Ultimately, she gives sexual preference to the non-Jewish man. Concerning Levi, she saves him from a Nazi pogrom, but makes him leave his home country when she ushers him out the door, saying "Geh. Geh endlich" (Go away, get going at long last!), instead of fleeing with him as his wife. The Jewish man character again is portrayed as antiheroic, not least by the fact that he does not succeed in winning the heart of the lady he has pursued. His soul mate in the film is not a "bunny," a woman who would grant him sexual satisfaction, but an actual rabbit. In German, the term *Hase* (rabbit) is a way of referring to cowardice, and the standard expression that this filmic image provokes is the proverbial *Angsthase*, literally a "frightened rabbit," the German equivalent of "chicken, a coward."[15] Levi and the rabbit are portrayed as an absurd couple, and over the course of the film, the Jewish man and the rabbit are conflated,: the Jewish man becomes the Angsthase.

The film *Mein bester Feind* (Wolfgang Murnberger, Germany, 2011) displays another example of a Jewish man courting an Aryan woman of whom he will become "dispossessed." The central female character in this film is the German woman Lena. In the course of the Nazi's "aryanizing," that is, confiscating Jewish property, not only property in the form of the Villa and the art gallery owned by the main Jewish character, Victor Kaufmann, which pass to his former friend, Rudi, who has joined the Nazi movement. Kaufmann's fiancée is also passed to the Nazi Rudi as a part and accessory of the formerly Jewish villa. The Jewish man is again divested of his love, or to put it more crudely, his sexual satisfaction falls prey to "aryanization."

Even in the film with the promising name *Der Einstein des Sex* (The Einstein of Sex; Rosa von Praunheim, Germany, 1999) the main Jewish character, the sexologist Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld is portrayed as totally dedicated to the scientific research of sexuality. Yet his personal sex life remains surprisingly inactive until very late in his career, when he has left Germany. Within the boundaries of Germany, sexual satisfaction seems to be unthinkable for a Jewish man.

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15 As in English, German also carries a sexual connotation for rabbit: "Sie vermehren sich wie Karnickel!" (They breed like rabbits!). In this respect the rabbit is also a "would-be" erotic signifier, but more one of childish desire than of manly fulfillment. The sexual image of the rabbit is clearly of ridiculous nature. "A bunny" is an erotic joke, not to be compared with the erotic omnipotence of, e.g., "a stud." The "Jew's soul-mate," the rabbit, hints at the idea of sexuality but remains on the level of a nervous undertone in the film.

Liebe Deinen Feind (Love thy enemy; Niki Stein, Germany, 2009) also falls into the new "German suffering" genre. Set in the time immediately after the war, German men are here portrayed as prisoners of war, subjected to foreign guards who deprive them of all their freedom and human needs. The film introduces them as men longing for love, but who are shot for exhibiting such human weaknesses as leaving the prison camp to keep secret dates with their fiancées. As is typical for this genre, the central figure, Gesa, is a young German woman of impeccable moral standards, no Nazi past, practicing an angelic profession – again a nurse in a hospital, fighting against all odds the evils in the world. And again, her filmic function is more than that of an individual figure portrayal: she is yet another allegorical Germania and offers the spectator a positive German role model for sympathetic identification.

The Nazi characters in this film are portrayed as sadistic outsiders, and not as a part of mainstream German society. They are depicted as so stereotypically cruel that they come across more like Nazi puppets than as real characters. They serve to divert, and thus extract and externalize, the guilt of Nazi crimes from the film's main German characters. The film opens with shots of the sea. This setting for a love story is by no means arbitrary, but stems from a long tradition rooted in the era of German Romanticism: doomed lovers and lonely wanderers on empty, cold shores or bleak mountain tops, reminiscent of the motifs in the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich. The shots of the landscapes of Romanticism are coupled with Gesa's voice-over, which introduces the spectator to the film with the words: "Peace had set in six weeks ago. At long last the Wehrmacht had capitulated." As if all of Germany had been eager to passively give in and let the war end.

Gesa is introduced while she is working among a group of former *Wehrmachtshelferinnen* (German army assistants), now employed on a British military base. She, however, pursues more noble work and activities than the other Fräuleins, performing her duties as a nurse, even under horrible circumstances. To underline her different, morally superior status, unlike the other German women in this film, she is never shown in a uniform, which would be reminiscent of a militarized Germany. Instead, she wears different pieces of clothing, all reminiscent of the red dress famously highlighted in the otherwise black and white film *Schindler's List*. This key scene, in which Schindler recognizes the plight of the Jewish victims in the Warsaw ghetto, was the original filmic inspiration for a new visual metaphor, an icon even, turning up ad nauseum in recent films to designate a woman character as an allegoric innocent victim in threatening circumstances. The same cameo appears in *Dresden*, as well as in the anti-Israeli, and also anti-Semitic film *Valley of the Wolves – Palestine*, a film popular among German migrants of Turkish origin in Germany today.

In the film *Liebe deinen Feinde*, like in the film *Hilde*, there is a character of a Jewish man, Simon, who fled from Germany and came back as a soldier, British, however, not American. A German Jew resurrected from the murdered Jewish people of Europe, miraculously returning to Germania to haunt the German soul with guilt. As much as the relationship between the German woman and her German fiancée is sexualized, the relationship with the Jewish man lacks any hint of eroticism. The British soldiers go so far as to nickname her "the virgin," and she shines throughout the film in venerable purity. All the other British soldiers are shown having sexual flings with German Fräuleins. Even married British soldiers are shown merrily impregnating German girls while rolling around with them in the dunes after some juicy fraternization party. But the relationship between the Jewish man and the German woman continues to prove unsatisfactory for the Jewish man, both in marital and sexual terms.

The German fiancée, on the other hand, is presented as a "real man." In the first shot, he emerges naked from the sea like a Greek God in ancient mythology, having swum across the wild, icy German sea in a heroic effort to have a night of love with his mate on the lonely beach. Again, all the elements of heroic, supreme love of the era of German Romanticism are combined – the lonely shore, the sea, the element of the water – the impending "Liebestod", the willingness to sacrifice one's life for love. It is not by coincidence that the element of the water is so closely linked to the problematic love for a woman. Linking the female and the element of the water has a long tradition that peaked in the era of Romanticism, with one of its expressions being the image of the Wasserleiche.

The Jewish man, on the other hand, is introduced fully clothed, and although he also courts the German woman throughout the film, he never gets to take his clothes off – a male physique is not part of the image drawn of him. Although he offers her marriage twice, despite the Shoah, and she temporarily seems to give him a positive response, there are no scenes of erotic fulfillment for him anywhere in the film. Instead, he is shown busily ressurrecting justice in Germany, assisting in legal courts as a lawyer against judges still ruling according to Nazi ideology. His goal is to uphold morality and justice, even if it gets him into a situation that forces him to advocate for the side of a man with whom he is in competition over the same woman. He is not motivated by revenge nor does he behave corruptly in order to achieve his personal goal of marrying the German woman. He does not abuse his powerful position as someone who is part of the occupying military power. Instead, he subordinates all of his feelings and longings for love while upholding morality, ethical values, justice, and his self-constraint. Daniel Boyarin wrote extensively on the alternative character of Jewish masculinity. He quotes John Ruskin to give an example of how Jewish masculinity was contrasted with classic masculinity. "'The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is

eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender.' Women in contrast 'must be enduringly, incorruptible, good; instinctively, infallibly wise – wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation.'"[16] According to these standards, the Jewish man in *Liebe deinen Feind* is not male, but completely effeminized.

Conclusion

The filmic portrayal of "the Jewish man" as first and foremost a Holocaust victim in contemporary films seems to demand his desexualization. Nazi propagated stereotypes claimed the "the Jewish man" to be oversexed, perverted, and as corrupting "Aryan women's souls and fertility." In turn, contemporary German film directors have chosen to create a safe distance from the anti-Semitic images of the Jewish man's sexuality by replacing the stereotype of the "dirty, subversive sexuality" with an almost virginal distance from sensuality, eroticism, or sexual satisfaction. In the process of reinventing the image of "the Jewish man," he was recoined in a Christian mold. This new image has become an icon revered in German Shoah memorial culture in terms of a cultural value system that operates within an essentially Christian matrix.

Furthermore, this desexualization is symbolic of the wider cultural framework. The fact that the Jewish man is portrayed as desexualized is symptomatic of the fact that in contemporary German culture Judaism is perceived and portrayed as morbid, a culture without a viable future in Germany. In the philosophy of Romanticism and Retro-Romanticism, which remain influential in German culture today, this morbid portrait becomes an image of *die schöne Leiche* (the melancholic, beautified Death). In the sentimental showcase of German memorial culture this construct became a canonical cameo, a trinket asset. It is an icon beautified and elevated to a venerated melancholic status. Its alleged proximity to death bestows the aureole of the holiness of the nether world onto it and as such, "the Jewish man" is drawn as a man remote from anything as life producing as sexuality.[17] However, historic facts point to the contrary. Nowhere in the world were birth rates higher than in the DP camps, the refugee camps for Jewish Holocaust survivors set up by the Americans in southern Germany, in the years 1945–48. The traumatic experience suffered by the mostly young survivors included the realization that with most of their family members murdered, leaving them

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16 Boyarin, Daniel, *Unheroic Conduct. The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man,* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: U of Chicago Press, 1997, 3.
17 Compare to the dialogue "Morbid Beauty" in this anthology.

deprived of family, they were utterly alone in the world. An immediate and radical reaction to this trauma was their ardent wish to produce new family members; a fact that is well documented in historical data[18] and numerous interviews of survivors.

In a way this historic reaction was a very "Jewish" way of reacting to the Shoah. Christina von Braun reminds us that "Der jüdischen Religion ... war die Sexualität ein 'Trost für den Stachel des Todes'" (To Jewish religion ...sexuality was a 'consolation against the sting of death').[19] Along the same line of thinking, the Babylonian Talmud takes this attitude even further and goes so far as to proclaim, "Whoever does not procreate children is a murderer."[20] The fall into the passivity of melancholia and refusal to take an active part in life is an image ascribed to "the Jewish man" in the films discussed, but it would have been a most "un-Jewish" behavior. Pnina Nave Levinson summarizes the traditional religious "duty of procreation," as commanded in the Torah, as that a Jewish man: "... should have at least a son and a daughter. Because of ...unforeseen catastrophes it should not be limited to this minimum. Even someone who procreated children already should continue to do so up until old-age. Children are happiness and a blessing, and they guarantee the survival of the community. To Jews – who were persecuted time and again – this was the only possible religious answer. Anything else would have let to the extinction of the Jews, today, after the Shoah, more than ever. The question is not one of a theoretical nature."[21] Levinson draws a direct line from the Talmudian wisdom to the historic situation after the Shoah, and indeed the picture she draws concurs with the actual historic situation in the DP camps.

I do not attempt to draw conclusions from the trauma-triggered longing of the Jewish men in the DP camps for children and a new family to the sensual quality and satisfaction of their sexual practices. They may have been numbed and emotionally hollowed out by the shattering experience of the Shoah. Or perhaps they found some relief and healing in their sensual, intimate moments of relief with their new wives. Historically, personal and intimate events tend to be less accurately documented, yet the historically documented fact remains that Jewish men in the aftermath of the Shoah sought to get married and procreate; they were in

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18 The exhibits and documentary videos in the permanent exhibition of Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.

19 Braun, Christina von, *Der schejne Jid. Das Bild des "jüdischen Körpers" in Mythos und Ritual*, Vienna: Picus, 1998. 99.

20 Babylonian Talmud, Jebamot 63b.

21 Levinson, Pnina Nave, *Jüdische Religion,* In: *Ethik der Religionen – Lehre und Leben, Volume 1: Sexualität*, Klöcker, Michael, Tworuschka, Udo (Eds.), 23. Göttingen: Kösel, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984.

actuality, very far from being desexualized. Their adamant will to be husbands and fathers of new Jewish families was a most "Jewish" way to react to death. It points to the paramount demand in Jewish philosophy not to lose hope and to focus on life rather than on the mortal aspects of humanity in any circumstance. These men certainly did not envision themselves as morbid and elevated by proximity to death. To the contrary, they emphasized their life-giving sexuality as a faculty of divine origin and a contribution to Jewish life.

The post-Shoah German consciousness is marked by the enormous tension that was produced by the guilt and shock of what had occurred a generation or two earlier in their home country. It is a tension that to a largedegree still cramps and immobilizes German feelings regarding the Shoah, Jews, and Judaism. It is a tension that has not yet found relief. It is a shadow of the past that the German consciousness cannot let go of. In Freudian terms, an orgasm means letting go of a great tension, a release; in this case the guilt complex makes relief impossible. Yet the historic guilt that produces this tension in the German consciousness is oppressive and contingent. The wish to eliminate it triggers its expulsion, its projection onto another object. In this case, the uneasiness of the unbearable tension in the German consciousness is projected onto the film character of "the Jewish man" who in turn is portrayed as the one who cannot find relief. He is made to stand in for the guilty and bear the tension that was so hard to suffer. On the other hand, the love stories fabricated in the films discussed here, and the resulting portraits of "the Jewish men" reflect the psychology and cultural parameters of contemporary German filmmakers. The desexualization of Jewish characters in recent German films is thus grounded neither in historic fact about the sexual lives of Jews as it actually existed in Germany immediately after the Shoah, nor in Jewish philosophy. The stigma of desexualization does not originate in actual Jewish behavior or Jewish thinking. It is a projection of the German subconscious *onto* the Jewish people.

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Katrin Köppert
Intra-Activities of the Queer Diaspora

Berlin-Kreuzberg and the "Jerusalem Kings" Phenomenon

Berlin-Kreuzberg: a district steeped in tradition, characterized more by transition than by the manifestation of architectural excellence; the site of an alternative scene and a culture of resistance that is striving to preserve its individuality despite gentrification and city marketing strategies, in order to present a different face to the mainstream. But Kreuzberg has long since arrived in the center of Berlin – 1980s Bohemia has given way to young families, and gallerists follow in the footsteps of punks. Amid the brunch gatherings and parties taking place on Oranienstrasse, Kreuzberg's history of political riots seems all but forgotten, and is at most 'consumed' with a bottle of beer in hand on 1 May every year.

The Paradoxical Power of Diaspora

Aside from polemic gentrification debates, Kreuzberg provides the location for the overlapping and simultaneity of a variety of political and identificatory positions, and also of internal differences (Hammer 1995). Their coincident presence leads to overlapping meanings and paradigm shifts that are concentrated in the assertion of particular identities. The continually reenacted encounters between these identities and subjective histories produce realms of experience that have a material impact on people's physical realities and lives, which are rarely viewed in terms of their multivalence and intradifference or intra-activity (Barad 2003).

This in turn leads to the discursive generation of condensed connections. The assault on German and Israeli drag kings following the Drag Festival 2008 at the SO36 club on Oranienstrasse, and above all the media coverage of the incident, can be viewed as symptomatic of such shifts. Shortly after the Israeli group Jerusalem Kings had given a satirical and deconstructive performance at the festival, several members of the group were attacked with batons not far from the SO36. This not only prompted a demonstration against homophobia and transphobia the following day, but also resulted in press reports that turned a rumor – that Grey Wolves[1] stickers had been spotted on the attackers' cars – into the fact that those

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1 The Grey Wolves are the youth commandos of the Turkish political group Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP), a nationalist movement whose ethnically defined "Turkishness" is Sunni Islamist

involved were violent youths of migrant descent.[2] These speech and writing acts are not a matter of pure coincidence, nor do they exist in a vacuum; they collide with pasts and cause friction or dispute. The spatial qualities of 'scriptlessness' within cultural experience, and the persistent dynamics (Mooshammer 2005: 8) that are selectively manifested, for example in the context of physical assaults, produce a knowledge that needs to be examined in terms of its structures and mechanisms. Proceeding from the epistemological premise of queer diasporas, I would like to approach Kreuzberg as a place where the paradoxical contemporaneity of mimicry is performatively enacted (Bhabha 2000: 126f). Power and its inherent threat are simultaneously articulated and visualized, whereby Kreuzberg serves not as a specially designed location, but rather as a discontinuous space – a stage upon which both normative and queer diasporic interventions are performed. What, however, can be subsumed under queer diasporas, and what potential significance do queer diasporas have in terms of analyzing and decoding both the local dimension of the assault and the global dimension of their complex realities?

"The paradoxical power of diaspora" (Boyarin 2002: 4) implies a departure and a loss of the immediate or transgenerational past, as in the case of the Jewish diaspora, but it also refers to a migration, a journey, an arrival, or new beginning. The diaspora experience is on the one hand tied to a memory of and a nostalgia for the native country, the homeland, the ancestors, and the family, but on the other it exists within the realm of risk and approximation (Boyarin 2002: 8). "The diaspora experience [...] is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite difference." (Boyarin 2002: 8) "[It is because of this] narrative of displacement, that it gives rise so profoundly to a certain imaginary plenitude, recreating the endless desire to return to 'lost origins', to be one again with the mother, to go back to the beginning" (Hall 1990: 120), opening up possible ways to decode the host country and its viewing or experiential habits.

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in orientation. See http:// http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_wolves; http://www.xs4all.nl/~afa/comite/artikel/artikel108.html. Retrieved 17.08.2011.

2 See http://www.taz.de/1/leben/alltag/artikel/1/ueberfall-auf-drag-kings/. Retrieved 15.05.2011.

Diaspora – The Multivalence of Homing Desire and Queerruption

As a result of this multivalence, diaspora is – for all its subversive tendencies – contingent upon static localizations (VerOrtungen[3]) such as nation and homeland. At the same time, the diaspora experience is one of loss, uprooting, and dislocation, which is expressed in the body in the same way as the dislocation of gender identification of people who define themselves as queer. Although queerness is also tied to a notion of a gender home, it oscillates between the poles and axes of gendering. Queer theory is connected – albeit in a relation of (de-)construction – to the binary gender system and heteronormativity as powerful sexual localizations. This reciprocal relationship between repulsion and 'contingency' or affiliation indicates an epistemological proximity between queer and diaspora. "[Q]ueerness is to heterosexuality as the diaspora is to the nation" (Gopinath 2005: 11). From the point of view of (de-)constructing and countering normative identities and normalizing power constellations, the concepts of queer and diaspora could therefore be mutually corrective if they were considered more in terms of their interrelation – without wishing to imply that the analysis is aimed at 'correction' in the sense of obtaining a definitive knowledge (Dietze/Haschemi Yekani/Michaelis 2007).[4] I employ the term 'queeriasporizing' to describe this interrelation, by which I mean an analysis/perspectivation of integrated processes such as gendering, ethnization, and nationalization that cannot be understood in isolation from one another and are constantly forming new, overlapping layers, making it impossible to achieve a universal view (Köppert 2010).

A queer diaspora critique could therefore examine postcolonial diaspora theory and queer theory in terms of their respective pitfalls, and place them in relation to uneven mappings of space and time in queer diasporic landscapes. After all, neither the migration between different countries nor that between different sexes is characterized by substantial continuities. Instead, both queers and migrants experience time and space as radically open and without laws or rules

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3 I chose this spelling of VerOrtung in order to emphasize the ambiguity of the term, insofar as every localization also involves a process of searching, locating, finding, and determining that is externally imposed, restrictive, and to some extent injurious.

4 The authors discuss queer theory and theories of intersectionality as a mutually corrective methodology. I take issue with this, as it cannot be assumed that such an approach will lead to something that is correct. If 'corrective' is taken to mean that it is intended to counteract or rectify faults or deficiencies, then the methodology implies a normative impetus based on the assumption that something has been designated as deficient, which seems to me to be too permanent, given the temporary and processual nature of the approach.

(Vorkoeper 2011). By reconceptualizing queer theory on the basis of fusion, coincidence, renunciation, and return, narratives of homeland and nation defined in conventional terms such as ethnic dispersion, filiation, and biological traceability can thus be denaturalized, and vice versa (Eng/Halberstam/Muñoz 2005: 7). Hence the potential of a queer diaspora critique lies in the critical examination and analysis of origin, genetics, filiation, affiliation, and homeland in terms of their heteropatriarchal and national structures, as queer diasporic theorizations and critiques "point to submerged histories of racist and colonialist violence that continue to resonate in the present and that make themselves felt through bodily desire" (Gopinath 2005: 4).

Beyond these epistemological considerations, "it is through the queer diasporic body that these histories are brought into the present" (ibid.). But what if the painful and traumatic histories of racist, colonialist, and heterosexist violence are brought into the present by the fact that not only do queer diasporic subjects appear, but their bodies again suffer injury and are traumatized – for the very reason that they are fixed in terms of their identity, rather than being conceived as modes of being or incomplete subjects? In the context of epistemological enquiry and the formulation of a postcolonial queer diaspora critique that sets out to examine issues related to the discursive creation of homophobic migrant criminal subjects, the material impact on, for example, Jewish queer diaspora experiences (Boyarin 2002: 7) cannot be ignored or excluded. The media coverage of the attack on the Jerusalem Kings seems symptomatic of this exclusion in that it was categorized in terms of transphobia and migration, while the issue of anti-Semitism was not addressed. This article aims to fill a gap in the perception and treatment of this incident, and thereby draw attention to current tendencies that focus on homophobia and transphobia or racism and migratism, while at the same time trivializing anti-Semitism in queer diasporic contexts.

Berlin-Kreuzberg between Queer Rebel and McDonaldization

Berlin-Kreuzberg serves in this context as a foil for the fusion of disparate minorities and subcultures. But is it really a fusion? Is it not the case that in the places where they encounter one another, a battle of the subcultures (Heidenreich 2005: 203) can be observed, a charged conflict between all the above-subsumed acts of producing individual aspirations, identities, and truths, which lead to no clear result? At least these places enable an assessment of the unmarked center, the apparent nothing that means everything and is a full presence as an unerasable

trace (Derrida 1972: 349). Berlin-Kreuzberg was regarded as a melting pot and the embodiment of multiculturalism until the hypocrisy of this term was exposed, also on a political level. While Kreuzberg rolls out the red carpet for tourists in the area where it overlaps with the district of Neukölln, it has nevertheless asserted itself as a queer-political neighborhood in contrast to the monolithic gay culture of Berlin-Schöneberg, and still accommodates spaces of diasporic settlement and exchange even though mechanisms of segregation have begun to take effect due to rising rents (Rubin 2003). However, because queer diasporas are elaborated as a relationship of opposition to assumptions of cultural nationalisms (Sayyid 2000), deterritorialization has led to the development of imaginative ways to carve out symbolic spaces in the inhospitable landscape of Berlin-Kreuzberg (Gopinath 2005: 192). Sometimes these spaces leave the realm of symbolism and assume manifest form, for example in the assertion of the queer Schwarzer Kanal[5] following its eviction from Kreuzberg, or in the organization of the very Drag Festival that heralded the current debates.

Drag the Flag – Jerusalem Kings Performing Queer Diaspora

The performance by the Jerusalem Kings produced – I would argue – precisely these queeriasporizing effects of resistance to nationalism and heteronormativity. As trans-identifying Israelis in the diaspora they elaborated the performativity of sex–gender on stage, and as trans men they parodied the process of masculinization carried out in the context of Israeli nation-building (Butler 1991). Their performance, to the accompanying song "Macho Man," was an overaffirmation of the projection of macho desires, addressing not only Israel's increasingly masculinist policies, but also the complexity of overlapping processes of nationalization and masculinization in the context of migrating political concepts. As the highlight of the performance, masculinity, sexuality, and war were satirized by the self-referential masturbation of the three nations involved – Palestine, Israel, and the United States – embodied by three protagonists wrapped in flags. Viewing them together in this way, it became evident that the armed conflicts between these nations are in fact narcissistic acts of self-reassurance, whereby each is as good or as bad as the others so there is no need for partiality.

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5 Having been in existence for fifteen years, the alternative community project Schwarzer Kanal is one of the oldest *Wagenplätze* (trailer parks) in Berlin, and regularly organizes queer parties and other projects.

The unmarked center of masculinist nation-building was rendered visible and simultaneously exposed as the structural impetus behind the conflict. Without taking one side or the other, the drag kings tested out on stage what it means to question specific interrelations within complex constellations in a performative manner, nevertheless assuming a position by naming their group "Jerusalem Kings." Situated knowledge was employed deconstructively (Haraway 1988), in that implicit reference was made to the dangers of abbreviated slogans such as "Freedom for Palestine." Reflecting its ideological basis, this demand, which was transported as revelatory monstrances (Holert 2008) on homemade flags and banners at the Transgenialer Christopher Street Day in 2010, does not specify with which parts of Palestine, from a queer perspective, solidarity must be shown in a historic moment, and which parts of Israeli policy are to be condemned. At least I am assuming that for the initiators of the group Berlin Queers for International Solidarity with Palestine, "Freedom for Palestine" does not mean permissiveness toward homophobic and transphobic fundamentalists. If, in the case of the Middle East conflict, both Israel and Palestine are regarded as having heteronormative, patriarchal, and national structures, a queeriasporizing political approach would exclude the possibility of blanket solidarity with one side only, so that this group with its flags and banners could be accused of being part of the (visual) discourse of reterritorializing endeavors. However, as long as queer diasporic groupings – caught up in the net of identity-affirming names such as Berlin Queers for International Solidarity with Palestine or Queers Against Israeli Apartheid – use queer as a positivistic postulation rather than a deconstructive dissolution (which in the style of a dualistic pro/anti model is more likely to lead to desolidarization in the struggle against oppression and discrimination), they will continue to erode their own political potentiality.

The question of whether and how these queer policies can have a queeriasporizing effect in the diaspora thus remains in dispute. The Jerusalem Kings' show, on the other hand, by introducing elements of disturbance (for example by discharging water pistols – clearly intended to be read as actual weapons – in a sexually connotative manner) into the performative repetition of national topoi such as flag displays, valorizes the diaspora in the context of attempts to develop a critique of dominating power structures, and thus opposes the degradation of (Jewish) diasporas. After all, the Jewish diaspora experience has been largely repressed due to the nationalization of Judaism since the State of Israel was established in 1948, and is now mainly articulated through the mouthpiece of active and strongly positioned lobby groups in the diaspora. With the shift of both political and economic interests onto issues of Islamophobia, racism in the context of right-wing extremism, colonialist racism, and the everyday experiences of migrants, which has been taking place at least since 9/11, it has been

possible to observe that Jewish diaspora experiences have either been written out of, for example, postcolonial diaspora research studies (Hall 1990, Bhabha 2000), or that the research is concentrated on the Israeli population.

What About the Criticism?

The criticism of anti-Semitism is thereby reduced to a mechanistic reaction in a mode of accusation aimed at groups that are presumed to lie far outside the social mainstream – whether it is the Society of St. Pius X, the Left, or, of course, the neo-Nazi movement. The extent to which everyday anti-Semitism runs counter to this assumption, however – arising, for example, from the midst of the to some extent homonormative LGBITT community or from the realm of queer politics – becomes apparent when an Israeli float is prohibited from taking part in the Gay Pride parade in Madrid 2010 on the grounds that it would pose an increased security risk, or when protests against Israeli apartheid are chanted at a Pride march in Toronto without considering how the struggle against Israeli apartheid is also a struggle against Jews, as Jewish ethnicity is related to the definition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people (Köppert/Schmidt 2012).

Even if the criticism of Israel's discriminatory border policies can be justified to the extent that one nation is legitimizing itself at the expense of another nation's right to exist, this should not be allowed to obscure the fact that a call to boycott, say, Israeli products not only constitutes an injurious speech act, but is also a complexity-reducing piece of propaganda that leaves a bitter aftertaste, especially when viewed against the background of German history. What is more, the prominent debate on Israel and its political policies inscribes a marginalization of the Jewish diaspora experience; this reproduces the opposition between a culturally degraded Jewish diaspora and a socially thriving Israel (Bunzl 2004: 3), whereby the unsettling and to some extent subversive effects of queer diasporic articulation, as illustrated by the Jerusalem Kings' performance, are not widely recognized. Above all, the complexity of this oppositional counterpublic draws attention to the double impossibility of belonging to a nation and rejecting it (Puar 2005: 126). As queer subjects, the Jerusalem Kings are in a relation of belonging to the Israeli nation-state, but they transcend this space by employing temporary appropriation and mimicry to expose the constructed nature of gender, national, religious, and ethnic boundaries.

This thwarts the basic assumptions of both a white German Queer Nation (Puar 2005: 108) and a masculinist conception of the diaspora based on homeland and migration (Clifford 1994), as the drag kings emphasize the artificiality

of masculinity with their transgender performance. Gender and nation are thus accentuated as artificial, as 'drag.' It is a form of exceptionalization not of parameters of identity, but of modifiable status descriptions: an exceptionalization with (painful) consequences.

Discourses of Straight and Anti-Semitic Diaspora and their Material Realities

That the demand for evidence lies at the heart of a paradox is illustrated by the painful consequences that occur when queers become visible in the diaspora, or when members of the diaspora become visible in the nation, thereby disrupting the masculinist paradigm of diaspora or symbolically queeriasporizing the nation. Does the attack on the Jerusalem Kings constitute homophobia, transphobia, anti-Semitism, or a form of nationalism encouraged by a football match as part of the European Championships[6]? The view of the incident becomes obscured by media coverage that makes discursive an interest in identifying the perpetrators and stigmatizing them, as it were, as members of the Grey Wolves. The Grey Wolves thus serve as a teaser for a causal link between Turkishness, masculinism, and homophobia or transphobia, while anti-Semitism is eclipsed as a level of discrimination. The fact that the victims of the attack included members of the Jerusalem Kings – diasporic queer Israelis – highlights a discourse that should cause particular concern because a historical experience of anti-Semitism that also involved hatred toward the transcendence of the gender binary construct is now being repeated in the diaspora, which is caused by and results in nationalism.

In line with the discursive equation of political passivity and homosexuality, or effeminate, passive masculinity that was developed in relation to the concept of the 'nation' in the nineteenth century, male Jews were for a long time regarded as homosexual and feminized within the dominant culture. Hence the foundation of an independent Jewish State was both the inversion and the rejection of feminized, homosexual masculinity, as well as of the diasporic, passive life that was projected onto Jews. It is no accident that Zionism emerged at the same time as heterosexuality was invented; it expresses the desire to become "straight" and "normal" (Boyarin 2000: 78).

Normalization within the framework of a growing national consciousness also means inventing one's nationality and identifying oneself with one's own

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6 On that particular evening, the men's football match of Portugal against Turkey was taking place as part of the European Championships.

"Jewishness," which the close link between Jewish identity and Israeli nationality implies. However, the claim that the internalization of national logics represents a form of "colonial mimicry" (Boyarin 2000: 81), insofar as Zionism was imagined as a way of emancipating and liberating oneself, also requires critical assessment from a gender studies perspective.

After all, this type of mimicry involved a process of masculinization intended to dispel the stigma(s) of effeminate Judaism and thus also had a corporeal impact, as illustrated by the physical exercises Jewish gymnasts performed according to a model of organized gymnastics established by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn in Germany (Brenner/Reuveni 2006). The concept of the nation that ultimately migrated to Israel in 1948, which can be traced through the development of Zionism in the diaspora in the nineteenth century, and similarly through the nationalizations of the Ottoman Empire (for example, in the context of the founding of the state of Turkey, based on the model of European nations), led not only to military conflicts between Israel and Palestine and between Israel and Iran; it also generated corresponding links to contemporary diasporic contexts, inasmuch as Jews and Palestinians or Turks and Kurds[7] fight bitter subcultural battles in the diaspora. There is an interdependent relation between this and the masculinization and heteronormalization of the diaspora, in the sense that the degrading judgements about the decadent, feminized Jew – having been inherited from Western Europe and undergone numerous metamorphoses in specific national discourses – appear in the diaspora as prejudices against Jews but equally against homosexuals as well. This regeneration of links strikes at the heart of a German society that grants the Jewish community in the diaspora no sense of security or protection, and in which state-decreed security measures rather than the people themselves are responsible for protecting Jewish synagogues from attack (Schneider 2007: 87). However, it also strikes at the heart of a white German society that professes to be tolerant and open-minded toward Jews and queers, without considering the extent to which anti-Semitism, masculinism, homophobia, and transphobia are thereby alterized and orientalized.

The projected vision of a masculinized and now anti-Semitic Orient in the midst of the Occident facilitates the conception of a feminized, homophilic, white German society. A discourse is spun out that places white Germans at the center of philo-Semitism and homophilia, while the diaspora appears straight and anti-Semitic; one that also extends to queers campaigning for the liberation of Palestine and presents them as anti-Semitic, placing particular emphasis on the

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7 I addressed the conflict between Turks and Kurds in the context of my master's thesis, using the example of the film *Kleine Freiheit* (2004) by Yüksel Yavuz.

fact that Judith Butler and Jasbir Puar, as pars pro toto for the queer community, signed onto the boycott campaign against Israel.

Solidarity or Conflicts?

The trouble with such expressions of solidarity from the queer community, or indeed from the queer diaspora, appears to be that deductions are made on the basis of the manifold translations of what the backgrounds and specific features of the various conflicts are, and while these deductions are assumed to be correct, and consequently implemented, they are bound to fail. The diverse migrations not only of particular concepts of 'nation' but also of sexuality scripts, are prone to translation problems that make it difficult to form stable judgements in the diaspora. A translation of the conflict into the queer diaspora must always be read as an impoverished imitation of an original that does not exist as such (Gopinath 2005: 13). However, instead of using – as the Jerusalem Kings' performance did – the resistance to translation or what is lost in the process of translation, as a way of disturbing narration, representation, and interpretation, of asserting "alternative form[s] of modernity" through the migration of concepts (Manalansan 2003: ix), separate fronts are established. The situation in the queer diasporas is exacerbated by the fact that the exportation and importation of national and sexual ideologies has become exceedingly complex, and this encourages a tendency toward clear delimitation and strict demarcation. Oppositional initiatives involving antiracist, antinational or anti-anti-Semitic approaches that simultaneously address issues of patriarchy and masculinism, as exemplified by the Jerusalem Kings' performance, are thereby rendered inaudible and invisible.

Alliances between people who have had similar experiences of oppression, albeit with specific differences, break down in a clash of subcultures – spurred on by alarmist overreactions on the part of the media, which lead to knee-jerk responses such as identifying particular groups of perpetrators or providing false descriptions of victims.[8] The decision to take the 2008 Transgenialer Christopher Street Day parade through Kreuzkölln, which was made by the organizers following the assault on the drag kings, likewise localized transphobia and homophobia in a neighbourhood where many German Turks live. This can be interpreted as an educational intervention aimed at encouraging Muslim queers to come out into the open, as well as at allegedly homophobic and transphobic migrants.

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8 See http://www.taz.de/1/leben/alltag/artikel/1/ueberfall-auf-drag-kings/; http://juliaseeliger. de/homophobe-gewalt-frauen-in-kreuzberg-zusammengeschlagen/. Retrieved: 18 August 2011.

As a result, queer contexts can likewise never be sure that they are not in fact reproducing structures of supremacy. Sometimes the queer diaspora even becomes a comfortable safety zone within which judgements are pronounced on human rights violations in, say, Israel or Palestine, with no knowledge of how this may also aggravate the situation. At the same time, the discursive displacement of the conflict into the queer diaspora can result in the focus being shifted away from those who are directly affected, as well as from locally engaged activists, which is unlikely to improve the situation in the Middle East. The creation of visibility for the queer diasporic struggle carries the risk of making the queers' struggle in Israel and Palestine fade into invisibility. This should not be taken as a plea for abstention, however. Rather, I concur with Hito Steyerl and Fatima El-Tayeb when they argue that political networks are no longer consolidated through community or imagined group identities, but rather through short-lived, precarious, and transnational networks that are formed on a basis of emotional connections, gestures, or political concerns. The disintegration of these networks should therefore no longer be regarded as failures, but rather as a productive driving force for mobilizing critical impulses with the capacity to revise and correct themselves. (El-Tayeb/Lawson/Schrade/Steyerl 2007: 323)

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Claudia Simone Dorchain
The Long Shadow of the Holy Cross

Jewish-Christian Gender-Images in Max Färberböck's movie
Aimée und Jaguar

In 1999, a courageous movie received rave reviews in Germany and abroad – Max Färberböck's film Aimée und Jaguar,[1] *a homosexual love story between the German-Jewish writer Felice Schragenheim and the Aryan German housewife Lilly Wust during the National Socialist era, a plot based on the double biographies that were fictionalized in a novel by the Austrian journalist Erica Fischer. The multilayered concept underlying this movie contains topics such as female homosexuality, fascist terror, gender diffusion, and anti-Semitism, issues that have frequently been discussed by the audience of critics.[2] But the question of this short essay goes further: Is there a tradition of antifeminism even older than the National Socialist propaganda? And if so, can it be detected within the roles and role-plays of the lovers in Färberböck's unhappy romance? The leading hypothesis of this small survey is that Christianity formulated antifeminist roles that turned out to fit perfectly into National Socialist propaganda, and disastrously affected the life and consciousness of every citizen, male or female. Can traditional Christian female roles be discussed in a lesbian context?*

Färberböck's film, *Aimée und Jaguar*, is a sentimental love story between a Jewish writer, Felice Schragenheim, who lives under a fake, so-called Aryan identity in Nazi Germany, and a non-Jewish German housewife, Lilly Wust, in the Berlin of 1943. Lilly, an unemployed mother of four, lives in isolation and frustration; her husband, a bank clerk, has been drafted into the *Wehrmacht*. Felice takes the lead in initiating a homosexual affair with Lilly, who falls in love with her without being informed about Felice's Jewish identity at first. The journalist, working in a newspaper agency, comes into contact with an underground organization and feels trapped between her fight for freedom and the selfish requirements of her beloved Lilly, who does not accept her being away even for a day to fulfill her tasks. Forced to reveal her true identity, Felice tells Lilly that she is Jewish, massively persecuted by Nazi terror, and needs to escape Germany soon. In the end, Felice withdraws from her colleagues' plan to organize the flight from

1 Färberböck, Max (dir.), *Aimée und Jaguar,* Germany 1998, first broadcast in 1999.

2 See Dischereit, Esther, http://www.hagalil.com/archiv/99/10/jaguar.htm, Institut für Kino- und Filmkultur http://www.film-kultur.de/filme/aimee_und_jaguar.html, Cinema 2 /1999, TV Spielfilm 4/ 1999.

Germany and remains with Lilly. This personal decision in favor of romantic love is the last one in her short life. Felice ends up in the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen and is only 23-years old when she is killed.

Erica Fischer wrote two novels using biographical material from the lives of these two women as background: *Aimée und Jaguar. Eine Liebesgeschichte, Berlin 1943*[3] and *Das kurze Leben der Jüdin Felice Schragenheim. "Jaguar" Berlin 1922 – Bergen-Belsen 1945,*[4] provide the film's plot with historical dates, places, names, and figures. The leading roles in Färberböck's movie, played with a remarkably high level of empathy by Maria Schrader and Juliane Köhler, fascinated the German audience. The critics were stunned by what they called the "authenticity of characters." As Georg Seesslen noted in 1999:

> Und noch in den Nebenfiguren beweist der Regisseur Max Färberböck sein Gespür für subtile Charakterisierung. Das sind Personen, denen Widersprüche und Geheimnisse gelassen werden...[5] (Even in the minor roles the director Max Färberböck shows a gift of subtle characterization. There are personalities with contradictions and mysteries...).

But are there really "contradictions and mysteries" regarding the personalities, as Seesslen believes? Are there "subtle characterizations" or rather ready-made clichés?

The following essay is a short foray into the religion-based, philosophical concepts underlying antifeminist constructs of identity that are considered to precede biologist thought, racism, and anti-Semitism. The question is whether love as an individual relation can remain independent of (self-) stigmatization under circumstances of "political religion" (Julius H. Schoeps) – a basically philosophical question. But although films allowedly have an epistemological and even metaphysical dimension, as Rudolf Harms states,[6] philosophers rarely deal with movies, with exceptions such as the universal genius Umberto Eco, who proved able to discuss the academic question of actuality and potentiality in Thomas Aquinas's masterpiece, *Summa Theologica*, and likewise to write the screenplay for an international blockbuster such as *The Name of the Rose*.[7] Being far below Eco's genius myself, I justify my short philosophic approach by

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3 Fischer, Erica, *Aimée und Jaguar. Eine Liebesgeschichte, Berlin 1943*, Cologne 1994.
4 Id., *Das kurze Leben der Jüdin Felice Schragenheim. „Jaguar" Berlin 1922 – Bergen-Belsen 1945*, Munich 2002.
5 Seesslen, Georg, DIE ZEIT 07/1999.
6 See Harms, Rudolf, *Philosophie des Films – Seine ästhetischen und metaphysischen Grundlagen*, Hamburg 2009.
7 Eco, Umberto, *Il nome della rosa*, Milan 1980/ Jean-Jacques Annaud (starring Sean Connery), *The Name of the Rose* 1986.

the new insights which, although shattered, may arise; for a philosopher actually sees things differently, or sees different things, focusing on the ideas behind the performance, on what is "hermeneutic."[8] My hypothesis is that the rave reviews often overlook the chilling gender impact and its religious baseline, especially the levels of programming and conditioning of "womanhood" by an androcentric paradigm coined by Christian faiths and fascist policies. *Aimée und Jaguar* could be a kind of unhappy, postmodern *Mysterienspiel*. The long shadow of the Holy Cross, distorted into a swastika, darkens a love story without a happy ending. In the following short survey, I will try to explore some of the main topics – lesbianism, spatiality, and authenticity, as far as they interfere with an "iconic" approach to theories of culture – and dare to interpret them from within a philosophical framework.

Mädchen in Uniform (Sagan/Frölich 1931) – A Forerunner?

Lesbianism is not new as a theme in German cinema. As early as 1931, Leontine Sagan and Carl Frölich produced *Mädchen in Uniform* (Girls in Uniform),[9] a movie about homosexual longing in a Prussian boarding school for girls. The plot, in itself, is somewhat predictable. A 14-year-old girl, the daughter of an officer in the Prussian Army, falls in love with her schoolmistress and, getting extremely drunk during a holiday, confesses her desire, which upends the strict rules of the school and causes many psychological conflicts. What is outstanding concerning this movie is not the plot as such, although the display of lesbian lust was courageous in the 1930s. Rather, it was its sharp criticism of the harsh discipline of Prussian society and its values. By introducing characters who are utterly exaggerated, such as the old gray-haired headmistress staggering on a crutch who forces the girls to military morning assemblies, Sagan paints a gloomy picture of a society fossilized in outdated rules and orders.

    Färberböck's movie, *Aimée und Jaguar*, following almost seventy years after *Mädchen in Uniform* is not at all advanced or innovative concerning the paramount matter of lesbian love. And, in sharp contrast to Sagan's film, whose characters are obviously imaginary and do not claim any significance as "authentic,"

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8 About the necessity to reveal many ideas, although cursory, within one mind in order to receive new philosophical insights, see Russell, Bertrand, *A History of Western Philosophy* (London 1945), 6.

9 Sagan, Leontine, Frölich, Carl (dir.), *Mädchen in Uniform*, Germany 1931.

Färberböck uses descriptions of authentic people, such as his heroine, Felice Schragenheim, who suffered under National Socialist terror. What turns out to be identical is the two artists' criticism of social policies concerning women in general, love, lust, and emotion in particular, and above all the rules of behavior. Sagan and Färberböck mirror two highly problematic eras in Germany's historical development: Sagan shows how the *Kaiserzeit* at the end of the nineteenth century was absolutely restrictive in sexual and political terms, and Färberböck criticizes the terror of the National Socialist years, when every citizen was forced to obey. Sexuality turns out to be a mirror, or more precisely a distorted mirror, subversive to social restriction. In the nineteenth century, sexual lust – whether hetero- or homosexual – was condemned so strongly for a woman that conservative doctors treated women for "ailments,"[10] as if they were sick, and threatened to send them to lunatic asylums. The criminologist Cesare Lombroso, famous for his psychiatric work on the presupposed connection between "genius and madness," a scientist who believed criminality to be genetic, stated at the very end of the nineteenth century, as an earnest scientific hypothesis, that any woman experiencing sexual lust was considered to be mentally ill, a prostitute, or a criminal.[11] Some decades later, and during the humanist efforts of Jacques Charcot, Sigmund Freud, and Wilhelm Reich, to name just some of the most influential scientists who contributed to the discourse, human sexuality became a serious topic of research and thus of shared social interest. Nevertheless, prejudices just seemed to shift instead of vanish: now, it was not sexual lust in itself that was inappropriate for a woman, but rather the circumstances under which to explore lust, which still were to be defined by political leaders.

In keeping with its racist doctrine, the National Socialist ideology clearly declared sexuality to be a pro-genetic means within the so-called Aryan family, to procreate blonde and blue-eyed generations of Germans. Gisela Helwig of the Federal Bureau of Political Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung), Berlin, states: "Das nationalsozialistische Frauenbild war im Grund kein Frauenbild, sondern ein Mutterbild. Ein weiblicher Mensch wurde fast nie als 'Frau' gesehen, sondern immer gleich als 'Mutter.'"[12] The ideological identification of femininity with fertility and the equation of "woman" with "mother" caused a

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10 The term "hysteria," a term coined by Plato, which meant "wandering womb," was not removed as a diagnosis from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) until 1994.

11 Lombroso, Cesare, *Criminal Women, the Prostitute, and the Normal Woman*, Turin 1894.

12 Helwig, Gisela, *Weg zur Gleichberechtigung*, in: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (Federal Bureau of Political Education), Berlin 2011, issue 254, with a citation of Weyrather, Irmgard, *Muttertag und Mutterkreuz*, Frankfurt a.M. 1993, 9.

glorification of mothers on the one hand and a homophobic fear on the other hand within the war-ridden and repressive German society. With a clear ideological focus on procreation and an utter restriction of female roles, homosexuality as a nonprolific form of sexuality became massively persecuted in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Nazi ideologists combined the fear of homosexuality, deeply rooted in the scholastic point of view (relying on the biblical Leviticus, medieval scholars considered homosexuals to be perverts because they do not procreate according to God's command) with the politically racist point of view that differentiated between "good" and "bad" genes. Under the Nazis, the instrumentalization of art for political purposes reached its apex also in regard to the glorification of maternity – SS storm troopers even appeared in the iconography as angels, protecting flirting heterosexual couples and women lying in the childbirth bed.[13] Once again, the nonprolific homosexual was turned into an outsider, a *pariah*, utterly disenfranchised and despised. In this regard, Färberböck's message is very close to that of Sagan's decades before: female (homo-) sexuality was, and obviously remains a severe threat to what rule-definers presuppose to be eternal values under changing social circumstances.

Playing Death and Anticipating the Victim

Gender as a construct of "identity" is commonplace in current research. The construction of gender as a temporary agreement about how men and women are required to present themselves in order to be accepted still dominates the feigned, self-determined individuality of characters in many ways. In the 1980s, Christina von Braun questioned the uncritical acceptance of concepts of "femininity" and suggested that they not be taken as authentic descriptions of individual personalities.[14] This warning came just before the fall of the Berlin Wall 1989, when established concepts of social categorizations were altered like rarely before. But the problem of self-categorization by ready-made concepts remained unsolved, and ten years after von Braun, Slavoj Žižek, in an analysis of Judith Butler's approach to femininity, spoke of a "double discrimination": ready-made concepts of femininity versus the opinion that these concepts could represent individual people.[15]

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13 See Dorchain, Claudia Simone, *Süßer Engel SS – Der Fahrerbunker in Berlin und die Täterstilisierung*, in: Weber, Ines (Ed.), *Diskurs. Politikwissenschaftliche und geschichtsphilosophische Interventionen*, Kiel 2011, 58–72.

14 Braun, Christina von, *Die schamlose Schönheit des Vergangenen*, Frankfurt a.M. 1989.

15 Žižek, Slavoj, *Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch – Zwei Essays über sexuelle Differenz als philosophische Kategorie,* Vienna 1999, 46.

In fact, uncritically copying concepts of supposititious femininity is exactly what Färberböck's unhappy heroines do.

Felice and Lilly anticipated antifeminist roles that were considered in their day to be inappropriate and worse, given the National Socialist propaganda of the contrasting role of the "Jewess" as representation or personification of deviancy versus that of the "good Christian mother"[16] as a common role model. Most surprisingly, German film critics seem not to have noticed this problem at all. While giving rave reviews of the alleged "authenticity of characters,"[17] they apparently forget that, despite Felice Schragenheim having been an historical person, the associations and self-attributions of the roles of "Aimée" and "Jaguar" are generic, plainly imaginary, and full of antifeminist stereotypes of "how to behave." There is evidence of this categorization being more than a dreamy play between lovers in a passionate mood, giving themselves playful names according to a romantic poem. Their names are generic, not individual, so their name-giving is an element of suppression with a long history. During the National Socialist era, the value of the individual was reduced to nil, while the masses ruled, and the use of generic names can be seen as a symptom of this degradation. What Omer Bartov describes as a negative side effect, characteristic of the National Socialist ideology – the loss of the individual and its intended, even heroically exaggerated annihilation in the mass[18] – is a process of high significance for industrial killing and representation, but also a phenomenon that predates the cruelties of fascism, for it derives from the cult of sacrifice in ancient cultures. Names recall history, and generic names recall history in the political sense: written by the victor, deindividualizing and categorizing the victim, sacrificing.[19] Felice actually adopts the nonhuman, animal-like personality of the "Jaguar," which has an ambiguous meaning: noble and elegant on the one hand, ferocious and unpredictable on the other. Lilly adopts the role of the "Aimée," which sounds very sympathetic because its French meaning is "beloved"/ "darling." But as a generic name, it also does not designate any individuality but reminds us of the doll-like passivity of the stereotypical mistresses in Baroque poems, exchangeable and replaceable, only living by being loved. Is their name-giving process a form of self-discrimination?

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16 See Helwig, Gisela, e.g.

17 TV Spielfilm 04/1999.

18 Bartov, Omer, *Man and the Mass. Reality and the Heroic Image in War*, in: Id., *Murder in Our Midst. The Holocaust, Industrial Killing, and Representation*, Oxford 1996, 15f.

19 See René Girard on myth-making and history-telling in ancient cultures, *Generative scapegoating*, in: Hamilton-Kelly, George (Ed.), *Violent Origins. The Problem of Ritual Killing*, Stanford 1986, 73–105 .

It seems so, because the heroines explicitly deal with antifeminist clichés of female passivity (Lilly the "Aimée") and, moreover, an anti-Semitic image of the Jewish citizen as nonhuman, of irritating and somehow threatening ambiguity (Felice the "Jaguar"). Female passivity – including an utter disinterest in politics – and the demonization of sexual lust have been main topics of National Socialist propaganda. Helwig reminds us that Hitler defined the role of the woman as essentially being that of the mother, frankly declaring passivity as a female core value and judging the struggle for intellectual and erotic independence as a "Jewish" perversion.[20] The German woman/mother, namely the Christian, should accept her role in a universe that is strictly separated from the social, intellectual, and political universe of the man. In 1943, when the love story between Lilly and Felice took place, these ideas had governed public opinion in Germany for a decade. But Färberböck's heroines are no machinators of propaganda at all. They choose and agree on their names deliberately, in acceptance. It is a frightening element of voluntarism in self-discrimination or humiliation, just as if they were anticipating their trauma, unconsciously but most consequently following Thomas Elsässer's theory of trauma as a basic element of identity.[21]

But it is not the only frightening element concerning their names. Lilly and Felice are not only homosexuals within a highly homophobic society. They are a Jewish-Christian couple, although Lilly Wust's religion or personal ethic – as far as she may be considered to have one – is rarely mentioned. She is in fact the representation of what Christianity teaches as being appropriate for a woman. As a housewife and mother of four, she lives in seclusion and detachment, with no apparent social or political engagement of any consequence, and she expects her breakthrough not by actively partaking in social life but by drifting into another secluded, private space, that within the dream of romantic love.[22] Felice, in contrast, lives a life of the intellectual, as a journalist and writer, and she proves her strong political identity by joining an underground community of antifascist fighters.[23] These are not only biographical lifelines of contrasting individual

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20 Reichsparteitag 1934, see G. Helwig, e.g.

21 Elsässer, Thomas, *Terror und Trauma. Zur Gewalt des Vergangenen in der BRD*, Berlin 2006/7.

22 It was this standpoint of an utterly apolitical mind that has been sarcastically criticized by the polemical writer Kurt Tucholsky in his early works in *Weltbühne* (Berlin 1926–1933) when he displayed "the" typical German woman of these days as a unsophisticated housewife trapped in her kitchen and pitiably incapable of expressing any political concern.

23 Exploring the cultural interdependence of "language" and "negativity" in this context, by taking Felice as an example, would be an interesting task, but is far beyond this short study. See Agamben, Giorgio, *Die Sprache und der Tod. Ein Seminar über den Ort der Negativität,* Rom 1982/ Frankfurt a.M. 2007.

values; they stand in the tradition of gender images. In the Christian (scholastic) tradition, the free, individual, and self-assured female personality is exceptional and becomes easily connected with the biblical image of the reckless seductress: Eve/ Lilith or Mary Magdalene, if not Jezebel or the Whore of Babylon. Felice, as the driving force in her homosexual relationship with Lilly, is freely assigned the role of seductress, voluntarily adopting the ferocious connotation of the "Jaguar" that mirrors the Christian fear of sexuality. Lilly seems to be closely connected with the Virgin-Mary-mother-type of femininity; although she maintains sexual relationships with other men she does not play the seductress but the part of the "seduced." Felice, in contrast, associates herself with the Eve-and-Mary-Magdalene-type. It is not by coincidence that the Jewish woman voluntarily plays "Eve"/ Lilith and the Christian woman "Mary," for the Jewish religion is, in Christian eyes, the essence of "otherness" and thus associated with danger – a backward religious standpoint underlying the National Socialist concept of "Jewry as otherness." Lilly and Felice, far from acting as individuals, choose to be incarnations of religious clichés. They cannot escape. They are out of Eden.

Gaining Space as the Project of Emancipation

In 1929, Virginia Woolf published her famous essay "A Room of One's Own,"[24] which became a classic standpoint of feminist theories. In Woolf's eyes, space is more than a physical emanation: it is the condition of self-determination and thus indispensable to the progress of emancipation. To own a room is supposed to be identical with financial and intellectual independence. Moreover, the definition of rooms, which came to include such attributes as "sacred" and "profane," distinctions found within every culture, was originally a purely physical description related to arrangement in space. Karl-Heinz Ohlig shows in his studies about the origin of religions, referring to French structuralism, how the original meaning of "sacred" derived from the classification of space – the room of the Gods and the room of humans – using notions of "upper" and "lower" not as directions but as references to a supposed nearness to the divine realm.[25] It is no coincidence that defining space as a relative nearness to the "superhuman" and thus freeing mankind from the backward bonds of slavery, discrimination and ignorance is a main topic in films about emancipation, and this is one aspect where cultural theories and film sciences meet. Numerous examples offer an insight into the

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24 Woolf, Virginia, *A Room of One's Own*, Cambridge 1929.
25 See Ohlig, Karl-Heinz, *Die Geschichte der Religion*, Darmstadt 2000.

interdependence of space and time, which Siegfried Mattl considers essential in order to build up filmic *mise en scène,*[26] with regard to the emancipation of the individual, mainly women. In the contemporary Israeli film *Ha Hesder* (Joseph Cedar 2000) we see the reason why Michal, the clever daughter of the rabbi, shows her superior role by occupying her father's seat in the office.[27] Based on the classic assumption of "spatial emancipation," it could be challenging to explore whether Färberböck's heroines, considered by German critics as modern personalities, actually own their space. A closer look at the opening scene of *Aimée und Jaguar* provides insights inot the contribution and meaning of space for the main characters.

Unheroic Space?

When Stanislaw Jerzy Leç philosophized about Greek tragedy, or the meaning of tragedy in general, he concluded: "The one who survives is *not* the hero."[28] Färberböck's movie starts with the survivor, thus with the non-hero, in a retrospective view held by the elderly Lilly in 1997, then living in a retirement home. The atmosphere is depressing. The retirement home not only stands for the last exit, but is also a kind of total institution, a place of seclusion and isolation. The changing times show the destruction of physical beauty as well, which adds the additional depressing element of the "fallen majesty" of the formerly attractive heroine. Viewers today may be reminded of the film *Der Vorleser*[29] by Bernhard Schlink (starring Kate Winslet) about the fictional Hannah Schmitz, the guard in a concentration camp, who reveals the development of her love story with a young schoolboy some many years later, as an old woman with destroyed physiognomy, living in the prison she has never left since her conviction. Although there is no resemblance between the National Socialist criminal Hannah and the politically disinterested housewife Lilly Wust, they share the sad retrospective of old age as survivors of a long-ago love story hidden in their memory, contrasting sharply with their current, utterly restricted circumstances, bitterly proving that they were *never* the hero.

The elderly Lilly is but a shadow of her youthful self, and by recalling what has been, we cannot fail to notice what is irrevocably lost. Even so it seems to be

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26 Mattl, Siegfried (Ed.), *Filmwissenschaft als Kulturwissenschaft*, Transcript Publishing House Bielefeld 2007, 7.

27 Cedar, Joseph (dir.), *Ha Hesder,* Israel 2000.

28 Leç, Stanislaw Jerzy, *Unfrisierte Gedanken,* Warsaw 1964.

29 Schlink, Bernhard (dir.), *Der Vorleser*, USA/ Germany 2008.

like a dream, like the evocation of youth, beauty, and love by a decrepit crone living in seclusion, a spell-making attempt to conjure the past – a failed spell. It is not by coincidence that Lilly Wust literally does not have a place of her own, even not as the failed magician in old age, trying to conjure up youthful loves that have waned forever. The retirement home is not a private dwelling place with an emotional history connected to its inhabitants, but an anonymous and somewhat hideous center for senior citizens who apparently lack the care of their families. By the way, this retrospective alludes to the emptiness of Lilly's family life, because all members of her family have left her except for her old housemaid, and her concern for the judgment of her husband and relatives, who formerly attacked her for her lesbianism, turns out to be meaningless in the absence of these persons who seem not to have left any trace in Lilly's life. Lilly's end reflects her life, ruled by others and by the perspective of a moment's pleasure or loss. By choosing such a life, Lilly not only represents herself, but also what Christian theology, anticipated by National Socialist ideology, expects a woman to be – passive, fertile, defined and ruled by others. In contrast, Felice is a modern woman who could have found Woolf's approval concerning space; she proves to be intellectually independent, courageously fighting for her rights with her model profession as a writer. By contrasting Lilly and Felice in regard of their spatial associations, we see that Lilly represents space as isolation, Felice as deliverance. At the turning point of the plot, Felice loses her space – and thus her means and self-esteem – and becomes imprisoned, later brutally killed. Gisela Helwig reminds us that Hitler defined female emancipation as "ein vom jüdischen Intellekt erfundenes Wort"[30] (a notion invented by Jewish *intelligentsia*), as a phenomenon of "Jewish" intellectuality that had to be rooted out in every individual who believed in it. Felice's death represents the ultimate fulfilment of what National Socialist demagogues defined as "emancipation as a Jewish idea." But owning space and seeking the truth as a pretext for persecution doesn't refer to the National Socialist era alone, but also to biblical times. Let us have a closer look at the reverse of the spatial model.

The Danger of Motion or Pandora's Speedy Box

In Claude Lanzmann's famous documentary on the crimes of National Socialism, *Shoah*[31] (1985), a filmic memorial of genocide described by Gertrud Koch

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30 See Helwig, Gisela, e.g.
31 Lanzmann, Claude (dir.), *Shoa*, France 1985.

as "Vorstellung vom Unvorstellbaren"[32] (imagining the unimaginable), there is an irritated allusion to space and motion in the political sense. The Polish Jew Rudolf Vrba sarcastically comments on the militaristic morning assemblies in the concentration camp as a kind of sports activity: "Germany is a very athletic nation." By identifying military drill with "sport," or frankly admitting the lethal danger of motion in this setting, Vrba stands in a long tradition that dates back to biblical sources and ancient Greek philosophy. Space and motion systematically presuppose each other, for space is the physical precondition for motion. It is this *dynamic* function of space – to allow movement – that made the concept of space ambiguous.

Motion has been considered as a danger in itself in ancient philosophy and was adopted as such by medieval scholars. Resolving the question about the origin of "Being" (is it air, water, the mind, the atom?) and the related question as to whether this origin would be static or dynamic was a paramount aim of Greek philosophy in the fields of ontology and epistemology. This core question remained unsolved. The unbridgeable differences between Herakleitos – highly appreciated by Karl Popper – who defined motion as ubiquitous, and Parmenides, who believed in a static source of Being, proved the plausibility of two standpoints toward this question. Plato found a kind of compromise between these two standpoints through his concept of the "world of ideas" and the "physical world," the first being static, the second dynamic.[33] Scholastic writers adopted this "double world" principle and attributed the static world of ideas to God and immortality, and the dynamic world of manifestations to mankind and morbidity. Philippe Ariès shows in his studies on sepulchral culture in Europe how death, or the speedy dance of death, is an integral part of Christian iconography dating back to the concept of "evil" space and motion as its lethal consequence.[34] But beyond the sepulchral cult as such, the topic of the "speedy" death largely influenced European cultural heritage through music, theater, and poetry for centuries.[35] A common fear of speed as a forerunner of death has been created out of ancient philosophic guidelines and found its sarcastic end in Vrba's comment on military morning roll calls in National Socialist concentration camps.

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32 Koch, Gertrud, *Die Einstellung ist die Einstellung*, Suhrkamp Publishing House Berlin 1997, 143.

33 See Plato's Cave allegory, in: Id., *The Republic* VII, 514a-520a.

34 Ariès, Philippe*, Images de l'homme devant la mort,* Paris 1975.

35 For examples of "speedy" death as a topic in medieval music, such as Hildegard of Bingen's musical work or the Spanish pilgrim's songbook *Llibre Vermell de Montserrat*, see Dorchain, Claudia Simone*, Totentanz – Der Tod in Bewegung*, in: Sauer, Walter (Ed.), *Scheidewege 41, Max Himmelheber Foundation Stuttgart 2011*, 186–193.

Felice is always on the run. This is not by coincidence. Her social role as a journalist and her private role as "Jaguar" imply motion, flight, struggle, aggression. She is running toward death. Lilly lives a flowerlike life of immobility, expecting her lover to give up her activities in order to stay with her forever and become as passive as she is, a requirement that fails most unhappily. Once again, Lilly and Felice are not individuals but generic representations of gender images rooted in religious antifeminism. The moral of the confrontation between the Christian woman representing the "static" and the Jewish woman representing the "dynamic" in every aspect of her life (work, underground activity, flight) is a mind game of the immobile divine Being and approaching Death, personified by the Christian as the reputed superior person close to God and the Jew as the reputed inferior person far away from Him, a mind game that could have been a pastime of Dominican scholars in the fourteenth century.

About Representativeness

Hannah Arendt states in her political works that the triumph of National Socialism would have meant the irrevocable collapse of European traditions, "der Zusammenbruch aller europäischen Traditionen."[36] If European tradition could be defined as intellectual goods, and thus as Platonic, Aristotelian, and biblical, as another philosopher, Karl Jaspers, believes,[37] it becomes clear that Arendt's point of view cannot be defended. National Socialism would not have represented the collapse, but rather an intensification of traditional ideas that made it a kind of political religion. As we have seen, the religious concept of "evil" space, and of living an independent life according to a mossback morality, can lead to death. In addition, the associative history of the roles "Aimée" and "Jaguar" played, as two opposites on the spectrum of emancipation, points to how National Socialism used Christian images mingled with Neoplatonic philosophy in order to justify the discriminatory functions of those models.

There is little "subtle characterization"[38] in Färberböck's women, in sharp contrast to the belief of German critic Seesslen, who speaks of fractures and nuances

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36 Arendt, Hannah, *Das deutsche Problem*, in: *Partisan Review 1945*, Reprint: Rotbuch Verlag Berlin 1986, 26.

37 Jaspers, Karl, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, Leipzig/ Berlin 1931, about the religious and occult heritage of National Socialist ideology. See also Goodrick-Clarke, Nicholas, *The Occult Roots of Nazism. Secret Aryan Cults and their Influence on Nazi Ideology*, London/ New York 1992.

38 See, for example, G. Seesslen.

in all personalities. Actually, the multiplication of a cliché remains a cliché. First, we have to distinguish "representativeness" from "authenticity." Färberböck's heroines are authentic as historical persons, as Fischer's novels showed, but it is not clear whether they are representative, and their filmic presence seems to have less of a *Zeitgedächtnis* (time memory),[39] as Frank Stern once defined the art of cinema, and more of a free association. The Federal Bureau for Political Education in Berlin states that in the 1940s two-thirds of the female citizenship were employed in the military industry alone, both in military hospitals and weapons production, not to mention the more than 500,000 young girls and women who voluntarily supported the army as so-called *Wehrmachtshelferinnen*.[40] So the unemployed housewife and mother of four, living in privacy and dreaming a little *bourgeois* dream of romance, is authentic but not representative of "the" German woman in 1943. But also if we fully abandon the critic's classification of representativeness with regard to Färberböck's main characters and only adopt the classification of authenticity, we must still concede that despite the fact that Lilly Wust and Felice Schragenheim lived, suffered, and confronted death (for Lilly, a living death), they failed to forsake their roles as Christian mother and Jewish seductress, Christian naïve and Jewish intellectual, amounting to a showdown between gendered religious roles adopted by National Socialist demagogues, as well as between Christian survival and Jewish victimization.

Authenticity and "Kitsch" and Why Critics do not Mention them

Movies as artwork must tolerate questions concerning their artificiality. By following Slavoj Žižek on the differentiation between art and kitsch, defining kitsch as art with imaginary wholeness, or evoking the imagination of a hoax wholeness,[41] we must agree that Lilly and Felice are far from being "subtle" characters with fractured personalities and, in contrast, show a complete, almost overall contingency. Thomas Elsässer does not hesitate to add an ethical dimension to filmic contingency and frankly speaks of the "honesty of Kitsch"[42] in regard to the early decades of German film, pointing to the hidden truth within ready-made

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39 Stern, Frank, *Die siebente Kunst als Kulturgeschichte*, 10, in: Id. (Ed.), *Filmische Gedächtnisse*, Mandelbaum Publishing House Vienna 2007.

40 See Helwig, Gisela (2011).

41 Žižek, Slavoj, *Die Pest der Phantasmen*, Vienna 1997, 40.

42 Elsässer, Thomas, *Das Weimarer Kino – aufgeklärt und doppelbödig,* Berlin 1999, 46.

clichés. The fact that Felice lied to Lilly about her true identity does not alter the contingency, but even adds another aspect of religious idea. Actually, Felice's lies are fully justified because of her membership in an underground organization and thus are not a proof of an unstable character but rather a coping strategy for social survival. But the opposition of "the" Jew and "the" Christian regarding truth is much more than that; it is a scholastic mind game of faith, because the search for the true identity of a lover is not only a common romantic topic (Lohengrin, Amor and Psyche, West-of-the-sun-east-of-the-moon),[43] but has proved a religious watershed between "true" faith and heresy, as Bernard McGinn writes in his studies about the "Antichrist."[44] In this respect, the Jewish woman and her false identity and the naïve Christian woman stubbornly insisting on honesty are more than women playing hide-and-seek under National Socialist terror. Rather, they mirror meanings of faith coined in the history of Christianity and considered the "true" or basic religion of mankind.

Färberböck's leading characters are obviously not subtle, but display a wholeness that is the union of two sides of an ancient religious cliché: the dynamic yet moribund Jewish woman with her attempt at emancipation, and the static, passive Christian woman who surrenders self-control and finally survives in political naivety. The presupposed fracture in their characters, praised by German critics, is not modern but actually old-fashioned, turning out to be not an overcoming but an enumerative combination of religious antifeminist stereotypes – stereotypes paving the way for racist and specious biological theories. Did the critics think that the "backward fracture" (a broken frame of out-dated role concepts) actually shows how deeply rooted such stereotypes have been, even in the subconscious mind of the resistance during the Nazi years?

Generic Names, Ready-Made Behavioral Scripts, and Self-Stigmatization

Despite attracting an enormous audience, Färberböck's *Aimée und Jaguar* is actually not beyond reproach. The heroines, Felice and Lilly, although authentic in some regard, actually fail to be representative of a statistical reality of female cit-

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43 "West-of-the-sun-east-of-the-moon," a fairy tale from Norway with strong parallels to the ancient Greek myth "Amor and Psyche," illustrating that the question of the "true identity" of lovers is of intercultural interest.

44 McGinn, Bernard, *Antichrist – Two Thousand Years of Human Fascination with Evil,* New York 2000.

izenship in Germany, but they are – and this is merely overseen by the exalted critics – representative of antifeminist Christian role models in a very problematic way. There is a religious dichotomy between the roles of the hazardous seductress Eve/ Lilith and the childish, immature Virgin-mother-type and, even worse and beyond the theological debate itself, intelligent young women fully conscious of being social outsiders adopt these roles and pretend to identify with them. To state it clearly: names are more than voice and sound; they are verbal indicators of negativity, as Giorgio Agamben' s theory on language puts it[45] – generic names are programs, and programs of femininity have brought the negativity underlying language in general to its lethal apex in the 1940s. When, if not in an era combining Christian fear of female sexuality and racism, would a Jewish/ non-Jewish lesbian couple stand directly within the reticle of ideological hatred? But although the crimes of the National Socialist era would have been committed no matter what names or roles "Aimée" and "Jaguar" had chosen, it remains that they did not hesitate for a moment to adopt misogynistic roles and platforms, and neither did their environment, despite its political bystander or combatant attitude.

The moral of this movie is, if there is a moral in biographies at all, a mirror of their *Zeitgeist*. Dealing with clichés of identity, of femininity, of desire and loss in its filmic representation is more than a director's perspective: It is "a daydream of society",[46] as Siegfried Kracauer puts it. Nevertheless, this daydream turned out to be a nightmare during the fascist terror. What lies behind this nauseating "daydream" is a challenge for further research about the origin of traumatizing roles. National Socialist ideology could not have gone so far without religious, specifically Christian, role models invading the subconscious mind of individual citizens and abusing art for propaganda. As Josef Riedl states: the long shadow of the Holy Cross easily deformed into a Swastika.[47] For centuries, Christian interpretations – often supersessionist and far beyond the Biblical characters, ruled images of female roles. Felice and Lilly are examples of this overall brainwashing, voluntarily reenacting Eve-the-Whore or Mary-the-Saint, animal-like or doll-like apparitions of put-on femininity, ready-made "identities" that are in every aspect not self-determined. Antifeminism as a primordially religious idea underlying racism and questionable theories of biology, and historically and systematically

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45 See Agamben, Giorgio (1982/ 2007).

46 Kracauer, Siegfried, *The Little Shopgirls Go to the Movies,* In: Id., *The Mass Ornament. Weimar Essay,* edited by Levin, Thomas Y., Cambridge, MA/ London 1995 (1927), 292.

47 Riedl, Josef, *Der lange Schatten des Kreuzes. Von Golgotha zur Swastika*, in: Schoeps, Julius Hans, Ley, Michael (Eds.), *Der Nationalsozialismus als politische Religion*, Bodenheim 1997, 53f.

preceding them, becomes an issue in contemporary gender studies.[48] The chronological order of antifeminism, racism, and suspect theories of biology, and their influence on cultural artifacts as well as on our self-images, evokes the question – a core question of philosophy – as to whether the lifelong process of creating one's own identity is self-determined at all.

Conclusion

The aspect of self-stigmatization within a stigmatizing society in Färberböck's film, overlooked by German film critics, should by no means be underestimated. Its last consequence is iron doors closing behind the "unholy" woman, under the shadow of a distorted Holy Cross.

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48 Helwig, Gisela, e.g.

Helwig, Gisela (Ed.), Federal Bureau for Political Education/ Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Issue 254, *Weg zur Gleichberechtigung*, Berlin 2011.

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Tommaso Speccher

The Dead Jew as Eternal Other

Loss and Identification in the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin

Introduction

Talking, thinking, and writing about the Holocaust requires careful attention to a vast array of historical events, personal and collective representations, and intellectual debates. The contemporary use of the term "Holocaust" evokes multiple references that extended and almost questioned its original meaning.[1] Depending on "where" this word is pronounced, and by "whom," the interpretive perspective changes and the sociopolitical nuances multiply. It is clear that the word "Holocaust" has gradually enlarged its explicative capacity to the point of signifying events and memories that exceed the specificity of its historical contingency.[2] The variety of the contexts in which the term has penetrated everyday language – in schoolbooks, in journalistic debate, in the sites of memorialization of the tragedy – spans the range of theology, history, sociology, philosophy, and politics.

The realm of politics has appropriated the memorialization of the Holocaust as one of the privileged instruments through which the practices and orientations of the European peoples might be shaped.[3] Furthermore, almost every European capital hosts a memorial to the Jews who were deported or killed during World War II, and they generally fulfill two functions: to discursively fix the details of a

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1 See Zev Garver and Bruce Zuckermann, "Why Do We Call the Holocaust 'The Holocaust',"
Modern Judaism 9, no. 2 (1989): 121–60, Young, James E., *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust:
Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,
1988), LaCapra, Dominick, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca: Cornell
University Press, 1994), 43–67.
2 According to Naomi Mandel, "the point is that once the unspeakable is constructed
as a theological narrative of destruction, sacrifice, and potential redemption by the term
'Holocaust', it becomes appropriable as a generic, almost comfortable, appellation for a broad
spectrum of disasters: hence the use of 'Holocaust' to refer to African American and American
Indian histories, the AIDS crisis, and abortion – to limit this appropriation to public discourse in
the United States alone." Mandel, Naomi, *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust,
and Slavery in America* (Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 43.
3 See the resolution on "Holocaust Remembrance" adopted by the General Assembly of the
UN in 2005: http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/docs/res607.shtml (last accessed
25 March 2011).

precise event, and to symbolically point to a reality more complex than the event in itself. This duplicitous nature characterizes the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe designed by the American architect Peter Eisenman and opened to the public in 2005. On the one hand, this site is an oral and visual history center preserving and displaying thousands of individual experiences; on the other hand, the cryptic layout of the surface lends itself to a multilayered symbolic impact. The Memorial is the result of a decade-long debate on the role of Holocaust memory within German culture, but its physical presence holds significance beyond these debates. More than simply preserving historical memory, it addresses the need to establish a clear procedure for confronting a difficult past.

Through the lens of the Berlin Memorial, this article addresses the center of this difficulty, which is the memory of the unsuturable wound that has befallen German-Jewish culture. My analysis will center on the Memorial's evocation of the irretrievably lost but desperately present past, a process instigated by the excessive repetition of documentary and personal traces in the learning center (located underneath the Memorial) and by the deliberately out-of-scale symbolism of its surface. I will propose a philosophical reading of the two conflicting experiences that this duality generates: an experience of mimetic identification and the immersion in symbolic loss. Both psychoanalysis and religion inform the notion of death and absence I work with but the main angle of analysis relies on a discussion of ethics.

I will start by analyzing the architectural function fulfilled by the memorial vis-à-vis its topographic position and its political legitimacy within German society. In a second moment I will produce an interpretation of the inexplicability of Holocaust representations as rooted in the unstable relationship between historical events and their representations, a discrepancy observed by, among others, Reinhart Koselleck and Dan Diner, and reified in the Berlin memorial. To contextualize this tension, I will briefly illustrate the generational development in German culture's reception of the Holocaust legacy. The psychoanalytic argument elaborated by Karl Jaspers in *The Question of Guilt* (1947) will be presented and integrated with A. Dirk Moses's recent article "Stigma and Sacrifice in the Federal Republic of Germany" (2007).[4] From here I will shift my focus to the epistemological and ethical consequences of the death of the European Jews. Among the many starting points that the history of philosophy offers to remember the Death of the Other, the work of the French-Lithuanian Jew Emmanuel Levinas remains particularly important. His work contains an important suggestion that

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4 Jaspers, Karl, *The Question of German Guilt*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Fordham University Press, [1947] 2000), Moses, Dirk A., "Stigma and Sacrifice in the Federal Republic of Germany," in: *History and Memory* 19, no. 2 (2007).

can help us understand the dead Jew as the Other that is desired, and that can be listened to. Levinas's ethics is certainly generated by the Holocaust but it strives to circumvent the catastrophe's most annihilating aspects by indicating directions for a meaningful exercise of collective memory.

Berlin and the Space of Memory

In Europe there are 536 memorials dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust; each European country having at least one. Most of them were officially proclaimed memorials after the fall of the Berlin Wall. These places of memory generally share two common characteristics: the detailed reconstruction of the event which took place at that site—with visual evidence, pictures, interviews, objects—and the presence of an emblematic artifact—a monument, a work of art—whose function it is to represent the crucial events in a metaphorical or allegorical way.

The Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is located near the Brandenburg Gate, right along the traces of the former Berlin Wall. It was designed by the American architect Peter Eisenman and opened in 2005. The nineteen thousand square meters of the site are covered with 2,711 concrete blocks arranged in a grid pattern on a sloping field. The concrete blocks, or stelae, only vary in height. According to Eisenman's project description, the stelae are designed to produce an uneasy confusing atmosphere while the whole structure represents a supposedly ordered system that has lost touch with human reason.[5] Underneath the grid-like surface visitors can access a documentation center displaying the names of all known Jewish Holocaust victims, as per lists obtained from the Israeli museum Yad Vashem.

The Berlin monument has been harshly criticized because it only commemorates Jewish victims. The debate around the work has been extensive, and a hefty book titled *Das Denkmal* (The Memorial) gathers about six hundred articles reacting to the project in the years between 1989 and 1999. In 1998, the German novelist Martin Walser had already produced one of the most significant critical statements concerning the Memorial, and its sharpness has not faded. Walser condemned Germany's "Holocaust industry" and what he called the "ceaseless presentation of our shame."[6] Noting that no other city in the world hosted a

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5 At the opening in 2005, the official tourist flyer claimed that the design represented a radical approach to the traditional concept of a memorial, partly because Eisenman did not use any symbolism.

6 In: Dankesrede von Martin Walser zur Verleihung des Friedenspreises des deutschen Buchhandels in der Frankfurter Paulskirche am 11 Oktober 1998, (translated

memorial of national disgrace, he declared that "The Holocaust is not an appropriate subject of a memorial and such memorials should not be constructed."[7] Walser's words eerily echo the unrepresentability spatially symbolized by the Memorial. The lack of any physical, realistic reference to the traumatic event it commemorates, or to the geographical site where it is located, makes it a memorial to nothing, to nothingness, or to absence. This absence is amplified by the fact that nowhere on the Monument can one find an inscription explaining the object of commemoration. This silence has been interpreted as a deliberate attempt to encourage the visitors' own research, but also as a reference to traditional Jewish cemeteries, and as an allegory of the sense of loss of the Jewish community.

Beyond the cryptic symbolism the central fact remains: the memorial is not erected on the location of a former extermination camp or some other crucial area, and the only connection between the monument and its position is its symbolic occupation of the new capital city of Germany. The Berlin Memorial was built from scratch sixty years after the Holocaust, and it shows all its indebtedness to contemporary architectural trends, particularly to Deconstructivism, and to a general tendency toward abstraction common in recent memorial construction. The act of memory is not produced by the mimetic or aesthetic repetition of the "traumatic incision"[8] but rather through an apparently empty semantic field whose symbolic openness and indetermination characterize the experience of memory.

The Berlin Memorial should therefore be understood within a wider trend in memorial culture. A new kind of national memorial is in fact being constructed in every capital city of all the old European countries: Instead of an "Arc de Triomphe" or "il monumento alla vittoria," today you can find a "memorial of the Holocaust." What is being represented in these places is not the past but a construction of the present, a construction of narratives and perspectives that simultaneously seek an understanding of the past and the present alike. Even within this broader context, the Memorial in Berlin represents a distinctly innovative mode of representation of the Holocaust that does not operate in relation to the historical event but through a mystical sense of the symbolic power of history.

Through the symbolic power of the topographical inscription, the millions of people who walk through the pillars in the memorial in Berlin every year learn a new perspective on history and on the past. However, this monument also invites

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by the author): http://www.hdg.de/lemo/html/dokumente/WegeInDieGegenwart_
redeWalserZumFriedenspreis/ (last accessed March 25, 2011).

7 Ibid.

8 This strategy is very common at other Holocaust memorial sites, the Washington Holocaust Museum and Auschwitz the most famous among them.

us to rethink nationalistic rhetoric in the direction of historical responsibility. Once founded on honor and military force, nationalist rhetoric is being transformed by the affective reaction brought about by the reference to a genocide and fostered by the crisis of the nation-state as political actor. In short, I argue that Holocaust memorials gesture in the direction of a post-national entity, namely the European one. In Berlin in particular, where the memorial is within minutes of the renovated parliament house, the site of national self-recognition almost merges into the site of the impossibility of recognition.[9]

Classic Dilemmas in Holocaust Historiography

The convergence of discursive, symbolic and experiential elements in the Berlin Memorial enacts the epistemological conditions of historical discourse in contemporary Europe. According to the German historian Reinhart Koselleck, "in every historical event many extra-linguistic factors are produced which are not reducible to representations and description. In a more general sense language and historicity cannot be reduced to each other in a definitive way."[10] In this light, the critical relationship between historicity and representation seems to undermine the reliability of any representation of events, military actions, persecutions, or massacres. Consequently, historical knowledge itself becomes questionable. This spreading uneasiness hovers over the analysis of Holocaust representations and is precipitated in the Berlin memorial's ostensible refusal to represent––at least on the surface. It hangs suspended between the exhibition of factual traces and the semantic rupture of their monumental shell.

Rupture, withdrawal, and willful indeterminacy resonate with the "ungraspability" of historical facts as articulated by Marc Bloch in the 1940s,[11] and as reelaborated in the 1970s as the problem of "historical writing." In the case of

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9 "We suggest that shared memories of the Holocaust, the term used to describe the destruction of European Jewry by Nazi Germany between 1941 and 1945, a formative event of the twentieth century, provide the foundations for a new cosmopolitan memory, a memory transcending ethnic and national boundaries." Levy, Daniel and Sznaider, Natan, "Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory," *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 1 (2002): 88.

10 Koselleck, Reinhart, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Tribe, K., New York: Columbia University Press, 2004 (1979), 222–23.

11 "The knowledge of the fragments, studied by turns, each for its own sake, will never produce the knowledge of the whole; it will not even produce that of the fragments themselves." Bloch, Marc, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. Burke, P. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992 (1942), 128.

the Holocaust, the tension between events and language reaches extremes that have led thinkers such as Theodor W. Adorno to aver the end of all possibility of saying any word from on high.[12] Adorno's reflection adumbrates what Koselleck describes as the withdrawal of facts vis-à-vis their own representability, a withdrawal that leaves room, almost paradoxically, for an excess of signification. In the case of the Holocaust, this empty space has been filled by an ever-growing body of cultural products. It is a fact that the memorialization of the Holocaust is an operation of unprecedented proportions through which original or fantasized experiences have been reconfigured and fixated in a widely spread collective memory. The memory of the catastrophe has far exceeded the boundaries of its original subjects––victims, perpetrators and bystanders alike. This abundance was preceded by what Jan Assmann has defined as the phase of "communicative memory." Different from collective memory, communicative memory is produced within a community in the arc of three generations from a given historical event.[13] Today that arc has almost come to a close and the spectacularization of the Holocaust lives on an almost self-sustaining productivity. The "Holocaust" has enlarged its scope to include social groups who use its emblematic core to renegotiate their own identities.[14] The "qualitative and quantitative uniqueness of the Holocaust"[15] has almost morphed into perfect transferability.

Postmodernity has taught us to perceive, as a counterpoint of excessive signification, an inevitable fragmentation of the signifier. Or better, figures like Adorno, Lyotard, and especially Derrida have conspicuously emphasized a deferral of the possibility of signification.[16] The negative force of the empirical Holo-

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12 "All post-Auschwitz culture, including its urgent critique, is garbage. After Auschwitz there is no word tinged from on high, not even a theological one, that has any right unless it underwent a transformation." Adorno, Theodor W., *Negative Dialectics*, trans. Ashton, E.B. (London: Routledge, 1990 (1966), 364–65.
13 Assmann, Jan, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance and Political Imagination*, London: Cambridge University Press, 2011 (1992).
14 For the relationship between historical and personal experience in a concentration camp, see Young, James E., *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation*; Friedländer, Saul, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe*, Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1993.
15 Rosenbaum, Alan, (Ed.), *Is the Holocaust Unique?*, Boulder CO: Westview Press, 2001, Milchman, Alan and Rosenberg, Alan, "Two Kinds of Uniqueness: The Universal Aspects of the Holocaust," in *New Perspectives on the Holocaust: A Guide for Teachers and Scholars*, Ed. Millen, R., New York and London: New York University Press, 1996.
16 "The Problem of the unrepresentable Holocaust will not go away. These eloquent gestures toward the limits of thought reverberate in contemporary critical theory and philosophy's explorations of language, history, community, and ethics, realms in which the Holocaust maintains a formidable presence. For Lyotard, Agamben, Blanchot and Derrida the Holocaust––

caust, a force of destruction and death that points to a metaphysical void, permanently defers our attempts to signify it: nonetheless, the nature of memorials, and of the Berlin memorial in particular, is to counter this void.

The "Information Center," which occupyies the underground part of the site, absorbs the functions of preserving, organizing, and reconstructing the traces of the survivors in a coherent discourse. The colossal quantity of data, the extensiveness of the archive, and the meticulousness of the display are exceptional. Despite the great effort undertaken by fleeing Nazis to erase evidence, the open archive parades a multitude of surviving documents, originating from Port-Bou to the Ukraine, which were indelibly marked by the Shoah. In the documentation center, people and places, personal histories and legal documents, faces and numbers inhabit the apparent astonishment that accompanies the history of Nazi exterminations.[17]

Rather than unspeakable, the Holocaust is too tightly marked by the overwhelming traces that have been unearthed, like a book whose print is almost too compact for the naked eye to see, and is therefore dismissed as unreadable. The crisis of representation does not obliterate meaning, although it makes access to meaning so painstaking and daunting as to threaten a potential disjunction in the epistemological path. Quite dramatically, Eisenman himself describes his work as a monument where "there is no goal, no end, no working one's way in or out." He continues:

> The duration of an individual's experience of it grants no further understanding, since understanding is impossible. The time of the monument, its duration from top surface to ground, is disjoined from the time of experience. In this context, there is no nostalgia, no memory of the past, only the living memory of the individual experience. Here we can only know the past through its manifestation of the present.[18]

Observing the groups of visitors, at first compact and focused while waiting to enter the documentation center and then quickly dispersed into a myriad of

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along with the implications of its representation––is not itself the object of their study but, rather, a catalyst that activates a sense of moral urgency and heightens the discussion's implicit stakes." Mandel, *Against the Unspeakable*, 32–33.

17 "Like any word and any name Auschwitz both signifies and effaces, refers and defers. To be 'after Auschwitz' is to be in the spectral presence of the people who survived it. It is to be forced to confront this deaths, this presence, and the disquieting effacement that 'after Auschwitz' performs on both. The more we speak about Auschwitz, it seems, the more prevalent and compelling the gestures toward the limits of speech, thought, knowledge, and world." Mandel, *Against the Unspeakable*, 31.

18 Eisenman, Peter, *Barefoot on White-Hot Walls*, Vienna: MAK/Hatje Cantz, 2004, 164.

lonely wanderers who drift among the stelae looking for references which are nowhere to be found, the detachment between historical and experiential time becomes palpable. In the undulating paths threading the surface along an impeccable grid, the Holocaust is a thrashed sign transfixed with tomb-like presences revealing itself in its wounded historical essence.

German-Jewish Culture: Guilt, Stigma, Inscription

The representation of the Holocaust deployed in the memorial is the result of a decade-long debate in Germany dealing with the attempt to confront German culture with the Shoah. This confrontation was complicated by the high level of integration of Jewish communities in Germany as a nation and the intertwining of German and Jewish culture.[19] German-Jewish culture was exceptional in the European context; for centuries it was a religious minority that finally managed to thread itself successfully into the German fabric. Unlike in many other parts of Europe, German-Jewish people and culture were accepted even into the sacred hearth of the State through a process of assimilation, which reached its emblematic high-water mark in 1848.[20] This inextricable history makes the extermination of European Jews particularly unique in Germany, and it inflected the political experience of post-World War II Germany toward a certain fundamental ahistoricity. This ahistoricity manifested itself along two conceptual lines. On the one hand, in 1947 Karl Jaspers analyzed it as an "unsustainable guilt;"[21] on the other hand, Hannah Arendt defined the German-Jewish relationship, in a letter to Jaspers, as a "negative symbiosis."[22] These two concepts and their filiations have run through the political and social debate in the German Federal Republic and in unified Germany. The psychoanalytical binary of guilt/shame has been used to read the attitude of the generation who came of age during Nazi Germany. As A. Dirk Moses has recently articulated, the sense of guilt for the Holocaust

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19 On the process of emancipation of the Jews in Germany see Sorkin, David, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, Mosse, George L., *Confronting the Nation. Jewish and Western Nationalism*, Biddeford: University Press of New England, 1993, 121–60.

20 1848 is the year in which nine representatives of the Jewish community were members of the first freely elected parliament in German-speaking Europe, the national assembly in the Paulskirche in Frankfurt am Main.

21 Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 81.

22 See Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers, *Correspondence, 1926–1969*, San Diego: Harcourt Brace International, 1992.

has generated paradoxical reactions, ranging from identification with the victim to refusal of one's German ethnic and religious identity: "there is no doubt that many German children felt polluted and even saw themselves as victim of their parents: a number of Germans described themselves as the Jew of [the] family."[23]

The political activism of those who lived this social history still resonated quite vocally in the public debate that surrounded the realization of the Berlin memorial; although these voices may eventually be filed away as the necessary but passing confrontation that always accompanies such an endeavor, they remain eloquent at least so far. The discussion between four German students, three Jews, and a Christian in *Der Spiegel* from 1998 is exemplary.[24] While the Jewish students – Mark Jaffé, Hilda Joffe, and Igor Gulko – supported the intrinsic necessity of the "injunction to seeing" that the memorial would represent for Germans, the Christian, Kathi Gesa Klafke, strongly contested this view by clearly stating that:

> The Holocaust should be confined to History with the extermination of the Indians, the slave trade, serfdom, the Gulag, colonization, the persecution of the Christians, the Inquisition, the Crusades … so that everyone can learn from them.[25]

What emerges from this quote is an obvious replacement of the idiom of guilt and shame with an equalization of historical crimes. Klafke attempts to destigmatize German culture. The hampering force of insuperable guilt has been explained by A. Dirk Moses through the notion of stigma and sacrifice. According to Moses, insisting on the allocation of guilt has stigmatized the entirety of German culture:

> In accusing Germans of seeking to ignore the stain of the Nazi past, commentators are blind to their own participation in the construction of the stain. For this reason it is useful to think of postwar Germans / Germany in terms of stigma.[26]

Although this analysis is persuasive, it overrelies on a psychological model that postulates the existence of national cultural units that are impermeable to each other.

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23 Moses, *Stigma and Sacrifice in the Federal Republic of Germany*, 147.
24 "Zum Hinschauen verdammt: die jüdischen Studenten Mark Jaffé, Hilda Joffe and Igor Gulko aus Berlin über den Streit um die Erinnerung an Auschwitz," In: *Der Spiegel*, 7 December 1998, 236–39.
25 Klafke, Kathi-Gesa, "Also doch Erbsünde?" In: *Der Spiegel*, Dec. 28, 1998, 148–49.
26 Moses, *Stigma and Sacrifice in the Federal Republic of Germany*, 149.

> In its Greek origins *stigma* meant a bodily sign of inferior social status, a brand on a crimi-
> nal or outcast. It is logically and causally prior to pollution because the stigmatized group
> self-pollutes its members' generation after the crime.[27]

Seen through the Berlin Memorial, the stigma is not exclusive anymore: Instead
of reproducing itself through generations of Germans it remains architecturally
etched into the ground. The territory made "significant" and the repository of the
legacy is national but also European. The stigma – the branding – is transferred
to the national earth like a seed that burgeons into an offering to the interna-
tional community. The stigma is a source of historical experience as well as an
ongoing embodied reflection on individual responsibility. From this perspective,
the subject of the Memorial is neither German society nor the Jewish victims but
rather contemporary historical subjectivity.

The evolution from interior guilt to exterior stigma signals the emergence
of the Berlin Memorial as a memory site for the interrupted narrative of *Euro-
pean*-Jewish culture. While objectifying the German burden of responsibility
without erasing it, the Memorial hints at the capillary distribution of guilt on a
European scale and therefore adumbrates the thorny issue of collaboration. The
capacity for sensorial experience of these multilayered resonances in the Memo-
rial stimulates an ethical movement of relationship with the Other and the Else-
where. The Other and the Elsewhere are the motor of ethics, as already enacted in
some ancient rites of passage. As one Italian scholar has observed:

> …the original rites of passage sanction a change of status within a community. They inter-
> vene and regulate the main moments of danger, tension and social crisis. This dimension of
> myth, far from being extinct or obsolete, reoccurs today not only as a cultural backdrop but
> also as an ever-present, permanent possibility.[28]

The surface of the memorial invites visitors to find their own path and to lose
their way; the regular repetition of obstacles and the embodied rituality of being
always at the edge, around the corner, in between, pushes the walker to the
threshold of a historical memory. The converging descent of the ground at the
base of the columns, the increasing obscurity and the deadening of the urban
soundscape immerse the visitor in the rarefied and mythical atmosphere that
characterizes the relationship between past and present. If myth is "the tale of
an obscure place, ancient and missing," that obscure place is also the site of a

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27 Ibid.
28 Valentinotti, M., in: Valentinotti, M., Zambotti, A. de, and Bonaventura, W., (Eds.),
Passaggi. Dialoghi Col Buio, Milano: Mimesis, 2006, 14.

conversation with the missing Other, that Other that in rites of passage the Self is encountering within the liminal space between Self and Other:

> Rites of passage: this is what the ceremonies connected to death, birth, weddings, puberty, etc. are called in folklore. In modern life, these passages have become more and more unrecognizable and imperceptible. We have become deprived of threshold experiences. The only one left to us perhaps is that of falling asleep. The Threshold is a zone. The word 'schwellen' [to swell] includes change, passage, and tides, meanings that must not go unnoticed by etymology» Oneiric architecture (W. Benjamin)

Rites of passage mark the renewal and revitalization of the relationships between the individual and the social body. The reconfiguration of the social episteme operates within a linguistic and logical proximity: individuals are led to the threshold of their *zoé* ("naked life") to redefine both their *bios* ("life within culture, individuality") and *ethos* ("moral attitude"). In this confrontational space, individuals discover their own nakedness as nonidentical to themselves in that it is also the nakedness of the Other, of the one that is not. Rites de passage are exercises in moral transformation from Self to Other. As Emmanuel Levinas has often tried to highlight, the prominence of the Other implies a calling to the other side as platonic *Epekenia tes ousia*:[29]

> The eschatological vision breaks with the totality of wars and empires in which one does not speak. It does not envisage the end of history within being understood as a totality, but institutes a relation with the infinity of being which exceeds the totality. The first 'vision' of eschatology (hereby distinguished from the revealed opinions of positive religions) reveals the very possibility of eschatology, that is the breach of the totality, the possibility of *a signification without a context*. The experience of morality does not proceed from this vision – it consummates this vision; ethic is an optics.[30]

The Exposed Dead Jew of Europe and the Subject

According to the reading produced so far, the Berlin Memorial gives prominence to an exposed subjectivity that seeks and mirrors itself in the absence of an interlocutor, who is, nonetheless evoked through traces, images, and histories. The entire inscription of the Memorial is the sign of an experience that does not allow

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29 Epekenia tes ousia (beyond being,), indicating a transcendent and ethical relationship with the Other, and is a reference to Plato's *Republic* (509b, 508c, 517bd, 518d).

30 Levinas, Emmanuel, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1969 (1961), 23.

itself to be reduced to one single concept but which opens up as ethical calling.[31] The ethical interpellation of the visitor happens in the lower part of the site and is divided into three steps – the cognitive, the aesthetic, and the symbolic moment.

The cognitive moment takes place in the Room of Dimensions. In this space the visitor is presented with an extremely detailed timeline elucidating the timing, the places, and the methods of the processes of persecution, ghettoization, concentration, and extermination. The inclusion of audio-visual material facilitates apprehension of the vast mass of historical research, familiarizes the viewer with real documents, and structures the rest of the visit. The recurrence of some photographs – also on display in the Washington Holocaust Museum and in Jerusalem's Yad Vashem – constitutes a so-called "stipulated memory," the allusion to a set of references shared at a transnational level.[32]

The aesthetic moment is progressively realized in the Room of Families and then in the Room of Names: It consists of the exhibition of the naked victims, their faces, their shattered lives, their familial relations and, finally, their names. The Room of Families, with its large pictures of complete households whose lives and names we come to learn in detail, produces an important emotional response in the viewers. Unlike the "historical" pictures of destruction from the Room of Dimensions, these family photos show no overt violence.[33] The beholder is soothed by the vision of family and friendly relations, by the sense of life that follows the sense of death but the pathos of identification is undermined by the awareness that destruction awaits. The following step, the Room of Names, is a cathartic moment that focuses on the names of the Holocaust victims. Every 60 seconds one name from the three and a half million victims listed at the Yad Vashem Archive is projected and followed by a sound recording containing the basic information defining the destiny of that person. The names bounce on the four walls, surrounding the viewer. The fade-out of every name alludes to the

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31 Ibid.

32 "Photographs that everyone recognizes are now a constituent part of what a society chooses to think about, or declares that it has chosen to think about. It calls these ideas 'memories,' and that is, over the long run, a fiction. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as collective memory. But there is collective instruction. All memory is individual, unreproducible––it dies with each person. What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating. Ideologies create substantiating archives of images, representative images, which encapsulate common ideas of significance and trigger predictable thoughts, feelings." Sontag, Susan, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, New York: Picador, 2003, 68.

33 "Being a spectator of calamities taking place in another country is a quintessential modern experience, the cumulative offering by more than a century and a half's worth of those professional, specialized tourists known as journalist." Ibid., 18.

ephemerality that threatens memory and to the ephemerality of individual life. Yet the regularity and the precision of the list project the names and life histories into the future, defying the invisibility of those individual deaths.

The symbolic moment takes place on the surface of the Memorial when the visitors emerge to natural light after having toured the subterranean archive. Disoriented by the lack of references, by the extensiveness of the grid and by the slight irregularities of the terrain, the viewer is quickly transferred from the conditions of recognition and catharsis to the impossibility of knowledge. However, when the visitor is immersed bodily in the surface grid, a grid designed and built to accommodate the bodies that move through it, one question remains: Who is at the center of the Holocaust Memorial? In our reconstruction, the exposed subject is the contemporary subject as visitor, consumer, tourist – called upon to embody the definition and construction of a history – a history which he simultaneously takes in as constituted by individuals. The dead Jew is the irreducible limit of that experience, the paradox of an ethics that can do nothing but listen attentively and expose the self to the Other.[34]

The immersion in the furrowed surface of the Memorial wraps the visitor in uneasiness and solitude, a fabricated disorientation that invites the subject to synthesize uncannily the biographies, lives, and silenced voices experienced below ground. All that remains of the Holocaust – coeval traces as well as contemporary resonances – acquires collective meaning through individual subjects who are symbolically made to go through an embodied loss of all received meaning. The memory of the Holocaust today distances itself from stigmatizing a country, a nation, or a social body. It initiates rather a new ethical practice that begins with the memory of the dead Jew as an internalized eternal Other and works toward the creation of a new, integrated self where the horrors of the past are apprehended through sympathy rather than defensive guilt.

Consciousness then does not consist in equaling being with representation, in tending to the full light in which this adequation is to be sought, but rather in overflowing this play of lights – this phenomenology – and in accomplishing events whose ultimate signification does not lie in disclosing. Philosophy does indeed dis-cover the signification of these events, but they are produced without discovery (or truth) being their destiny. The relation between the same and the other is not always reducible to knowledge of the other by the same. What counts

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34 "The Other remains infinitely transcendent, infinitely foreign; his face in which his epiphany is produced and which appeals to me breaks with the word which can be common to us. ... Speech proceeds from absolute difference." Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 194.

is the idea of the overflowing of objectifying thought by a forgotten experience from which it lives.[35]

Conclusion

The hermeneutic and ethical core of the Holocaust in relation to contemporary memorial representations in Europe, and in Berlin in particular, attempts to suspend a univocal and totalizing discourse and to encourage the emergence of a subjective interrogation that debunks essentialist identity narratives. In this new imaginary, the post-Holocaust subject strives to achieve recognition while alleviating the paralyzing self-referentiality of guilt generated by a vision of the dead Jew as the victim of a terror apprehended with horror and self-horror.

The apperception of Otherness as liberated from the weight of the "intentional offense to the ontological dignity of the victim"[36] can offer a model for relating to the dead Jews of Europe, without rejecting responsibility for and implication in that loss. In this new territory, the spatial stigma is transformed into a site of encounter where the Other is potentially received and met.

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35 Ibid., 28.
36 Adriana Cavarero, *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009, 9.

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Felice Naomi Wonnenberg

Sissy and the Muscle-Jew Go to the Movies

The Image of the Jewish Man in Film after 1945 and Its Reception in Germany

Over the last ten years "the Jewish Man" has been portrayed in numerous films of Israeli-European coproduction. However, as innovative as many of these works might be, these depictions have deep roots branching off into the history of Judaism, anti-Semitism, and the cultural history of Europe and the Zeitgeist. When tracing these roots, two different aspects become clear: on the one hand the expectations that Jewish society itself has had toward their men as the "ideal Jewish man," and on the other hand the image of "the Jewish man" that non-Jewish societies developed and still partly hold. The most revolutionary change in Jewish male subjectivity is without doubt the Zionist reinvention of the Jewish man as the "Muscle Jew." This new image of a Jewish masculinity has been visualized in films of the Zionist period, but interestingly, more recent German-Israeli coproductions seem to be performing what was once the pre-Zionist model of Jewish masculinity. This circular movement in the field of imagining masculinity is the subject of this essay.

Diachronically Changing Images of Jewish Masculinities

Central to the topic of this essay are aspects of gender studies. What kinds of masculinities are being performed in these films and how are they perceived and evaluated? It should be pointed out that there is a striking contrast between the divergent evaluations of the behavior of "the Jewish Man" by different parties. Concerning this, Daniel Boyarin states that certain modes of conduct would have been derided as unmanly, dishonorable, "unheroic" and outright "sissy-ish" by the non-Jewish surrounding. The very same behavior would have been viewed positively when judged according to the canon of values of traditional Jewish Diaspora society, such as Hasidic Jewry in Poland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This sort of behavior was not considered "`unheroic` but anti-heroic and, indeed, traditionally Jewish: "A Jew was expected to be able to control

his anger, not to be provoked."[1] In these Jewish circles the same actions might very well have been seen as "emotionally controlled," as "intelligent," and "compassionate," and therefore, as very positive emotional qualities of a mature character.

In his writings, Sigmund Freud records how his father related to an incident when he was insulted. His father had his hat knocked off his head as a gesture of an anti-Semitic outburst against him, but he took pride in the fact that he had not been tempted into a rash reaction. Quite the contrary he had withstood the insult in a moment of silent dignity. The incident that Freud relates is a perfect example of how Jewish society expected their men to abstain from what was called in Yiddish "goyim naches."[2] Boyarin explains this term, which is of central importance to the understanding of traditional Jewish subjective images of masculinity, as follows: "The term goyim naches refers to violent physical activity, such as hunting, dueling, or wars – all of which Jews traditionally despised, for which they in turn were despised – and to the association of violence with male attractiveness and with sex itself..."[3]

In contrast, the sexuality of "the Jewish man" was associated with tenderness and femininity. One striking symptom of this phenomenon is the fact that "The clitoris was known in the Viennese slang simply as the "Jew" (Jud), and female masturbation was colloquially referred to in the same terms " The phrase for female masturbation was "playing with the Jew,"[4] as Sander Gilman points out.

In the incident that Freud described, his father told him how insults to "proud manhood" were borne with quiet dignity, not met with physical violence and a seeming submission into female subordination. Such an attitude was strongly condemned in anti-Semitic circles of nineteenth-century Central Europe. The essence of this philosophy of hatred was distilled into the theories of Otto Weininger. "Both misogyny and hatred against Jews surface in an unusually clear shape in Weininger's writings."[5] He paralleled what was seen as "typically Jewish behavior" with what was considered to be "typically female behavior" and condemned both in language filled with hatred.

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1 Boyarin citing Bergman in: Boyarin, Daniel, *Unheroic Conduct. The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California Press, 1997. 36.
2 Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 33.
3 Ibid., 42.
4 Gilman, Sander, *Freud, Race, and Gender,* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993, 39.
5 Braun, Christina von, *Zur Bedeutung der Sexualbilder im rassistischen Antisemitismus,* in: *Jüdische Kultur und Weiblichkeit in der Moderne,* Inge Stephan, Sabine Schilling, Sigrid Weigel (Eds.), 25. Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 1994.

Male Menstruation: Augustinus

This peek in anti-Semitic theories goes back a long way in cultural history. Discreditable theories likening Jewish men to women can be traced back to as early as the fifth century. "Augustinus says that among the Jews men are also suffering from the curse of the women's illness (patiuntur menstrual)."[6] The Church elder Augustinus is cited here referring to menstruation. As absurd as this theory might sound today, it was considered factual and was a part of traditional beliefs for hundreds of years. The wording of the citation betrays several aspects of misogyny as well as hatred of Jews. The "woman" as such is imagined as an inherently sick being. Her female corporeality, her ability to give birth – and the menstruation connected to it – is seen as a disease. Moreover, this "disease" is referred to as God's curse on her.

In the Jewish tradition there is a different view of women's faculty to give birth, to bring forth life. The prototype man, Adam, names the first woman "Chava" (Eve),[7] the one who can give life, her name being derived from *Chaim* (Hebrew for life) as a name and title of honor. For Adam it was her most impressing characteristic.

In Augustinus's fantasy, Eve's menstrual blood becomes a disease,[8] and the supposedly menstruating Jewish man becomes "as sick as" a woman. The bottom line: being a woman means being ill. "The "disease" …is …the woman herself'"[9] is Christina von Braun's sardonic remark about the history of hysteria, the "disease" that was originally declared to have its `evil root` in the uterus. This perverted theory of the life-giving female organs and their projection onto – or rather into – the male Jewish body was traditionalized for centuries.[10]

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6 My translation of the German "Es sagt Augustinus das die juden von dem fluch (auch die man) leiden die kranckheit der frawen (patiuntur menstrual) (sic). Eck, Johannes, *Christliche Auslegung der Evangelien,* Tübingen: 1531, citation after Hsia, Po-Chia, *Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany,* New Haven and London: 1988.in Henschel, Gerhard, *Neidgeschrei. Antisemitismus und Sexualität,* Hamburg:Hoffmann und Campe, 2001.130.

7 In the English translation "Chava" becomes "Eve."

8 Braun, Christina von, *Nicht ich. Logik, Lüge, Libido,* Frankfurt: Aufbau, 1985, 111–112.

9 Braun, *Nicht ich,* 13.

10 Not only was there the persistent belief that Jewish bodies were sick, but another theory, even more absurd, was added: the theory that Jewish men needed the blood of Christian children to compensate for their loss of blood during their supposed menstruation. A fantasy that brings "the Jewish man" close to the image of a blood-thirsty vampire. And indeed, a theory that in turn led to a lot of actual bloodshed, with Jewish men being put on trial and then tortured and burned at the stake following the accusation of blood libel. As gloomy and Gothic as this theory sounds, it has imperiled Jews up to the present day. The last time Jews are known to have been murdered in the course of the pursuit of this fantasy was as late as 1946 when forty-two people were murdered by a Christian mob in Kielce, Poland. See documentation in the

So it is no wonder that when anti-Judaism of the religious medieval kind turned into modern anti-Semitism – a hatred of Jews fuelled by racism – the stereotype of the effeminate Jewish body was turned into the stereotype of the effeminate behavior of the Jewish man. The logic of anti-Semitism made sense according to its own laws. As the Jewish man had been imagined for hundreds of years as virtually physically a female, it was a small jump to the conclusion that he was also effeminate in his character.

Zionist Masculinity

Images such as these of the Jewish man in the Diaspora as an effeminate "weak-ling" was one of the stereotypes the Zionist movement turned against. Max Nordau developed fantasies about the changes in the Jewish man's corporeality that would take place under the Mediterranean sun, and thus reinvented Jewish masculinity.[11] His concluding statement at the Second Zionist Congress of 1898 was: "We must aim to create once again a *Muskeljudentum* (Jewry of muscles)."[12] Samuel Todd Presner comments on this enterprise: "For centuries, the stereotype of Jews as physically weak and racially inferior persisted across Europe. Zionist thinkers sought to turn this stereotype on its head at the end of the nineteenth century by creating a popular counterimage: the muscular Jew. By emulating their ancestral war heroes (such as Bar Kochba and the Maccabees) and participating in all aspects of the contemporaneous European body reform movement, Jews could cultivate discipline, agility, and strength – the very ideals that would help turn them into a healthy, physically fit, nationally minded, and militarily strong people."[13] Raz Yosef also emphasizes this aspect of the new Jewish National movement: "Zionism was not only a political and ideological project, but also a sexual one, obsessed with Jewish Masculinity and especially the Jewish male body. The political project of liberating the Jewish people ... was intertwined with a longing for sexual redemption and normalization of the Jewish male body. In fin-de-siècle anti-Semitic scientific-medical discourse, the male Jew's body was associated with disease, madness, degeneracy, sexual perversity, and "feminin-ity...Unlike the passive, ugly, femme diasporic Jewish male, the new Zionist man

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permanent exhibition at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.
11 Nordau, Max, *Zionistische Schriften,* Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1923. 424–426.
12 Ibid.
13 Presner, Todd Samuel, *Muscular Judaism. The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration,* London and New York: Routledge Press, 2007. Introduction

would engage in manual labor, athletics, and war…This notion of a new Jewish masculinity became the model for the militarized masculine…Israeli…"[14]

Performing Masculinity in Films

All these phenomena of cultural history are the matrix within which even contemporary film directors generate their characters, often quite unconscious of the ground they stand on. One of the ilms that reflects this new Zionist masculinity is, for example, *Hu Halach B'Sadot,* English title *He walked through the fields* (Yoseph Millo, Israel, 1967), a film about the 1947 war of independence. In this film Assi Dayans' still young and beautiful body incorporates the new Muskeljudentum, the Muscle Jew. The film also represents this physical beauty in the context of other symbolic elements of Zionist ideology and nationalist ideologies in general, for example, the fields bearing fruit. The climax of the film is the love scene that takes place on a stack of straw and wheat. The female protagonist quite literally becomes "the bearer of the immortal fruit of Zionism," while the male protagonist sacrifices his body on the altar of the new nation.

The Hero and the *Angsthase*

On the other hand, many films dealing with the Holocaust subconsciously repeat the gender images of the Diaspora. In these films "the Jewish man" is frequently depicted as helpless, a victim who suffers his fate in "female" passivity. Strikingly, even in heroic films of more recent years, such as *Schindler's List* and *The Pianist,* "the Jewish man" is not the hero but is saved in a heroic manner by non-Jewish men. Portrayed as being passive, his qualities are not of a virile and physical nature but of an intellectual one – a clever bookkeeper who can help Schindler out with cunning advice, or a talented pianist.

Another example of this phenomenon is Andrzej Wajda's masterwork, *Samson*, with its paradigmatic title, from 1961. In Hebrew, Samson is *the* heroic figure as in "Shimson ha Gibor," and the biblical "Samson the hero." In the film *Samson*, the Jewish protagonist lives in hiding underground like a frightened rabbit, and there is even a cut showing him and, parallel to this scene, one with a rabbit, thus equating the two figures. In modern Hebrew this German term Ang-

14 Yosef, Raz, *Beyond Flesh. Queer Masculinities and Nationalism in Israeli Cinema*, New Brunswick and London: Rutgers UP, 2004. 2

sthase was translated and integrated into the language as the metaphoric term *shafan* (lit. rabbit, fig. coward).[15] In his classic film, Wajda uses this indelible image of the Angsthase, the proverbial coward, to underline the character traits of the Jewish man in hiding. Only in the very last scene does the Jewish protagonist overcome his fear and commit an act of bravery – a suicide attack on the Germans who are searching for Jews. So one could say that the existence of the Jewish man as a hero is extremely limited: it lasts not even a second. The moment he starts to act heroically, he dies and the film ends.

The image of the Angsthase has been used repeatedly in other European films, representing a soul mate, a pet for the Jewish character, as in *Viehjud Levi* (Didi Danquart, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, 1999). The main character, a Jewish cattle merchant, travels with his rabbit, a real rabbit, and the character is introduced in the film's first long scene as the partner and soul mate of a rabbit. The shafan is the one to whom he confides his secret longings for love. The linking of the two characters is so strong that the double portrait of the Jewish man and the rabbit appears on the cover of the DVD and the posters of the film released by the Franco-German television network Arte.

In the East German film *Hotel Polan* (Horst Seemann, East Germany, 1982), often referred to as the East German answer to the famous U.S. milestone production *Holocaust* (Marvin J. Chomsky, USA, 1978), the main character, the owner of the Hotel Polan, likens his Jewish family to rabbits. When his family turns to him in times of trouble, he tries to give them consolation by reciting the proverb "Wem Gott gibt a Hasele, dem gibt er auch a Grasele." He refers to this aphorism

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15 The root of the Hebrew *shafan* is a bit confusing. In ancient Hebrew the word *shafan* occurs, for example, in Psalm 104:18 "the rocks a shelter for the *shafan sela.*" Luther mistranslated *shafan* as coney, or rabbit (in German, *Kaninchen*). The correct translation is hyrax or rockbadger, an animal with short, round ears, and which can still be found today in the Ein Gedi nature reserve in Israel. This animal is, in fact, not a rabbit at all. Rabbits make tunnels in the ground – rabbit burrows. They do not live under rocks since the furry soles of their feet would prove too slippery for climbing on rocks. Nevertheless, the majority of Israelis today use the word *shafan* when they mean rabbit or hare, without bothering to make a distinction between these zoologically different animals or even *shafan sela*. Like many originally German expressions and sayings, the figurative Angsthase (frightened rabbit; in English, chicken/coward) was translated literally into modern Hebrew and became a colloquial term, used as both a noun and a verb. For more details about rabbit symbolism in the Jewish context see: Wonnenberg, Felice Naomi, *The Chodorow Ceiling: How did the rabbit get into the synagogue? From China via Paderborn, Germany to Chodorow: On the tracks of a symbol*, In: Newsletter of the Museum of the Jewish People Beth Hatefutsoth Tel Aviv (2008): 3–5. Wonnenberg, Felice Naomi, *Hakensprünge durch die Kunstgeschichte: Das Drei-Hasen-Symbol,* In: David Jüdische Kulturzeitschrift 76 (2008): 46–48, or http://www.david.juden.at/kulturzeitschrift/uebersicht.htm

twice, in two separate scenes of the film. The literal translation is "God who gave the rabbit, will also provide some grass." So the Jewish grandfather demonstrates his faith in God, portraying himself and his family as passive, defenseless, and meek as rabbits.

Film Heroes

The year 2009 seemingly brought about a change in terms of the perception of the Jewish man as a scared rabbit, with filmmakers presenting counterimages to that of the Diasporic Jew as a weakling. Director Quentin Tarantino said about the concept of his cinematographic fireworks of violence, *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), that he had seen the depiction of the Jew as a victim "ad nauseam," or – translated into plain English – he had become "sick of it." This, he said, was the trigger for his unhistoric film of Jewish revenge on the Nazis, a narration in which Jewish fighters beat Nazis to death with baseball bats.

Edward Zwick is another director whose main motivation for his film *Defiance* (2009) was to counter the traditional stereotype. His film tells the story of Jewish partisans hiding and fighting in the forest, a film whose plot is pronounced as "a true story, never told before." Truly, Zwick's depiction of the Jewish man as a classic picture book hero, conforming to all the Hollywood rules, is quite unique. The protagonist, played by actor Daniel Craig – otherwise known for his role as James Bond, a true hero – is portrayed as a saviour and leader, parading on a white horse before the huddled masses of Jews seeking refuge in his forest camp. His heroism is commented upon diegetically by an old man: "I had almost lost my faith, but you were sent by God to save us." This prince on a white horse, all these helpless miserable victims have been waiting for, calls out to them from his elevated position on horseback in a moment of truly heroic demagoguery: "We will become warriors! ...We may be hunted like animals but we will not become animals...We have chosen all this to live free, like human beings, as long as we can. And if we die in our effort to live, at least we die like human beings."

Yet, this monolithic monument of Jewish heroism stands out in film history as a lone figure, unparalleled since Paul Newman's Jewish hero, Ari Ben Canaan, in Otto Preminger's *Exodus* (1960). There are striking parallels between the central speech in *Defiance* and Ari's address to the Jewish refugees: "There is no excuse for us to go on living unless we start fighting right now. So that every Jew on the face of the earth can begin to start feeling like a human being again." In both declarations, fighting is presented as Darwin's missing link, the decisive detail that elevates a being from animal existence to "man"hood.

It should be noted, though, that these examples of images of a Jewish man as a hero are extremely rare in film history. Apart from Paul Newman's portrayal in the 1960s, which is more that of a U.S. rather than a Jewish hero, Zwick's and Tarantino's heroes are the exception to the rule and not the avant-garde of a change in the Jewish man's image in cinema.

Perception of the Israeli Man

That's what can be said about "the Jewish man" in films dealing with the holocaust. "The Jewish man" who is omnipresent in daily media, however, is the Israeli man. In cinematographic productions of recent years he is often shown as the Israeli soldier. In stark contrast to the actual daily news, there is a trend to show the filmic figure of the Israeli soldier in the moment of military defeat. In these films "historic facts" are often treated as fragments, extracted from the historical context and disconnected from prior events and causes. Considered from a factual, nonpolitical point of view Israel is a country that cannot afford to lose a war. Yet in the film industry there is a faction that provides Israeli directors with European film funding and production money with the stipulation that they provide mise-en-scène the military exitus of the small country in the Middle East. The moment of the psychological and military breakdown is the moment typically depicted in "Israeli" films that are successful in Europe, such as *Walz with Bashir*, *Lebanon,* and *Beaufort*. This scopophilic desire for the Zionist swan song is a new phenomenon among European audiences, but it is buildt on a tradition of military-critical films that go back some three decades in the history of Israeli filmmaking.

Yorim ve bochim ("Shooting and Crying")

Over the last thirty years, a new type of "masculinity" has been invented and performed in Israeli cinema. This new masculinity finds its expression in the Israeli film genre known as *Yorim ve bochim* (Shooting and crying). Yorim ve bochim is a critical term to describe a cultural phenomenon that appears not only in films, art, and fiction. The idea behind this term is that people are aware of the problematic issues of war, yet still take part in it. This specific Israeli genre, which has established its place in all Israeli film anthologies, is dedicated to portraying the "Israeli man at war." However, as the term suggests, the "heroes" portrayed in

these films are a far cry from the classical hero, indeed they are more crying than macho-ing around.

Judd Neeman, whose 1977 film *Masa Alunkot* (lit. Stretcher Drill or The Stretcher Incident,; English film title *Paratroopers)* was the first to question the Israeli Army Tsahal as a totally heroic institution, and it is seen as the foundation stone of this genre."[16] Raz Yosef writes about *Paratroopers* that it "was the first film that critiqued and deconstructed Israeli male military manhood.[17] *Yom Kipur*, by Europe's favorite "Israeli" director, Amos Gitai, is another example of this genre. *Beaufort* by Joseph Cedar, *Waltz with Bashir*, and *Lebanon* – all awarded coveted film prizes at major European festivals – are only the most recent and most prominent examples of this long-standing cinematic tradition in Israeli moviemaking. The men portrayed in these films are morally shell-shocked antiheroes, traumatized and confused. Plagued by remorse over the acts they have committed, they seek compassion and solidarity with their fellow Achi (the Hebrew word for "brothers), or in this context, "brothers-in-arms," and find themselves isolated "for crying out loud" in a society of countless other silenced, broken warriors. The image that Israeli directors draw of the "Jewish man" in these Yorim ve bochim films boomerangs back to the values of traditional pre-Zionist society, when gender expectations emphasized the emotional rather than the martial qualities of a "Jewish man" described earlier in this paper.

Interestingly, the Yorim ve bochim films typically win prizes at European film festivals. The more critical the films are toward any martial action on the Israeli side, the more likely they are to be favorably received by non-Jewish European audiences. Comparing the frequency of prizes awarded to Israeli films carrying a "pacifist message" compared to other Israeli films of the same production years, it becomes obvious what European audiences want to see. It seems that a Jewish man engaging in hard physical action is an unpardonable sight for European audiences, and is met with incomprehension.

In the inner-Israeli context, the phenomenon of the Yorim ve bochim genre attests to a great facililty for self-criticism within Israeli society itself. On the other hand, the phenomenon that they are showered with film prizes by non-Jewish European audiences evokes, on a second thought, a quite nasty aftertaste. Whereas the very common image of a (non-Jewish!) man with a gun in his hands is so willingly consumed by cinema audiences, and even enjoyed in a fully erotic

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16 The pejorative term *shafan* mentioned above is the name the commander calls his subordinate the moment before his mental breakdown, causing the soldier to throw himself onto an exploding handgranade.

17 Yosef, *Beyond Flesh,* 57.

way in countless action films, this same image becomes unacceptable, unforgivable it seems, when the man portrayed is a "Jewish man" in an Israeli film.

Comparing two films dealing with the same military operation, this specific expectation of the international audience becomes clear. *The Hurt Locker* (2008), directed by Kathryn Bigelow, makes a show of a soldier whose job it is to disarm bombs. He is clearly performing the role of an all-American hero who draws the attention and admiration of the audience through heroic sex appeal. In *Beaufort* there is also an extended scene of a soldier who has to disarm a bomb. The American elite hero in *The Hurt Locker,* of course, masters his task throughout the film. The only thing that "is killing him" is being stuck in the role of a father who has to care for his child, which is shown in the second to last scene of the film. He is a real man, so what he needs is war, and in the final scene off he goes on another mission.

The Jewish bomb specialist soldier in *Beaufort,* on the other hand, is presented as clever enough to know that the mission is unreasonably dangerous, yet he is forced to go through with it, anyway. He invariably fails, being "disembodied" in the most drastic way possible. Both films received major prizes at international film festivals in the same year.

Another highly acclaimed film of recent years is *Paradise Now* (Hany Abu-Assad, 2005), a German/French/Palestinian/Israeli co-production, which also highlights the Jewish man as the fearful guy. Antonia Schmid sees many anti-Semitic motifs reenacted in this film. Among other stereotypes, she identifies that of "Jewish cowardice." She also points out the monologue a Palestinian character recitess to two men who are about to be sent to Israel with bombs strapped on them: "The soldier who will check you is a dead man. None of them wants to discover you, because they are afraid to die. And because you are not afraid of death, you have power over life."[18] It is surely a monologue of demagogic impact but I doubt that it would leave a great impression on the spectator's mind. Today most audiences fail to see the attraction of the mythical greatness of martyrdom. On the contrary, such rabble-rousing speeches might make a spectator wonder, whether there is not a certain convincing intelligence to the instinct of the shafan – to run when it is time to run. Reading against its speaker's intention, this statement could be accepted as a compliment.

To sum up, the reception of these kinds of films, judging from audiences' expectations and tastes as gauged by their votes at film festivals, international audiences seem to expect the non-Jewish man to sport the qualities of a classic

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18 Schmid, Antonia, *Terror als Tragödie? Paradise Now in Rezeption und Kritik,* lecture at symposium *"Antisemitismus ohne Ende? Propaganda und Provokation im Film,* in: Dokumentationszentrum Reichsparteitaggelände, Nuremberg, Germany 22 October 2010.

masculine hero. The Jewish man, by contrast, is expected to seek peaceful solutions, to be in control of his feelings, and to be compassionate – all attributes that match the stereotypes of the Jewish man of the Diaspora.

Perception of "Jewish" and "Israeli" Films

Walz with Bashir, Beaufort, and *Lebanon* are perceived by European audiences as Israeli films when, strictly speaking, they are not. According to the rules of the film market, they are European-Israeli coproductions rather than purely Israeli films since a great percentage of the production money comes from Europe.[19] Even though an Israeli director has lent his name to the film, if the financing comes from European sources, Europeans are in the position to decide what kind of film is produced and how it presents the reality of the Middle East. Still, these films are marketed as Israeli films because they faithfully reproduce and deliver the image that Europe has fabricated of the Middle East conflict. They match the stereotypes in the heads of European spectators so well because they are underwritten by European producers.

Another question arises in this context: Why do these films draw so few Israelis into the cinemas? A lot of Israeli film critics and cineastes even deny the Israeli background of Europe's favourite "Israeli" director Amos Gitai, to the point that he is not included in Israeli anthologies of Israeli cinema. When *Lebanon* was released in Israeli cinemas in November 2009, I asked an Israeli friend, Giyora, born in 1967, whether he would join me for a visit to this movie. He replied: "I was in Lebanon myself (meaning the First Lebanon War) and I have seen how the upper half of the head of my friend was blown off and his brain splashed on the ground like some disgusting soup. Believe me, I do not want to see this movie."

In very streetwise terms my friend explained a phenomenon that Israeli filmmakers have struggled with time and again. Regarding the problem of the different perception of Israeli films by Israeli audiences versus international audiences, Amy Kronish commented: "Although growing and developing, Israeli cinema is riddled with many problems. These problems include issues of government support, limited audience, inadequate budgets...In addition, Israeli cinema suffers from identity problems; is it possible to be an indigenous Israeli art form,

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19 Excerpt from an e-mail Samuel Maoz, director of *Lebanon,* sent me in October 2010: "The final budget of the film was 1.4 million dollar. About 800.000 from Israeli sources … and about 600.000 from Germany and France. About the audience, in Israel audience was relatively low, about 100.000 spectators… when the film came to Israeli cinemas about two months after I received the Golden Lion in Venice."

or does the road to success require that one produces films that are international in nature? Those filmmakers who have tried to appeal exclusively to the international market have lost their Israeli appeal."[20]

In an interview, Judd Ne'eman, the director of *Paratroopers*, contributed his own experience with Israeli audiences and Yorim ve bochim films[21]: "Believe me, nobody, nobody in Israel wanted to see *Paratroopers* when it came out." Today, no anthology of Israeli film is complete without mentioning his milestone work, and Neeman was honored with the Israel Prize in 2009. What my friend Giyora recounted in such a dramatic way is phrased more philosophically by Susan Sontag in her book on war photography: "The more remote or exotic the place, the more likely we are to have full frontal views of the dead and dying." [22]

In the case of Israeli films and Israeli audiences this distance, that is necessary to be able to look the dead people in the face, is surely not given, neither spatially, historically nor mentally. The very people who fought in the First Lebanon War are now in their forties, and thus the center of Israeli society. Traumas caused by the First Lebanon War have been successfully ignored, denied, overshadowed, and thus annulled from the collective memory by an even greater trauma – the Holocaust. Director Samuel Maoz – who himself fought in the First Lebanon War – recalls that when he got back from the battlefield, "to complain afterwards that you felt bad inside was unforgivable. The older generation told us, 'Say thank you that you are alive; we were in the [Nazi concentration] camps.' We hated them because they used the camps against us and this made us feel we had no right to complain."[23]

In 2006, when the Second Lebanon War broke out, the trauma of the war experiences of the First Lebanon War, which had never been faced and dealt with, resurfaced and haunted Israeli society like a sequential trauma. It was a collective, yet unadmitted trauma that people did not want to get sucked into. The 1982 experience of pushing into Lebanon, just to find out subsequently that she possessed quite a *vagina dentata* – had ineradicably stamped its mark onto

20 Kronish, Amy; Eskridge, William N. and Safirman, Costel, *Israeli Film. A Reference Guide,* Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2003. 21.

21 From my interview with Judd Ne'eman in Tel Aviv, March 2010.

22 Sontag, Susan, *Regarding the Pain of Others,* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. 70.

23 Samuel Maoz in an interview for *The Observer*, Sunday 2 May 2010, republished on *The Guardian* Website. In the same interview Maoz adds: "In some ways, reaction to *Lebanon* has been wholly predictable. "In Israel, the younger the audience, the more positive the response," says Maoz. "The older generation has been more negative. I suppose I understand it. As I said, many of them came from the camps. I remember my teacher, her camp number on her arm, shouting in the class that we must fight for our country, even die for it, because everyone wants to terminate us."

the Israeli collective memory as the most traumatic war experience.[24] You better not penetrate into her. This trauma inscribed itself in the language used on the media: in 2006 the population demanded again and again to "lo lihikanes lelevanon" (not let the boys go in).

Sontag writes on this topic: "...war ...is waged as much as possible at a distance, through bombing...minimizing opportunities for the enemy to inflict any casualties at all."[25] This psychological phenomenon in consequence caused the Israeli population to pressure their politicians not to let ground troops push into Lebanon but to stick to air raids, even though the military was not equipped to target and take out the insurgents. On a vague but strong notion of the prevailing unconscious trauma, the reaction was "better stay on top."

A European Audience's View

For the European audience the perspective onto these wars is a completely different one. Sontag comments that exposing war and suffering is only possible when it is far away from one's own culture. "Generally, the grievously injured bodies shown in published photographs are from Asia or Africa. This journalistic custom inherits the centuries-old practice of exhibiting exotic – that is, colonized – human beings: Africans and denizens of remote Asian countries were displayed like zoo animals in ethnological exhibitions mounted in London, Paris, and other European capitals from the sixteenth until the early twentieth century. In *The Tempest* Trinculo's first thought upon coming across Caliban is that he could be put on exhibit in England: "not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver... When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian."[26]

By looking at the carnage in the Middle East, it thus also serves the European spectator to "exoticize" the problem in the region and to distance a problem with European roots psychologically further away from the European (self-declared) sphere of morality. When watching *Lebanon,* the European spectator will most likely run a low risk of feeling too uncomfortably close to the Israeli soldier. His uniform, and Hebrew language that comes to the European cinema undubbed but subtitled, allows the European visitor to look at the soldier as an "exotic" other. The numerous film critics who discussed the film using the term "heart

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24 As mentioned earlier, while the Holocaust overshadowed the Lebanon experience, and was commonly referred to as "the war," it was not a war, it was genocide.

25 Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others,* 67.

26 Ibid., 72.

of darkness" attest to this phenomenon. In terms of cultural and literary theory "heart of darkness" is the very term of "the horror" of the exotic "other" world, a concept firmly established in the famous novel *Heart of Darkness* and the film *Apocalypse Now*, which was based on that novel.

In *Strangers to Ourselves*, Julia Kristeva described the psychological mechanism by which looking at someone as "the other" provides the opportunity for the spectator to project, or rather eject, whatever they feel uncomfortable with onto the other, the object that is being looked at.[27] The same phenomenon is at work when foreign audiences watch films like *Lebanon*. Psychologically, it is the opportunity to get rid of fears that exist subconsciously in the spectator, by ejecting these fears onto "the other." By looking *at* him he becomes the one who is "the aggressive soldier, the killer, the brute." Sontag describes it as follows: "for the other… is regarded only as someone to be seen, not someone (like us) who also sees."[28] The one who is being looked at becomes the passive victim. The relationship of power is reassuringly established.

Female Symbolism in Men's Business

Susan Sontag[29] highlights a statement in Virginia Woolf's book-length essay *Three Guineas*, appearing toward the close of nearly two decades of plangent denunciations of war, offered the originality (which made this the least well received of all her books) of focusing on what was regarded as too obvious or inapposite to be mentioned, much less brooded over, that war is a man's game – that the killing machine has a gender, and it is male.[30] The war machine in itself may be gendered male, as Virginia Woolf states in the passage Susan Sontag quotes, but in this "male killing machine" female symbolism often plays a central role because in these films maleness is established through contrast with female symbolism. Woolf further underlines the sexual nature of the fascination with war in her statement: "Men make war. Men (most men) like war, since for men there is "some glory, some necessity, some satisfaction in fighting" that women (most women) do not feel or enjoy." [31]

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27 Kristeva, Julia, *Etrangers à nous-mêmes*, Paris: Fayard, 1988.

28 Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others,* 72.

29 Ibid., 6.

30 http://www.arlindo-correia.com/040110.html

31 Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others,* 3.

War as Male Satisfaction: *Walz with Bashir* – Big Mama

Strikingly, in films such as *Walz with Bashir*, *Beaufort*, and *Lebanon*, female-male symbolism is visualized in several key scenes. In *Walz with Bashir*, the soldier describes his "initiation to war" as an encounter with an *Übermutter* (an archetypal woman). On board a ship on the way to the battlefields the soldier gets literally "sick of it," puking overboard Hethen starts to hallucinate that a giant woman is swimming leisurely toward him, picks him up like a baby, lies down on the water and places him on her belly, his hands hugging her waist. She swims away while the boat with his fellow soldiers is bombed in the background. *He escapes from his role as a soldier, returning onto – into – the belly of big mama. The other key scene in "Walz with Bashir" is the documentary footage that shows women running out of the refugee camps Sabra and Shatila* toward the Israeli soldiers who were positioned a few hundred meters away from the camps, forcing the soldiers to realize that something terrible must have happened in there. *Just as the "big mama" allows the soldier to escape into a prenatal dream world of passivity and innocence, the Sabra and Shatilla women forcefully awake the soldiers from their surrealist perception of the war, compelling them to realize* how much suffering has been caused while the Israeli soldiers were dwindling into an interspace of oblivion. If they had been alert and aware of the reality, the massacre carried out by the Phalangists could have been stopped much earlier.

Beaufort, the Tunnels

In the film *Beaufort*, female symbolism is also very strong, soldiers being literally caught up in a female lay-out: Beaufort is an ancient battle hill into which the Israeli army Tsahal is digging numerous tunnels. The whole plot of the film revolves around the boys' desire to get out of these tunnels, which while protective are also constricting. They are stuck in a symbolic vaginal birth canal. This topographic master plan is used repeatedly by the director Cedar. In his earlier film, *Hahesder* (2000), the plot also revolves around a tunnel system. A small group of Jewish extremists want to use ancient tunnels in the city of Jerusalem to penetrate to the archaic birth place of Judaism, the now Muslim mosque Dome of the Rock. They see this undertaking as the birth of a new Jewish identity that would aggressively reclaim its maternal ground.

Lebanon – the Uterus Tank

The soldiers in *Lebanon* are also "stuck" in a small, hot, slimy, claustrophobic place – their tank. Whereas initially a tank might seem quite a metallic cold machine, about the image of the tank in this film the director Maoz says "I took great care to make the tank look, feel and sound as organic as possible." The tank in *Lebanon* is shown from the very beginning of the film as dirty and flooded with liquids. In the course of the film this impression is intensified. Whenever the tank stops it seems to give a great huff, like an exhausted creature. Smeared in oil and other reddish liquids, the tank seems to sweat and dribble, and with the reddish liquids running down the sides of the tank, she even seems to have blood oozing out of her pores. When hit by an RPG, the inside is smeared with slime and pieces of bread, visually very much like vomit. This site, the closed hot sweaty environment that the men just want to get out of, subconsciously evokes a monstrous womb. The boys are caught up, pressed together in an archaic struggle for their lives. Their only view out is the peep hole perspective through the telescope, an extremely limited one that reminds them even more of their helplessness. This is the breeding ground of their most basic desire – to get out and live.

Lebanon – the Inverted Birth Scene

The female symbolism of the tank is further emphasized in the scene reminiscent of an "inverted birth." In this scene an infantry soldier is shot and killed and needs to be evacuated with the tank. He has a giant wound with blood all down the middle of his chest. The other soldiers try to bring him back to life. But no scream of life as with a newborn comes out of his mouth. Instead, when they apply the electric reanimation machine a wave of blood gushes out of his mouth. *Slimy with blood and sweat, his dead body is pulled through the round hole at the top of the tank by the hands of the others, much like a baby would be pulled out of the round vaginal opening*. The body thumps into the tank's slimy dark hot uterus and sinks together like a fetus.

In Claude Lanzmann's film *Tsahal* (1994, France/Germany), tank soldiers are interviewed. One of them describes joining the Israeli army after escaping from the Holocaust as a child survivor: "After I joined the army I was born again. My second birth was in a tank." The emotional attachment toward Tsahal and the tanks themselves attain a degree that is likened to this most archaic human

experience. In his essay "Shoah and rebirth in a tank," Josef Joffe highlights this phenomenon.[32]

In Maoz's film, the tank is visualized as a place of inverted birth, a monstrous womb that sucks the dead body of the soldier back in. The round opening on top of the tank as the vagina opening – the vulva – expanded into a round opening at the moment of birth is deliberately chosen, and speaking from a technical point of view, actually the "wrong opening." The actual tank model used in the First Lebanon War, the Merkava tank, has a rear door especially designed to facilitate the evacuation of wounded soldiers from the battlefield, even in the midst of fighting. An extended explanation of this technical improvement is part of Lanzmann's *Tsahal*. In *Lebanon* this rear door is not used, instead the much more complicated way – lowering the body through the top hole – is chosen. This action is repeated when the helicopter arrives: the body is pulled up, much like a puppet on strings, through the top hole. The command is "Angel ascending." The employment of the visually impressive top hole instead of the technically more practical rear door, which would have been the usual choice, allows the symbolism of an inverted birth to be used, and later on, through the "Angel ascending"-scene, an allusion to the Christian ascension is made. Yet, again, there is no glorification. The archaic inverted birth scene, as well as the ascension scene, is suffered by the fellow soldiers in pain-stricken silence.

Judd Neeman asked rhetorically why "in... new war films the male body is made to open up and expose its innermost organs to daylight." His answer is that the symbolic function of the scenes "represents a long-standing association between death and reproduction, and therefore, the image of the open male body signifies the maternal domain." He concludes that "there is a certain conflation between the perception of the wound in the male body and the female body when she gives birth. The recurrence of wounded male bodies is coupled in both *Saving Private Ryan* and the *Thin Red Line*, with the recurrence of the motif of the mother".[33] As in the examples that Neeman points out, in *Lebanon* there is also a scene of transgressing the line between life and death. It is embedded in a scene with an enormous actual *and* symbolical wound. Moreover, the handling of the body of the man who has just recently died is visually paralleled to the handling of the body that has just recently come to life.

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32 Joffe, Josef, *Shoah und Wiedergeburt im Panzer*, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung Munich, 28 December 1994, reprinted in the booklet of the DVD Tshahal, Absolutmedien, 2008.
33 Ne'eman, Judd, *The Crying Wound – Mama Mama: Body Boundaries Unbound,* Unpublished article.

Phallic Action: Shooting and Peeing

Lebanon goes further in its deconstruction of power relations, more precisely in the deconstruction of classic images of masculinity: here the physical incorporation of masculinity, the phallus, is under frontal attack. The phallus is not the penis, it is the imagination of penis potency, evoked through images of manliness. It is inherent and imminent to the fetishist function to evoke, yet never to actually show a real penis. Even though in the course of film history nearly every visual taboo has been broken, this taboo remains intact: thou shall not make an image of it. As it cannot be imagined, it remains all the more powerful as a source of veneration and power. It is not by coincidence that many war-action movies include a central scene, where the character of the soldier appears on the scene to save the day, *holding a weapon sporting a very phallic form at the height of his hips spurting his lethal discharge all around.*

In *Lebanon*, the very organ around which all phallocentric fantasies center, and what could be the incarnation of phallic shooting action, is reduced to its more banal other function; the perhaps most basic and unheroic need of any creature: in the very situation when the soldier Shmulik is expected to shoot, he needs to pee. In this moment the man proves to be highly dysfunctional as a soldier, he suffers, so to say, from projectile dysfunction.[34] In countless war movies a spectacle is made of phallic combat action: the hero comes in to save the day, grabs some big gun, a weapon – which, not by coincidence, sports a very phallic shape – and, holding it at hip-height, spurts ammunition all around. In *Lebanon*, expectations are also built up to a phallic orgiastic scene of this kind, but the very dependence on satisfying the physical needs of his organ makes this phallic showing-off impossible.

Helping to Pee

This sort of scene is repeated and emphasized several times throughout *Lebanon*. In all, there are eight peeing scenes. The first scene in the film has the cannon loader grab a box of ammunition, turn it over, dropping the ammunition onto the flooded floor, just to have a receptacle to piss in. The commander of the tank comments this action with a look of disapproval but does not have the authority to forbid this spontaneous act of urinating. The ammunition, which is central to

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34 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMG_feULoCg.

the phallic shooting action, is carelessly dropped in order to provide a peeing container, thus giving human discharge priority over war equipment.

All the subsequent peeing scenes build up to the final long peeing scene when the captured fighter pleads with the soldiers to help him urinate. Interestingly, in this scene the Israeli soldiers do not only shoot doubtful looks *at* the fighter but here he addresses them and starts to speak to them. Up to this point, the interaction with the other, the enemy, has been nonverbal, pure combat action, here the Israeli soldiers try to understand his words. Animals can fight but they cannot speak about how to understand "the others'" foreign language. It is an instance when their strictly human faculties are called upon. And this very first human encounter between Israelis and "the other" is linked to a very emphasized peeing scene.

What happens in this moment, when a man has to touch another man's penis? Because the fighter is tied up, the Israeli has to do the service and take out his penis, hold the soft piece of flesh gently, put it back, and dress him. *This is not a manly action. To fondle and do some service to another man's soft, non phallic penis is humiliating to the Israeli soldier. He now does not look down at the captured enemy, but here in a very shy delicate way, they "see eye to eye."* At one point the Israeli soldier even bashfully averts his gaze. This is a point of view that completely reverses the relationships of power within the tank. It is striking that this "helping-to-pee-scene" is the "anticlimactic" final scene to which the whole film builds. It becomes the key scene of tension in this movie. This first of all human encounters, helping the enemy, the "other," to fufill his "most basic human need," as director Maoz called it, brings about the redemption. What the soldiers have been longing for throughout the movie finally happens: the fighting stops, and for the first time, they can emerge from the tank. In the final scene of the movie the protagonist Shmulik opens the tank and sticks his head out. At long last he gets the overview, he now sees the whole picture. It is also the first time that the camera is no longer confined to the claustrophobic space of the tank, and we get to see the tank in a wide angle shot in the middle of a field of sunflowers.

Peeing Scene in *The Crying Game*

How much this action, touching another man's penis, changes the positions of power becomes even clearer in the very graphic enacting of such a scene in another film, *The crying game*. In this film by Neil Jordan, an IRA fighter is asked to help a handcuffed hostage to urinate, or, more precisely, to take out his penis. All of a sudden the hostage is the one giving commands, thus, psychologically,

the hostage has taken the upper hand. The difficulty it presents for a man to overcome the taboo of touching a soft, vulnerable penis becomes clear when the two devise a technique in which the IRA man can avoid holding the penis by making the prisoner lean forward while he pees, so "he won`t dribble all over" himself. But the critical act of touching the penis needs to be braved the moment after, when it comes to putting his organ back in. The IRA fighter`s reluctance to touch the captive's penis is commented on by the hostage when he shouts provokingly, "It's only a piece of meat!" – which, of course, it is precisely not.

The embarrassment is highlighted again when the hostage remarks to his capturer, "So, I know that was not very easy for you,"[35] again reversing the power relationship of the victim and the perpetrator. The empathy for his perpetrator that the victim voices in this remark has an absurd element to it and becomes an incident of comic relief, breaking the extreme tension. Of course, sexual jokes about male bonding are absolutely not permissible in a combat context. When the IRA group leader finds out about the bonding between his subordinate and the hostage, he tries to save the situation with hard discipline. He sends the IRA fighter, who "befriended" the hostage in the peeing scene, away and re-depersonalizes the relationship between victim and perpetrator by putting a hood over the hostage's face. This mechanism of depersonalizing the victim is, of course, essential for the perpetrator to keep a "safe" distance from the "victim" in order to make him the enemy "other." For the leader`s taste there was clearly too much male friendship lurking in this scene, endangering the combat spirit. He remasculinizes the situation with a classic macho gesture: he spits on the floor next to the hostage. The contempt for the victim reestablishes the "necessary" distance and the macho gesture sends a signal of virile domination. [36]

Boyarin: The Little, Fleshy Penis

Daniel Boyarin writes in the prologue of his acclaimed book, *Unheroic conduct*, about sexual images of Jewish men: "I desire … to find a model for gentle, nurturing masculinity in the traditional Jewish male ideal – … a male who could be so

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35 Jordan, Neil, Film *The Crying Game*, Ireland/United Kingdom, 1992, 111 min. 00:18:18.
36 The film *The Crying Game* is revolutionary not only in thematizing male intimate bonding. It is also a film about smudged and crossed gender demarcations. In the course of the film a character is introduced who seems to be a woman. But in a full-body close-up, the lover – and the spectator – is confronted with the naked truth: this is a woman with a penis. This unique taboo-breaking scene is highly interesting in the context of gender markers, gender determination, and society's reactions tothem, but pursuing this avenue of thought would lead away from the core topic of this essay.

comfortable with his little, fleshy penis that he would not have to grow it into 'The Phallus'... that will not have to rediscover such cultural archetypes as Iron Johns, knights, hairy men, and warriors within."[37]

In the film *Lebanon*, this very longing is clearly stage-managed; the often evoked – and for better fetishization effect never actually shown – phallus is here reduced to a little soft worm of flesh that needs to relieve itself, or else would pee in the pants.

No Establishing Shot – No Overview

However, let us take a step back and consider not *what* is being looked at but *how* things are being looked at. Going back to the example of *Lebanon*, it becomes clear how important it is *how* views are constructed in films. Since the publication of Laura Mulvey's essay "Visual pleasure," film theory has researched excessively the relations of power established through looking at someone, or "being-looked-at".[38] One of the most striking characteristics of *Lebanon* is the fact that all shots are inside the claustrophobic uterus of the tank. The only "lookouts" onto the outside world are granted through the cross hairs of the shooting device.

This telescopic view can only be altered and adjusted manually by the soldiers in a clumsy, slow manner that often caues the soldier who has to aim and shoot, to lose his overview. The crosshair gaze visually suggests a most powerful, even mortal view of the object that is being looked at and to be shot at. However, as the soldier fails to shoot in the decisive moment, the power of this view is broken. Instead we come to experience this perspective in the film as a very limited view. It is the exact visual translation of the expression of "not having an overview."

In *Lebanon*, the spectator is not provided with a wide angle shot, called the master shot or establishing shot, and instead has to piece together the information through incoherent close-up shots. Furthermore, the establishing shots are missing. Thomas Elsaesser writes about the function of the establishing shot: "A sequence... usually begins with an 'establishing shot' or 'master'...presenting the place of action and the involved in their environment... (This provides a symmetric structure of framing: At the beginning and the end of a sequence the film gives an overview over the location and the characters. The 'establishing shoot' is of great importance because we get familiar with the spatial configuration of a scene.

37 Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*. xiv.

38 Mulvey, Laura, "*Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*," in: *Film Theory and Criticism Introductory Readings,* Braudy, Leo, Cohen, Marshall (Eds.), 833–844. New York: Oxford UP, 1999.

Thus the "master shot" serves the spectator as orientation in space."[39] In *Lebanon* the establishing shots are often missing. The shot that in cinematographic tradition would grant the spectator – and in this case the soldiers as well – the chance of an orientation over the scene: *in consequence, the one who cannot oversee the action anymore will invariably lose his omnipotence.*

Standard compulsory establishing shots used in films give the spectator a feeling of a superior overview of the film's action and thus a feeling of omnipotence.

Der entkörperlichte Blick – Elsässer

Looking at someone puts the one who is being looked at in a position of inferiority. Elsässer offers the following comments on this phenomenon of the power of voyeurism. "The disembodied eye was celebrated as a potent illusion of power and omnipotence: Voyeurism is closely intervowen with a form of disembodiment – the imagination to be free of ones responsibility – or the responsibility one believes one to be bound to – to be phyically present at a certain time and place."[40] This is the main element of so many combat movies. However in the film *Lebanon* the heroes are not "on top of things," not flying over some indigenous village accompanied by Wagnerian music and spurting their charge onto the virgin forest below – an example of "classic masculinity" in combat action as performed in *Apocalypse Now*.[41] In *Lebanon* the soldiers are confined to the inside of the tank, captured in her monstrous womb, caught up in the tank`s enormous slimy body. They are far from disembodied, and therefore they are not in the superior position that would allow them to be voyeurs. *These soldiers are bound to their corporeality. But these bodies have nothing heroic about them.* Smeared with oil and sweat they disintegrate into dirt, real to the point where their bodily needs, to urinate, prevent them from functioning in the very moment when they

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39 Elsässer, Thomas and Hagener, Malte, *Filmtheorie zur Einführung,* Dresden: Junius, 2007. There is an English translation of this book, but the passage cited here is not included in the English. The translation here is my own. The passage corresponds to page 107 in the German edition.
40 Ibid., 107 in the German version.
41 As a multilayered film highly critical of war, *Apocalypse Now*, (directed by Francis Ford Coppola, USA, 1979) includes this scene of "classic combat masculinity," yet puts at the center the figure of a commander who invites ridicule for allures he takes on as the Vietnam cowboy or would-be surfer.

are expected to shoot. Furthermore, through numerous subjective shots, the spectator is tied up "sutured" to this dependent point of view of the soldiers.

Mulvey: Being-Looked-At-Ness

Lebanon also categorically refuses the spectator the common "visual pleasure." In classical films the cinematic mechanism relies on the phenomenon, as Laura Mulvey puts it, that "Das Zuschauersubjekt empfindet beim Anblick eines einzelnen Bildes eine tiefe Befriedigung, die sich psychoanalytisch auf das "Imaginäre" im lacanschen Sinne zurückführen lässt: Die Welt als Bild verspricht Kontrolle und Macht...Das Zuschauersubjekt erfährt in der Illusion einer raum-zeitlichen Kontinuität ...noch einmal das imaginäre Glücksgefühl des Kleinkinds, die Welt als Ganzes wahrzunehmen...(es) schafft die Illusion einer vollständigen Welt, in der alles, was gezeigt wird, einen Zweck hat und keine Fragen offenbleiben." In *Lebanon* all this omnipotence is categorically refused because of the lack of an establishing shot and the fragile corporeality of the soldiers. It is refused, even though it is permanently proposed by the shot including the cross hairs. The cross hairs suggest a lethal view. The cinematographic shot parallels the combat shot. We are led to believe that whoever is being "looked-at" is in imminent danger of being "shot at," the ultimate omnipotence of being master over life and death.

Being Looked-At

Laura Mulvey famously developed a theory about the power of the one who looks and the impotence and subordination of the one who is "being-looked-at" in cinema. She argues that there is a "visual pleasure," the phenomenon of "scopophilia". "There are circumstances in which looking itself is a source of pleasure",[42] the pleasure of looking at the other without being looked at, a view that establishes power over others through a controlling "looking-at." This mechanism of power established through views, that is, by looking at someone from the point of view of a hidden voyeur, is broken in *Lebanon* by the fact that people in front of the cannon-telescope are looking back at the soldier behind the telescope. That means the relations of power and subordinance, that is whoever is being looked at, are reversed in this film. They are reversed in several instances. In one very early scene, the soldier gets a reproachful look back – the look from

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42 Mulvey, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,* 833-844.

the commander when the soldier fails to shoot in time, thus causing the death of a comrade. In another scene, a civilian woman is looking back at the soldier Shmulik, a woman who screams out her pain over the loss of her child killed by the soldiers in the course of the fighting.

Shooting Chicken

These scenes, in which the ones who are being looked at are looking back at the soldiers, directly confronting them on a moral level with the consequences of their shooting actions, distinguish *Lebanon* from most combat films. Some of these who are being looked at turn out to be dangerous fighters, others civilians, and in the action of war it is hard for the Israeli soldiers to tell them apart on the spur of the moment. In the introductory scene the soldier Shmulik fails to shoot in time at two men, who turn out to be fighters and then kill an Israeli infantry soldier accompanying the tank. The next moment a man in a pick-up truck drives toward the tank. Desperate not to fail again in protecting the infantrymen, Shmulik shoots at the truck and severely injures the man, who is in fact only a chicken farmer. Dozens of chickens are blasted off the truck, some are killed, some flutter around in terror.

Difference of the Impersonal Look in *Das Boot* and Personal Look in *Lebanon*

Lebanon has often been compared to *Das Boot* (lit. "The boat"; the title for the U.S. market was also *Das Boot*) (Wolfgang Petersen, Germany, 1981) because both films use the telescope's crosshair view as the camera view point.[43] Yet there is a decisive difference between the crosshair views in *Lebanon* and the views in *Das Boot*: the view that the German submarine soldiers have through their telescope onto the boats of the enemy, is one-way. They look at the huge gray rumps of the other boats, at machines made for war and killing. These machines do not look back at the soldiers. In *Lebanon*, "the other" is not a huge, gray, anonymous war machine but human beings, seen through the telescope in emotion-filled,

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43 To my great surprise, Samuel Maoz told me that he had not heard of the film *Das Boot* when he made *Lebanon*, a curious fact, taking into consideration that he received a large part of the film's funding from German sources, and that *Das Boot* holds a milestone reputation in German film history.

extreme close-ups. *Das Boot* does not elevate its view onto the same filmic aesthetic-philosophic level as does *Lebanon*, in which the views can be interpreted on the basis of film theories such as Mulvey's. In *Das Boot*, looking and shooting at the other ships remains on the level of the shallow superficial tactics game known as *Schiffe versenken* in Germany, in which the player aims, shoots, and gains satisfaction from every "hit."

Shooting as a Phallic Pleasure

Whereas in classical Hollywood cinema, relations of power are established through the gaze, here they are broken. Tied up with the boys in this limited situation, the spectator is denied the scopophilic pleasure of voyeuristic omnipotence that classic combat films offer in shooting scenes, a pleasure that is of a phallic nature but in the worst possible sense. It is a sublimation of phallic action turned into lethal action. The pleasure of omnipotence evoked in these classic combat movies is the "satisfaction of war" that Virginia Woolf spoke out against, a satisfaction found in aestheticized and sexualized killing. A perverted aesthetic cinematographic persuasion that likens war to sexual action, making it look like something that goes hand in hand with a certain type of masculinity, one that is perceived in our society as normative under the "laws of war," a type of masculinity that is sexualized in classic combat movies and elevated to a state of veneration through sex appeal. The appeal and attractiveness to mass audiences shows how "visual pleasure" can promote wars as something "desirable" in terms of certain masculinities, a most destructive "visual pleasure" established in sexualized violence declared as "manly."

Conclusion

Role models of masculinity have seen profound changes over the last century in the Jewish context. These changes in the image of masculinity have been more drastic in Jewish culture than in any other culture. Besides, one and the same masculinity performed could be judged very positively or utterly negatively, depending on the value system used for evaluation. The very images of masculinity that Zionism wanted to overcome seem to have resurfaced in recent German-Israeli coproductions. The process of playing out different modes of masculinity is still ongoing, both in Israel and in Jewish Diaspora culture, and reflects

an intricate system of self-images generated in contrast to the stereotypes of surrounding societies.

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Spaces of Memory – Reflections on Social Transformation at the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe

Interview with Irit Dekel

Claudia Simone Dorchain: What is the concept of space you use in your studies on memorial arts? Is there a general theory of space underlying your research?

Irit Dekel: There is no one theory of space I use. First, since as an ethnographer I discovered and indeed was part of the construction of what the specific site meant. I did so only during my research. By participating in memory work, or by observing how visitors acted, i.e. what they say about their experience in the site, how they walk in it, take pictures, "play tag" and observe others in the Holocaust memorial. Second, as I learned that this space is made of many spaces and historical times, I developed a tool kit to understand it through the focus on speech and motion, which was influenced by De Certeau, Lefebvre, Foucault, and Goffman.

I looked at the ways visitors, especially Germans (since most participants in guided tours are Germans), created a space for inner observation in which they were expected to undergo emotional transformation while also observing other visitors' [re]action in the memorial. To me the space of the memorial creates possibilities for – or "spheres" of – *speakability* in the present, triggered by speaking about the past, which were not possible earlier.

CSD: Space and time are, in Immanuel Kant's point of view, the conditions of recognition. Of course he is right, but not totally. I mean, isn't there recognition independent of time, as we all know by everyday life, for example in immediate recognition, spontaneous ideas, a sudden flash of insight, a ray of inspiration, *Einfall* in German? There is, for sure, recognition without time. Is there recognition without space?

ID: Thanks for this intriguing question. The memorial is a good case for theorizing the interrelation of space and time. To follow your line of thought, it seems to me that there is no recognition that is not inherently embedded in its own time and places. You might be asking about the duration of recognition in your reference to incidence or the *Einfall*. But an incident is also embedded in historical time. In the case of the Holocaust memorial, the creation of spheres of speakability makes the site have many incidental spaces for communication; not all are "commu-

nicative" in the sense that not all lead to dialogical conversation, certainly not to agreement. I thus think about space as the social condition for encounter and communication, and of this particular one as predominantly enabling accidental encounters and a framework for conversation: first about itself, then about memory, and only then about the past, the Holocaust.

However, this memorial, despite being built by and for Germans (as its initiators insisted), does not imply that the past is owned by a certain group and located in a certain space, authentic or not. With the case of the Holocaust memorial, and with other invented sites of memory, we can see how different interest groups claim a relationship to the past and to the present state of memory politics. I therefore do not think that there could be recognition that is not inherently connected to an imagined or real place where recognition occurs.

CSD: Space seems to me a notion that gives way to philosophical interpretation without being of philosophical interest in itself. Space as such, space as space has no meaning. Space as a place to start from, as a standpoint, as common ground, allows meaning. Is that right?

ID: I am intrigued by what seems to me a very time-oriented understanding of space in what you suggest here. My understanding of space is not heuristic. I'd rather talk about what happens in it, and what are the preconditions for this happening bound with a specific place, city, agents acting in them, their history cultures, and politics. Space cannot only be conceived as a background for the revelation of meaning. Thus, I look at the space of encounter between individual strangers as the most potent starting point when one studies urban sites, precisely because meaning is also produced in a dialogue between people about places, objects, and their mediations. As the framework for the creation and performance of knowledge practices, the urban site I studied, the Holocaust memorial in Berlin, starts off by stating that indeed it has no meaning, because it stands for the memory of the Holocaust, which cannot be mastered or understood. This statement attempts to neutralize some loaded content that the site tries to make less threatening, a phenomenon that we also see in nonabstract sites or museums that try to attract publics that would otherwise not come to visit. It is thus constructed as an abstract work of art and the visitors have to make sense of it in a way that will enable reflection on how they deal with the past.

Thus, meaning does not arise from space, also not from architecture, but from the encounter between a site, what people know and want to know about it, its depiction in the media, and the actual personal experience of it. And we said nothing about the information presented in the underground Information Center and the ways people experience it. So, I would say (following Bourdieu)

that space is not just the background for some social theater but a multidimensional topos constructed on principles of differentiation, which are constituted by the rules that are active within that social universe. One's role is then defined by one's relative position within that space.

CSD: The interpretation of space – as I have said as "place to start from, standpoint, common ground" – is threefold (if not manifold). It means a place to develop things from, to define oneself, and to define the "other." So, space as a place for development permits all kinds of cultural attempts aiming at the future, thus technical and ethical; space as a standpoint remains for those who intend to find their identity, thus psychological; and space as a place to define the "other" is what ancient Greeks called *politeia*, the room of politics, government, rule-giving, and justice.

ID: The dialogue occurring in space does not have to lead to a unified worldview. Here I find Habermas very helpful, especially his critical understanding of communicative space, which can and indeed should also reflect diversity. Eder is helpful in understanding the structure for analyzing the creation of others by "we" groups in Europe: "collective" or common memories are one central precondition for "collective" and common identity. This, I believe, is how one can find something like the Greek *politeia* in our own, much more multifarious and simply much larger, political structures. In the Holocaust memorial I studied visitors' actions as well as educational programs and the work of the Foundation Memorial and found that the site enables speech about memory work and one's relations to it as a prism to their "moral career" as citizens.

However, dialogue or conversations are not necessarily produced there; rather it is a mutual performance and observation of emotional transformation. In this sense, the memorial is certainly not the "space to start from."

This work of memory is directed by the expectations visitors have from other "authentic" and nonauthentic memorial sites, which migrate to this new one. It is also not a common ground in terms of social activities, which are not common at all and certainly do not produce a unity of meaning or interpretation. As a stranger studying the memorial and writing its first ethnography, I found that people's actions in it are aimed at mutual observation in the present and directed at "self-knowledge." Clearly, this self-knowledge is not exclusive to group or community knowledge, but it is, however, directed by and toward the individual who is supposed to undergo transformation in the site. One might ask whether this transformation happens through the acquisition of historical knowledge and I would argue that is not necessarily the case. The transformation is on the emotional level and can be triggered by images or certain recognizable activities.

CSD: In your recent work on space in memorial arts in Germany and its numerous examples, where do you find space as 1. technical/ethical; 2. psychological; and 3. political dimension? Can these layers of interpretation or "ways of world-making," as Nelson Goodman would have said, be defined more precisely? Do we still deal with semiotics, places as a continuity or discontinuity of symbols with a certain meaning, or do you think a different approach would be better?

ID: In my forthcoming book, *Mediation at the Holocaust Memorial*, to be published by Palgrave, I offer a typology of four forms of speakability that develop and are performed in the Holocaust Memorial: *witnessing, guilt and shame, performing silence, and provoking knowledge.*

In the first, witnessing, the visitor becomes a witness of Holocaust victims and the state of victimhood and then reflects on what being a witness means to her or him. The second form, guilt and shame, is the reflection of one's moral standing as a visitor to the memorial, which is often expressed in guestbook entries by German visitors and in conversation with and among the guides at the memorial. Performing silence and talking about the need to be in silence happens through individuals talking about their most desirable memorial experience as well as by groups asking to sit or walk quietly at the end of a guided tour. In a visitors' survey at the Information Center, it was also made clear that the site is meditational for many, just like a church, as Uhl already suggested. The last form of speakability is provoking knowledge, which is usually done in discussion about the underground installation where visitors reflect on new information they learned about the Holocaust, as well as exchange their reflections on particular individuals and families.

CSD: Space is not only static, as Pierre Nora states in his theory of *lieux de mémoire*, but utterly *dynamic*, changing. In my view, it is the dynamic of space that allows interpretations which differ that much. Because the static in itself can't be interpreted. Space, in the most general view, is the condition of motion, of movement, thus the approaching of the future, or the approaching of death. And it is motion, in my eyes, which, with all its connotations, adds the manifold interpretations to the concepts of space.

ID: Nora's concept of lieux de mémoire, as presented in his monumental project of analyzing French spaces of memory, understood not only classical "places" but also seminal texts as sites of remembrance when the milieu of memory is gone.

The Hebrew concept of space (*merchav* and also *makom* – for place) is never "in place," is always open for change and interpretation, and is often sacred, interior, ritualized. Gurevitch wrote about the concept and idea of "place" in the

Hebrew culture as stemming from this ambivalent Jewish understanding of place, which is, as you said, a place to start from. Indeed, he reminds us, Genesis starts when God created earth but at the same time the Jewish and later Israeli place is never fixed, never final. Having grown up in Israel and being Gurevitch's student, I am very much influenced by the potency of this liminal condition of place.

CSD: Space as a condition of motion, and motion being a multilayered issue, reminds me of the philosophy of the ancient Greeks. Their paramount questions in philosophic research have been the following: first, what is the substance of the Primal Being (water, fire, the intelligible mind, the atom?) and second, is the Primal Being static or dynamic?

ID: In clearly very different discourses, with different bases and different aims, I see the tension you identify in the early moment of Western thought – between static being and dynamic becoming, between, say, Parmenides and Herakleitos – as largely overlapping with the tension between emptiness and content, between above and below, in the experience of space in the memorial. The formal and material vacuousness of the "Stelenfeld" (field of stelae, or stones) in this sense, stands in opposition to the highly structured space and carefully constructed order of information-presentation in a manner that parallels the opposition between the totally undifferentiated space of being and the absolutely determined, ever-in-motion space of becoming.

CSD: Herakleitos was of the opinion that everything conceivable to our eyes could not be but dynamic, the matter of perception of something as "static" would be unreal, an illusion. In sharp contrast, Parmenides wrote about the immobile Primal Being as ever motionless. But Parmenides already conceded that there actually could be a twofold meaning of human recognition: the false recognition given by the senses, which displays the illusion of the motion and variability of phenomena, and the "truth," the hidden knowledge of invariability and immobility of "that which is," a knowledge that is, according to Parmenides, not conceivable. So, the Parmenidean standpoint was not an empirical one, but somewhat mystic.

ID: It was something of this tension in the "epistemologies" of the two that I meant to capture in my last comparison. If we think about the "Stelenfeld" and *Ort der Information* [OdI] as models of knowledge performance and dissemination, one might suggest that the empty, formal and fundamentally anarchic space of the "Stelenfeld" represents the eternal, atemporal, and immobile truth of what is, and cannot not be – in the sense of Parmenides; while the ordered progression

through carefully presented materials in the OdI can be thought of as a manifestation of the Herakleitean insight into all knowledge as the knowledge of motion, in this case the knowledge of the motion that occurs within the visitor – the emotional response – in conversation with the motion within the installation of the OdI.

But I am a little uncomfortable with this metaphorical talk we have engaged in. For my interest in the site at the time of its opening and five, six years later was on the one hand precisely the playfulness it will enable, which I thought could be interesting to observe and take part of. On the other hand, however, through this playful exchange of metaphorical thinking about space in its abstractness, and the eros of revelation of what cannot or shall not be grasped, with the agreement to talk very little, if at all, about the Holocaust was for me a reason to approach it as a sociologist analyzing memory work. I can thus talk about memory work of the Holocaust at a certain point in time and how it is a knowledge producing activity, at times the knowledge of what *not* to talk about. This is what I learn from that particular place, as a culmination and a reflection of wider phenomena of speakability.

CSD: Christian philosophers adopted the Parmenidean-Heraklitean dichotomy, made more sophisticated through the Neoplatonic approach that Plotinus, Proklos, and Dionysos Areopagita defined in the first centuries after the fall of Rome. For these Neoplatonic thinkers, space is the emanation of the Divine Mind, which is supposed to be the Primal Origin. Of course, many Christian philosophers shared this view of space. They identified God-the-Father with the immobile Primal Being, and the devil, the world of illusion, of falsity, with the ever-changing vain phenomena of perception, as Plato's *Cave Allegory* shows. In this regard, the matter of space becomes, once again, of enormous interest since the scholastic scholars first adopted it.

ID: It is very tempting to think of the *Cave Allegory* in relation to the "above and under" of the Holocaust Memorial. Here, though, the apparent interpretation of Plato's intention would have to be reversed. That is, it is only in going down below (into the OdI) and exposing oneself to a series of images that are presented on the wall that one can hope to escape "the condition of the soul in its lack of education" that is radically encountered in the "Stelenfeld". Namely the visitor above is entirely ignorant with respect to their current spatial surroundings: What are these stones? Why are they here? Who built this? When? Why? For whom? What am I doing here? And so on. It is only when they "go down" – and not "rise up" – that there is the possibility of education.

This going down is literal – you must (on this reading) enter the OdI – but it is also figurative: you must go down into your own soul, or heart, or experience and encounter the loss symbolized in the Memorial. This might also suggest, however, that the apparent interpretation itself – and surely its cooptation by Christian metaphysics (and later by *The Matrix*) – ought to be called into serious question.

CSD: *The Matrix*, yes, a dystopia ruled by Christian metaphysics, ascetics replacing lust for life with tabloids, and a filmic model of special effects concerning speed. Space literally gives way to motion so, from a scholastic point of view, space is the condition of illusion, of vanity, evil. That is the reason why the Gothic architects did not allow their cathedrals to become too "fleshy," for stones are the "flesh" of a house if you will; what they aimed at was the "de-manifestation," the diminishing of the material world, a kind of utter deconstruction in fine arts.

They (Christian architects in the Middle Ages) created memorials of the non-space. Is the matter of "non-space," an idealist concept deeply rooted in Christian-Platonic philosophy, at all influential in what German memorial arts and films consider to be "Jewish"?

ID: In hearing "non-places," I think of the work of Auge on such "non-places" as airports and malls. These are places of transience that are not defined as a negation of more essential places but instead a condition in which the subject tends to be a spectator and the gazes may shift frequently between various spectators and spectacles.

For Auge, non-places proliferate in "supermodernity." In such venues, one's identity is transient and exchangeable. These are of interest for two reasons: the abstractness and the accidental tourism that occurs in the Memorial, where one stumbles upon the site, then happens to reflect on it or not. As for the "Jewish question," I am uncomfortable talking about Jewish architecture (or Jewish anything). If the Judeo-Christian tradition leaned toward abstractness in the case of this memorial and many others in the past three decades, which could reflect this ambivalence, then we have to link it more to individualization, postfigurative memorials in the postnational age and the specific, very liberating possibility opened for the first time for visitors to a Holocaust memorial (the first German national memorial) to say "I like it" or "I don't like it."

Eisenman is Jewish. He and Serra understood the power of the monumental abstract in this regard. The fact that Eisenman and later others compare it to a graveyard does not make the site or its architecture Jewish, just the particular culture look for things Jewish and their detectable, ever obscured, symbols.

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