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GO WEST!

CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATIONS OF "THE WEST" IN THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION

*Edited by Bernhard Hemetsberger
and Andreas Oberdorf*

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Published with financial support by the University of Klagenfurt, Forschungsservice and Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education and the University of Münster, Institute for Educational Studies.

ISBN 978-3-11-140813-2
e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-140898-9
e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-141019-7
DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2024951797

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

© 2025 with the author(s), editing © 2025 Bernhard Hemetsberger and Andreas Oberdorf, published by Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston, Genthiner Straße 13, 10785 Berlin.
This book is published with open access at www.degruyter.com.

Cover image: Yakobchuk / iStock / Getty Images Plus
Printing and binding: CPI books GmbH, Leck

www.degruyter.com
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Andreas Oberdorf and Bernhard Hemetsberger

Searching for "the West" in the History of Education

Since the beginning of Russia's extended war against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, geopolitics has shifted once again. More than thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, we – especially those of us located in the northern hemisphere – are now witnessing a revival of "the West." Even though – or rather because – its meaning is still ambiguous and seems to be more uncertain than ever before, "the West" is not by chance omnipresent in politics and media, and open to manifold interpretations and ascriptions of belonging and exclusion: Who is part of "the West"? When and where is or was it located? How did its meaning change over space and time? Who are the mediators of "the West" and what is their stake in culture and education? What does the concept mean epistemologically, historically, educationally – and which utopia, dreams, promises, or fears are triggered?

For most people today, "the West" is basically a community of shared (idealistic) values such as freedom, human rights, democracy, and solidarity. In political terms, some would probably consider the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO), with its far-reaching political-military commitments, as representative of "Western" ideals that guarantee security for its members and allies. Others point, with a rather more geographical emphasis, to the history of closely intertwined transatlantic relations between Europe and North America, where "the West" could most easily be located. For others, "the West" is best reflected in material terms regarding the consumer and everyday culture, especially brands and goods, including food, clothing, and products of the entertainment industries. The fact that all these ambiguous ideas of "the West" can exist side by side, yet still show some overlaps, creates a complex field of investigation. From the "outside" it may evoke rather colonial, suppressive, or hegemonic sentiments through the abstruse, self-destructive, subversive tendencies of "the West." However, since the historic fall of the Iron Curtain and the European integration of the former Eastern bloc states, the simple demarcation and differentiation between "the East" and "the West" no longer works. The recent revival of "the West" in the context of the Ukraine War shows that "the West" is not only historically significant but lives on as a multifaceted and powerful concept that helps many people gain orientation in the world and overcome crises and situations of fragility. In this respect, "the West" still contributes to many people's cognitive and mental maps and manages certain contingencies as it evokes painful memories, anxieties, and resistance against any revival.

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-001

In line with this everyday understanding in public discourse, “the West” – along with analogous ideas and interpretations of “Western” belonging and distinction – is often used without any critical questioning in history of education research, particularly regarding transnational and transatlantic issues. Here, “the West” appears as a kind of “container term” or “fuzzy” concept that can refer to manifold entanglements and cultural transfers in different historical contexts. Following poststructuralist and postcolonial perspectives, “the West” must be understood and analyzed as the result of a discourse that emerged without the critical reflection or participation of “the others,” “the East,” or “the rest” of the world, from which “the West” – usually more implicitly than explicitly – seeks to distinguish itself. Since ideas of “the West” reproduce problematic “Western” views, these asymmetries of power must be revealed, deconstructed, and made the subject of critical historical analyses that expose conflicts, injustices, and ideas of order.[1]

In history of education research, there is an urgent need for a self-reflective reappraisal of “Western” concepts and views on education, operating in pedagogical practice, reflections, and research alike and consequently guides educative processes anew. This is not only relevant for scholars with a particular interest in inter-/transnational, non-European, or global histories of education, but for everyone who sees the need for a critical questioning of ideological bias that helps to decolonize the history and theory of education on this matter. These postcolonial perspectives on education have become more important in educational science in the last ten to fifteen years, for instance with regard to “global citizenship education.”[2] More recently, scholars of educational theory have again emphasized the “necessity and possibility, the prospects and pitfalls of decolonizing and provincializing ‘Western Education’ in a globalized world.”[3] They have also shown the complexity, depth, and far-reaching implications for educational research – without, however, taking a closer look at the history of education.[4] In this regard, this book aims to stimulate a critical reflection and debate on “Western” ideas in the history of education, especially as “Western” historians of education have hardly paid attention to this issue yet.

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[1] See Riccardo Bavaj, “‘The West’: A Conceptual Exploration,” in *European History Online* (EGO), published by the Institute of European History (IEG), November 21, 2011. Accessed 18 January 2024, http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/crossroads/political-spaces/riccardo-bavaj-the-west-a-conceptual-exploration; Jasper M. Trautsch, “The Invention of the ‘West’,” *Bulletin of the GHI Washington* 53 (2013): 89–104; Jasper M. Trautsch, “‘Der Westen’: Theoretisch-methodische Überlegungen zu einer Begriffsgeschichte,” in *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 60–61 (2018–19): 409–440.

[2] Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti and Lynn Mario T. M. de Souza, eds., *Postcolonial Perspectives on Global Citizenship Education* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

[3] Sharon Stein et al., “Provincializing ‘Western Education’: Editorial,” in *On Education: Journal for Research and Debate* 3 (2020): 2.

As a powerful figure of asymmetry and a concept of conflict and confrontation, “the West” essentially reproduces ideas of one’s own superiority over the inferiority of “the others” or “the rest.” Following Reinhart Koselleck’s theory of historical-political semantics, many of those “counter-concepts” can be identified in in historical narratives that are intended “to exclude mutual recognition.”[5] The rise of “the West” as an idea of belonging and exclusion emerged at a time when European borders were being crossed and as such it is closely linked with the formation of the modern world. In other words, “the West”, as Jürgen Osterhammel argues, “presupposes the expansion of Europe, the founding of new European communities overseas.”[6] Even if “the West” as a concept was not yet common at that time, the idea was emerging. Here, Michel Foucault would speak of “discursive formations”[7] that structure knowledge of the world on a prelingual and preconceptual level in a limited communication space.[8] This resulted from the perception of “the own” through the experiences of “the foreign” in the Age of European expansion, starting in the late eighteenth century, and formed the basis of a self-referential community of communication, in which the boundaries of belonging, the degree of its ambiguity, tolerance, and the potential for integration had to be confirmed or renegotiated from time to time. This process and practice of (re-)negotiation did not take place in a self-reflective dialogue with “the others” but was limited to the respective “Western” space and community of communication. That is why Osterhammel considers “the West” as a “concept of arrogance”[9] after all.

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[4] See also Phillip D. Th. Knobloch and Johannes Drerup, eds., *Bildung in postkolonialen Konstellationen. Erziehungswissenschaftliche Analysen und pädagogische Perspektiven* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2022).

[5] Reinhart Koselleck, “Zur historisch-politischen Semantik asymmetrischer Gegenbegriffe [1975],” in *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, ed. Reinhart Koselleck (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), 213.

[6] Jürgen Osterhammel, “Was war und ist ‘der Westen’?”, in *Die Flughöhe der Adler. Historische Essays zur globalen Gegenwart*, ed. Jürgen Osterhammel (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2017), 104; see also Jürgen Osterhammel, *Europe, the “West” and the Civilizing Mission*, Annual Lecture, 2005 (London: German Historical Institute, 2006).

[7] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 35–42.

[8] See also Peter Meusburger et al., eds., *Geographies of Knowledge and Power* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2015).

[9] Osterhammel, “Was war und ist der ‘Westen’?,” 104.

Other scholars would probably define “the West” with a less critical vigor as a geographical imagination, maintained by culturally and historically pre-structured discourses that influence people’s mental maps in past and present. This issue is still prevalent – to the present day and also in this volume – to which extent an inner-Western discourse remains exaggerating, hegemonic, illusory and hardly connectable to non-Western approaches?[10]

The most cited and, therefore, probably the best account of the formation of “the West” as a figure of asymmetry and power was elaborated by the Palestinian-American academic and literary critic Edward Said, professor of literature at Columbia University and one of the founders of postcolonial studies. In his book *Orientialism*, published in 1978, Said establishes the concept of “the Orient” as an invention of “the West.”[11] For Said, the term “Orientalism” describes how “the West” perceives and interprets “the Orient” as a foreign, unknown, strange and inferior culture somewhere in the “Middle” or “Far East.” Central to the construction of this “otherness” is an asymmetry of power. The image of “the Orient” is contrasted with “the West” as a positive counter-image, wherein “only the dominant group is in a position to impose the value of its particularity (its identity) and to devaluate the particularity of others (their otherness) while imposing corresponding discriminatory measures”, as Jean-François Staszak has stressed.[12] “Occident” and “Orient” therefore represent an asymmetrical pair of concepts that Koselleck would also call counter-concepts. A rigid imagined border was drawn here, which, according to Said, still characterizes the image of “the Orient” and the relationship between “the West” and “the East” today.[13]

Another prominent example is the imagination and attribution of “the West” in North America as the “Old West” or “Wild West” since the long nineteenth century. Here, the founding states of the United States, located at the Atlantic coast with their economically and culturally important bridgeheads to Europe, represented the enlightened, cultured, and civilized world, whereas the middle and far west of the continent was considered unknown and unpredictable, a dark, backward, and uncivilized area beyond the frontier of European settlement. The painting *American Progress* (1876) by John Gast (1842–1896) clearly demonstrates these contrasting images, showing the westward movement of the European settlers, guided by Columbia, bringing modern technology, education, and civilization to the western parts of North America. For the viewer today, this scene clearly points to the asymmetries of power and highly problematic aspects of (im-)migration and settlement history that can be roughly sketched with a few key words: the conquest and destruction of nature, big-game hunting, land grab, oppression and expulsion of indigenous peoples, religious conversion, slavery. The “civilizedness” that many settlers attributed to themselves, provided them with a sufficient basis of legitimacy and obligation – sometimes also incorporating religious obligation – to conquer the “wilderness” and rule the indigenous people. In this respect, the difference of “civilized” and “wild” also has pedagogical consequences, as the evolutionary pedagogue Alfred K. Treml has emphasized.[14] As is still reflected in literature and film today, the mutual learning between “wild” and “civilized” people is rarely addressed, while the imperialistic motif of cultural superiority often prevails, even in recent years, when viewed with a critical eye. The pedagogical moment here is the instruction, the religious conversion, and the civilization of those who were considered “wild” according to “Western” ideals. Sometimes, however, there are also depictions of “noble savages” who teach the settlers a responsible life in nature and model virtuous behavior.[15] The difference between “civilized” and “wild” still exists here but also embraces open and trustful dealings as well as a certain critical stance on the part of the settlers vis-à-vis their own “civilizedness.” Regardless of how these inequalities and asymmetries of power are dealt with and which pedagogies can be addressed here, “the West” does not lose its significance as a concept that promises progress, prosperity, and personal freedom for “the one” – but not equally for “the others.” *Go West, young man, and grow up with the country* – a phrase often attributed to Horace Greeley (1811–1872), became a famous slogan of the westward movement that expresses this naively rationalist faith in progress and social renewal, and for a long time was closely related to the idea of Manifest Destiny.

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[10] Felwine Sarr, *Afrotopia*, trans. M. Henninger (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2019). However, “Western” education, for example, still remains a central point of change – see, e.g., 38–41 and 99–108; but also 117.

[11] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

[12] Jean-François Staszak, “Other/Otherness,” in *Encyclopedia of Human Geography, ed.* Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2009), 43.

[13] For Edward Said’s “imaginative geography” see also Susanne Rau, *Räume. Konzepte, Wahrnehmungen, Nutzungen* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 2013), 87–89.

A rather similar image of “the West” was sung about a hundred years later, when this slogan enjoyed an unexpected revival in pop culture by the Village People. The disco anthem “Go West” was created as a studio project by Jacques Morali

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[14] Alfred K. Treml, “Die Pädagogisierung des ‘Wilden’ oder: Die Verbesserung des Menschen durch Erziehung,” in *Ethnopädagogik – Sozialisation und Erziehung in traditionellen Gesellschaften. Eine Einführung*, ed. Klaus E. Müller and Alfred K. Treml (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1996), 221–239.

[15] See also Frank Usbeck, “Kampf der Kulturen? ‘Edle Wilde’ in Deutschland und Amerika / Clash of Cultures? ‘Noble Savages’ in Germany and America,” in *Tecumseh, Keokuk, Black Hawk: Portrayals of Native Americans in Times of Treaties and Removal*, ed. Iris Edenheiser and Astrid Nielsen (Stuttgart and Dresden: Arnoldsche, 2013), 177–184.

(1947–1991) and Henri Belolo (1936–2019), referring to the homophile culture of New York City's neighborhood Greenwich Village, also known simply as "The Village." Again, "the West" is the promised land of milk and honey, where a better and more carefree life is supposed to be possible. For queers of every sex and gender, particularly in the early years of Gay Liberation in the 1970s, San Francisco was seen as the place to be, triggering a veritable migration to the west coast of the United States. The song calls on us to leave everything behind and to face an unknown future in "the West" with confidence and critical distance from narrow-minded social conventions and conservatism:

> (Together) We will go our way
> (Together) We will leave someday
> (Together) Your hand in my hand
> (Together) We will make our plans
> (Together) We will fly so high
> (Together) Tell all our friends good-bye
> (Together) We will start life new
> (Together) This is what we'll do
>
> (Go West) Life is peaceful there
> (Go West) In the open air
> (Go West) Where the skies are blue
> (Go West) This is what we're gonna do
> (Go West, this is what we're gonna do, Go West)

In 1993, the openly gay duo Pet Shop Boys, Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe, released a cover version of "Go West" on their album *Very*, in which they transferred the song from its originally all-American setting to the post-Soviet context.[16] After the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the entire free world – "the West" – is the place of longing that promises maximum prosperity and progress in economic, political, and cultural terms. "Go West" is reimagined as the anthem of Americanization and Westernization, as the Pet Shop Boys' music video, directed by Howard Greenhalgh, makes clear: from Lenin on Red Square in Moscow to the Statue of Liberty in New York. This setting is made completely ironic with the help of an all-male chorus repeatedly shouting "Go West!", whereby the choir takes up the

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[16] P. J. Smith, "'Go West': The Pet Shop Boys' Allegories and Anthems of Postimperiality," *Genre* 34 (2001): 307–338.

“Soviet fetishization of perfectly muscular male physique,”[17] as Gilad Padva points out:

> Whereas the Soviet Union’s revolutionary art idealized and idolized these muscles as the working class’ victory, “Go West” decontextualizes the male physique by queering the solidarity and brotherhood of gay men of different colors marching together in an explicitly homoerotic display of male beauty and pride. In this respect, both Soviet images of semi-naked male workers […] and the Pet Shop Boy’s exposure of eroticized male bodies *are* ideological: the male physique was celebrated by the Soviets as socialist objects, whereas the invested bodies in “Go West” symbolize gay emancipation.[18]

In summary, it can be said that anyone who wants to question the concept of “the West” must expect to enter stirring terrain. If the closely intertwined concepts of Westernization and Americanization are to be avoided and replaced by new, supposedly less problematic concepts – liberalization, Europeanization, globalization – further obstacles and potential pitfalls may arise.[19] Since concepts tend to reduce complexity and language always reflects power, identity, and worldviews, unbiased interpretations are probably impossible. This is, of course, also the case with historical perspectives and historiographies as immanent educative endeavors providing interpretations of who and how “the West” embraces in “the world.” For this very reason it is crucial, however, that “the West” must be the subject of critical analyses from history of education perspectives that uncover and explain its hidden injustices and ideas of order.

The bulk of the articles assembled here were initially drafted as papers delivered in the winter semester of 2022/23 at the University of Münster, Germany. The original talks – which have now been revised for publication – were designed as contributions to the lecture series “‘Go West!’ Conceptual Explorations of ‘the

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[17] Gilad Padva, “The Counterculture Industry. Queering the Totalitarian Male Physique in the Pet Shop Boys’ ‘Go West’ and Lady Gaga’s ‘Alejandro’,” in *Handbuch Kritische Theorie*, ed. Uwe Bittlingmayer, Alex Demirovic, and Tatjana Freytag (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2019), 1291.

[18] Padva, 1292.

[19] For these concepts see the review article by Holger Nehring, “‘Westernization’: A New Paradigm for Interpreting West European History in a Cold War Context,” *Cold War History* 4 (2004): 175–191; Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, “Westernisierung. Politisch-ideeller und gesellschaftlicher Wandel in der Bundesrepublik bis zum Ende der 60er Jahre,” in *Dynamische Zeiten. Die sechziger Jahre in beiden deutschen Gesellschaften*, ed. Axel Schildt, Detlef Siegfried and Karl Christian Lammers (Hamburg: Christians, 2000), 357–391; Eckart Conze, “Wege in die Atlantische Gemeinschaft. Amerikanisierung und Westernisierung in Westeuropa nach 1945,” in *Nationale Identität und transnationale Einflüsse. Amerikanisierung, Europäisierung und Globalisierung in Frankreich nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, ed. Reiner Marcowitz (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2007), 72–86.

West' in the History of Education," organized by the editors of this book – Andreas Oberdorf, lecturer for theory and history of education and deputy head of the Center for German-American Educational History at the University of Münster, Germany; and Bernhard Hemetsberger, postdoctoral researcher for the history and theory of education and schooling at the University of Klagenfurt, Austria, and adjunct professor for history of education at the University of Münster in the winter term 2023/24.

Conceptual Attempts on/from "the West"

Riccardo *Bavaj* looks at conceptual explorations of the "the West" that are primarily informed by the history of concepts, taking as his example the historical-political thoughts of Heinrich August Winkler, one of the most influential supporters of the concept of "the West" in contemporary Germany. Bavaj argues that Winkler's thoughts on "the West" can be linked to the German rémigré Richard Löwenthal, who tied social change with perceptions of cultural crises.

Bernhard *Hemetsberger* questions the linkage of "the West," public discourse during crises, and the notion that "Western" schooling as the provider of rational foundations for "all". If "the West" is characterized by rationality, as Max Weber pointed out, schools should supply this rationality; perceptions of crises, meanwhile, are described as situations of fragmented and missing explanatory narratives that trouble this nexus. Hence, the question arises: if school crisis narratives renew through infinite regress, what is understood as "the West"?

Perspectives on "the West"

Frank *Jacob* sheds light on the early period of Japanese opening towards "the West," starting in 1853. Numerous Japanese travelled the world to "modernize" their country and brought back "Western" educational ideas, among other perceptions. However, these were largely dependent on the "transmitting" person; the Japanese reception of prominent American educational ideas was amalgamated to Japanese needs under the assumption that this would contribute to "modernization."

From postcolonial perspectives, Timm Gerd *Hellmanzik* analyzes the discursive portrayal of "Europe" in relation to the Ottoman Empire in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century school textbooks that he considers to be a conceptual precursor of what later was called "the West." The chapter also shows how history textbooks initially excluded the Ottoman Empire from what was considered "Europe," but later partially included it within this conceptual framework.

Silke *Mende* explores "the West" in French discourses, particularly in the "francophonie républicaine." She points out that the concept of "the West" is relatively absent here, while concepts as "modernity" and "civilization," due to the French Enlightenment tradition, were essentially target concepts. The French language also plays a prominent role in this context as the most important agent of France's "educational task" (*tâche éducatrice*), according to M. Edmond Besnard (1918).

The implementation of programmed instruction in the Soviet Union is portrayed by Viktoria *Boretska* as a history of obscuration. To optimize and progress educational thought during the Cold War, the behaviorist and American foundations of this teaching method were systematically blurred in the Soviet Union. Concurrently its "Western" foundational theories were reinterpreted as self-defense against an "imperialistic West" and the portrayal of a particular image of the United States.

Sergei I. *Zhuk* unravels various stages of "indigenization" of American influences into Soviet and Russian politics and culture from the Russian imperial period until today. With regard to the concepts of "Americanization" and "Westernization," Zhuk argues that America and, by extension, "the West" became a "seductive adversary" for the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Despite political and ideological antagonisms, the American way of life was fascinating and highly attractive, especially for young "KGB people." This chapter bases *en gros* on his recently published monograph *The KGB, Russian Academic Imperialism, Ukraine, and Western Academia, 1946–2024* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2024).

Documentary (re-)presentations are rare sources in History of Education research – a gap May *Jehle* is filling by analyzing two German documentary films about the expectations of East Germans about "the West" before 1989 and then after, when many East Germans experienced for themselves what "the West" could mean for and to them. On the one hand, biographical educative processes are shown and made visible in these films; on the other, historical lessons may be drawn as to how these (re-)presentations enable reenactment, understanding, and at best, learnings for viewers and analysts.

Along the history of the Swiss-located Leysin American School (LAS), founded in the early 1960s, Karen *Lillie* exemplifies how global elites educate their offspring exclusively and "Western" to gain and preserve advantages in globalized times. During a shaken history, several pedagogical transitions were necessary to keep their pupils on their way "westwards."

Epistemological Endeavors on “the West”

Roberto *Kulpa* enters “the West” by rethinking it from the perspective of Central-Eastern Europe and attempting to steer it towards the non-occidentialist and decolonial epistemics in/of Queer Studies. Employing Walter Mignolo’s statement “I am where I think,” the readers are invited to join the author on a biographical, intellectual, and reflective journey in geopolitics and geo-temporalities.

Philipp *Stelzel* closes this book with reflections on the relation of West German historians and their American colleagues in the post-war period, where the national background of the participants in the transatlantic conversations were crucial. While this “Western” intellectual exchange has a different character today, the period under investigation unravels how “historical,” “political,” or “educational” backgrounds had influenced the exchange.

The editors would like to acknowledge the audience of the lecture series in the winter term of 2022/23 as well as all the presenters and the contributors to this anthology, who gave us the impression of a worthwhile publication and opened a continuing discussion on conceptual explorations of “the West” in the History of Education. This was enabled by financial support by the University of Klagenfurt, the resources of its Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education as well as the Department of Education. Moreover, the University of Münster’s Institute for Educational Studies bore the costs of the lecture series and the publication, which we very much appreciate. Special thanks are addressed to Rabea Rittgerodt, De Gruyter, for her support and Alex Skinner as translator of Silke Mende’s chapter.

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Riccardo Bavaj

Between Evolutionary and Container Concept: Western Self-Assertions, German Westernizers, and the Spatialization of Political Thought

For several years now, commentators have been pondering "the end of Western hegemonies."[1] It is a hallmark of the discourse on "the West," however, that the concept proves useful even, and perhaps especially, when commentators lament its decline. As Oswald Spengler's 1918 bestseller *The Decline of the West* indicates, the history of "the West" has always also been the story of a never-ending end.[2]

Books abound that see a "post-Western world" on the horizon, the "end of American world order," and a global future that is Asian rather than "Western."[3] There has, moreover, been abundant commentary on the rise of an "America First" mantra that questions the role of NATO, and that pits America against the notion of a "Western value community." Commentators describe a rise of populism and US unilateralism, and see the post-1945 settlement of the transatlantic order severely undermined.[4] When turning to Russia, one is bound to encounter Alexander Dugin's geopolitical vision of Neo-Eurasianism, squarely directed against Anglo-America's "thalassocratic" (maritime) sphere and its "liquid" civilization. "The collective

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[1] "The End of Western Hegemonies?" The 2nd International Conference by The West Network, June 5–7, 2019, University of Jyväskylä. Accessed November 19, 2024. https://thewestnetwork.wordpress.com/2019-conference/; see also Marie-Josée Lavallée, ed., *The End of Western Hegemonies* (Wilmington, 2022).

[2] It should be noted, however, that the conceptual nuances of the German work (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, 1918–1922) are lost in the English translation: Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, 2 vols. (New York, 1926–1928). As the title indicates, it employs the more open, multifaceted expression "the West," rather than "Occident," for the term *Abendland.*

[3] Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2018; first published 2014); Parag Khanna, *The Future is Asian: Global Order in the Twenty-First Century* (London, 2019); Charles A. Kupchan, *No One's World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn* (Oxford, 2012); Oliver Stuenkel, *Post-Western World: How Emerging Powers Are Remaking Global Order* (Cambridge, 2016); Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World and the Rise of the Rest*, rev. ed. (London, 2011; first published 2008).

[4] The literature on this is vast. See, pars pro toto, Marko Lehti, Henna-Riikka Pennanen, and Jukka Jouhki, eds., *Contestations of Liberal Order: The West in Crisis?* (Cham, 2020); see also Jean-François Drolet and Michael C. Williams, "America First: Paleoconservatism and the Ideological Struggle for the American Right," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 25 (2020), 28–50.

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-002

West," meanwhile, has been identified as Russia's main enemy by Vladimir Putin's increasingly dictatorial regime.[5] At the same time, it is worth recalling the rather close ties between the Russian government and the Donald Trump campaign in the context of the 2016 US election. In his gloomy analysis *The Road to Unfreedom*, historian of East-Central Europe Timothy Snyder quotes a Russian politician hoping that "Trump can lead the Western locomotive right off the rails" – a telling statement that also reveals the intimate connection between the idea of the West, notions of progress, and philosophies of history. Snyder, of course, sees Putinesque demons rather than a Hegelian world spirit wandering from east to west.[6]

Under the subsequent US administration, to be sure, Putin's rallying cry against "the collective West" was answered in no uncertain terms by Joe Biden's memorable outburst: "For God's sake, this man cannot remain in power." As he made clear in his Warsaw speech of March 26, 2022, Biden viewed the Russo-Ukrainian war as a "battle between democracy and autocracy. Between liberty and repression. Between a rules-based order and one governed by brute force." Putin was depicted as "taking Russia back to the 19th century" (another characteristic historical-philosophical trope), and "rather than driving NATO apart," Biden declared, "the West is now stronger and more united than it has ever been."[7] In fact, there is little doubt that NATO has found itself revivified by the war in Ukraine, and that it has been given a new lease of life. While the implications for the alliance of Trump's return to the White House are still unclear at the time of writing, its eastern flank has been reinforced by new members Finland and

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[5] Irina Kotkina, "Geopolitical Imagination and Popular Geopolitics between the Eurasian Union and *Russkii Mir*," in Mark Bassin and Gonzalo Pozo, eds., *The Politics of Eurasianism: Identity, Popular Culture and Russia's Foreign Policy* (London, 2017), 59 – 78, here especially 66; Marlene Laruelle, "Alexander Dugin and Eurasianism," in Mark Sedgwick, ed., *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy* (Oxford, 2019), 155 – 169, here 160; on the Russian concept "the collective West" see the media analysis by Ekaterina Chimiris, "The Collective West Concept and Selected Western Actors (Germany, Norway, Estonia, NATO) in the Russian Media: Post-Crimea Dynamics," *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: (F) Political Science* 22/1 (2022).

[6] Timothy Snyder, *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (London, 2018), 11, 218. Of course, the report by Robert Mueller, appointed as special counsel for the US Justice Department, did not conclusively establish "that the Campaign coordinated or conspired with the Russian government in its election-interference activities." *Report on the Investigation into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election* (Washington D.C., 2019), 173. Accessed November 19, 2024. https://www.justice.gov/storage/report.pdf.

[7] "Remarks by President Biden on the United Efforts of the Free World to Support the People of Ukraine," Warsaw, March 26, 2022. Accessed November 19, 2024. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/03/26/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-united-efforts-of-the-free-world-to-support-the-people-of-ukraine/.

Sweden, the latter's accession (initially opposed by Turkey) ending a 200-year period of neutrality. Judging by the political discourse and media commentary since the start of Putin's invasion of Ukraine, "the West" seems very much alive. It figures as a distinct geopolitical entity that, however amorphous its borders, thinks and acts. It is said to impose sanctions and deliver arms. Commentators may debate the degree to which it stands strong and united – but that "it" not only exists but also matters as a key actor in current world affairs is rarely questioned.[8]

The editors of this volume, too, point to the renewed urgency of the idea of the West in current areas of debate. They also, however, stress the need to create a distance from current tropes to facilitate critical reflection. As we are surrounded by "West"-centered rhetoric, and find ourselves subjected to it almost on a daily basis, this is no easy task. Given the all too familiar, casual, and ubiquitous references to "the West," an additional effort of defamiliarization is required to gain sufficient distance from patterns of interpretation that dominate public discourse. As the title of this chapter suggests, the strategy of defamiliarization adopted here is primarily informed by the history of concepts (*Begriffsgeschichte*). Typically, this examines the shifting meanings of concepts over time, both as a mirror and driver of social change.[9]

From the perspective of the history of concepts, the renewed prominence of "the West" as a socio-political concept is closely intertwined with the self-assertion of anti-Western alterities, that is the prominence and distinctiveness of "the Other." This "Other" may come in various shapes and forms. In the twenty-first century, anti-Western alterities have emerged in the form of militant Islamism, Russian imperialism, and China as an emerging dictatorial superpower. In a post–Cold War environment where the former antonym, Soviet Communism, is gone, these alterities have proven robust enough to keep "the West" alive. With the war in Ukraine, this is felt particularly strongly.

Indeed, the greatest threat to "the West" as a socio-political concept is the lack of any threat. It does tend to be in fashion when confronted with "internal" or "external" threats that are framed or at least perceived as anti-"Western." The concept is most commonly evoked in situations of international conflicts, crises, and wars: especially when arguments can be made about the inner political cohesion of foreign policy alliances – along the lines of, for instance, "liberal democracies" fighting autocratic regimes. This has been the case since the early nineteenth century when the directional concept "the west" (with a small letter) transformed into a socio-political concept (with a capital letter), and when a geographical direction became temporalized space: moving westward came to mean moving forward – historically, politically, socially. There has been a particularly long tradition of a "West" versus Russia discourse: from Petr Chaadaev's Russian oppositional critique that Nicholas I's crushing of the Decembrists' uprising of 1825 was "setting us back half a century" (Biden's Warsaw speech offers an interesting parallel here), to the Polish November Uprising of 1830–1831 and the Crimean War of 1853–1856, to today's war in Ukraine.[10] There clearly have been phases of more or less active talk about "the West," which mark its changing fortunes, and the ups and downs of a "career," in *Begriffsgeschichte* terms. On the whole, however, "the West" has continued to be a prominent point of reference and effective framing device in contemporary political debate and the wider public sphere.

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[8] For a rare exception in political commentary, see Christoph Heusgen, *Führung und Verantwortung: Angela Merkels Außenpolitik und Deutschlands künftige Rolle in der Welt* (Munich, 2023), 216–217; see also the interview with Christoph Heusgen in *Der Spiegel*, 38/2021, September 17, 2021: "I have actually struck the concept of 'the West' from my vocabulary."

[9] The classic reference is Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main, 1979); as well as Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, 8 vols. (Stuttgart, 1972–2004). Parts of this chapter are based on research conducted with Martina Steber. See Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Steber, eds., *Germany and "the West": The History of a Modern Concept* (New York and Oxford, 2015); Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Steber, eds., *Zivilisatorische Verortungen: Der "Westen" an der Jahrhundertwende (1880–1930)* (Berlin and Boston, 2018).

Things have been slightly different in the *academic* sphere. For a number of years, scholars have questioned the intellectual validity of "the West" – as an analytical concept that refers to a group of countries, or a civilization, and that conveys social norms, political beliefs, civilizational identities, and a way of life. "The West" as an "intelligible unit of historical study" (to use Arnold Toynbee's famous expression) has been losing intellectual purchase.[11] There has been a growing uncertainty about its political contours, cultural identity, and epistemological status: Is there actually such a thing as "the West", or is it nothing but a mirage? The reasons for this are manifold, but among them the end of the Cold War looms large. This is because it gave rise to a renewed sense of geo-historical contingency. It resensitized scholars to the historical conditionality of geopolitical constellations. Of course, interrogating and thinking beyond Cold War bipolarity had been possible before the wall came down in 1989. Nonetheless, what human geographer Derek Gregory has called the "disclosure of […] taken-for-granted geographical imaginaries" certainly became easier without the discursive straitjackets of the Cold War.[12] To be sure, one of Gregory's intellectual mentors, the literary critic Edward Said, had already engaged with "imaginative geographies" as early as the 1970s, in his studies on "Orientalism."[13] Both postcolonialism and postmodernism, alongside other strands of the "cultural turn," had begun to undermine the appeal of formerly unquestioned assumptions about "the West" before the Iron Curtain was torn apart. And yet, it was not until the 1990s that a critical mass of scholars, hailing from various disciplines, turned their eyes to spatial imaginaries such as "the West," "Eastern Europe," and "the Third World."[14] The West became a "West" in quotation marks. Rather than a category of analysis, it became an object of enquiry – to be interrogated and historicized.

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[10] Petr Iakovlevich Chaadaev, "First [Philosophical] Letter" (1 December 1829), in *Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology*, with an Introduction by Isaiah Berlin, ed. Marc Raeff (New York, 1966), 167; for a more sustained analysis see Riccardo Bavaj, "'The West': A Conceptual Exploration," *Europäische Geschichte Online*, November 21, 2011. Accessed November 19, 2024. http://www.ieg-ego.eu/bavajr-2011-en.

[11] Arnold J. Toynbee, "The Unit of Historical Study" (1934), in Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, ed. David C. Somervell (Oxford, 1946), 1–11.

In this vein, the chapter proceeds as follows: It *first* highlights some of the key fault lines and issues at stake in more recent debates on "the West," starting with a few examples of Western self-assertion and attempts to stabilize "Western identity," which will then be contrasted with self-positionings "beyond the West" and attempts to dismantle the "Western paradigm." *Second*, and more central to the chapter, it will outline an analytical framework that may help explore discourses on the West more systematically. For purposes of illustration, it will be drawing, by way of example, on the work of the most prominent intellectual advocate of "the West" in Germany, Heinrich August Winkler (b. 1938). *Third*, and finally, the chapter will move further back in time and investigate – again from the perspective of the history of concepts – the "Westernization" of the political thought of German rémigré intellectual Richard Löwenthal (1908–1991), who was to prove influential in the formation of Winkler's historical and political thought.

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[12] Derek Gregory, "Geographical Imaginary," in *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, ed. Derek Gregory et al., 5th ed. (Malden, 2009).

[13] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, rev. ed. (London, 2003; first published 1978); Edward W. Said, "Orientalism," *The Georgia Review* 31 (Spring 1977), 162–206 (part 1: "Imaginative Geography and Its Representations").

[14] See in particular Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, 1995); Christopher GoGwilt, *The Invention of the West: Joseph Conrad and the Double-Mapping of Europe and Empire* (Stanford, 1995); Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, 1994); see also Derek Gregory, "Imaginative Geographies," *Progress in Human Geography* 19 (1995), 447–485.

Western Self-Assertions, and Self-Positionings “beyond the West”

There is an extensive literature that is committed to stabilizing “Western identity.” A few book titles may suffice to illustrate this, which all point in a similar direction – for instance *The Uniqueness of Western Civilization*, *Rebooting the West*, *How the West Won*, or *The Fate of the West: The Battle to Save the World’s Most Successful Political Idea.* And we also have Joseph Henrich’s recent account of “how the West became psychologically peculiar and particularly prosperous,” which at the very least may win the prize for a catchy acronym: “WEIRD” – meaning here “Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic.” All these books seek to boost “Western” confidence and self-assurance at a time when, for one reason or another, “the West” is seen under threat.[15]

One of the most vocal supporters of the project to “reboot” the West is the British-American historian, political adviser, and media star Niall Ferguson. Ferguson laments what he calls the “pusillanimity” of “Westerners.” They are, he says, beset by nagging self-doubts and a value-relativism instilled by a postmodern, postcolonial questioning of “Western paradigms,” and are, therefore, unfit for the political and economic challenges of the day. Ferguson is a master of knowledge transfer, keen to reach a younger audience, and in his 2011 book *Civilization* he outlines “six killer apps of Western power.” These killer apps, he claims, were instrumental in “the West’s” rise to world dominance. At a time when “Resterners” have downloaded most of “the West’s” killer apps, heralding the end of the Western era, Ferguson’s message to “Westerners” places great emphasis on reactivating killer app number six, the Weberian work ethic, which provides the “moral framework” for “Western civilization.” In a nutshell, “Westerners” should pray more and work harder.[16]

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[15] Joseph Henrich, *The WEIRDest People in the World: How the West Became Psychologically Peculiar and Particularly Prosperous* (London, 2020); Ricardo Duchesne, *The Uniqueness of Western Civilization* (Leiden, 2011); Christopher Coker, *Rebooting the West: The US, Europe and the Future of the Western Alliance* (Abingdon, 2009); Rodney Stark, *How the West Won: The Neglected Story of the Triumph of Modernity* (Wilmington, 2014); Bill Emmott, *The Fate of the West: The Battle to Save the World’s Most Successful Political Idea* (London, 2017).

[16] Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The Six Killer Apps of Western Power*, rev. ed. (London, 2012; first published as *The West and the Rest*, 2011), 13, 256 – 294; see also the “documentary” *The Fight of Our Lives: Defeating the Ideological War Against the West* (2019), which features Niall Ferguson and others.

At the same time, cosmopolitan self-positionings "beyond the West" cast doubt on "the West's" status as a historical-cultural entity. The West, it is posited, has lost much of its intellectual plausibility. In his 2016 Reith Lectures, philosopher and cultural theorist Kwame Anthony Appiah debunked the whole idea of "the West," and stated: "There is no such thing as western civilization." Particularly, Appiah argues against any claims of exclusive ownership over so-called "Western values" – both because of the global exchange and cross-fertilization of ideas and because of the exclusionary effects of "Western" identity rhetoric. "The real problem," he points out, "isn't that it's difficult to decide who owns culture; it's that the very idea of ownership is the wrong model." Appiah is a prominent example of a broad strand of part-cosmopolitan, part-postcolonial literature, which radically questions the epistemological status of the West.[17]

A less cosmopolitan and more forcefully postcolonial critique of "the West" has been offered by Indian writer and intellectual Pankaj Mishra – especially in his books *Age of Anger* (2017) and *From the Ruins of Empire* (2012). *From the Ruins of Empire* reminds readers of the critique of European colonialism, which was formulated by Asian intellectuals around the turn of the century. Even before publishing these two books, he had already caused a stir by attacking Niall Ferguson's "killer app" book in a long article in the *London Review of Books* – something that Ferguson answered with threats of a libel suit.[18] Mishra's "West" is, above all, a colonial actor and a space of social inequality: "Democracy," he writes, "Anglo-America's main ideological export and the mainstay of its moral prestige, has never been what it was cracked up to be." As can be gleaned from this quotation, Mishra's "West" primarily refers to Britain and the United States, which he both also subjected to a trenchant critique during the first wave of the COVID crisis. Germany, by contrast, in a postcolonial version of a *positive* German *Sonderweg*, was praised as a haven of social security: "Even the bleakest account of the German-invented social state seems a more useful guide to the world to come than moist-eyed histories of Anglo-America's engines of universal progress." Mishra clearly articulates a democratic stance "beyond the West," but the polemical thrust of his commentary is framed in such a way that is squarely directed *against* “the West,” thus falling into the very rhetorical trap that Appiah identifies.[19]

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[17] "Kwame Anthony Appiah on 'Western civilization'": The Reith Lectures (2016). Accessed November 19, 2024. https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b081lkkj. The lectures have been published under the fitting title *The Lies That Bind*, and can be read as an answer to Niall Ferguson's Reith Lectures from 2012, which had warned against a "degeneration" of "Western societies." Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity* (London, 2018), ch. 6: "Culture" (187–219; quotations at 208, 218).

[18] See Pankaj Mishra, "Watch this Man," *London Review of Books*, November 3, 2011; Niall Ferguson, "Letter," and Pankaj Mishra, "Reply," *London Review of Books*, November 17, 2011; Niall Ferguson, "Letter," and Pankaj Mishra, "Reply," *London Review of Books*, December 1, 2011.

When considering current debates on “the West” more generally, one can discern two types of conflict: *first* between advocates and opponents of a “liberal-democratic West,” where both sides accept “the West” as a socio-political entity but with one side challenging and the other defending it (e.g. Putin vs. Biden, 2022–2024), and *second* between supporters and critics of “the West” on the one hand, and, on the other, cosmopolitan or postcolonial self-positionings “beyond the West” (such as Appiah’s). If seeking to analyze these conflicts and make the process of “Western” identity-shaping as well as contesting “Western” identity an object of enquiry, it is worth dwelling on two aspects, which are crucial for an analysis of “the West” from the perspective of the history of concepts. This leads to the second part of the chapter.

An Analytical Framework and Heinrich August Winkler’s *History of the West*

This section will first explore two semantic dimensions of the concept of the West, and will then examine the function, appeal, and usefulness of this concept. In the discourse on “the West,” there is often a tension at play between an open-ended evolutionary concept and a spatially confined container concept. The evolutionary concept implies a universal trajectory and a standard of civilizational progress – in terms of social norms, technical advance, economic development, and political values – that, in principle, is attainable by any part of the world. The underlying assumption is that universal progress originates in the West, with a special emphasis on the “Atlantic Revolutions” of the late eighteenth century, and a cluster of norms and ideas centered on human rights, the rule of law, separation of powers, and parliamentary democracy, but that at some point in the future “the West” may be (almost) everywhere.[20]

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[19] Pankaj Mishra, “Flailing States,” *London Review of Books*, November 16, 2020; Pankaj Mishra, “The Liberal Establishment Is ‘a Stranger to Self-Examination’,” *The Nation*, November 23, 2020; Pankaj Mishra, “Grand Illusions,” *The New York Review of Books*, November 19, 2020; see also Pankaj Mishra, *Bland Fanatics: Liberals, Race and Empire* (London and New York, 2020), esp. 1–15; Pankaj Mishra, *Age of Anger: A History of the Present* (London, 2017); Pankaj Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Intellectuals Who Remade Asia* (New York, 2012); as well as Pankaj Mishra, “Das Reich der Mitte: Warum Deutschland nicht länger auf dem Weg nach Westen schlafwandeln sollte,” *Der Spiegel*, 4/2023, January 21, 2023: “Germany […] should no longer be sleepwalking on the road to the West.”

This evolutionary concept of “the West” conveys meanings of temporalized space, or what some human geographers call “TimeSpace.”[21] This is most obvious in terms such as “Westernization,” where the temporal component is built into the concept, but it is also evident from statements such as Hegel’s (alluded to at the start of this chapter) that “world history” is travelling “from east to west”: “for Europe is the absolute end of history, just as Asia is the beginning.”[22] The key message of this temporalization of space is, as mentioned above, that “moving westward” means “moving forward.” The container concept is, instead, largely defined along cultural, religious, linguistic, and also ethnic lines. It is therefore constituted by features that, even in principle, are much less universalizable. This concept implies a plurality of civilizations with different trajectories and only a limited degree of convergence (if any).[23]

To illustrate the tension between the evolutionary and the container concept of the West, I will now turn to what is the main work in German scholarship on the subject, namely Heinrich August Winkler’s four-volume *The History of the West.* Winkler, emeritus professor at the Humboldt University in Berlin, has long left the proverbial “ivory tower,” and his target area has been the wider intellectual field where citizens search for political guidance and moral leadership. Political education has been the primary impetus of Winkler’s work, especially since Germany’s reunification. It is no wonder that Winkler, as an intellectual, frequently speaks out on matters of general concern such as European integration, Russia’s annexation of Crimea, and the war in Ukraine. The political implications of Winkler’s work are obvious, and he himself makes no bones about the normative angle of his scholarship.

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[20] See especially Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London, 1992); R.R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution. A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800* (Princeton, 1959); see also Paul Nolte, “Westen ist überall: Der Anspruch auf Menschenrechte, Freiheit und Demokratie gilt universell,” *Die Politische Meinung* 58 (2013), no. 523, 34–39.

[21] Jon May and Nigel Thrift, eds., *TimeSpace: Geographies of Temporality* (London and New York, 2001).

[22] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. Introduction: Reason in History*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge, 1975), 197. These lectures were originally given between 1822 and 1830.

[23] See above all Samuel P. Huntington, “The West: Unique, Not Universal,” *Foreign Affairs* 75 (1996), no. 6, 28–46; Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, 1996); see also Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, “How to Think about Civilizations,” in *Civilizations in World Politics: Plural and Pluralist Perspectives*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (London and New York, 2010), 176–200.

Winkler's *History of the West* was published between 2009 and 2015 and runs to more than 4,500 pages. More recently, it has been complemented by a follow-up volume on a crisis-ridden present and an up-to-date summary, bringing the total to nearly 6,000 pages.[24] Before that, he had published the two-volume bestseller *Germany's Long Road West*, kept to just under 1,500 pages, which became a defining work for a unified Germany ten years after its reunification. *Germany's Long Road West* quickly gained the status of a master narrative for the new Berlin Republic.[25]

The pivot of Winkler's story is what he calls the "normative project of the West." This "West" is defined as an evolutionary concept centering on the American Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789). The norms of this project are mainly derived from ideas advanced by these two "Atlantic Revolutions," as outlined above. Winkler's *History of the West* is both the story of the emergence of this cluster of "Western values" and the story of their appropriation, rejection or violation. While critics of *Germany's Long Road West* had been quick to point out that Winkler had reviewed German history against the ahistorical yardstick of an idealized West, he now followed the French, British and Americans, too, on their circuitous paths to "the West" – through the muddy waters of imperialism, racism and slavery. The "Westernization of the West," he declares, was a process marked by "non-simultaneity" (*Ungleichzeitigkeit*) – some became Westernized faster than others – and there were many contradictions between "project" and "practice" on the way.[26] (The "Western project" itself, however, remains unblemished. Winkler's "West" leaves little room for the dialectics of the Enlightenment.)

As can be inferred from Winkler's notion of a "Westernization of the West," the term "the West" carries various meanings. It refers not only to a "normative project," evolutionary and ever-evolving, but also to a geographical region preceding this project. There was a West before "the West." This West is presented as a religiously defined container space. Winkler's historical West is defined as that part of Europe where Latin Christianity held sway, and it ends where the influence of the Orthodox Church begins. In Winkler's liberal understanding of the historical West, it is the separation between religious and secular powers that was critical to

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24 Heinrich August Winkler, *Geschichte des Westens*, 4 vols. (Munich, 2009 – 2015); Heinrich August Winkler, *Zerbricht der Westen? Über die gegenwärtige Krise in Europa und Amerika* (Munich, 2017); Heinrich August Winkler, *Werte und Mächte: Eine Geschichte der westlichen Welt* (Munich, 2019). The following draws, in part, on my review in *sehepunkte* 22, no. 2 (2022). Accessed November 19, 2024. http://www.sehepunkte.de/2022/02/26764.html.

25 Heinrich August Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2006 – 2007; originally published in German as *Der lange Weg nach Westen* in 2000).

26 Winkler, *Geschichte des Westens* 1, 21.

Western evolution – an essential precondition for the development of individual freedom. The West, as a historical-geographical entity, paved the way for "the West" – the normative project.

The crucial point to make here is that the conflation of evolutionary and container concept leads to limitations of the universalizability of "Western ideas." Sometimes, the drawing of civilizational boundaries remains implicit, and works more like an unspoken assumption; sometimes, it is made explicit, not least in Winkler's political commentary. It is those dynamics of exclusion, which are built into Western container-space rhetoric, that are criticized from postcolonial and cosmopolitan perspectives – perspectives "beyond the West." Critics take exception to the exclusive link that is made between space and idea – for instance, when people are referring to "Western democracy." Worth bearing in mind is that both conceptual variants, evolutionary and container, are not mutually exclusive, but often coexist in varying degrees of conflation, which create tensions between the West's universality and Western particularities.

This leads to the second aspect of this section: the function, appeal, and usefulness of the concept. "The West" is not only a cipher for political values, cultural norms, and religious traditions. It is also an effective rhetorical tool to mobilize people for a cause, to fight for a political agenda, and to forge national, as well as transnational, identities. An important part of this dynamic is the spatiality of the concept. One needs to take seriously that "the West" is a spatial concept. This may be an obvious point to make, but it is one often left underexplored. Spatial concepts – once they metamorphose into socio-political ones (and as mentioned above, for "the West" this happened in the early nineteenth century) – are distinct from non-spatial ones in their specific ability to reduce complexity, create orientation, and shape identities. By "specific ability" I mean the homogenization of space. Spatial concepts create orientation and shape identities through spatial homogenization. They evoke an "imagined community" (in Benedict Anderson's phrase), and create a sense of cultural, historical, and ideological cohesion, which is attached to a certain geographical area. Sometimes, the boundaries of this area are defined very clearly; often they are amorphous, and they also tend to shift over time.[27]

Once again, Winkler's *History of the West* provides a good example. The creation of this multi-volume monument is a performative act to anchor Germany firmly in the imagined community of the West – that is, in a community defined by liberal-democratic, pluralist values. This is the political rationale for producing such a work in the first place. Germans should care about the West because they belong to it. That is the central message no German is supposed to miss when browsing in the bookshop. After centuries of fateful deviation from the Western norm, climaxing in Nazism and the Holocaust, Germans have finally arrived in the Western haven – and Winkler has written nearly six thousand pages to make sure no one ever forgets. The English-language book market has, of course, been liberally supplied with histories of the West for more than a century – in the United States since the introduction of the "Western Civ." curriculum in the aftermath of the First World War – but Winkler's *History of the West* has been the first of its kind written for a German audience. Like his bestseller *Germany's Long Road West*, this work explains to German citizens who they are, where they come from, and, most importantly, where their commitments lie.[28]

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[27] See Konrad Lawson, Riccardo Bavaj, and Bernhard Struck, *A Guide to Spatial History: Areas, Aspects, and Avenues of Research* (Olsokhagen, 2021). Accessed November 19, 2024. https://spatialhistory.net/guide/, chapter 6: "Spatial Imaginaries."

Another key purpose of Winkler's *History of the West* is to remind Germans of the country that has acted as a main driving force behind what he calls the "normative project of the West," namely the United States. The cover image of the second volume of his *History of the West*, which culminates in the Allied victory over Germany in 1945, aptly visualizes this aspect of Winkler's message: "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima," the historic photograph showing five US marines and a navy corpsman raising the American flag on a Japanese island in February 1945, has been one of America's most popular icons – and works here as a symbol for Winkler's message that "Western values" are grounded not only in Western European but also in American history.[29]

"The West," in other words, creates a space of imagination, in which milestones of US intellectual and constitutional history – such as the *Declaration of Independence* and the *Bill of Rights* – can be conceived as "one's own," that is, as part of the intellectual foundation of German citizens. The spatial concept of the West works as a bridge that not only connects one body politic with another, but that facilitates the formation of liberal-democratic, pluralist subjectivities. The key function is the internalization of political values through the self-positioning on a mental map that is oriented to the west: political identity formation through spatial homogenization.

While Winkler is the first to write a *History of the West* in Germany, he follows in a tradition of previous German Westernizers. His scholarship and intellectual commitments reflect the legacy of a whole tradition of “Western” missionaries, so to speak, who all left their traces in his work. This leads to the third and final part of the chapter.

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[28] See also Heinrich August Winkler, *Wie wir wurden, was wir sind: Eine kurze Geschichte der Deutschen* (Munich, 2020).

[29] See Jost Dülffer, "Über-Helden – Das Bild von Iwo Jima in der Repräsentation des Sieges: Eine Studie zur US-amerikanischen Erinnerungskultur seit 1945," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 3 (2006), no. 2, 247–272.

Richard Löwenthal and the Spatialization of Political Thought

When historians embark on the historicization of “the West,” they rarely address the question of when, how, and why certain historical actors adopt this concept. This question is, however, important if historians are to gauge its appeal and usefulness in public discourse. My case study focusses on Richard Löwenthal, who emigrated in the 1930s and returned to Germany after the war. Through the course of exile and return, he first transformed into an ardent supporter of “Western democracy” before embarking on his mission to “Westernize” the Federal Republic’s political culture. “Westernizing” refers here to the incorporation of West Germany into a “value community” *called* “the West.” This value-based incorporation was to go far beyond so-called *Westbindung*, the integration with NATO. It was to drag German society away from what was perceived as the murky currents of a “German special consciousness” characterized by authoritarian statism, anti-democratic nationalism, and the ideal of an apolitical government that would represent an allegedly homogenous, organic body politic called “the people” – in short, beliefs that were deemed to have fuelled Nazism’s “revolt against the West”.[30]

I will address two guiding questions in this final part of the chapter: In what ways did Löwenthal’s political thought spatialize, that is, incorporate and modify spatio-political frameworks, and which spatial contexts were key to this transformation? First of all, however, a few facts about Richard Löwenthal: He was born in 1908, studied law and economics, and in 1926 joined the Communist Party, but was ostracized a few years later because he did not toe the new party line that declared “social fascism” to be the party’s “main enemy.” In 1933, he joined a left-socialist resistance group called New Beginning (*Neu Beginnen*). He soon had to leave Germany and spent most of his exile in London, where he started working for the news agency *Reuters* and was later hired by the liberal weekly *The Observer.* In 1947, he became a British citizen. In 1961, he was appointed Professor of International Relations at the Free University Berlin, with a strong emphasis on world Communism.[31]

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[30] Richard Löwenthal, *Social Change and Cultural Crisis* (New York, 1984), 33 (“revolt against the West”); see, in this context, the following important studies: Julia Angster, *Konsenskapitalismus und Sozialdemokratie: Die Westernisierung von SPD und DGB* (Munich, 2003); Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Wie westlich sind die Deutschen? Amerikanisierung und Westernisierung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1999); Michael Hochgeschwender, *Freiheit in der Offensive? Der Kongress für kulturelle Freiheit und die Deutschen* (Munich, 1998).

Löwenthal's path to "the West" was long and circuitous. He started off as the member of a Communist student association in the Weimar Republic, and found himself signing up, in 1950, as a founding member of the Congress for Cultural Freedom – a decidedly anti-Communist organization, and a major conduit of transatlantic cultural transfer that spread ideas of Cold War liberalism and "Western Civilization." How can we account for this intellectual transformation? Three factors stand out: first, the shock waves sent out by the Soviet Union; second, the specific circumstances of Löwenthal's time in exile; and third, the emerging spatial logic of the Cold War in 1946–47.

Typical of many Communist and left-socialist intellectuals, Löwenthal became increasingly disenchanted with the social experiment of the Soviet Union's Communist Party. While, in 1936, he still praised the Soviet Union as a "tremendously progressive state […] freed from the fetters of capitalism,"[32] he increasingly castigated the "totalitarian degeneration" of Stalin's dictatorship.[33] His critical stance to the Soviet Union, however, did not lead to the embrace of a system of parliamentary government nor did it include a more conciliatory attitude towards capitalism. It was not until the second half of the war that he gradually abandoned his belief in a proletarian dictatorship as essential prerequisite of socialism.

Emigration studies have stressed the importance of acculturation, that is, the transformation of norms and beliefs through cultural contacts.[34] Richard Löwenthal provides a good example of this process. From the middle of the Second World War, he became a regular contributor to *Tribune*, Labour's independent weekly, and he also joined the newly founded International Bureau of the Fabian Society, a forum of intellectual exchange, to which he remained committed for many years to come. By the end of the war, however, Löwenthal had not yet fallen for "the West." In his book *Beyond Capitalism* (which came out in early 1947), he demanded the formation of a socialist Europe as a "third force" situated between the two world powers of “East” and “West.”[35] This demand was firmly rooted in previous socialist discussions and was part of several schemes of a European “third force,” which were popping up like mushrooms in various political camps following the end of the war.[36]

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[31] For a more extensive discussion, with further references, see Riccardo Bavaj, "Cold War Liberalism in West Germany: Richard Löwenthal and 'Western Civilization'," *History of European Ideas* 49 (2023), 607–624.

[32] Ernst [Richard Löwenthal], "Stand und Tendenzen der Sowjetökonomik" (November 25, 1936), in Richard Löwenthal, *Faschismus – Bolschewismus – Totalitarismus: Schriften zur Weltanschauungsdiktatur im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Mike Schmeitzner (Göttingen, 2009), 166.

[33] Paul Sering [Richard Löwenthal], "Zwanzig Jahre Kommunistische Internationale" (March 11 and 25, 1939), in Löwenthal, *Faschismus – Bolschewismus – Totalitarismus*, 197.

[34] See in particular Angster, *Konsenskapitalismus und Sozialdemokratie.*

The more evidently the binary logic of the Cold War began to crystallize, however, the less plausible these schemes became. His adaptation to the new realities of international relations manifested itself in an article he wrote for *Tribune* in October 1947, which he concluded by stating that “Communist intransigence” was forcing socialists to confine their work to the “Marshall sphere” and “to act as a progressive force within the Western World rather than as an independent third entity trying to mediate between the forces of West and East.”[37] Already in a letter from December 1946 he had pointed out that the conception of a “third force,” while envisioning a Germany independent of all occupation powers, did not imply neutrality between “East” and “West,” as long as “West” meant “democratic Europe”: “Germany is part of Europe, namely a Europe to which Russia does not belong.”[38] Here already, we see signs of a container-space rhetoric that would become characteristic of Löwenthal’s spatio-political framework. As he put it in another letter, Russia had maneuvered itself into the “dead end of world history,” while America had the potential to develop in all directions.[39] As so often in the conceptual history of “the West,” it was the increasing antagonism towards Russia that contributed to a westward shift of spatio-political imaginations.

Löwenthal had certainly arrived in “the West.” His concept of the West, however, was not static but dynamic, and provided a cipher for various visions of the future. His use of the concept was certainly characterized by container-space rhetoric, but his “West” was, as it were, a container on the move. Later he even highlighted this inner dynamic of “Western civilization,” its specific evolutionary temporality, as its defining feature. He would bring to bear a previously dormant facet of his intellectual socialization at the University of Heidelberg, as his writings on “Western civilization" would owe much to Max Weber's theory of Occidental rationalization and the Protestant ethic of capitalism (in its revised form of 1920, which drew explicitly on "Occidental" rhetoric).[40] Löwenthal was influenced, moreover, by the British historian Arnold Toynbee, who reached the height of his fame in the early Cold War years – at a time when the frequency of references to "Western civilization" soared.[41] Toynbee's gargantuan, multi-volume study of world civilizations, which to this day has remained unmatched (though certainly not unchallenged), elaborated the view that "Western civilization," alongside twenty or so other civilizations in world history, was, as mentioned above, an "intelligible unit of historical study" – a statement that was repeatedly quoted by Löwenthal.

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[35] Paul Sering [Richard Löwenthal], *Jenseits des Kapitalismus: Ein Beitrag zur sozialistischen Neuorientierung* (Lauf bei Nürnberg, 1946 [published 1947]), 247, 251, 256 – 257.

[36] See Christian Bailey, *Between Yesterday and Tomorrow: German Visions of Europe, 1926 – 1950* (New York and Oxford, 2013); Rainer Behring, *Demokratische Außenpolitik für Deutschland: Die außenpolitischen Vorstellungen deutscher Sozialdemokraten im Exil 1933 – 1945* (Düsseldorf, 1999); see also Terence Renaud, *New Lefts: The Making of a Radical Tradition* (Princeton and Oxford, 2021), 183 – 193.

[37] Paul Sering [Richard Löwenthal], “The Exhumation of the Comintern,” *Tribune*, no. 561, October 10, 1947, 8.

[38] “Richard Löwenthal to Waldemar von Knoeringen, 30 December 1946,” Archiv der sozialen Demokratie der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (AsD), Waldemar von Knoeringen Papers, vol. 84.

[39] “Richard Löwenthal to Karl B. Frank, 18 October 1947,” AsD, Richard Löwenthal Papers, vol. 4.

When he – and that is the final point of this chapter – tried to make sense of the rapid transformation of industrially advanced pluralist societies from the mid- and late 1960s, he resorted to a political language that was shot through with Toynbeean notions of "rhythms," "crises," and "breakdowns" of civilizations. From that time on, it was his mantra that "the West" was facing a "cultural crisis," a situation of collective anomie. For him, the disaffection of the "young Western intelligentsia" with parliamentary democracy in 1968 was merely an epiphenomenon of a "long-term cultural crisis." He was particularly worried about "West-wide phenomena" such as a decline in work ethic, which in his view pointed to severe problems in identity formation. Far more serious than the abstract sloganeering of a "Great Refusal" (Herbert Marcuse) during the student revolt, these symptoms of social "decay" revealed a serious "cultural crisis" that undermined the authority of "Western" institutions.[42]

Löwenthal's central goal was to preserve the system of liberal, parliamentary democracy through stabilizing an identity "nested" in the narrative community of "Western civilization."[43] The language of "Western civilization," closely intertwined since the nineteenth century with notions of progress, liberty, and reason, was an effective way of negotiating fundamental values and the future of pluralist societies. At the same time, he deployed the "Western crisis" rhetoric as a means to create a sense of urgency – not too different from more recent examples of Western self-assertion and attempts to stabilize “Western” identity. Like these examples, the case of Löwenthal shows that the history of “the West” has always also been the story of a never-ending end.

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[40] See Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, vol. 1, 9th ed. (Tübingen, 1988; first published 1920), especially 1–16.

[41] See Philipp Sarasin, "Die Grenze des 'Abendlandes' als Diskursmuster im Kalten Krieg: Eine Skizze," in *Das Imaginäre des Kalten Krieges*, ed. David Eugster and Sibylle Marti (Essen, 2015), 38.

[42] Richard Löwenthal, "Die Intellektuellen zwischen Gesellschaftswandel und Kulturkrise," in Richard Löwenthal, *Gesellschaftswandel und Kulturkrise: Zukunftsprobleme der westlichen Demokratien* (Frankfurt am Main, 1979), 29–30.

[43] Guntram H. Herb and David H. Kaplan, eds., *Nested Identities: Nationalism, Territory, and Scale* (Lanham, 1999).

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Bernhard Hemetsberger

The Best in the West? The “West” in and as School Crisis Narratives

Competing with each other, surpassing one another, or at least cutting a good figure compared to others, are deeply human incentives that operate well beyond the arena of sports. They require *inter alia* concepts of competition, self and alterity, and a set of gradual differences of comparable similarities. Historically and today, we can find many examples, coalescing around certain characteristics of identification. Regional perimeters are used widely here in everyday language to provide an exemplary possibility of identification. While boundaries are partly random and elastic, it does not harm the concept of belonging: on the contrary, it seems to vitalize its application. While this positioning is highly selective and problematic for others, the “Western tradition” is one identification option which undoubtedly has “historical blindnesses and […] destructive consequences,”[1] even as it remains a point of reference up to the present day.[2] The commonality among these allusions is the invocation of the “West” as a localized and directionally oriented idea, always in relation to a given individual’s geopolitical and sociopolitical position.[3] However, as Andreas Oberdorf and I have already pointed out in the introductory section to this volume, the “West” cannot be clearly defined or located. In the absence of a map delineating the “West” and the impossibility of creating one without immediate contradiction regarding its precise location and in-/exclusion criteria – particularly in the context of reporting on the Ukraine conflict, which raises intriguing questions – this chapter offers the opportunity to contemplate historical sources and attempts to conceptualize the “West.” Since Max Weber,[4] the “West” is mainly characterized by the theorem of rationalization with regard to how to conceptualize, understand, and teach about the “world” around us, an idea disseminated by distinguished scholars such as Jürgen Habermas or influential public intellectuals such as Samuel P. Huntington.[5]

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[1] Penny Enslin and Kai Horsthemke, “Rethinking the ‘Western Tradition’,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 47 (2015): 1172.

[2] Armin Nassehi, “Wo liegt der Westen? Eine Standortbestimmung in unübersichtlicher Zeit,” *Kursbuch* 211 (2022): 118.

[3] Nassehi, “Wo liegt der Westen?,” 116 – 118.

[4] Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie I* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1920): 1.

[5] Helmut Heit, “Fortgesetzte Identitätskrise. Der Westen im Spiegel Chinas,” *Kursbuch* 211 (2022): 58 – 59.

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-003

When schools are considered as "Western" institutions designed to perpetuate and deepen a rationalized world view or "thought styles,"[6] the principal thesis guiding this chapter is that the "West" seeks to constitute itself particularly through the institution of the school[7] and through warnings about its decay or decline,[8] expressed in the mode of competition. To explore this thesis, we first address the significance of public schools in "Western" societies and explain why school crisis narratives garner public attention here in particular (Part 1). This allows us to examine a genre of sources (Part 2) that invokes the "West" in these school crisis narratives, and which seek to constitute the "West". Simultaneously, the reverse scenario is invoked, suggesting that the crisis lies in decline or total collapse of the broadly conceived "West," and schools, as genuinely "Western bulwarks," should counteract this decline (Part 3). As mentioned, from this, a specific mode of competitiveness should be derived (Part 4), increasingly disseminated internationally through supranational organizations like the OECD,[9] contributing even more to the diffusion and dissolution of the concept of the "West." The effects of globalization, thus evading a concrete location, renders any boundaries indeterminable and stresses the question addressed in the conclusion (Part 5) – whether "Western thought" is *in regressus ad infinitum.*[10]

1 Schools as "Western" Therapies to Crises

Interestingly, all known "high cultures" have had school-like institutions that systematically attempted to organize and arrange teaching and learning.[11] Early in human history, it seemed insufficient for those in certain social positions to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and cultivation on the fly, that is, through participation, observation, and guided experimentation in everyday life. For this group, it was necessary to learn in the abstract and by generating the differentiation that comes along with social distinction: Firstly, it was claimed that learning should be initiated before immediate application. Secondly, learning is initiated at an abstract level that separates itself from specific problems of individual cases and claims to be applicable to multiple situations, or deducible from them. Thirdly, and this is an early central characteristic, social distinction can be established through this learning, which confers specific social rights, advantages, and legitimacy.[12] Examples include the ancient Egyptian priests and their administrative training, Chinese civil service examinees, or citizens of ancient Greek free city-states and their educative settings. These types of schooling intended to free individuals from immediately vital activities. For a certain period of time schooled groups are relieved from activities from which they nevertheless make a living – in all societies, up to the present day, schooling is therefore a phenomenon of prosperity.[13] This is historically a privilege accorded only to limited groups of people who must be socially legitimized through knowledge, skills, and cultivation compared to all other social actors, who are mainly occupied with tasks that support everyday life. This type of schooled cultivation is not intended for the majority. Their general civilization changes with time, as Norbert Elias has traced, corresponding to sedimented trends, but always in the light of religious or cosmological explanatory contexts.[14] There is a divine or world-explaining framework within which humans are encompassed, and in which they can act.

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[6] Luca Sciortino, *History of Rationalities: Ways of Thinking from Vico to Hacking and Beyond* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023).

[7] Francisco O. Ramirez and John Boli, "The Political Construction of Mass Schooling: European Origins and Worldwide Institutionalization," *Sociology of Education* 60 (1987): 2–17.

[8] Bernhard Hemetsberger, *Schooling in Crisis: Rise and Fall of a German-American Success Story* (Berlin, New York: Peter Lang, 2022); or Matthew W. Seeger and Timothy L. Sellnow, *Narratives of Crisis: Telling Stories of Ruin and Renewal* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016).

[9] Maren Elfert and Christian Ydesen, *Global Governance of Education: The Historical and Contemporary Entanglements of UNESCO, the OECD and the World Bank* (Cham: Springer, 2023).

[10] Daniel-Pascal Zorn, "Das Denken der Anderen. Eine kurze Geschichte westlicher Hegemonie," *Kursbuch* 211 (2022): 87–88.

[11] Bernhard Hemetsberger, "Schule," in *Bildungswissenschaft in Begriffen, Theorien und Diskursen,* ed. Matthias Huber and Marion Döll (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2023), 533.

Michel Foucault outlined monumental changes in the “West” in the late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century, until the transition to the nineteenth century.[15] The apparatus of power and control – through practices of punishment, castigation, and imprisonment – diffused into the logic and functioning of publicness and rationality. Besides hospitals, prisons and especially schools turned into normalizing institutions that served an expanding but simultaneously more tightly woven government(-ality) of humans on the European continent (and later beyond). With the disintegration of religious and cosmological explanatory contexts, and also through the intellectual deconstruction of the Enlightenment, extended publicness and discourse emerged, based on logic, scientificity, and rationality.[16] This idea of an enlightened public, based on a “cosmopolitan” bourgeoisie, is always contentious. Worldviews, explanatory contexts, and interpretations of “reality” are constantly under evaluation, critique, and eventually driven into crisis. Reinhart Koselleck argued that with publicness, a discursive space emerges – almost unique throughout the “West” – that allows for the negotiation of general problems in the mode of critique.[17] If criticism becomes excessive, it indicates that shared explanations and explanatory modes are decreasing, fragmenting or even missing, as crises perceptions are spreading. Critique attacks and ultimately overturns the connecting foundations of world interpretations. Crises are then conceived as stages of explanatory crises, which is considered a uniquely “Western” perspective that potentially includes the discursive participation of everybody in the community.

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[12] See, for example, Horst Schiffler and Rolf Winkeler, *Tausend Jahre Schule. Eine Kulturgeschichte des Lernens in Bildern* (Stuttgart, Zürich: Belser, 1985); or Sabine Kirk et al., eds., *Schule und Geschichte. Funktionen der Schule in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2000).

[13] Schiffler and Winkeler, *Tausend Jahre Schule.*

[14] Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen. Erster Band: Wandlungen des Verhaltens in der weltlichen Oberschicht des Abendlandes* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976).

[15] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, transl. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1977).

Perceptions of crises and their public negotiation became particularly pronounced at the end of the eighteenth and the transition to the nineteenth century, especially in Europe and North America, and are shared by a constantly growing majority of the population. The political systems on either side of the Atlantic differ in the way they perceive and utilize this publicness. In Europe, well into the second half of the twentieth century, bourgeois publicness is perceived more as an attack and a danger to person-centered government systems, whereas in America, publicness was increasingly used for negotiating social issues and decision-making, although its logic was not yet fixed at the end of the eighteenth century. Thus, criticism and publicness took on society-constituting forms around the turn of that century, an era which has entered scientific periodization as *Sattelzeit.*[18]

In the same period, that is, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in German-speaking countries and the nascent North American Republic, general compulsory education and common schools were being conceived and introduced.[19] They were supposed to stabilize critical and crisis-driven social conditions by conveying generally shared attempts to interpret the world[20] – that is, to understand how the world might mathematically, linguistically, artistically (and so on), be comprehensible, experiential, and explainable? From this point on, schools become public and common institutions designed for as many people as possible. Schools promised, in an increasingly opening vision of the future, an improvement or positive vision: through schooling, “Western” society in the future could achieve knowledge, happiness, and usefulness, and find solutions to their problems; this is how meaning is generated in times of fragmented explanations, i. e. crises.

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[16] Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988).

[17] Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis.*

[18] Reinhart Koselleck is considered the “inventor” of this term for a transition period between 1750 and 1850; see Reinhart Koselleck and Christoph Dipper, “Begriffsgeschichte, Sozialgeschichte, begriffene Geschichte. Reinhart Koselleck im Gespräch mit Christoph Dipper,” *Neue Politische Literatur* 51 (1998): 195.

[19] Ramirez and Boli, “The Political Construction of Mass Schooling,” 2; and James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Johann Bernhard Basedow was to German-speaking countries[21] in the 1770s what Horace Mann was to America[22] from the 1830s onwards: both publicly promised that schools could promote peace and improve social futures. The school was the institution that could alleviate, overcome, or even prevent social problems concurrently. In the 1760s Basedow proclaimed in the Garden Realm of Leopold III Frederick Francis of Dessau-Wörlitz – after the Seven Years’ War, the rise of landless people, famine, and unusual weather changes[23] – that schools were the solution:

> You reasonable patriots of the human race and of all countries, you agree with me that public happiness of the state is not detached from the common happiness of the people; that this happiness is proportionate to public virtue; that public virtue depends on the comprehensive education and on the instruction of those who, in the higher classes, will determine the morals and fate of the others. […] You agree with me that the essence of schooling and studies is the most useful and surest tool to make the whole state happy and to secure happiness according to its particular nature.[24]

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[20] David F. Labaree, “When Is School an Answer to What Social Problems? Lessons from the Early American Republic,” in *Education Systems in Historical, Cultural, and Sociological Perspectives*, ed. Daniel Tröhler and Ragnhild Barbu (Rotterdam: Sense Publisher, 2011), 77–78; and Hemetsberger, *Schooling in Crisis*, 212–213.

[21] See Michael Niedermeier, *Das Gartenreich Dessau-Wörlitz als kulturelles und literarisches Zentrum um 1780* (Dessau: Stadt Dessau, 1995): 8–9; and Jürgen Overhoff, *Die Frühgeschichte des Philanthropismus (1715–1771). Konstitutionsbedingungen, Praxisfelder und Wirkung eines pädagogischen Reformprogramms im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Tübingen: May Niemeyer 2004), 215–223.

[22] Labaree, “When Is School an Answer,” 85–86.

[23] See Wilhelm Abel, “Massenarmut und Hungerkrisen in Deutschland im letzten Drittel des 18. Jahrhunderts,” in *Das pädagogische Jahrhundert. Volksaufklärung und Erziehung zur Armut im 18. Jahrhundert in Deutschland*, ed. Ulrich Herrmann (Weinheim, Basel: Beltz, 1981), 29–52.

[24] The translations are mine, based on Johann Bernhard Basedow, *Vorstellung an Menschenfreunde und vermögende Männer über Schule, Studien und ihren Einfluß in die öffentliche Wohlfahrt. Mit einem Plane eines Elementarbuchs der menschlichen Erkenntnis* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1768), 12–13.

Especially against the background of conditions that were generally perceived as crisis-driven, schools would nurture hope for a better future.

> You patriots of the human race and all countries, can't you see the signs of deadly decline in public happiness; have mercy on the millions; so ease the possibility of bourgeois virtue, the renaissance of love for our homeland fostered in the lower and higher schools, where it must happen and has happened according to the previous constitution. I am aware of the fact that current schooling in many places is not solely responsible for the almost universal apathy for the public good in its current form. But it is one of the most important causes. This is enough for me.[25]

Abstracted from the language of the late eighteenth century (which must nevertheless have been well received at the time, as Basedow was an extremely interconnected, eloquent, and publicly effective personality[26]), the educationalization of social problems[27] becomes apparent and has since been invoked in German-speaking countries in response to countless social problems and experiences of crisis. Basedow managed, in the public discourse on the general perception of crisis in the last third of the eighteenth century, to bring schools under discussion as therapy for social problems such as moral decay, governance issues, or supply shortages. He used his exceptional publicity opportunities for this purpose in an extensive way.

Fifty years later in North America, Horace Mann, as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, likewise used the associated publicity to draw attention to the dangers of a lack of education for American society:

> [I]n the distant villages and hamlets of this land, where those juvenile habits are now forming, where those processes of thought and feeling are, now, today, maturing, which, some twenty or thirty years hence, will find an arm, and become resistless might, and will uphold, or rend asunder, our social fabric. The Board may, trust they will, be able to collect light and to radiate it; but upon the people, upon the people, will still rest the great and inspiring duty of prescribing to the next generation what their fortunes shall be, by determining in what manner they shall be educated.[28]

The guarantee that school education would push back against, prevent, or even solve social problems also resonated with American public opinion during this crisis period after the War of 1812 – including plantation relocations, slavery discussions, and the expansion into Western territories – giving a veritable boost to the common-school movement initiated by Mann.[29] That no top-down school law could prevail, Mann understood immediately:

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[25] Basedow, *Vorstellung an Menschenfreunde*, 22.

[26] See Alexa Crais, "Elternbriefe an das Dessauer Philanthropinum (1774 – 1792)," *Cahier d'Études Germaniques* 70 (2016): 106.

[27] For example, Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe, eds. *Educational Research: the Educationalization of Social Problems* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008).

[28] Horace Mann, *Lectures and Annual Reports, on Education* (Cambridge: published for the editor, 1867): 40 – 41.

> In the first place, the education of the whole people, in a republican government, can never be attained without the consent of the whole people. Compulsion, even though it were a desirable, is not an available instrument. Enlightenment, not coercion, is our resource. The nature of education must be explained. The whole mass of mind must be instructed in regard to its comprehensive and enduring interest.[30]

In a persuasive, explanatory, and enlightening manner, Horace Mann managed to present the benefits of common school education, especially the possibility of educationalizing social problems,[31] that is, delegating them to schools, and gaining parental trust, which is seen early in school attendance statistics.

Particularly in times of crisis, which may be defined as periods in which explanation is fragmentary or lacking, it is crucial that public figures offer interpretations that seem relevant, as Luhmann would argue,[32] that is, that they address the respective problem and thus makes it appear surmountable. This is precisely the case with Basedow and Mann, as prominent spokespeople promoting views shared by many and this may be seen repeatedly throughout history, in manifold ways. Hence, these sources are always seismographs of time-specific crisis issues.[33]

It is not until the late eighteenth century that we can speak of comprehensive mass schooling *de jure* in European countries. In fact, school attendance statistics show that only in the second half of the nineteenth century did schools become part of the normal experience of life and family in German-speaking countries and the US.[34] The idea of exclusive groups in a premodern community educating themselves for certain tasks in schools and arguing about them increasingly fragments. Ideally, since the Enlightenment, all people would be educated within schools for their socially “most useful” way and represent their opinions and positions in public discourse. This meant a monumental change for parents, who would need to willingly send their children to school rather than putting them to work as soon as possible, urging them to contribute to the family income or to their own subsistence.[35]

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[29] Howard M. Jones, “Horace Mann’s Crusade,” in *America in Crisis. Fourteen Crucial Episodes in American History*, ed. Daniel Aaron (Hamden: Archon Books, 1952), 91–107.

[30] Mann, *Lectures and Reports*, 286.

[31] Labaree, “When Is School an Answer,” 85–86.

[32] Niklas Luhmann, “Familiarity, Confidence, Trust: Problems and Alternatives,” in *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations*, ed. Diego Gambetta (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 97–98.

[33] Marcus Otto et al., “‘Krisen’ als Seismografen gesellschaftlichen Wandels und Gegenstand schulischer Bildungsmedien,” in *Handbuch Krisenforschung*, ed. Frank Bösch, Nicole Deitelhoff, and Stefan Kroll (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2020), 93.

[34] Francisco O. Ramirez and John W. Meyer, “Comparative Education: The Social Construction of the ModernWorld System,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 6 (1980): 373–375; and Detlef K. Müller and Bernd Zymek, *Sozialgeschichte und Statistik des Schulsystems in den Staaten des Deutschen Reiches, 1800–1945*, vol. 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 300.

With the expansion of general education, the school promise of leading “Western” societies into a better future spreads and consolidates in these regions of the world. This is what gives parents the conviction that school is a legitimate place for their growing children. Incidentally, “Western” school becomes an increasingly exclusive legitimate pedagogical practice. So, when new social problems arise or crises occur, schools are held responsible for their promise leading societies into a better (not worse) future. These are points in the historical repetition loop where disappointed expectations of schools in public discourse turn into demands for reforms and school crisis narratives.[36] Ever since, the latest since the Enlightenment,[37] schools are brought into play as therapies against crises or argued to be important for these reasons in the “West.” This idea spreads increasingly within a more general public. As crises are recurring, schools are an immediate point of contact in the “West” – this is an indication that school’s promise of a better future has been and is immensely successful. Had the institution not promised to lead to a better future? Was it not socially tasked with addressing or solving social problems? This explains why various topics such as youth crime, sexuality, financial knowledge, and the like are given to schools depending on contemporary awareness or problem framing, even if, repeatedly against better knowledge, they are doomed to fail: despite sex education, teenage pregnancies cannot be ruled out, as well as criminal offenses of the same age group are not fully preventable with mandatory lessons in ethics, criminal law, and conflict management. Despite these findings, the educationalization of social problems is persistently adhered to in the “West,” and this is based on the school promise and the general trust in it. Public opinion in the “West” created a unique place to react and respond discursively to various crises *ad hoc.*

In summary, during the Enlightenment and thereafter, schools in Europe and North America were expanded into common institutions, gaining their legitimation and social acceptance through a promise of a better future and corresponding expectations. If this promise was thwarted by crisis-driven experiences of reality, that is, if the world fell short of the interpretation taught in schools, the schools were held responsible for this (aka school crisis narratives), and school reforms were demanded. This seems to be a uniquely "Western" phenomenon, which evolved and spread from there and became a self-perpetuating and well-known process: social crisis perception, an immediate educationalization of these social problems superseded by school crisis narratives because the institution has failed to accomplish its discursively assigned task, followed by school reforms to equip the institution to adequately address (future) crises until the next critical situation appears.

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[35] Michael S. Katz, *A History of Compulsory Education Laws* (Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa, 1976), 23.

[36] Hemetsberger, *Schooling in Crisis*, 211 – 217.

[37] Lukas Boser et al., “Die Pädagogisierung des ‘guten Lebens’ in bildungshistorischer Sicht,” *Jahrbuch für Historische Bildungsforschung* 23 (2018): 303 – 332.

2 The "West" *in* School Crisis Narratives

When social problems are educationalized in times of crisis – for example, in the 1960s during full employment but economic stagnation in West Germany, when Georg Picht[38] analyzed the numbers of high school graduates as an indicator of social stability and saw in their recent low number a danger that could potentially encompass the whole of society – school crisis narratives emerge, as the institution is perceived to be failing to deliver what is (discursively) expected. Consequently, school reforms become inevitable, and their programs commonly reflect crisis topoi and their pedagogical response.[39] These narratives are predominantly cast in the mode of tragedy, accompanied by a warning tone of decline and downfall if no immediate school reform is launched to prevent the worst.[40] In the transatlantic sphere, numerous examples exist in which the "West" is invoked as a reference in such tragic school crisis narratives. The comparative and reference systems used to orient an institution's own failures, the current crisis, and inspirations for reform point to "the West" as a better example and thereby position themselves as part of it. Florian Waldow has found interesting insights into international comparative studies and their media interpretation:[41] "Western" school systems, for instance, those slipping in PISA studies, use "Western" societies or systems as references from which educators should learn.[42] These most often have positive connotations and are predominately "Western" PISA-winning countries, even though there are better-placed "non-Western" systems on the respective scale, such as, for instance, schools discredited as Asian "drill schools" in Singapore.[43] The ranking logic is here twisted in favor of "Western" comparison standards and preferred expectations. Although such studies are now conducted globally, participating states adhere to a reference horizon framed as "Western." It probably comes as little surprise that when the "West" feels it is in crisis – especially during the heyday of the Cold War – the link between schooling and the "West" is tightened.

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[38] Georg Picht, *Die deutsche Bildungskatastrophe* (Berlin: dtv, 1965).

[39] David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering Towards Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[40] Seeger and Sellnow, *Narratives of Crisis.*

[41] Florian Waldow, "Das Ausland als Gegenargument. Fünf Thesen zur Bedeutung nationaler Stereotype und negativer Referenzgesellschaften," *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 62 (2016): 403–421.

> Everyone is aware today that our educational system has been allowed to deteriorate. It has been going downhill for some years without anything really constructive having been done to arrest the decline, still less to reverse its course. We thus have a chronic crisis; an unsolved problem as grave as any that faces our country today. Unless this problem is dealt with promptly and effectively the machinery that sustains our level of material prosperity and political power will begin to slow down.[44]

In the midst of the Cold War, the system competition between "East and West," the launch of the Soviet satellite "Sputnik," which sent beeping radio signals back to Earth and particularly alarmed the American public, marked the initiation of standardizations in the education sector.[45] Interestingly, Vice-Admiral Hyman G. Rickover of the US Navy, though not a pedagogical expert (as so often observed of similar public figures), educationalized America's crisis perceptions and believed he had found a reference to the "Western educational ideal": that is, "that our schools must return to the traditional task of formal education in Western civilization – transmission of the nation's cultural heritage, and preparation for life through rigorous training of young minds to think clearly, logically, and independently."[46] Rickover refreshes the rationalization thesis of Max Weber and (traditionally) connects the public institution school to it. This seemed obvious to him, as it did to many others, as there would be a "long and honorable history of learning which sets Western civilization apart from all others and to which the Western world owes its dynamic quality."[47] A distinctive hierarchy is introduced here and a well-known "Western" notion of superiority included, which is to be understood in the context of the Cold War. This "arrogant" notion had long been discussed, considered taboo, or refused.[48] However, Rickover tried to legitimize this, paradoxically in the light of Sputnik. "Since the people of the West also outdistance all others in scientific productivity, the sum of human knowledge has grown phenomenally," he argued, a debt owed to ancient Greeks, who "gave the West a scientific habit of mind,"[49] a delineation used here and elsewhere.[50] Rickover prototypically illustrates a fundamental structure that I would like to break down as follows: a "Western" school system is (increasingly in danger) losing one's way from the original, exceptionally successful, and internationally unique "Western" path based on ancient Greek rationality and a particular set of world interpretations. This path or tradition is something that can define the "West" (as "Westerners" are all schooled alike), and one should refer to it in order to identify with it. Here, the "West" is used referentially: invocation is thus an assignment.

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[42] Reinhard Bendix uses the term "*reference society* whenever intellectual leaders and an educated public react to the values and institutions of another country with ideas and actions that pertain to their own country"; see *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 292.

[43] Florian Waldow, "Projecting Images of the 'Good' and the 'Bad School': Top Scorers in Educational Large-Scale Assessments as Reference Societies," *Compare* 47 (2017): 653.

[44] Hyman G. Rickover, *Education and Freedom* (New York: Dutton, 1959), 101.

[45] Bernhard Hemetsberger and Katharina Thyri, "Education and Freedom. Rickover, Sputnik and Educational Standards," in *War and Education*, ed. Sebastian Engelmann, Bernhard Hemetsberger, and Frank Jacob (Paderborn: Brill, 2022), 95–115.

[46] Rickover, *Education and Freedom*, 18.

In 1959, the same year that Rickover published his manifesto, Josef Dolch's *Lehrplan des Abendlandes* (Curriculum of the Occident)[51] was published in Saarbrucken, West Germany. The book unfolded two and a half thousand years of "Western" history, starting as a matter of course in ancient Greece. The book establishes the organization, selection, and sequencing of pedagogical content over the centuries, orienting them towards the Greek classification which spread in the Middle Ages as the *septem artes liberales*, was strengthened again by the neohumanist movement headed by Wilhelm von Humboldt, and appears in the ongoing debate on general education.[52] Even today, one "traditionally"[53] refers to the foundational thoughts on schooling, the discipline of education, or even the disciplinary basic concepts and terms to ancient Greece, seen as the cradle of "Western" society and academia. This is likewise found almost consistently in various overview works on the history of pedagogy.[54] In this conception, the "West" is united by an intellectual, logical-scientific worldview with its roots in ancient Greece, later shaped by Christianity, and transmitted by schools through the centuries until the present day.[55]

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[47] Rickover, *Education and Freedom*, 25.

[48] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 50–52.

[49] Rickover, *Education and Freedom*, 70–71 and 75.

[50] Zorn, "Das Denken der Anderen," 82–88.

[51] Josef Dolch, *Lehrplan des Abendlandes. Zweieinhalb Jahrtausende seiner Geschichte* (Ratingen: Aloys Henn, 1959).

[52] Dolch, *Lehrplan des Abendlandes*, 9–10.

[53] For example, Hans-Ulrich Musolff and Stephanie Hellekamps, *Geschichte des pädagogischen Denkens* (Oldenbourg: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2006) or Gerald L. Gutek, *A History of the Western Educational Experience* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press 1995) are probably well known (but hardly made aware of) among current university students from their introductory lectures in educational science.

In addition to the contentious public sphere, it seems that the "West" is constituted within the institution of school, through repeated transmission of its genesis and "thought traditions." One could consequently argue, as Jürgen Habermas did,[56] that prerequisites for qualified participation in the public sphere must be brought along by the aspiring public actor, meaning that one has to navigate argumentative-logical language games[57] in order to participate in the (ideally non-coercive) discourse of better arguments. This, crucially, relies on schooling.

In summary, in school crisis narratives (and its set of historical sources), the "West" seems to be invoked as an idea based on a common origin of world interpretation in the scientific-logical-rational tone that originated in ancient Greece, and which, through schooling, has been made increasingly accessible since the Enlightenment to the general public. For this reason, it appears critical and problematic when schools are described as being in crisis because they do not deliver what a "Western" society demands of them, and this is nothing less than "Western" communalization, or the idea thereof. Already, it is becoming clear that it is not only the school that faces challenges but the concept of the "West" itself, which risks being thrown into crisis.

3 The "West" *as* a School Crisis Narrative

School crisis narratives *inter alia* refer to a "Western" tradition that needs to be regained. Simultaneously, they warn, either implicitly or explicitly, of the signs of complete decay or the threat of the downfall of the "West." This leads to the formation of a space in these narratives that is perceived as being threatened by decay – whether it is the all-encompassing decay of “Western” customs, values, or norms, “Western” lifestyles, “Western” democracies and political systems, “Western” achievements, or “Western” global dominance. Oswald Spengler,[58] in 1917, coined the epoch-making title *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (The Decline of the Occident). This title, which was invoked by conservative or right-leaning quarters in particular, continued to resurface in the media. However, the suggestion that fundamentally conservative or neo-conservative positions seem plausible, a wish to restore better times, is only partially confirmed. Some years after Spengler, in 1931, Karl Jaspers published *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* (The mental situation of our age)[59] against the backdrop of Nazi ideology, which was at that time pervasive, particularly in educated circles. This raised questions for Jaspers about how this ideology could be reconciled with or even conceivable in the light of “Western”-humanistic education ideals, which must consequently be in decline. While Spengler used seasonal metaphors to structure his argument, Jaspers raised questions about tipping points that would characterize dangerous decay. If the “West” exists as a comparative foil and an aspirational vision in some school crisis narratives, as outlined earlier, the narratives under consideration here envision the “West” as a scenario of decay that needs to be prevented. If “Western” culture and society are constituted through schools, it is conceivable that their perceived failure would shake the entire structure of the “West.” Georg Bollenbeck, albeit writing on the subject of Germany as the country of sublime poets and thinkers, argued that when an idea is constituted and defined over a fading concept, the idea fragments.[60] What may sound like a circular argument reflects the constructivist perspective on the construction of reality,[61] and invokes the well-known Thomas Theorem: “if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.”[62] If tragic doomsday scenarios are believed, they are real and alarming in their consequences to everybody touched by these interpretations. Crisis theory suggests that perceptions of time radically accelerate as they move towards a turning point that is perceived as dangerous.[63] At such a point, a sense develops that something must be done immediately to avert the worst, with little time remaining. The urgent awareness of standing on the brink of the loss of individual or collective significance may explain the vehemence with which action is taken or attempts are made to counteract this change, to preserve something that should not be lost.[64]

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[54] For example, Friedrich Paulsen, *Das deutsche Bildungswesen in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1912).

[55] Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 46 – 47 draws on the same distinctions.

[56] Jürgen Habermas, "Können komplexe Gesellschaften eine vernünftige Identität ausbilden?" in *Zur Rekonstruktion des Historischen Materialismus*, ed. Jürgen Habermas (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), 92 – 128 and Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft,* 13th ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2013).

[57] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Ascombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 3 and 15 – 17.

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[58] Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte* (Munich: Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1923) and the tradition continues as, for example, Huntington forecast similar trends in the 1990s.

[59] Karl Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit,* 4th ed. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1955).

[60] Georg Bollenbeck, *Bildung und Kultur. Glanz und Elend eines deutschen Deutungsmusters* (Frankfurt am Main, Leipzig: Insel, 1994.

[61] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *Die gesellschaftliche Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit. Eine Theorie der Wissenssoziologie,* 5th ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1977).

[62] William I. Thomas and Dorothy Swaine Thomas, *The Child in America: Behavior Problems and Programs* (New York: Knopf, 1928): 572.

This leads to programs like the recently launched *Save the West* initiative in the United States.[65] It portrays various complex global threat scenarios in a "culture war" rhetoric that declares these threats to be an attack on the "West," which, through its continuing cultural, economic, and technological superiority, must defend itself against its own (potential) demise. The civilization gap, as Osterhammel calls it,[66] is evident in the perception of one's own "Western" and predominant position over others. At the same time, there is a fear or warning in this structure that, within this framework of the "West," there is a potential of disadvantage, a need to subordinate or to disappear. This is found in the mid-twentieth century in school crisis narratives by Rickover and Picht, and in the current *Save the West* initiative in the United States, as well as in a large number of earlier documents like "A Nation at Risk" in the 1980s[67] or the more recent "German Education Catastrophe" of the 2000s, along with its PISA shock.[68] It is not just about the quality of schools but, beyond that, about the existence of the "West" as an idea constituted through schooling. That is why the institution is presented as one of the most important “bulwarks” of the “West,” the purpose of which is to preserve it by all means.

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[63] Bernhard Hemetsberger, "The Question of Time in Crises, Acceleration, and Recurring School Reforms," in *Educational Research and the Question(s) of Time*, ed. David Cole, Mehri Mirzaeirafe, and Annie Yang-Heim (Cham: Springer, 2024), 529 – 542; on the concept of acceleration, see Hartmut Rosa, "Social Acceleration: Ethical and Political Consequences of a Desynchronized High-Speed Society," *Constellations* 10 (2003): 3 – 52.

[64] Bernhard Hemetsberger, "Öffentliches Schulvertrauen in Krisenzeiten: eine Verfallsgeschichte?" in *In Education We TRUST? Vertrauen in Bildung und Bildungsmedien*, ed. Eckhardt Fuchs and Marcus Otto (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2022), 41 – 52.

[65] "Save the West" accessed January 31, 2024. Accessed November 19, 2024. https://savethewest.com/.

[66] Jürgen Osterhammel, "Was war und ist 'der Westen'? Zur Mehrdeutigkeit eines Konfrontationsbegriffs," in *Die Flughöhe der Adler. Historische Essays zur globalen Gegenwart*, ed. Jürgen Osterhammel (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2007): 105.

[67] David P. Gardner et al., *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative For Educational Reform: An Open Letter to the American People. A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education* (Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, 1983).

[68] Joachim Radkau, "Drohende deutsche Bildungskatastrophen – von Picht bis PISA," in *Geschichte der Zukunft. Prognose, Visionen, Irrungen in Deutschland von 1945 bis heute*, ed. Joachim Radkau (Munich: Carl Hansen, 2017), 210 – 241.

4 Competition and Rivalry within the “West” through School Crisis Narratives

The preceding argument should have demonstrated comprehensibly that schools, public discourse, and the idea of the “West” are interconnected. It has been hinted that school crisis narratives in and about the “West” operate through comparisons and references, which encompass strong competition, as Rickover notes: “We are finally coming out of our traditional educational isolation and looking at the educational systems of other countries of Western civilization in order to compare them with ours. […] The whole reappraisal has been painful but good for us.”[69] Rickover was not only addressing the “Western” idea or the school’s mission to preserve it, but also hinting that within these comparisons, the focus is mainly on being “the best in the West.”[70] Competitiveness also appears to be a specific feature of the “Idea of the West.”[71] Within selected “Western” references – meaning the acceptance of only a limited circle of comparison – competition arises for better rankings,[72] learning, and adaptability (policy lending and borrowing), and comparison becomes the driving force for improvement.[73] If the “West” does not seem broad enough, global competitions – under “Western” leadership – can be launched to expand the idea.

In 1968, Philipp H. Coombs, then Director of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and later Chairman of the International Council of Economic Development, declared a world education crisis. His book *The World Educational Crisis* immediately became a bestseller; in it, Coombs discussed the extent to which schools in the rest of the world lagged behind the “West” and also their inefficient educational planning, which could explain the economic turmoil observed in “non-Western” states and which could also cause problems for the “Western” financial market.[74] Coombs's argument applies a "Western" perspective to global contexts, thus subjecting conditions in "non-Western" areas to these considerations. He also initiates a competitive dynamic in the "West," using rhetoric such as "not falling behind,"[75] "catching up,"[76] "backwardness,"[77] "best practice," "efficiency," or "learning willingly from Finland,"[78] phrases which are familiar to us today and are still used almost constantly in educational research and practice under the aegis of supranational "Western" organizations like the OECD, UNESCO, and the World Bank.[79]

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[69] Rickover, *Education and Freedom*, 157.

[70] Rickover, *Education and Freedom*, 42.

[71] Bernhard Hemetsberger, “Citius, Altius, Fortius – Imperative von Statistiken zur Leistungsoptimierung,” *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Pädagogik* 99 (2023): 25.

[72] Gita Steiner-Khamsi, “The Politics of League Tables,” *Journal of Social Science Education* 1 (2003): 1–6.

[73] Hemetsberger, “Citius, Altius, Fortius,” 26–27.

5 Concluding Remarks

In concluding, I propose that this exploration of the "West" and school crisis narratives, as well as their inscribed competitive mode, opens theses for discussion and a final question.

Firstly, the idea of addressing social problems through public discourse where a future vision for the entire society is negotiated is a specifically "Western" one. Moreover, schools, as institutions meant to supply fundamental principles for all, in order to equip them to participate in public discourse, immediately become places to revise fundamental principles if they are no longer viable in times of crisis.

Secondly, the idea of the "West" is based on references to ancient Greek considerations of science, logic, and knowledge that are transmitted through schools. Identification with this in school crisis narratives accordingly leads to attributions to the "West." Interestingly, this idea has only been around for about two hundred years and withholds the fact that ancient Greek thought was lost to the "West" for a long time; it took multiple waves of transfer from regions coded as non-"Western" for this knowledge to arrive – via Byzantium, Persia, Arabia, and Egypt, to Spain, France, and Northern Italy – back in the "West."[80]

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[74] Philip H. Coombs, *The World Educational Crisis: A Systems Analysis* (New York, London, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968).

[75] Stefan T. Hopmann, "No Child, No School, No State Left Behind: Schooling in the Age of Accountability," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 40 (2008): 417–456.

[76] Elfert and Ydesen, *Global Governance of Education.*

[77] Keita Takayama, "The Politics of International League Tables: PISA in Japan's Achievement Crisis Debate," *Comparative Education* 44 (2008): 387–407.

[78] Steiner-Khamsi, "League Tables."

[79] Elfert and Ydesen, *Global Governance of Education.*

[80] Zorn, "Das Denken der Anderen," 82.

Thirdly, if schools are in crisis, the existence of the “West” is subject to a threat that schools must counteract. The strong linkage of schooling and the “West” as a concept means that a crisis for one likewise endangers the other. Moreover, considerable public attention is directed to schools or the “West” when “culture wars” are detected in one or the other.

Additionally, *fourth*, tragic narratives of downfall and decay in “Western” schools dynamize, accelerate, and encourage efforts to preserve the “West.”

Finally, competitiveness also seems to be a specific feature of the idea of the “West,” especially when it comes to enhancing the performance of “Western” schools and thus their global dominance or global diffusion. David P. Baker portrayed a fully schooled (global) society,[81] which is organized by school mechanisms such as competition, which has become universal. Particularly interesting in the last point is the possible dissolution of the idea of the “West” through its global generalization and the resulting unnecessary question of who or which nation should be attributed to the “West.” The fact that schools are attributed a significant role in this context, or that schools emerge as either under threat or the agent of salvation in the respective crisis negotiation of the “West,” presents a difficulty that is likely unsolvable and will probably become more radical as perceptions of (world) crises intensify, in turn fostering critique of the worldview, institutions and norms of the “West.”[82]

Daniel-Pascal Zorn’s analysis emphasized that “Western thinking” measures everything else – including its own creations – against itself.[83] This holds true for both global school comparisons and for references to “origins” of schooling and science in the “West.” It thereby constantly seeks to overcome that which threatens to limit it, yet in doing so, it primarily limits itself. Consequently, “Western thinking” is, according to Zorn, thinking in infinite regress. This infinite regress arises as a logical structure through the desire to encompass everything as completely as possible, including one’s own conditions. We have seen this with crisis perceptions, as with school reforms, eager to fix schooling this time for future scenarios. In “Western thinking,” this claim to completeness is not only evident in providing explanations without major gaps and describing objects without blind spots. Instead of excluding tradition, it is integrated. Rational mastery – the history of one’s own thinking – should appear complete without being complete, that is, without endangering the knowledge system that generates this completeness according to its own specifications.[84] Schools should pass on a rationality equipped for any future crises of the "West" without questioning its essential incompleteness, which requires school reforms to adapt to new crisis scenarios while concurrently legitimizing the institution's existence and refreshing the idea of the "West." The other or the alien is erased precisely through being represented as such i. e. as the other. It is not exclusion, but inclusion that is the most radical form of obliteration: Is that why schools are congested with "ideas" and the "West" is in trouble?

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[81] David P. Baker, *The Schooled Society: The Educational Transformation of Global Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014).

[82] Nassehi, “Wo liegt der Westen?,” 118.

[83] Zorn, “Das Denken der Anderen,” 86–88.

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[84] Zorn, "Das Denken der Anderen," 88.

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Frank Jacob

Reaching Modernity through Western Education? Debates and Practices in Modern Japan, 1853–1894

Introduction

Japan's relations with the West are complicated, to say the least. Confronted with a forced opening of some Japanese ports for international trade under pressure from US warships, the so-called "black ships" in 1853,[1] during the tremendous economic, political, and social transformation process of the Meiji Restoration between 1868 and 1892,[2] Japanese society debated the possible paths to the future. While some argued on behalf of a wide-ranging imitation of the West, with English as the new national language, others detested the opening of Japan that supposedly resembled the country's weakness and demanded a strong anti-Western policy from the elites and the government.[3] The struggle for the "soul of Japan" had

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[1] Japanese names are provided according to the rules of use in Japan, i. e., family name followed by first name. I would like to thank the editors for having organized the lecture series at the University of Münster in 2022/23, at which I could present a paper as well. This chapter is an extended version of that presentation. For the American report on the expedition see Francis L. Hawks, *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas, Performed in the Years 1852, 1853, and 1854* (New York: Appleton, 1856).

[2] Aoyama Tadamasa, *Meiji Ishin* (Tokyo: Bunkyōku, 2012). Due to the tremendous changes, some works referred to the Meiji Restoration as a revolution. I would disagree to use this terminology though, as the events between 1853 and 1868 as well as their impact afterwards, are not revolutionary, although without any doubt a political and social transformation took place. On the debate see, among others, Eddy Dufourmont, "Japan, a Country without Revolution? Uses of *kakumei* and Historical Debates in the Meiji Era (1868–1912)," in *Historians of Asia on Political Violence*, ed. Anne Cheng and Sanchit Kumar (Paris: Collège de France, 2021), 105–118.

[3] The Western pressure after the forced opening increased due to diplomatic missions from numerous countries, who demanded trade treaties from the Japanese government as well. The latter therefore had to navigate somehow between Western demands and internal pressure on the shogunate for allowing foreigners to enter the country and to make such demands. Michael R. Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 11–33. On the Prussian diplomatic mission to Japan, whose participants in a way witnessed this dilemma of Japanese foreign policy see Frank Jacob, "Die Eulenburg-Expedition: Preußische Direktheit trifft japanische Zurückhaltung," in *Fremdbilder – Selbstbilder: Paradigmen japanisch-deutscher Wahrnehmung (1861–2011)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014), 25–40.

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-004

begun, and many layers of considerations can be identified between these two extreme positions in the debate about Japan and the West.[4] Regarding the development of education in Japan, the years between 1853 and the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894 witnessed the establishment of an educational system that was influenced by this debate, and although many Western elements were formally implemented, particularly Japanese elements were also kept as part of the country's modern approach toward the education that was supposed to fit the needs and necessities of a new time.

This chapter aims to highlight some of the early developments of this debate about Japan's education system after its opening in 1853. Taking some of the agents and networks that favored a Westernization of Japanese education into account, a focus will be placed upon the role of Fukuzawa Yukichi, an influential intellectual who visited Western countries even before the Meiji Restoration and who, as German Japanologist Wolfgang Seifert recently argued, "was neither a social scientist nor a historian, but a journalist who developed his own social philosophy, and he was influential not only through his books and newspaper articles, but also as the founder of a private educational institution."[5] In a second step, this contribution will focus on the Iwakura Mission, where large parts of the new Meiji government traveled abroad to find answers and solutions to the particular demands of a country that was not only searching for its own place within the world but also the most efficient way to close the gap between the world system's core and Japan's own possible position within the already globalized world from which it had secluded itself for around two and a half centuries during the Tokugawa period.[6] The questions this chapter seeks to answer are as follows: What arguments were used to advocate for Western education as an example to follow? Who were agents for the import of Western education standards to Japan? And finally, which networks stimulated the decision to apply Western standards to the establishment of Japan's national education system following the Meiji Restoration?

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[4] Hirakawa Sukehiro and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, "Japan's Turn to the West," in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 5: *The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 432–498.

[5] Wolfgang Seifert, "A Perspective for Japan: Fukuzawa Yukichi's 'Theory of Civilization', 1875," *Historická Sociologie* 2 (2021): 48. Also see Tamaki Norio, *Yukichi Fukuzawa 1835–1901: The Spirit of Enterprise in Modern Japan* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

[6] Japan had the ambition to become part of the imperialist core, instead of being suppressed to a peripheral or semi-peripheral status within the capitalist modern world system. On the role of this system as historical caesura and political instrument of rule see the chapters by the author in Frank Jacob, ed. *Wallerstein 2.0: Thinking and Applying World-Systems Theory in the 21st Century* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2023).

Fukuzawa Yukichi

Fukuzawa Yukichi, who ran a private school that would later become recognized as Keio University in Tokyo and who had quite a significant influence on the philosophical discourse about the West and Japan's role in the world, was one of the Japanese who participated in the first official mission to the United States in 1860.[7] As a member of this mission, he participated in what he later referred to as "an epoch making adventure of our nation."[8] In San Francisco, he was able to witness the differences between Japan and the United States. As he was particularly interested "in matters of life and conventions of social custom and ways of thinking,"[9] he found the US particularly interesting, as it was naturally very different from feudal Japan. One of the important things he imported into Japan from his first trip was a copy of Webster's dictionary, perhaps the first ever brought back to the East Asian country. Back in Japan, where anti-Western sentiments had gained momentum,[10] Fukuzawa turned away from his Dutch studies (*rangaku*) toward learning English to translate important texts into Japanese.[11] At this time, he realized that a lot of work lay ahead: "[A]s yet my knowledge of English was not sufficient; I still had to have much recourse to my Dutch-English dictionary. Though I called myself a teacher, I was still a student along with those I was instructing."[12]

In December 1861, he had another opportunity to sail to the West when he was assigned to a diplomatic delegation to Europe as a translator.[13] He visited France,

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[7] On this first mission see Benita Stambler, "Ambassadors of Exchange: The 1860 Japanese Mission to the US," *Education About Asia* 16, no. 2 (2011): 21–24. An older discussion of this mission is also provided in Chitoshi Yanaga, "The First Japanese Embassy to the United States," *Pacific Historical Review* 9, no. 2 (1940): 113–138.

[8] Fukuzawa Yukichi, *The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi*, trans. Eiichi Kiyooka (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1934), 113.

[9] Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 113.

[10] Anti-Western sentiments had previously limited the opportunities for Japanese scholars to gain more critical insight into Western knowledge. See details in Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early Modern Japan: The New Theses of 1825* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

[11] Since the Tokugawa shogunate had only allowed trade relations with Dutch traders, the only import of Western knowledge was limited to books in Dutch. Consequently, scholars would study this language and publications imported from the Netherlands. Marius B. Jansen, "Rangaku and Westernization," *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 4 (1984): 541–553.

[12] Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 131.

[13] On the so-called Takenouchi-Mission (in Japanese referred to as *Bunkyū ken-Ō shisetsu*) see Georg Kerst, "Die japanische Sondergesandtschaft nach Europa im Jahre 1862," *Jahrbuch der Historischen Gesellschaft Bremen* 52 (1972): 195–233.

England, the Netherlands, Prussia, and St. Petersburg.[14] Fukuzawa used this opportunity to improve his English skills and, at the same time, he was able to buy books he could later use in his private school:

> I […] had the convenience of some money at my disposal. As there were few ways of spending any money beyond the needs of my traveling clothes, which cost very little at a time when such things were cheap, I used the balance of my allowance to buy books in London. This was the beginning of the importation of English books into Japan; it is only since my first large purchase in London that our students have had free access to English in print.[15]

Alongside developing his own language skills – such as getting used to the "strange language written sideways" – Fukuzawa absorbed as much knowledge and information as he could, although not everything was easy to understand for the young Japanese scholar: "Of political situations of that time, I tried to learn as much as I could from various persons that I met in London and Paris, though it was often difficult to understand things clearly as I was yet so unfamiliar with the history of Europe."[16] As before on his travels to the United States, Fukuzawa was less concerned with hard sciences than he with the cultural aspects that sparked his interest:

> During this mission in Europe I tried to learn some of the most commonplace details of foreign culture. I did not care to study scientific or technical subjects while on the journey, because I could study them as well from books after I had returned home. But I felt that I had to learn the more common matters of daily life directly from the people, because the Europeans would not describe them in books as being too obvious. Yet to us those common matters were the most difficult to comprehend.[17]

For a Japanese in his twenties, Fukuzawa had already experienced foreign countries and become quite familiar with Western culture, or rather, what he considered it to be. His travels through several European countries "provided Fukuzawa with a prolonged opportunity to observe western societies firsthand"[18] and would have an impact on his further career as an author and intellectual authority on things Western. Of course, his understanding and interpretation of the West were closely related to his own experiences, which would be further developed after a second visit to the United States in 1867.[19] His delegation met with US politicians in Washington, D.C., as well as other important representatives in New York City.[20]

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[14] Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 134. The Japanese government would also send another mission to France in 1865. See Marc D. Ericson, "The Bakufu Looks Abroad. The 1865 Mission to France," *Monumenta Nipponica* 34, No. 4 (1979): 383–407.

[15] Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 135. On the history of the contact between the English and Japanese languages, see James Stanlaw, *Japanese English: Language and Culture Contact* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 45–82.

[16] Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 138.

[17] Fukuzawa, *Autobiography*, 142.

[18] Benjamin Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education: Constructing the National School System, 1872–1890* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 63.

Considering that Fukuzawa had been on three missions to foreign countries before the Meiji Restoration actually began, he could naturally be considered an authority on the West. He used this status and thereby became what Mitani Ta'ichirō called "one of the forerunners of modern Japan,"[21] who would have an important impact on many other intellectuals in the national context in the decades that followed.[22] These intellectuals included, among others, the famous Japanese historian and political scientist Maruyama Masao, who also developed a strong interest in Fukuzawa and his works.[23]

When Japan was forcefully opened to face the supposedly modern world in 1853, Fukuzawa realized how important education and language skills were.[24] When the "black ships" of Commodore Matthew Perry arrived in Edo (Tokyo), the young Japanese was shocked by the lack of his own ability to communicate properly with the foreign representatives:

> To my chagrin, when I tried to speak with them, no one seemed to understand me at all. Nor was I able to understand anything spoken by a single one of all the foreigners I met. Neither could I read anything on the signboards […] There was not a single recognizable word in any of the inscriptions or in any speech […] I realized that a man would have to be able to read and converse in English to be recognized as a scholar in Western subjects in the coming time

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[19] Fukuzawa Yukichi, *The Autobiography*, 176–188.

[20] In the same year, 1867, Tomita Tetsunosuke – who was later appointed as the first Vice-Consul of the Consulate General of Japan in New York – also came to the US and studied economics in Newark, NJ. The document of his appointment can be found online: https://www.historyofjapaneseinny.org/blog/artifacts/tetsunosuke-tomita-appointed-first-vice-consul-of-the-consulate-general-of-japan-in-ny/. For a more detailed description of his activities in New York, see Takahashi Shuetsu, "Tomita Tetsunosuke no nyūyōku fuku ryōji shūnin to kekkon to shōhō kōshū-sho," *Tōhoku Gakuin Daigaku keizaigaku ronshū* 187 (2016): 15–92.

[21] Mitani Ta'ichirō, "'Bunmei-ka' – 'Seiyō-ka' – 'Kindai-ka' o megutte: Fukuzawa Yukichi to Maruyama Masao: Nihon kindai no sendō-sha to hihan-sha," *Nihongaku shiin kiyō* 72 (2018): 209.

[22] Wolfgang Schwentker, *Geschichte Japans* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2022), 656–658.

[23] Mitani, "'Bunmei-ka' – 'Seiyō-ka' – 'Kindai-ka' o megutte," 209–211.

[24] He expressed his thoughts about education in several of his writings. See *Fukuzawa Yukichi on Education: Selected Works*, trans. and ed. Eiichi Kiyooka (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1985).

> […] On the very next day after returning from Yokohama, I took up a new aim in life and determined to begin the study of English.[25]

His experiences in countries in the West increased this sense of impotence, especially since "[t]he supremacy of the West in virtually all areas was overwhelming."[26] For Fukuzawa, this situation presented a danger to Japan, which, to quote Benjamin Duke, could lose "its independence as western imperial powers gained control over backward nations throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Acutely aware of the dangerous international environment that confronted Japan in the 1860[s], Fukuzawa viewed the period as a crisis of national sovereignty that could only be met with drastic reforms to develop a prosperous country with a powerful military component."[27]

His school would therefore offer students a possibility to change this educational imbalance, and the fact that Fukuzawa relied on books he had imported from the US during his second trip paved the way for a stronger Japanese interest in America's educational policies. In 1867, Fukuzawa "hastily made a huge purchase of English books for the [Japanese] government. Unprepared for the endeavor, they hastily requested the American State Department to make the selection. The final shipment weighing ten tons included, among others, 13,000 copies of elementary readers, grammars, and math books, 2,500 copies of *Webster's Dictionary*, and 600 history books."[28] While the Meiji government would reconsider which Western education model to follow during the Iwakura Mission (1871–1873), as an early authority on the West, Fukuzawa used his influence to advocate for a modernization according to Western standards in the following years.

In 1869, he published *Seiyō no jijō* (Things Western), which would become a bestseller and have a huge impact on the way Japanese readers would perceive the West. In it, Fukuzawa described the schools he had seen abroad in some detail:

> In every western country there is not a town or village without a school. The schools are founded both by the government and by private citizens. All children, boys and girls, enter the elementary school at age six or seven. They first learn to read and write and then study such subjects as the history of their country, geography, arithmetic, fundamentals of science, art, and music.[29]

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[25] Wayne Oxford, *The Speeches of Fukuzawa* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1973), 12, cited in Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 62.

[26] Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 63.

[27] Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 63.

[28] Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 64.

[29] Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Seiyō no jijō (1869)," in *Fukuzawa zenshū*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Jiji Shimpōsha, 1926), 319–321, cited in Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 64.

Education had a practical purpose for Fukuzawa, who, in his second bestseller *Gakumon no susume* (The advancement of learning, 1872),[30] argued on behalf of a policy that would secure Japan's position within the modern world system through an intensive program of modernization that would be oriented toward the West.

This orientation was discussed in Fukuzawa's famous essay *Datsu-A ron* (On leaving Asia) in 1885 as well. In it, the Japanese intellectual argued that "[i]nternational communication has become so convenient these days that once the wind of Western civilization blows to the East, every blade of grass and every tree in the East follow what the Western wind brings."[31] Fukuzawa advised that accepting and embracing Western knowledge would serve the national cause more than opposing modernization with an ultra-nationalist agenda:

> For those of us who live in the Orient, unless we want to prevent the coming of Western civilization with a firm resolve, it is best that we cast our lot with them. If one observes carefully what is going on in today's world, one knows the futility of trying to prevent the onslaught of Western civilization. Why not float with them in the same ocean of civilization, sail the same waves, and enjoy the fruits and endeavors of civilization?[32]

Although Fukuzawa might have first and foremost considered Japan as some kind of role model, Asian progress was achieved by casting aside "old conventions" to achieve a "spread of civilization and enlightenment (*bummei kaika*)."[33] In contrast to other Asian countries and realizing that their fate seemed to be exploitation by the West as colonial or semi-colonial spaces, Fukuzawa argued for Japan to leave Asia because "[w]e do not have time to wait for the enlightenment of our neighbors so that we can work together toward the development of Asia. It is better for us to leave the ranks of Asian nations and cast our lot with civilized nations of the West."[34]

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[30] Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Encouragement of Learning*, trans. David A. Dilworth and Umeyo Hirano (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1969).

[31] Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Datsu-A Ron 'On Leaving Asia' – from the Jiji shinpō newspaper, March 16, 1885," *Education about Asia* 21, no. 1 (2016): 66–67. Accessed November 1, 2022. https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaa/archives/lesson-plan-on-leaving-asia-primary-source-document/.

[32] Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Datsu-A Ron."

[33] Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Datsu-A Ron."

[34] Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Datsu-A Ron." In this regard, Fukuzawa advertised a different position from other intellectuals, especially Pan-Asianists who demanded a closer cooperation with China in the future. For one of these Pan-Asianist writings see Miyazaki Tōten, *Sanjūsannen no yume* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1967 [1902]). On Pan-Asianism and its different positions, see Sven Saaler and Christopher W. A. Szpilman, eds. *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, vol. 1: *1850–1920* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011).

With regard to Fukuzawa's demands, Wolfgang Seifert emphasized that

> "Westernization" (or "Europeanization") did not mean a blind acceptance of models, with the aim of becoming "like the West." For him, the whole set of institutions, practices and ideas prevailing in Western Europe (often with the addition of the United States) represented "Western civilization." When he spoke of "elevating the level of civilization" in Japan, he meant that Japan should adopt and develop a modified version of this set.[35]

His "motivating concrete goal" was consequently not a mere imitation of the West to achieve modernity but that "Japan should become an independent, sovereign, modern national state, with a population conscious of itself as a nation."[36] To achieve this, Japan should look toward the West, but it should not become Western per se. He expressed his arguments in more detail in *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* (An outline of a theory of civilization, 1875), in which he stated: "[O]utwardly adaptation of the Western way of life alone should not be the aim of the Japanese in the beginning time of transformation."[37] Fukuzawa consequently understood civilization as a process and not as a status, emphasizing "historical dynamics" according to the three stages of civilizational development: (1) the stage of primitive man; (2) the semi-developed stage; and (3) modern civilization.[38] The West was supposedly more developed; however, this did not mean that this was supposed to be the case forever:

> When we are talking about civilization in the world today, the nations of Europe and the United States are the most civilized, while the Asian countries, such as Turkey, China and Japan, may be called semi-developed countries, and Africa and Australia are to be counted as still primitive lands […] While the citizens of the nations of the West are the only ones to boast of civilization, the citizens of the semi-developed and primitive lands submit to being designated as such. They rest content with being branded semi-developed or primitive, and there is not one who would take pride in his own country or consider it on par with nations of the West. This attitude is bad enough.[39]

Naturally, according to these considerations, Japan should look to the West as inspiration for how to achieve a state of modernization, that is, Westernization, yet not solely with the aim of becoming Western but one of the nation states to be considered superior due to their level of civilization.

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[35] Seifert, "A Perspective for Japan," 49.

[36] Seifert, "A Perspective for Japan," 49.

[37] Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, rev. trans. D. A. Dilworth and G. Cameron Hurst III (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2008 [1875]), cited in Seifert, "A Perspective for Japan," 51.

[38] Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, 17–18, cited in Seifert, "A Perspective for Japan," 51–52.

[39] Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, 17, cited in Seifert, "A Perspective for Japan," 51.

Fukuzawa's students and readers would adopt these thoughts, and many became officials in the (post-)Meiji Restoration circles of power; hence, to quote Duke once more, "writings of the central core of the Meiji leaders were sprinkled with ideas derived from Fukuzawa's writings,"[40] and it was especially those within the ranks of the Ministry of Education who would share his opinions. However, until the Iwakura Mission visited the United States, there were competing ideas about which country's education offered the best possible outcome for the Japanese government.

The Iwakura Mission

Before the Iwakura Mission,[41] high officials in the Ministry of Education leaned toward France as a model for future Japanese education, but the journey of large parts of the Meiji government through the United States and Europe changed this inclination.[42] The Iwakura Mission, led by and named after Iwakura Tomomi, a high-ranking politician, was a strange endeavor. The majority of the new government, including key cabinet members as well as high-ranking officials from different ministries, went on a long study trip to North America and Europe for almost two years, leaving the new nation state with a power vacuum. Their intention was simple: to study the world and to bring back the things that were considered the most valuable from all the "civilized" (modernized) nation states they visited.

One of the so-called *o-yatoi gaikokujin* (foreign advisors),[43] the Dutch missionary Guido Verbeck, who also served as head of what would become the Imperial University, advised senior government leaders that "there is something in the civilization of the West that must be seen and felt; in order to be fully appreciated, personal experience is necessary to understand the theory of [Western] civilization."[44] The Iwakura Mission and its participants would ultimately follow this advice, and the emperor of Japan, in his address to them, made it clear what the delegation was supposed to accomplish on its journey:

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[40] Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 65.

[41] On the mission, especially in the German-speaking countries, see *Die Iwakura-Mission: Das Logbuch des Kume Kunitake über den Besuch der japanischen Sondergesandtschaft in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz im Jahre 1873*, ed. and trans. Peter Pantzer with Matthias Eichhorn (Munich: Iudicium, 2002).

[42] For a detailed discussion, see Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 67–76. Also see Jia Liu, "On the Education Reform of the Meiji Japan," *International Journal of New Developments in Engineering and Society* 3, no. 4 (2019): 22.

[43] Umetani Noboru, *O-yatoi gaikokujin: Meiji Nihon no wakiyakutachi* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 1965).

> After careful study and observation, I am deeply impressed with the belief that the most powerful and enlightened nations of the world are those who have made diligent effort to cultivate their minds, and sought to develop their country in the fullest and most perfect manner. […] If we would profit by the useful arts and sciences and conditions of society prevailing among more enlightened nations, we must either study these at home as best we can, or send abroad an expedition of practical observers to foreign lands, competent to acquire for us those things our people lack, which are best calculated to benefit this nation.[45]

Tanaka Fujimaro[46] was chosen to represent the Ministry of Education during the trip, although, as Duke emphasizes, he was a curious choice for the task since "he could not be classified as an authority on the West, nor was he able to use any of the western languages."[47] Tanaka's "unprecedented career as an international educator began with his arrival in San Francisco with the Iwakura Mission in January 1872, at the age of twenty-seven."[48]

Due to Tanaka's lack of experience and language skills, his translator Niijima Jō would become an important agent of and advocate for the US education system.[49] The young man – who was a graduate of the Philips Academy in Andover, Amherst College, and Andover Theological Seminary, all in Massachusetts[50] – later became the founder of "the great Christian university Dōshisha in Kyoto"[51] after leaving Tokugawa Japan to study Christianity in the United States, where he knew he could rely upon his experience and contacts to pave the way for the successful adaptation of US education in Japan.[52] His academic career in the US also stimulated special treatment from the "highest educational official in the United States government"[53] in Washington, D.C., namely Commissioner of Education John Eaton,[54] another graduate of Andover Theological Seminary. His personal contacts and his American hosts' positive perception of him were responsible for Tanaka's own positive perception of the United States in general and the educational system of Pennsylvania in particular, itself partly due to Niijima's role, who, "[t]aking advantage of his contacts in the area, […] went far beyond the role of a translator."[55]

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[44] Albert Altman, "Guido Verbeck and the Iwakura Mission," *Japan Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1966): 58, cited in Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 80.

[45] Charles Lanman, *The Japanese in America* (New York: University Publishing, 1872), cited in Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 80.

[46] On his role with regard to the further development of Japan's education system also see Yukawa Fumihiko, "Meiji shoki kyōiku jimu no seiritsu: Tanaka fujimaro to Meiji 12 nen kyōikuryō," *Shigaku zasshi* 121, no. 6 (2012): 1045–1083.

[47] Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 82.

[48] Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 82.

[49] Carmen Sterba, *Modest Niijima Jo: Samurai to Pastor to Chancellor* (Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2020), 67–72. Also see Arthur Sherburne Hard, ed. *Life and Letters of Joseph Hardy Neesima* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1891), 127–130.

[50] Hard, ed. *Life and Letters*, 99–114.

[51] Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 84.

There was, however, another foreigner and soon-to-be *o-yatoi gaikokujin* in the service of the Japanese government who played an important role during the Iwakura Mission: the mathematics professor Dr. David Murray, who taught at Rutgers College (1863–1873).[56] The Japan–Rutgers connection also goes back to the influence of Verbeck, who had advised his students in Nagasaki to go there for their further education, such that "Rutgers College and a local preparatory school in New Brunswick became the primary institutions in America to receive Japanese students before the Meiji Restoration."[57] Mori Arinori, the first Japanese ambassador to the United States (1871–1873) and later the Minister of Education (1886–1889),[58] had inquired at several colleges and universities about general questions in relation to education, and Murray's answer, representing Rutgers College, made an impression on the Japanese politician and shall therefore be quoted at length here:

> The problem of education is justly regarded by statesmen as the most important in all the circles of their duties. All other functions of government, such as of the repression and pun-

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[52] Motoi Yasuhiro, *Jo Niijima and the Founding Spirit: A Textbook for the Lectures on Doshisha*, trans. Nobuyoshi Saito and David Chandler (Kyoto: Doshisha, 2011).

[53] Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 87.

[54] A short survey of his life and achievements is presented in an obituary in *The Evening Star,* February 9, 1906: 6.

[55] Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 90.

[56] Murray later also published a study based on his experiences with Japanese education: *Education in Japan: Circulars of Information of the Bureau of Education* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1875). On his life and impact, see the extensive study Benjamin Duke, *Dr. David Murray: Superintendent of Education in the Empire of Japan, 1873–1879* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2019). On the perception of Japanese education in American journals, see Hashimoto Miho, "Beikoku media ga tsutaeta bakumatsu Meiji shoki no kyōiku," *Hikaku kyōiku-gaku kenkyū* 27 (2001): 120–138.

[57] Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 91.

[58] For more detail see *Mori Arinori's Life and Resources in America*, ed. John E. Van Sant (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003).

> ishment of crime, the encouragement of national industries, the development of commerce, the defense against enemies, all are inferior in importance to the training of the young which determines the character of the nation. […] The nations which have in modern times exerted the greatest influence on the world's history, those which have made the most rapid progress and wealth and power, are those which have made education their special care and have furnished the most general and the most thorough culture to their citizens. The two nations which in the past century have advanced most in wealth, population, fame, and influence, are the United States and Germany. […] In these nations, if there is any one feature in which their systems of government excel, it is in the variety and profusion with which the means of education have been provided. Differing widely in other circumstances, they still have shown this common aim in their efforts to render education universal, and to leave no human soul within their territory without the opportunity for development. […] Every nation must create a system of education suited to its own wants. There are national characteristics which ought properly to modify the scheme of education which would be deemed the most suitable. The culture required in one nation is not precisely required in another. There are traditional customs which it would be unwise to subvert. There are institutions already founded which are revered for their local and national associations, which without material change may be made the best elements of a new system. Every successful school system must be a natural outgrowth from the wants of a nation. If, therefore, changes are to be made in the educational system of any country, wisdom would suggest the retention, so far as admissible, of those institutions already in existence. This is but a proper concession to national self respect, and will go far to make any new features acceptable.[59]

In March 1872, Murray was offered the position of the "superintendent of education in the empire of Japan,"[60] and the "Westernization" of Japanese education would soon follow American ideas and standards.

Although Tanaka visited Europe afterward and was deeply impressed by German education – which, in contrast to his military colleagues, he "rejected […] as a model for Japan as too developed and highly organized for a nation in transition from feudalism to modernism"[61] – the decision to follow the American model was made, and this ultimately had a decisive impact on education in Japan for decades to come. However, the case of education also shows that "Westernization," in fact, followed personal interests and networks instead of a systematic perception of what could have been understood as "the West." Other examples within the educational system of Japan, such as the study of ancient philology or history, as advocated by the first Japanese ancient philologist Tanaka Hidenaka, very often followed personal interests, the availability of relevant literature, and existent language capacities.[62]

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[59] *Mori Arinori zenshū*, 3:357–358, cited in Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 94–95.

[60] Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 92.

[61] Duke, *The History of Modern Japanese Education*, 96.

While initial ambitions for educational reforms were directed toward France, the interest and impact of Fukuzawa Yukichi and the members and translators of the Iwakura Mission turned the tide in favor of the US. However, "Westernization" cannot solely be understood as the "Americanization" of the education sector, especially since different ideas and thoughts were imported and led to a contest of opinions in Japan. In addition, Japan's overall modernization process during the Meiji Restoration relied upon well-educated Japanese acting as translators, replicators, and innovative intellectuals who, in a way, shaped the course of the import of Western ideas.[63] It also relied upon international developments and trends within an already globalized world. The access to and comparability of existing education systems allowed Japanese officials to gather all kinds of knowledge and expertise and would often give them the possibility to hire experts in their fields from all over the world. The *o-yatoi gaikokujin* were consequently as valuable assets as the experienced Japanese citizens abroad, who helped and advised the Japanese government's officials with regard to the choices to be made and paths to be taken.

Regardless of the eventual and overall success of Japan's modernization, which unfortunately was only internationally accepted once the country had won wars against another Asian power (China) in 1895 and a Western great power (Russia) in 1905, the import of foreign knowledge and standards also led to severe discussions about the future and soul of Japan, stimulating anti-foreign sentiments that eventually led to violent protests against the new government or those who seemed to represent the danger of "Westernization." Some intellectuals tried to find philosophical answers to the dilemma that would be expressed through the concept of *wakon yōsai* (Japanese spirit, Western technology).[64] Considering Japan's further historical development, the implementation of Western education was a formal act that tried to incorporate Japanese cultural specifics in some kind of hybrid, a cultural amalgamation of Western ideas and Japanese values.

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[62] Frank Jacob, "Western Classics in Modern Japan (2016)," *CUNY Academic Works*. Accessed June 15, 2023. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1033&context=qb_pubs.

[63] Missionaries, like Katayama Sen, would also bring political ideas back to Japan and become the "backbone" of the socialist Left in the country. See Frank Jacob, "The Continuities and Discontinuities of Anti-Communist State Violence in Modern Japan," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Anti-Communist Persecutions*, ed. Christian Gerlach and Clemens Six (London: Palgrave, 2020), 51–75.

[64] Hirakawa Sukehiro, *Wakon yōsai no keifu: uchi to soto kara no Meiji Nihon* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1971); Peter Lutum, *Das Denken von Minakata Kumagusu und Yanagita Kunio: Zwei Pioniere der japanischen Volkskunde im Spiegel der Leitmotive wakon-yōsai* (Münster: LIT, 2005).

Conclusion

Returning to the questions initially posed: First, the arguments that were used to advocate for Western education as an example to follow were the experiences and individual capacities of young Japanese intellectuals who visited foreign countries after the opening of Japan in 1853, paving the way for Western education to be adopted in Japan. Very often, individual interests and experiences also stimulated decisions about "Western role models" that seemed to fit the Japanese needs and necessities. The writings of Fukuzawa, which would later be considered part of the Japanese Enlightenment,[65] created a public perception of "the West" that very much depended on the intellectual's own perception. "Westernization" therefore relied on the personal image of "the West" among those who could persuade Japanese readers and government officials alike that the Western civilization they depicted was suitable and worth importing. With regard to education, the role of the US as a suitable role model would soon be unchallenged and thus quite important for the development of Japanese education during and after the years of the Meiji Restoration.

Second, there were numerous agents who were responsible for the import of Western education standards to Japan. Along with the already-mentioned Japanese intellectuals who visited Western countries, there were translators like Niijima, whose experience and contacts played an important role. Furthermore, the personal experiences and positive or negative perceptions of "the West" of government officials like Tanaka and Mori played important roles in deciding what would be considered suitable for Japan, especially with regard to Western education in Japan, as both of them had prominent and powerful positions that helped them to forge the latter according to their own ideas. Besides Japanese individuals, foreign advisors also played an important role, although their selection might have been rather related to the experiences of the former group, who recommended them as suitable appointments to the Japanese government. Nevertheless, from 1853, the *o-yatoi gaikokujin* played important roles in the educational sector in the "Westernization" of Japanese education.

Finally, the networks that stimulated the decision to apply Western standards to the national education system existed both within and outside of Japan. The circle of former students of Fukuzawa's school later represented the intellectual's ideas within governmental circles as well, such that the link between teacher and student, a particularly powerful one in the Japanese context, was without any doubt responsible for the creation, multiplication, and synergetic implementations of ideas about “the West” and ideas related to the necessity to study “Western” systems of education and to transform Japanese education standards accordingly. In addition, the networks in Western countries that were studied by members of the Iwakura Mission played an important role in the eventual selection of Western elements that were supposed to be important and adopted within the new and transforming Japanese state. The Rutgers connection, represented by Dr. Murray, was therefore as important as the Andover Theological Seminary connection between Niijima and Eaton.

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[65] Carmen Blacker, *The Japanese Enlightment: A Study of the Writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

One can consequently argue that the “Westernization” of Japan, or at least of its educational sector, relied upon numerous and diverse processes and connections that involved a multitude of motifs, actors, and networks. All in all, these factors built up to a process of modernization, which, with regard to the history of education in Japan, was very much linked to the United States, although other sectors or segments of this process were also related to other countries or regions of the world.[66] Ultimately, the “Westernization” of Japan did not mark a complete end to Japaneseness; rather, it was an amalgamation of Western imports with Japanese needs. The Japanese nation was thus based on a modernity that kept old traditions alive while adopting new things from abroad, creating something that is still and will probably remain modern, as long as the categories for the latter term stay the same.

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[66] See for example Frank Jacob, “Die deutsche Rolle bei der Modernisierung des japanischen Kaiserreiches: zur deutschen Kolonialerfahrung in Japan seit der Eulenburg-Expedition,” *Revue d’Allemagne* 48, no. 1 (2016): 57– 73.

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Timm Gerd Hellmanzik

"The West" from a Postcolonial Perspective of History of Education: The Construct "Europe" as a Conceptual Boarder

1 Introduction

In recent years, the discussion surrounding "the West" has significantly intensified in both the public sphere, including the media, and academic circles, in response to historical events.[1] The interpretation of this concept is diverse, but it can be broadly categorized into two opposing perspectives: In the first, "the West"[2] is understood and propagated as a normative project representing "Western values." In the second, a critical understanding emerges, pointing to contradictions and inconsistencies related to colonialism and imperialism.[3]

Within the German-speaking context, Jürgen Osterhammel emphasizes that "the West" has never solely functioned as a geographical term, but is intricately intertwined with a discourse on "civilization."[4] Jasper M. Trautsch provides an extensive analysis of the historical genesis and linguistic implications.[5] This reveals close semantic connections to adjacent terms such as "Europeanization" and "modernization," which have sometimes acted as synonyms for "the West," merging conceptually with it. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall contributes a powerful analysis in his essay "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power" (1992), in which he unveils the discursive construction of "the West" in contrast to "the Rest" and eluci-

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[1] In the feuilleton, there is currently a debate underway regarding the historical reappraisal of the German Democratic Republic, with a focus on the ongoing construction of "West" and "East" identities. Various publications contribute to this discussion, and criticisms argue a tendency to downplay historical circumstances. Katja Hoyer, *Beyond the Wall: East Germany, 1949–1990* (Dublin: Allen Lane, 2023); Dirk Oschmann, *Der Osten eine westdeutsche Erfindung* (Berlin: Ullstein, 2023).

[2] By employing quotation marks, the subsequent analysis aims to highlight a critical perspective. The term "The West" lacks a fixed semantic definition.

[3] The scholarly examination of the concept as an analytical entity is still unfolding and has experienced renewed momentum within various historical disciplines through the *spatial turn* and *linguistic turn*. Christopher Gogwilt et al., *Westerness. Critical Reflections on the Spatio-temporal Construction of the West* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2022).

[4] Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt. Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2015) 143.

[5] Jasper M. Trautsch, "'Der Westen': Theoretisch-methodische Überlegungen zu einer Begriffsgeschichte," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 60–61 (2018–2019): 409–440.

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-005

dates its enduring consequences.[6] Embracing a critical understanding of this concept proves fruitful in transnational and postcolonial analyses of the history of education, which will be further explored in this article.[7]

A particular focal point at the intersection of “East” and “West,” “Asia” and “Europe,” “Orient” and “Occident,” lies in German-Turkish relations. These transnational relations have recently garnered attention in the history of education.[8] While contemporary historical reference points tend to revolve around the *Gastarbeiter* (‘guest worker’) agreements of the 1960s, close educational and cultural policy entanglements can be traced back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During this time, the German Empire sought to expand its (cultural) imperialist influence towards “semi-colonial entanglements” in “the Orient.”[9] Similarly, the long nineteenth century of the Ottoman Empire, with its reform phases, is often described in historiography as a period of *modernleşme* (‘modernization’) and *batılaşma* (‘westernization’).[10] A multifaceted discourse on “Turks” and “Turkey” also exerted its influence within German pedagogy. It encompassed educational knowledge bases that depicted the Ottoman Empire and its population in certain ways, perpetuating stereotypical notions that have lasting effects. It also involved a debate within educational policy regarding the transformation and reform processes of the Ottoman educational system and its compatibility with “European education.”[11]

This article delves into the transnational German-Turkish history of education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a specific focus on the construction of “the West.” First, it discusses approaches within the historical and theoretical discourse on determining the concept of “the West.” Various positions are juxtaposed, taking a postcolonial perspective as the theoretical basis for the subsequent historical analysis. Building upon this, a discourse-analytical investigation[12] of historical textbooks is conducted, providing insights into the educational knowledge of the time. The aim is to examine the relationship between the Ottoman Empire or “Turkey”[13] and conceptions of “Europe,” which can be understood as a precursor to “the West.” The study aims to unravel the complex web of self-perceptions and perceptions of others that emerged during this period, shedding light on the associated semantics and their implications. Finally, the article concludes by summarizing the key findings and situating them within a broader context.

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[6] Stuart Hall, “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power,” in *The Formations of Modernity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben (Oxford and Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 184–227.

[7] Marcelo Caruso and Daniel Maul’s edited volume *Decolonization(s) and Education: New Policies and New Men* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2020) provides a noteworthy example of engaging with (post-) colonial entanglement and decolonization in the field of history of education.

[8] On the transnational, entangled, and postcolonial history from the perspective of the history of education, see: Ingrid Lohmann, Julika Böttcher, Sylvia Kesper-Biermann, and Christine Mayer, eds., *Wie die Türken in unsere Köpfe kamen* (Bad Heilbrunn: Julius Klinkhardt, 2021–2025).

[9] Malte Fuhrmann, “Deutschlands Abenteuer im Orient. Eine Geschichte semi-kolonialer Verstrickungen,” in *Türkisch-Deutsche Beziehungen: Perspektiven aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, ed. Claus Schönig et al. (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2012), 10–33.

[10] Cengiz Günay, *Geschichte der Türkei. Von den Anfängen der Moderne bis heute* (Wien: Böhlau 2012), 11.

[11] Mustafa Gencer, *Bildungspolitik, Modernisierung und kulturelle Interaktion. Deutsch-türkische Beziehungen (1908–1918)* (Münster: LIT, 2002).

2 “The West” as a Contentious Concept – a Postcolonial Approach to the Term

The interpretations of the concept of “the West” vary significantly, showcasing divergent perspectives. Highlighting the notion that contemporary (self-)perceptions are also challenged when examining historical spaces, global historian Jürgen Osterhammel sheds light on the subject. The emergence of “the West” as a category is a relatively recent phenomenon, dating back to the late nineteenth century. Often framed as a community of “Christian values,” it is consistently positioned against other constructs, initially the “Muslim Orient,” later Soviet communism, and subsequently Islam.[14] It is worth noting the potential for shifts and updates in the concept today, particularly in relation to Russia, China, and the “Global South.” Osterhammel elucidates this concept while the dichotomy between the “Orient” and the “Occident” has ancient cosmological origins, the category of “the West” took shape with a transatlantic vision of a comprehensive civilization. In the late nineteenth century, “the West” and its synonyms, such as the “civilized world,” were not confined to spatial terms but functioned as evaluative and descriptive categories applied to states and regions.[15]

From the point of *Begriffsgeschichte* (‘conceptual history’) historian Jasper M. Trautsch conducts a comprehensive study on the historical development of the concept of “the West.” He delves into its multifaceted nature and recognizes it as a fundamental political concept of the modern era. He examines how the meaning of the term has evolved over time in relation to factual historical events. However, it is important to acknowledge that the retrospective use of the term does not always align with how people from that period described themselves or others. Researchers must therefore be mindful of their own perspectives and provide an explanation of their positionality.[16] In contrast to Jan Ifversen,[17] Trautsch names four different definitions: Firstly, "the West" is seen as a political community, as it was formulated during the World Wars or the Cold War, representing the "democratic West" in opposition to ideologies like fascism and communism.[18] Secondly, "the West" can refer to the "modern world," comprising economically and technologically developed countries, particularly against the backdrop of colonialism and imperialism.[19] Thirdly, "the West" existed as a racial category, shaped during the resistance against colonialism, but has largely diminished in contemporary times. And finally, "the West" serves as a reference to a cultural community that has evolved over time, forming a religious unity and sharing common values.[20]

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[12] The analysis is based on a discourse-theoretical perspective that builds upon Michel Foucault’s ideas and has been further developed for discourse-historical analyses by Achim Landwehr, in *Historische Diskursanalyse* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 2018).

[13] In the source material, the references are used interchangeably as synonyms.

[14] Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*, 143.

[15] Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*, 144.

Furthermore, Trautsch explains that these understandings not only coexist but also overlap with each other. This is particularly evident when considering the notion of a political community and a cultural and value community, as exemplified by the imperialist powers of the nineteenth century such as Britain, France, the Netherlands, and the USA. In addition, it is explained that semantic peculiarities exist in different languages such as English, German, and French, as the terms sometimes have different connotations.[21] Trautsch's insights emphasize the potential, relevance, and complexity of examining the historical development of these concepts, which must be considered as foundational aspects of an analysis in the history of education.

Concepts of a political community of "the West," as a shared cultural space and community of values, are also conveyed in contemporary historiography. Historian Heinrich August Winkler plays a crucial role in shaping the perspective of parts of German academia and public discourse. In numerous publications, Winkler comprehensively elucidates his understanding of "the West" in history. His highly factual historical accounts primarily aim to explain contemporary crises faced by “the West.”[22] Historical representation and normative assignments thus go hand in hand. In his works, Winkler describes the global genesis and historical transformation of “the West,” highlighting the historical events and trends that have favored and accompanied the emergence of “Western values.” According to Winkler, these “Western values” constitute “a historically unique ensemble of achievements.”[23] The historical narrative takes the form of a continuous narrative of progress and development, beginning in antiquity and leading through the medieval “West” to the historical cornerstones of the “modern West”: The Declaration of Independence in North America and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen by the French National Constituent Assembly in 1789. Following Winkler, these documents have developed their “own logic” and laid the foundation for the “project of the West,” marking a watershed moment for “humanity.”[24] Initially “the West” is seen within the context of Western Christianity, that is, Latin Europe. It encompasses fundamental attributes such as freedom, checks and balances, the rule of law, popular sovereignty, democracy, individualism, and pluralism. According to Winkler, these values could *only* emerge within their particular historical context. He also acknowledges that violations of these “core values” have occurred within the “normative project” of “the West,” which explains why it is considered an ongoing endeavor.[25] Nonetheless, Winkler points out the “ability to adapt” and the “will to learn.”[26] Hence, “the West” is viewed as a dynamic entity with an organic and vibrant nature. German history is also placed in this “Western” framework. Referring to the words of President Richard von Weizsäcker, Winkler argues that Germany found its “permanent place among the circle of Western democracies” in 1990.[27] NATO and the EU are identified as the supporting pillars of recent history, with the “commitment” to “Western values” being decisive in each case.[28] Winkler’s position exemplifies one facet of the historiographical discourse surrounding the concept. It can be demonstrated that the historical argumentation, including the arrangement of historical narrative and its interpretation, unfolds a powerful narrative that extends beyond a mere understanding of the concept and descriptive analysis. In *Werte und Mächte* ('Values and powers') Winkler concludes by stating, "the present history of the West does *not* place its subject in quotation marks because it sees more in the West than the construct it *also* was."[29]. In doing so, he provides a clear positioning of his understanding of the concept while also pointing out contrasting interpretations of "the West," some of which will now be presented in opposition.

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[16] Trautsch, "'Der Westen'," 427.
[17] Jan Ifversen, "Who are the Westerners?" *International Politics* 45 (2008): 236–253.
[18] Trautsch, "'Der Westen'," 430.
[19] Trautsch, "'Der Westen'," 431.
[20] Trautsch, "'Der Westen'," 432.
[21] Trautsch, "'Der Westen'," 434.

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[22] The crisis of the West is addressed, for example, in Jürgen Habermas’s essay collection *Der gespaltene Westen* (‘The divided West’) from 2004. The central concern of this work is the examination of how violations of international law are handled. His analysis shows that by “the West” he primarily means the USA and Europe, which invokes the ideals of the Enlightenment.

[23] Heinrich August Winkler, *Werte und Mächte. Eine Geschichte der westlichen Welt* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2019), 895.

[24] Winkler, *Werte und Mächte*, 56.

[25] Winkler, *Werte und Mächte*, 897.

[26] NZZ, Standpunkte 2015. Der Westen, mächtig und angreifbar. Interview with Heinrich August Winkler, accessed April 24, 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2x6bdDSRQM.

[27] Heinrich August Winkler, *Wie wir wurden, was wir sind* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2021), 9.

[28] NZZ, Standpunkte 2015.

The sociologist and historian Immanuel Wallerstein raises critical concerns in his works regarding an uncritical approach to the notion of "Western civilization":

> The concepts of human rights and democracy, the superiority of Western civilization because it is based on universal values and truths, and the inescapability of submission to the 'market' are all offered to us as self-evident ideas. But they are not at all self-evident. They are complex ideas that need to be analyzed carefully, and stripped of their noxious and nonessential parameters, in order to be evaluated soberly and put at the service of everyone rather than a few.[30]

He argues against the idea of inherent superiority and instead attributes the historical dominance of "the West" to specific processes and systemic dynamics. The rise of "the West" to global hegemony is seen as a result of factors such as economic strength, colonial expansion, and the exploitation of resources from other regions. He calls for a critical examination of "Western hegemony," highlighting the internal divisions and contradictions within "the West" itself.[31] These perspectives align with postcolonial viewpoints that scrutinize the political, economic, and cultural effects of colonialism. Already in his key work *Orientalism* (1978), Edward W. Said elaborates on the dualism of "Orient" and "Occident," critiquing the hegemonic production of knowledge and its strategies of representation. In this discourse, the idea prevails that ontological differences exist between both poles, which determine the perspective of comparison: the identification of differences instead of commonalities. "Western" notions often generate both implicitly and explicitly a sweeping image of, on the one hand, a dynamic and animated "Occident" with a changing history, and on the other, a passive and merely reactive "Orient."[32] In "The West and the Rest," Hall offers a global perspective on colonial relations and provides an analysis of the concept of "the West." He argues that the identity of "the West" only emerges through its comparison with "the Rest," the other, and peripheral regions. According to Hall, these two poles, "the West" and "the Rest," are interconnected and represent "two sides of a single coin."[33] Rather than being defined geographically, "the West" is seen as a historical construct characterized by attributes such as industrialization, urbanization, capitalism, secularism, and modernity.[34] On the other hand, "the Rest" has opposing and often pejorative attributes ascribed to it. Hall emphasizes that European societies were constructed through the depiction of the foreign and the acknowledgment of difference.[35] The discursive construction of "the West" since the Enlightenment, along with its self-perceived superiority, has served to legitimize and propel European expansion, exploitation, and domination. It is important to note that neither "the West" nor "the Rest" can be considered homogenous, and the imaginary boundaries of these constructs remain unclear. Hall decries the uncritical usage of the term "the West," as it perpetuates powerful dichotomies beyond its historical context and into the present. Alongside the critical examination of the historical formation of "the West," a serious critique of knowledge production is expressed, which must be taken seriously when dealing with the topic.[36]

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[29] Winkler, *Werte und Mächte*, 884.

[30] Immanuel Wallerstein, *European Universalism: The Rhetoric of Power* (New York: The New Press, 2006), XV.

[31] Wallerstein, *European Universalism*, xv.

[32] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 2003).

The various approaches to the concept demonstrate that "the West" is a complex and constantly evolving construct. The theoretical assumptions and research approaches, whether global-historical, conceptual-historical, European or national-historical, or postcolonial, determine how the concept of "the West" is dealt with in historical investigations. It has been shown that the results of the analyses presented are similar, but the conclusions and interpretations differ significantly. Winkler uses his analysis to draw attention to contemporary issues involving "the West" emphasizing its "achievements" as a still valid normative project. Postcolonial theorists focus on the flip side of "the West," which presents itself as "universal" and connected to the imaginations of a "European civilization." The "success story" is massively questioned, and instead, the (colonial) history of entanglement and systems of representation become subjects of analysis.

In the context of (educational) historical research, clarifying the understanding of the concept is crucial. Instead of examining public, political, or media discourse on "the West," I now turn to the history of education and analyze educational media as a valuable source. Adopting a postcolonial understanding of the concept, “the West” is seen as a discursive construct constantly intertwined with “the Rest.” Without completely denying the value of “Western achievements” as Winkler calls them, postcolonial approaches to “the West” focus on its constructed nature. The continuous demarcation from everything “non-Western” is seen as its distinctive feature and subsequently examined in relation to the Ottoman Empire.

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[33] Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power," 187.

[34] Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power," 184–227.

[35] Andrea Polaschegg argues that this is not exclusively a Western practice, pointing out that the West has also been misrepresented in "Oriental" sources, highlighting the distortion in its portrayal. Andrea Polaschegg, *Der andere Orientalismus. Regeln deutsch-morgenländischer Imagination im 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 39.

[36] Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power," 225.

3 The Relation Between “Europe” and the Ottoman Empire in German History Textbooks

Since 1949, Turkey has been a member of the Council of Europe, joining NATO in 1952 and the OECD in 1961. However, its affiliation with “the West” and “Europe” is a subject of continuously heated debate, with both discussions seamlessly merging into one another. One notable example is the contentious debate surrounding its potential EU membership since 2005. This even prompted the influential German historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler to take a clear and unequivocal stance against it in an article titled “Turkey’s accession destroys the European Union” (2006). Wehler cited various factors for his opposition, including perceived economic weaknesses, concerns about “Islam,” the notion of a distinct “cultural sphere,” and the argument that Turkey, fundamentally, is a “non-European country.”[37] More recently, there has been even a discussion about whether Turkey still belongs to “the West.”[38] Given these circumstances, I believe it is essential to examine the historicity of these debates within the previously not considered educational discourse, particularly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Drawing on theoretical perspectives, I interpret the construction of “Europe” as a direct precursor to and, at times, synonymous with “the West.” Consequently, I aim to explore the impact of the concept of “Europe” on historical textbooks’ portrayal of the Ottoman Empire. By analyzing the language, semantics, and the presence of “othering”[39] in educational knowledge, we can gain insights into the prevailing attitudes and perspectives.

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[37] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, “Der Türkei-Beitritt zerstört die Europäische Union,” in *Soziale Ungleichheit, kulturelle Unterschiede: Verhandlungen des 32. Kongresses der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie in München*, ed. Karl-Siegberg Rehberg (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2006), 1140–1150.

[38] Gehört die Türkei noch zum Westen. Perspektiven mit Andreas Nick und Taha Özhan. Körber Stiftung 2018, accessed April 28, 2023, koerber-stiftung.de/site/assets/files/19396/koerber_globals_gehoert_die_tuerkei_noch_zum_westen.pdf.

[39] In line with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the concept of “othering” refers to the process of constructing identity and power dynamics by defining a group as “the Other.” It involves the creation of boundaries that distinguish and marginalize certain groups, reinforcing notions of difference and hierarchies of power. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives,” *History and Theory* 24, no. 3 (1985): 247–272.

It is worth noting that textbooks have undergone significant transformations during the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, evolving from precious individual books to mass-produced educational tools that have become indispensable in the process of nation-state formation. By examining textbooks, we can reconstruct the "perception patterns, interpretations, values, and norms" associated with historical events, shedding light on the identity formation processes.[40]

When examining German history textbooks from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, specifically in relation to their narratives about the Ottoman Empire, we often encounter the recurring construction of "Europe."[41] Although the explicit mention of "the West" may be absent,[42] there are notable references to "Europe" that closely align with the conceptual framework of what we now partly understand as "the West." These references arise when discussing the Ottoman Empire, and they introduce a certain tension.

Initially, "Europe" is often constructed in the textbooks as an observing entity – a unified perspective that follows the historical events concerning the Ottoman Empire from a certain vantage point. One prominent event that receives significant attention in the books' historiography is the Greek War of Independence (1821–1832). In this war, "the Turks" assume the role of antagonists in contrast to "the Greeks." Retrospectively, the events are described as the "revival of Europe"[43] and thus, the authors of the textbooks construct a notion of "Europe" being newly discovered in recent history, distinguished from the ancient era. With the establishment of modern Greece, the authors explain how the War of Independence "captured the attention of Europe."[44] In other instances, it is mentioned that “the educated Europe was keenly observing the conflicts.”[45] Similar dynamics can be observed in later military conflicts, such as the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, where “astonished Europe”[46] pondered the fate of the Ottoman Empire.

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[40] Eckhardt Fuchs, Inga Niehaus, and Almut Stoletzki, eds., *Das Schulbuch in der Forschung. Analysen und Empfehlungen für die Bildungspraxis* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2014), 34.

[41] The examined textbooks were sourced from the collection of the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media – Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), located in Braunschweig, Germany. The selection included textbooks on world and national history used in higher education institutions and prestigious girls' schools, providing insights into the educational practices of privileged bourgeois groups. This contribution partially draws upon my monograph, Timm Gerd Hellmanzik, *Vom "Türkenjoch" zu "Deutschlands Freundschaft für die Türkei" – Der Wandel des Wissens über das Osmanische Reich in deutschen Geschichtsschulbüchern 1839–1918* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2023).

[42] The concept was not yet widespread and, moreover, the German authors probably did not see themselves as "Western."

[43] Theodor Bernhard Welter, *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte für Gymnasien und höhere Bürgerschulen* (Münster: Coppenrath, 1840), 358.

[44] Friedrich Nösselt, *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte für Bürger- und Gelehrtenschulen. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der deutschen Geschichte. Theil 3* (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1839), 551.

By personifying “Europe” as a rhetorical device, the narrative gains impact, becomes more accessible to the readers, and potentially piques their interest.[47] This storytelling technique creates a dichotomy where the respective events position the Ottoman Empire as the object of observation while elevating “Europe” to the role of the observing subject. The descriptions are also infused with emotional elements, depicting how “celebrations echoed throughout Europe”[48] or how the “Balkan troubles” “kept Europe in suspense.”[49] Even in the first half of the nineteenth century, the textbooks mention that “Europe’s attention was anxiously directed towards the Orient.”[50] Through this vibrant style, the history textbooks construct “Europe” as a living entity, enabling readers to identify with. Meanwhile, the Ottoman Empire is linguistically separated and perceived as outside the realm of “Europe” although the textbooks do not explicitly define what or who is exactly meant by the term in these contexts.

Another concept of “Europe” in the descriptions of the Ottoman Empire within the textbooks is related to geographical and cultural determinations and delineations. Even at a broader level, evident from the table of contents and organization of the textbooks, “Europe” occupies a distinct position within the historical narrative. While it serves the purpose of structuring the content, it also establishes a clear demarcation. Headings such as “European events,” “The peoples and states of Europe” or simply “Europe” are employed, providing a framework to discuss individual states or events and underline their historical significance.[51] Interestingly, the Ottoman Empire is often included within these discussions, located within the geographical boundaries of "Europe," sometimes divided into "European Turkey" and "Asian Turkey." In Wilhelm Pütz's[52] widely used *Outline of Geography and History of Ancient, Middle, and Modern Times* (1855), which aims to integrate historical and geographical knowledge, each era commences with a "Geographical Overview of Europe." While the introduction presents "the Turks" as "Europe's dangerous neighbors,"[53] the geographical descriptions within the "Overview of Europe" place "The Ottoman Empire" within specific time periods, such as "during the Reformation," thereby positioning it *within* "Europe."[54] Consequently, certain texts create dualisms wherein the Ottoman Empire is considered part of the European state order while excluding "the Turks" as an ethnic group. Both these perspectives can coexist within the textbooks. A significant recognition of the Ottoman Empire within the "European state order" occurs in discussions surrounding "The Treaty of Paris."[55] Through the formal acceptance in the peace treaty, the Ottoman Empire is included in the "concert of European powers" yet contradictions persist within the texts. Adjacent passages continue to use phrases like "the Turks in Europe"[56] or "conquests of the Turks in Europe," emphasizing the continued portrayal of "the Turks" as outsiders. Consequently, certain medieval perceptions are revived, depicting "the Turks" as the "Terror of the World" and antagonistic to a "Christian Europe."[57]

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[45] Jakob Carl Andrä and Richard Seehaußen, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte für höhere Mädchenschulen. Vierter Teil* (Leipzig: R. Voigtländer, 1910), 117.

[46] Georg Weber, *Die Weltgeschichte in übersichtlicher Darstellung* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1879), 567.

[47] Christoph Huber, “Personifikation,” in *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft. Neubearbeitung des Reallexikons der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, vol. 3, ed. Klaus Weimar (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 53–55.

[48] Johannes Bumüller, *Die Weltgeschichte. Ein Lehrbuch für Mittelschulen und zum Selbstunterricht. Dritter Theil* (Freiburg: Herder, 1862), 423.

[49] Karl Dageförde and Wilhelm Heinze, *Die Geschichte in tabellarischer Übersicht. Ein Hülfsbuch für den Geschichtsunterricht* (Hannover: Helwing, 1917), 233.

[50] Welter, *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte*, 360.

[51] Friedrich Mürdter, *Leitfaden der Weltgeschichte; für untere Gymnasialklassen oder lateinische Schulen, Real- und Bürgerschulen, Pädagogien und Töchteranstalten* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1855), 178; Georg Weber, *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte: mit Rücksicht auf Cultur, Literatur und Religionswesen, und einem Abriß der deutschen Literaturgeschichte als Anhang für höhere Schulanstalten und zur Selbstbelehrung* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1847), 774; Wilhelm Pütz, *Grundriß der Geographie*

In contrast to everything non-European, other passages highlight aspects that provide more clarity to the concept of "Europe" and attribute it with the adjective "European." These passages provide insight into a corresponding (self-)understanding and create a fictional common cultural space. Once again, Pütz can be considered:

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und Geschichte der alten, mittleren und neuern Zeit für die mittleren Klassen der Gymnasien und für höhere Bürgerschulen. Erste Abtheilung (Koblenz: Karl Bädeker, 1860), 51.

[52] Wilhelm Pütz (1806–1877) was a teacher at Catholic grammar schools in Cologne, Trier and Düren. In 1862 he was appointed professor. He went on study trips to numerous European countries and his works are widely read and have also been translated into Swedish, English, Dutch, Hungarian, and French. Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, *Das deutsche Schulgeschichtsbuch 1700–1945: Die erste Epoche seiner Gattungsgeschichte im Spiegel der Vorworte* (Berlin: LIT 2011), 610.

[53] Pütz, *Grundriß der Geographie und Geschichte*, 1.

[54] Pütz, *Grundriß der Geographie und Geschichte*, 4.

[55] Bumüller, *Die Weltgeschichte*, 692.

[56] Wilhelm Pfeifer and Cramer Franz, *Pfeifers Lehrbuch der Geschichte für höhere Lehranstalten. Fünfter Theil* (Breslau: Hirt, 1918), 153.

[57] Aslı Çırakman, *From the "Terror of the World" to the "Sick Man of Europe": European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

> Europe is indeed the smallest but the most powerful, most educated, relatively populated, and, in every aspect, farthest removed from all extremes of the continents. […] Moreover, it surpasses the other continents in everything that is a product of the mind. While the formation of states, sciences, mechanical and fine arts, industry, and trade originally belong to the East, they have achieved their highest development and perfection on European soil, first in the South and later in the North.[58]

Rather than defining "Europe" based on physical-topological characteristics, he presents "Europe" as the culmination of a progressive civilization just as it was described in the notion of "the West" as a normative project. While acknowledging the ancient Orient as the origin of cultural achievements and civilization, Pütz argues that they have only fully come into bloom in Europe. By highlighting education, arts, economic productivity, and political order as crucial distinguishing features, Pütz's remarks bear a resemblance to descriptions of "the West." Other texts expand on this idea, emphasizing the ongoing but unsuccessful efforts of "the Rest" to reach this level:

> They seek strength, they seek defense against impending decline through European institutions, through European means, through the spirit of Europe that they strive to instill in themselves and their own. But the spirit of Europe, incompatible with Islam, will not come to them. Their downfall is certain, even if they manage to prolong their existence for a few more decades. And over them, Europe will eventually extend its influence to Persia and China, where other paths have already been prepared. For no matter how Europe itself emerges from the turmoil it still faces, one thing seems certain: its immense superiority will increasingly assert itself against the foreign world.[59]

In the discussion of political developments in the Ottoman Empire, the attempt at "Europeanization" and "Westernization" is declared a failure. A fundamental opposition is seen in the religion of "Islam." This perspective categorically excludes the Ottoman Empire and aligns with a widespread narrative of decline in the nineteenth century. Imperialist ambitions and conquest plans are considered justified in light of the comprehensive "superiority of Europe." "Spirit" (*Geist*), including "intellectual development," serves as a decisive concept of distinction, marking an insurmountable difference. Where it prevails, the world is guided by enlightenment, reason, institutions, and achievements of humanity.

Later texts, after the turn of the century and especially during the so-called "Young Turk Revolution" of 1908 adopt a different perspective and attribute a certain participation in "Europe" to "the Turks": "Turkey, which had been predicted to perish several times before, should gain the character of a modern European state through internal reforms at the turn of the century."[60] The crucial factor is the Young Turk Party, which "aimed to make their country accessible to Western European influences and modern civilization."[61] The Ottoman Empire turned to modernity, thus its preservation and cultural and political revival can be predicted. While it may not be inherently "European" it is capable of "Europeanization." Rarely, even euphemistic expressions can be found, in which the reforms in the Ottoman Empire are directly linked to "European history": "Thus, it was destined for the Ottoman Empire to complete the work that France began in 1789 in Europe."[62] These remarkable statements reflect historical change and shifting evaluations. They can be explained by improved political relations between the German Empire and the Ottoman Empire in the pre-war period and tendencies towards the formation of a new nation-state that met European standards.

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[58] Pütz, *Grundriß der Geographie und Geschichte*, 51.

[59] Ludwig Flathe, *Lehrbuch der allgemeinen Geschichte für höhere Unterrichtsanstalten und zum Selbstunterrichte Gebildeter* (Leipzig: Gebhardt & Reisland, 1839), 418.

Overall, it becomes clear that in places of demarcation, textbooks associate "Europe" and "European values" with specific characteristics: state formation, science, "intellectual development" and trade. Walking through history, the Ottoman Empire is long denied participation in these aspects and even accused of incompatibility. However, gradually, in the early twentieth century, isolated positions emerge that incorporate the Ottoman Empire into the civilizational history of "Europe." In a remarkable way, criteria employed to delineate and characterize "Europe" in this context exhibit noteworthy parallels with those observed in historiographical discourse concerning "the West."

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this article has provided insights into the theoretical and historical construction of the concept of "the West" and its manifestation in the educational discourse regarding the Ottoman Empire. The analysis has explored the complex and heterogeneous portrayal of the relationship between "Europe" and the Ottoman Empire in history textbooks, and the ways in which these textbooks encompass various historical periods and events, resulting in the construction of multiple "Europe" concepts and perceptions of the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, underlying these varied representations, one can discern a progression from a categorical rejection and exclusion of the Ottoman Empire to a partial "inclusion" within the concept of "Europe." Despite the absence of formal colonial relations, the descriptions are permeated by a sense of (colonial) superiority. It is not until later, when the political exigency of an alliance becomes more apparent in light of the World War, that the descriptions take on a more positive tone.

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[60] Ella Mensch, *Leitfaden für den Unterricht in der Weltgeschichte: an höheren Mädchenschulen sowie an Studienanstalten* (Berlin: Otto Salle, 1910), 204.

[61] Mensch, *Leitfaden für den Unterricht in der Weltgeschichte*, 204.

[62] Heinrich Christensen, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte für höhere Mädchenschulen* (Leipzig: Hirt, 1909), 70.

The analysis of the textbooks has identified three levels of discourse: "Europe" as an observing entity, "Europe" in relation to geographical-cultural determinations and boundary delineations, and "Europe" as a shared cultural space, distinguished from non-European entities. The latter level aligns with the normative project of "the West" and can be considered a precursor to it. These findings resonate with analyses based on other source materials; as Peter Burke aptly noted, "Europe is not so much a place as an idea."[63] Despite the absence of explicit references to the "West" in German perspectives during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the analysis demonstrates that the concepts of "Europe" in relation to the Ottoman Empire employ mechanisms of differentiation and similar attributions. "Europe" functions as a conceptual boarder, a term that creates a distinction between different entities.

In light of these insights, it is clear that the use of the terms "the West" and "Europe" as analytical categories is not straightforward. It calls for further discussion and critical examination within the field of pedagogical historiography. Additionally, the postcolonial understanding employed in this empirical investigation highlights the need to re-evaluate other related terms critically. By delving deeper into these dimensions, future research can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the construction of "the West" and its relation to "Europe" in educational contexts.

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[63] Peter Burke, "Did Europe Exist Before 1700?" *History of European Ideas* 1, no. 1 (1980): 21.

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Silke Mende

French Discourses on the “West,” “Modernity,” and “Civilization”: The Example of *francophonie républicaine*

> It is French principles that have won the day. Just as occurred 130 years ago, the new world has defeated the old world. 1919 continues, indeed completes 1789 and 1792 […] 1918 marks the end of a world, and 1919 will see the beginning of a new era.[1]

This[2] passage is from a speech delivered in Lyon on December 8, 1918, by Edmond Besnard, a radical republican and ardent proponent of laicism. A month after the end of the First World War, he slotted that conflict chronologically into a longer history of events by recalling the ideas of 1789. Spatially, unlike the majority of his contemporaries, he directed listeners’ attention beyond Europe: “In the Orient, France has long enjoyed a situation of privilege, economically as well as intellectually and morally. Its language is the most widely disseminated there of all foreign languages; it is like a badge of sublimity, a proof of culture and civilization.”[3] This perspective is explained by the fact that Besnard was the secretary general of the Mission Laïque Française (MLF), an organization whose goal was to spread French language and culture in the Mediterranean region and the Middle East. A radically laicist organization, it had been founded in 1902 against the backdrop of the internal French dispute over the separation of church and state, and it sought above all to compete with the many well-established Christian orders and their schools. The timing of his speech was likely also related to the League of Nations mandate for Syria and Lebanon, which France had long been eager to obtain and was finally

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[1] “La France en Orient. Conférence de M. Edmond Besnard,” *Bulletin de la Mission Laïque Française* 15 (1918): 87. All French quotations were translated into German by the author and then translated into English for the present volume. In some cases, the original French passages are given in parentheses.

[2] This present article was first published in German in 2018 (Silke Mende, “Französische Diskurse um ‘Westen’, ‘Moderne’ und ‘Zivilisation’ – Das Beispiel der francophonie républicaine,” in: *Zivilisatorische Verortungen. Der “Westen” an der Jahrhundertwende (1880–1930)*, ed. Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Steber (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2018): 44–56) and has not been revised for the English translation; the bibliography has not been updated.

[3] “La France en Orient,” 87.

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-006

granted in 1920/22, formalizing its traditionally strong, informal influence in the region.

But how might this shed light on the place of the “West” in French debates at the turn of the century? The above quotes illuminate in exemplary fashion a number of dimensions and challenges – not least those of a semantic nature – associated with France’s discourses on the “West.” They also hint at certain substantive aspects and motifs that I elaborate below. Finally, they point to the angle from which this chapter approaches the issue of France and the “West,” namely *francophonie.* As the most important agent of the “educational task” (*tâche éducatrice*) that allegedly fell to France as the “schoolmaster of nations” (*l’institutrice des nations*),[4] Besnard identified the French language – “a badge of sublimity,” indeed the very “proof of culture and civilization.” This reflected the objectives of his organization but also the fact that the French language played a prominent, definitional role in the French self-image(s).

My approach here brings into focus actors who were particularly committed to French language policy and language cultivation, but who also associated with them a whole set of other ideas and concepts. In what follows, I focus chiefly on an intellectual republican elite that had emerged since the 1880s in the “Third Republic” and whose center of gravity lay in the Parisian bourgeoisie. This elite included politicians, scholars, and intellectuals whose engagement often overlapped, not least in the many charitable associations and scholarly societies founded in the name of *francophonie* in the final third of the nineteenth century. These bodies formed a tight-knit institutional network and were enmeshed – in terms of both personnel and finances – with a centralist and increasingly interventionist state and its institutions. The associated constellation of actors shaped French debates about language and language policy both inside and outside the French nation-state, and it also made an impact on the French empire and France’s role in international politics.[5] The perspective I have chosen here on *francophonie républicaine*, which was particularly dominant at the turn of the century, nevertheless represents only one, albeit important, aspect of this theme.[6]

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[4] “La France en Orient,” 89.

[5] See Pierre Singaravélou, “Aux origines coloniales de la francophonie. Le rôle pionnier des associations et des sociétés savantes,” in *Les associations dans la francophonie*, ed. Sylvie Guillaume and Noble Akam (Pessac: Maison des sciences de l’homme d’Aquitaine, 2006), 63 – 74. On the “Alliance Française” as an important language policy organization, see François Chaubet, *La politique culturelle française et la diplomatie de la langue. L’Alliance Française, 1883 – 1940* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2006).

[6] On other, sometimes competing actors and discourses, such as antirepublican movements or the numerous French, mostly Catholic missionaries, see James Patrick Daughton, *An Empire Divided:*

After (1) briefly examining French notions of the "West" from a history-of-concepts perspective, I turn (2) to the concrete dynamics characteristic of this and related concepts between metropolitan France and its colonial and imperial spheres of influence. This (3) prompts us to consider the scope of more far-reaching concepts, namely French universalism, and to ponder competing or even cooperative conceptions within the "West."

1 The Relative Absence of the "West" and the Need for Complementary Concepts

In the French case, if we wish to get a handle on the ideas and concepts central to this volume and its core period of investigation, namely the "long turn of the century," the "West" is not the most obvious term to explore.[7] At least in the sources reviewed here, "West"/"Western," in other words *occident/occidental*, are comparatively little-used terms, though the multifaceted charge of these French words is significant in this context. Beyond its primarily geographical meaning, *occident* may stand for the (Christian) "West" in a narrower sense, while in the sense of "Occident" it is the concrete antonym of "Orient."[8] In light of this, it is imperative to foreground – or at least include in our analysis – related terms that are often directly linked to *occident* in linguistic usage. Reference was often made to *civilisation occidentale*, that is, "Western civilization." *Civilisation* is similar but not identical to *occident*, entailing a number of differing emphases – which may provide insights into the tensions indicated earlier, such as the question of France's status as part of the "West," its role within it, and its universalist aspirations. This leads on to the question of whether *civilisation* was generally construed as

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Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880–1914 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[7] However, in a recent article, Georgios Varouxakis emphasizes the importance of French impulses to the idea of the "West," specifically the influence of Auguste Comte (1798–1857), though he developed his ideas in the first half of the nineteenth century. Georgios Varouxakis, "The Godfather of 'Occidentality': Auguste Comte and the Idea of 'The West,'" *Modern Intellectual History* 85 (2017): 1–31.

[8] On the latter, see, for example, Desmond Hosford and Chong J. Wojtkowski, "Introduction," in *French Orientalism: Culture, Politics, and the Imagined Other*, ed. Desmond Hosford and Chong J. Wojtkowski (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010), 1–10. For a general account, see Helmut Hühn, "Die Entgegensetzung von 'Osten' und 'Westen,' 'Orient' und 'Okzident' als begriffsgeschichtliche Herausforderung," in *Begriffsgeschichte im Umbruch*, ed. Ernst Müller (Hamburg: Meiner, 2005), 59–67.

a singular, that is, as a desirable benchmark, or whether several possible *civilisations*, plural, were imagined as existing in parallel, as co-existing, and as existing in opposition to each other.

In terms of conceptual history, "civilization" in our context can be traced back essentially to the late Enlightenment and the Revolution, when *civilisation* became "the outright epitome of long-term, irreversible and unlimited cultural progress."[9] In the early nineteenth century, "a positive understanding of the concept of civilization [prevailed] that was rooted in a history of salvation and philosophy of progress."[10] To these temporal and ideological dimensions, however, we can add a third, spatial one. Following Jon May and Nigel Thrift, *civilisation* can also be described as a dynamic, ideologically charged "time-space concept" characterized by its invariable dynamism.[11] Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Steber have made the same point about the related concept of "the West."[12] Another closely related term also encompasses this triad of ideology, geography, and temporality. This is the enigmatic concept of "modernity" or "modernization." In French, in addition to the noun *modernité,* it is above all the adjective *modern/e* that stands out here, often in combined forms such as *civilisation moderne.*[13]

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[9] Pierre Michel, Rolf Reichardt, and Eberhard Schmitt, "Barbarie, Civilisation, Vandalisme," in *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich 1680–1820*, ed. Rolf Reichardt and Eberhard Schmitt, vol. 8 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1988), 22.

[10] Michel et al., "Barbarie, Civilisation, Vandalisme," p. 45. See also Lucien Febvre, "Zur Entwicklung des Wortes und der Vorstellungen von 'Civilisation,'" in *Lucien Febvre, Das Gewissen des Historikers*, ed. and trans. Ulrich Raulff (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 1988), 39–77; Georg Bollenbeck, "Zivilisation," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, and Gottfried Gabriel, vol. 12 (Basel: Schwabe, 2004), col. 1365–1379; Birgit Schäbler and Hans-Joachim König, "Zivilisierung, 2014," in *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit Online*, accessed October 25, 2017, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/23520248_edn_a4904000.

[11] See Jon May and Nigel J. Thrift, *Timespace. Geographies of Temporality* (London: Routledge, 2003); see also Bollenbeck, "Civilization," col. 1365.

[12] See Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Steber, "Introduction: Germany and 'The West'. The Vagaries of a Modern Relationship," in *Germany and "The West": The History of a Modern Concept*, ed. Riccardo Bavaj and Martina Steber (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 1–37.

[13] On this topic, see Christophe Charle, *Discordance des temps. Une brève histoire de la modernité* (Paris: A. Colin, 2011).

2 "Modernizing" and "Civilizing" through Language? Attempts to Create Uniform Spaces and Ideas

It is when we try to grasp the concrete dynamics of these concepts that the focus on *francophonie* comes into play. As the French nation-state was emerging, language-political questions and tasks closely linked to concrete ideas about the nature of a modern national society first rose to prominence in the wake of the Revolution of 1789. We need only think of the famous report by Abbé Grégoire of 1794 "on the necessity and means of eradicating the dialects and regional languages and universalizing the use of the French language."[14] This and other key texts from the Revolutionary milieu gave rise to tropes that were to display an astonishing permanence. To put it in simple terms, these were grouped around the juxtaposition of "civilization" and "backwardness". While the former was associated with the French standard language, the latter was linked with various dialects or regional languages. Veritable strategies of naturalization came into play here, as already described in the pioneering 1975 study of language policy during the French Revolution under the rubric of *une France sauvage.*[15] Here the "savage" or "barbaric" was posited as a negatively charged antonym to Enlightenment, "progress," and "(modern) civilization."[16]

At the end of the nineteenth century, the early Third Republic in particular sought to build on the radical Enlightenment-centered aspirations of the French Revolution in many respects, not least with regard to the standardization of language. In 1873, for example, Léon Gambetta characterized those areas of the country "covered by a black stain of ignorance" and in which the "clerical spirit" ruled triumphant as linguistically untapped territory. What was needed, he declared, was not a teacher speaking a language whose true dictionary lay in the Vatican, but rather a schoolmaster who spoke the language of the *citoyens* and was devoted to the "ideas of modern society" (*idées de la société moderne*).[17] The "dictionary in the Vatican" was more than a reference to Latin as the language of the liturgy. It also highlighted the fact that many priests used local dialects and regional languages. In the eyes of the republican reformers, these stood for backwardness and ignorance in a special way, such that it was vital to repress them in the name of the republic, Enlightenment, and "modernity."[18] In the first instance, then, especially in the final third of the nineteenth century, "modernization" through language was a national project focused on the French regions, one intended to complete the process of internal nation building.

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[14] "Rapport sur la Nécessité et les Moyens d'anéantir les patois et d'universaliser l'usage de la langue française," in: *Une politique de la langue. La Révolution française et les patois: l'enquête de Grégoire*, by Michel de Certeau, Dominique Julia, and Jacques Revel (Paris: Gallimard, 2002 [1975]), 300–317.

[15] "Rapport"; see also Schäbler and König, "Zivilisierung," section 3.

[16] See Bollenbeck, "Zivilisation," 1365.

[17] Léon Gambetta, "Discours prononcé le 16 mai 1873, à Nantes," in *Discours et plaidoyers politiques de M. Gambetta,* ed. M. Joseph Reinac, vol. 3.2 (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1881), 367–391, quote at 378.

But this program, which was bound up with the concepts of "civilization" and "modernity," also played a role in the French empire, and increasingly so.[19] The conquest of large parts of the second French colonial empire took place, of course, in the early phase of the Third Republic. Even more than in the case of other colonial powers, the imperialist legitimizing ideology of a *mission civilisatrice* was of great importance to France. More explicitly than in the case of Britain, for example, it was also linked to a language policy agenda.[20] The French language was to be used to disseminate a whole set of ideas and conceptions to the supposed benefit of the colonized, especially the elite, who were to be granted access to modernity. Relevant statements are legion, so here I will cite only former French prime minister Jules Ferry:

> But the moral conquest, the progressive civilizing of the native (*la civilisation progressive de l'indigène*), may take another form. One binds the conquered people to oneself not only by respecting their religion, their personal status, and their property rights, but attracts them above all by opening schools for them, by putting them in possession of the French language, the only vehicle of French ideas among these peoples, which we have set ourselves the goal of raising to our level.[21]

The stage model inherent in the civilizing mission and in the concept of *civilisation* is reflected not only in this quotation but also, though with a different emphasis, in a text by diplomat Jean-Jules Jusserand of 1888, in which he advocates educational reform in Tunisia because, as he argues, Tunisians are far more "civilizable" (*beaucoup plus civilisables*) than Moroccans or Algerians. Furthermore, "[w]hen the majority of Arabs speak French, they will no longer be dangerous."[22]

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[18] For a nuanced view of republican discourse and concrete practice, see Jean-François Chanet, *L'école républicaine et les petites patries* (Paris: Aubier, 1996).

[19] However, the attempt to relate actors and discourses in the metropole and in the empire naturally requires a differentiated approach, especially since the concrete relations of violence and hierarchy as well as the legal situation of the populations to be "modernized" or "civilized" in the French "motherland" and in the French colonial empire were quite different.

[20] See Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).

[21] Jules Ferry, "Discours sur la question algérienne au Sénat (6 mars 1891)," in *Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry*, ed. Paul Robiquet, vol. 7 (Paris: A. Colin, 1898), 207.

The many contradictions clearly inherent in this program have been elaborated on many occasions and I therefore summarize them only briefly here.[23] First of all, there was the huge gap between discursive aspirations and concrete practice, which was bound to seem all the more glaring against the backdrop of French discourses which were generally of a universalist and republican character. Depending on which part of the empire one was in, there was great variation in the number of schools and in the will to "civilize" the indigenous population by imparting knowledge of the French language, and the civilizing mission was aimed primarily at the elites.[24] In addition, the idea of a unitary "target civilization," which initially underlay the *mission civilisatrice*, clashed with the colonial aspiration to rule over the long term because achieving the civilizing goal would have removed the "need" for colonial rule as such. In this respect, it seemed far from desirable to acquaint indigenous populations with the model of "Western civilization." Against the background of a racism increasingly justified in biological terms, the colonizers also doubted that this was even possible. Finally, many commentators expressed the fear that if indigenous actors engaged too vigorously with the ideas and pioneers of "civilization," this might reinforce their critique of colonialism and foster anti-colonial emancipation movements. Indeed, many individuals educated at French institutions argued with reference to the core values of Enlightenment and human rights in order to highlight the inconsistency of discourse and practice and to question French colonial rule.

Independent of this, however, in the field of colonial policy, too, the concept of civilization was imbued with differing and competing meanings. In the French case, the intense debate about the "right" colonial doctrine at the turn of the century played a particularly important role here.[25] While the concept of "assimilation" had previously dominated, and with it the idea of a single modern "target civilization" to which the supposedly inferior peoples were to be gradually introduced, the concept of "association" that was now attaining dominance was linked with the idea of several coexisting "civilizations."[26] The aforementioned Mission Laïque Française exemplifies this shift toward "association" and the corresponding pluralization of the concept of civilization. Hence, in the speech quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Secretary General Besnard explicitly emphasized that:

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[22] Jean-Jules Jusserand, *La Tunisie* (Paris, A. Colin, 1888), 153.

[23] On this and the following section, see Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel, *Zivilisierungsmissionen. Imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2005), especially the essay by Jürgen Osterhammel, "'The Great Work of Uplifting Mankind.' Zivilisierungsmission und Moderne," 363–425.

[24] Various case studies on language policy in the French colonial empire can be found, for example, in *The French Colonial Mind*, ed. Martin Thomas, vol. 1 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

[25] On this and the following, see the classic account by Raymond F. Betts, *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890–1914* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005 [1960]).

> It is not, of course, a question of replacing Arab civilization with French civilization, for that would be against our principles, but of associating the two civilizations (*associer les deux civilisations*), and […] of developing the Syrian native within the framework of his own civilization (*de développer l'indigène Syrien dans le plan de sa propre civilisation*).[27]

For the most part, hierarchical gradations were still inherent in such statements. Moreover, the concept of civilization in the singular continued to be used in parallel, just as "assimilationist" ideas did not completely disappear. For example, no less than thirty years after the change in colonial policy strategy, former French foreign and colonial minister Gabriel Hanotaux, who was also a member of the Académie Française, was still postulating that: "These peoples, forgotten by civilization but thoroughly civilizable, have found their modern soul by spelling French."[28]

Nevertheless, in the spirit of "association," the practice of schooling, for example, increasingly featured multilingual instruction. In Syria and Lebanon, French continued to occupy an important place in the curriculum, but Arabic and other modern foreign languages were taught concurrently. In addition to the influence of debates on the right colonial and language policy, which were conducted in the metropole, the forces at play locally and the dynamics associated with them were also of key importance, as elaborated by Esther Möller in her nuanced account of developments in Lebanon. There, the indigenous elites in particular increasingly acted as "customers," and many of the organizations originating in France sought to do more to accommodate their linguistic desires.[29]

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[26] The coexistence of these two concepts of "civilization," especially since the second half of the nineteenth century, is observed beyond the colonial context by Febvre, "Entwicklung," 70–71.

[27] "La France en Orient" (see footnote 1), 89.

[28] "Congrès de l'Alliance Française, Séance de Clôture, 11 juillet. Discours de M. Gabriel Hanotaux de l'Académie française, Président du Comité France-Amérique," *Revue de l'Alliance Française* 71 (1937): 185.

[29] See Esther Möller, *Orte der Zivilisierungsmission. Französische Schulen im Libanon 1909–1943* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 177–213.

3 "Western" or "French" Modernity? France, the "West," and "the World"

But to what extent were "civilization" and "modernity" conceived as primarily French or as generally European, "Western" concepts? And what of intra-European or intra-Western competition or cooperation? First of all, the French concepts of "modernity" and "civilization" usually had a strongly universalist connotation, due in part to the specifically French Enlightenment tradition.[30] In line with this, historian of philosophy Gabriel Séailles, for example, remarked in 1920: "By extending the influence of France, by spreading its language and its ideas, [the Mission Laïque Française] not only serves the national interest and economic expansion, but is working for peace among men and for the progress of the entire civilization (*la civilisation toute entière*)."[31] This statement is exemplary of the conviction that France was acting in the interest of all humankind.

At the same time, various competitive but also cooperative relationships came into play. For our context, an intra-Western rivalry, especially with Britain, is of primary interest. Analogous to the two countries' different Enlightenment traditions, we can observe continued attempts by French thinkers to distance themselves from first British, then Anglo-American ideas about "modernity."[32] Both rhetorically and programmatically, as well as in terms of real-world competition for influence, this was again reflected in the politics of language. In part, this involved the "correct" interpretation of core liberal and democratic values, the basic principles of which the two cultural spheres had in common. This is exemplified in a speech by Louis Herbette, president of the propaganda committee of the Alliance Française, an organization founded in 1883, which – much like the Società Dante Alighieri founded six years later and the Akademie zur Wissenschaftlichen Erforschung und Pflege des Deutschtums founded in 1925 as predecessor to the Goethe-Institut – was tasked with disseminating a national language and culture internationally. In a 1904 essay on the French language and French literature in Canada, Herbette highlighted the qualities of French in comparison to English and ultimately deduced from this the superiority of French *civilisation.* He began with a backhanded compliment: “Admittedly, the English language, whose use is universal chiefly in shipping, commerce, and travel, has a fairly wide catchment area. It is the language of simple exchange. Let us suppose that the French [language] is one of complicated productions, not a language of luxury, but a language of more refined culture.”[33] He later stated: “The revolutions of the English were conducted among themselves and for themselves. Those of the French were for everyone; rather than crying out ‘God and my right,’ that dualism which is nothing but egotism, these [revolutions] proclaimed human rights, [embodying an] altruistic humanism.”[34]

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[30] See Tyler Stovall, *Transnational France: The Modern History of a Universal Nation* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2015).

[31] Gabriel Séailles, "La Mission Laïque," *Mission Laïque française. Revue de l'enseignement français hors de France* 17 (1920): 6.

[32] On the different traditions and discourses, see Michael Hochgeschwender, "Was ist der Westen? Zur Ideengeschichte eines politischen Konstrukts," *Historisch-Politische Mitteilungen* 11 (2004): 1–30, esp. 9–13.

By declaring the French revolutions a project of emancipation benefiting all of humanity and disparaging those of the English as spatially limited events merely for their own benefit, Herbette expressed the tension between different models of “the West,” “modernity,” and “civilization.” At the same time, this reflects a situation of concrete power-political competition, in this case in Canada, for which the linguistic-political skirmishes sketched out here were evidently merely a cipher.

Depending on situation and context, however, other actors championed intra-Western cooperation between the “flagship languages” of Western thought. During World War I, for example, French linguist Albert Dauzat extolled the *entente cordiale* between France and the United Kingdom, which supposedly found reflection in the linguistic field. The “alliance of the French and English languages,” he averred, would eventually achieve the collapse of pan-Germanism and render its hegemonic ambitions forever impossible.[35] If, Dauzat continued, the language question was considered solely from the scholarly point of view, regardless of current circumstances, German was obviously and unalterably inferior to its French and English rivals. A plethora of supposed linguistic peculiarities made the German language seem unsuitable as “the instrument of precise and rapid exchange necessary for modern thought (*la pensée moderne*) in an ever more active and refined civilization (*une civilisation toujours plus active et raffinée*).”[36] Nevertheless, he, too, emphasized the differences between the French and English languages, which ought to divide their influence both geographically and in line with different fields of application. Here he was arguing in a way not dissimilar to that of Louis Herbette a decade earlier, albeit without the latter’s aggressive undertones. Thus, as Dauzat likewise argued, English was primarily the language of commerce, whereas French, among other domains, was not only the language of diplomacy and culture, but also of the ideas established by the Revolution.

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[33] Louis Herbette, “Introduction: La langue et la littérature française au Canada. La famille française et la nation canadienne,” in *Études de littérature canadienne-française*, by Charles ab der Halden (Paris: F. R. de Rudeval, 1904), xxiii–xxiv.

[34] Herbette, “Introduction,” lxxviii.

[35] Albert Dauzat, *Le français et l’anglais. Langues internationales* (Paris: Larousse, 1915), 5.

[36] Dauzat, *Le français et l’anglais*, 9 – 10, quote at 10.

4 Conclusion

When it comes to French debates around the turn of the century, as we have seen, other terms are better suited than the "West" to illuminate the ideas about order central to the present volume. These are, above all, the concept of "civilization" and, with some qualifications, that of "modernity." "Civilization" and "civilizing," closely linked to "modernity" and "modernization," were in the first instance essentially target concepts. From the point of view of the "center," what mattered was to connect and ultimately standardize various spaces, as well as different actors and ways of life. These could be supposedly "backward" regions in one's own "motherland," which was to be integrated into a unified nation-state. Above all, they were regions within the empire that had been declared "backward" and that, in the spirit of the *mission civilisatrice*, were not only to be "civilized" but also integrated in the long term by means of language. With the semantic shift from the colonial-policy concept of "assimilation" to that of "association," the notion of civilization was pluralized within the imperial framework. To an even greater extent than in the metropole, however, and depending on the region there remained a wide gap between aspiration and reality. Moreover, the indigenous population and especially its elites were more than mere addressees of linguistic and "civilizing" programs: they appropriated their content and thereby changed them.

An ideal connecting link across the different spatial levels was the quasi-missionary belief in French universalism, a notion fed by the legacy of the Enlightenment and the Revolution and that equated France's interests not only with those of its empire, but to some degree with those of humanity as a whole. Competing notions of "modernity" and "civilization" within the "West" also came into play. Parallel to the rise of English as the leading world language, from the turn of the century onward the pioneers of *francophonie* placed emphasis on competition with the English language and thus with Anglo-American concepts of the "West," "modernity," and "civilization." Depending on the context, however, the ideas and concepts assigned to the French or Anglo-American traditions could also be thought of in cooperative terms, especially when – as in the context of the First World War – "Western civilization" seemed to be facing an aggressive antagonist in the form of the German Empire.

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Viktoria Boretska

Discursive Strategies of the Soviet Union in Legitimating the Western “Borrowing”: The (Re)Invention of the West and the Case of Programmed Instruction

Introduction: The Reinvention of “the West” During the Cold War

The relations between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War are at times perceived as ones of ultimate antagonism and isolation. Certainly, the decades-long animosity and competition, ideological confrontation, and the partitions of the so-called “zones of influence” separated by the Iron Curtain – the repercussions of which are visible still today – were by no means fictional. However, the Cold War “contract” meant that the adversaries could never really afford the blissful ignorance of isolation: One way or another, both the United States and the Soviet Union were bound by the same predicament and utterly dependent on each other’s presence and participation. A football match would not take place with only one team on the field and, apparently, nor would the contest for global domination. Moreover, the USA and the USSR were not only mutually dependent on each other’s participation, but they were also inventing and reinventing each other – or to be more precise, the *image* of each other, which they simultaneously used to devise their own image. In other words, unfortunate as it was, the vitality of one Cold Warrior depended on that of another, and this co-dependence was essential for mutual self-definition.

The science and technology historian Slava Gerovitch posited that, “Instead of depicting the Cold War solely as a clash of ideologies, it may be more productive to examine the discursive strategies that were employed to shape the image of the opponent and to build up ‘our’ ideology against ‘theirs’.”[1] The framework of “capitalism versus communism”, just like the exceptional focus on the two “leaders” in the Cold War, seemed to have exhausted itself in the study the subject: The US–So-

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[1] Slava Gerovitch, “Writing history in the present tense: Cold War–era discursive strategies of Soviet historians of science and technology,” in *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences during the Cold War*, ed. Christopher Simpson (New York: The New Press, 1998), 218.

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-007

viet focus has been expanded by the explorations of global scale and impact,[2] and the opposition of the American system to the Soviet system is no longer taken for granted as the point of departure in historical inquiry. On the contrary, the discursive approach offers a more complex picture, where the two seemingly stable opposing systems were not only continually being (re)constructed but were being constructed as against their imagined opponents. Indeed, both the USA and the USSR were defining themselves against the background of their "enemy" and developed discursive strategies to create the image of their opponent – and to further act upon this perception. This kind of discursive maneuvering became an intrinsic feature of Cold War diplomacy, geopolitical interaction, and, subsequently, the two countries' domestic policies, which were heavily impacted by the real, exaggerated, or manufactured threats of the war.

The historian Ron Theodore Robin, in his analyses of the cultural and diplomatic history of the Cold War, explained that "the image of the enemy was derived from an uneven mixture of fragmented information and unauthenticated presumptions. It was a rumor", which was further transformed into "a powerful working hypothesis."[3] These knowledge gaps about the "enemy" were operationalized and eagerly filled by the imagined and desired vision of the opponent both in the USA and in the USSR. The fact that it was impossible "to *know* one's enemy" completely during the Cold War presented an almost favorable setting to the politicians, be it in the USA or the USSR, who could manufacture the enemy as the opposition to their own agenda, thereby underlining the correctness of their path and legitimating the choices of policies. The invention of the "enemy" thus worked on several levels, and on an overarching level, the creation of one's own image as against the invented vision of the enemy ensured that that this enemy was thereby materialized.

This process of enemy invention during the Cold War sheds light on the role of the Cold War, and the Soviet Union in particular, in the (re)invention of the concept of the generalized "West". While the concept of the "West" as a socio-political category is said to have emerged around the nineteenth century,[4] its contemporary working definition was largely shaped during the era of the Cold War, in which the United States is normally placed at the center of the so-called "civilized world", is envisioned as the foe by the former Soviet Union, and is demonized by the Russian Federation to this day. The Soviet Union did not invent the concept of the generalized "West", but through the years of the Cold War, it deepened the divide between the West and the rest by emphasizing (and also manufacturing) its difference from and incompatibility with Western ideals, as well as the potential future of American cultural dominance. The contemporary understanding and use of the term "West" are therefore impossible to grasp without considering the recent – and persistent – context of the Cold War, where it was instrumentalized by the "opposing superpowers".

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[2] See, for example, Lorenz M. Lüthi, *Cold Wars: Asia, the Middle East, Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Odd A. Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and US-Indonesian Relations, 1960–1968* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

[3] Ron T. Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 4.

The most noticeable "invention" of the West can be observed during the times when the Soviet Union "borrowed" Western ideas and technologies, because it was precisely at such moments that the Soviets had to showcase their radical difference from their "enemy", thereby also fashioning a particular image of the latter. The difference was demonstrated by a number of particular legitimating discursive strategies. For example, in his book *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics* (2002), Slava Gerovitch analyzed the emergence of a whole new language which enabled the adoption of the Western science of cybernetics into a Soviet context; this became the discursive strategy that legitimated cybernetics in the USSR as different and necessary. Similarly, the Western – American – idea of programmed instruction was legitimated in the Soviet Union through a series of discursive tricks that embedded in the popular imagination a version of the West and the United States that was most favorable to the Soviet Union.

The current chapter focuses on the case of programmed instruction (PI) and the making of a particular image of the United States and the West during the "import" of PI to the Soviet Union. First, a general overview of the teaching method of programmed instruction as an emerging innovative technology in the United States will be provided, as well as the context of PI in terms of the Cold War and its impact on education. Afterwards, the trajectory of PI's migration to the Soviet Union will be considered. Further, the specific strategies of legitimation will be analyzed – from the military rationale (i. e., the implementation of PI in the Soviet Union as self-defense against "the imperialist West"), to the psychological distinction and the emphatic difference between the Soviet and American visions of human development. Finally, the last strategy of marginalization will be elaborated: The Western origins of PI were described as entirely irrelevant to PI's assumed main purpose of learning optimization and progress. The West, while being acknowledged by Soviet scholars to have advanced PI research, was still disregarded on the grounds that Western scholars had misinterpreted its "real" purpose. Throughout, the image of the United States and the West was thus gradually built in relation to Soviet demands.

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[4] John M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Subject: A Short Guide to the Teaching Method

As soon as the scholar James G. Holland joined the Harvard psychologist Burrhus F. Skinner for research into and development of a new instruction method in the fall of 1957, he was restless, burning the midnight oil to stay ahead of students in generating material for the teaching machine. He later described it as "a mechanical marvel, reminiscent of the age of brass instrument psychology, in size and shape like a small suitcase."[5]

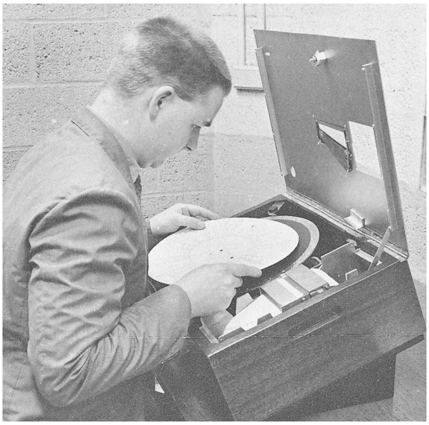

Fig. 1: A photo of a student holding a teaching machine (Skinner Collection of Harvard University Archives, unpublished documents, rights with the author).

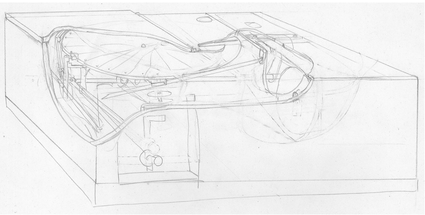

Fig. 2: Skinner's drawing of the mechanism (Skinner Collection of Harvard University Archives, unpublished documents, rights with the author).

The insides of these suitcases, which Holland spent white nights composing, were the sets of frames – later, "a program" – designed after the principles of Skinner's behavioral science. These principles, among others, suggested that a student would learn best through (1) instruction designed in a coherent way, using the smallest units of information; (2) instant feedback about what they got “right” or “wrong”; and (3) at their own individual pace, which made learning enjoyable, economical, and effective. Skinner’s new promising teaching method was called “programmed instruction” and could be implemented with or without the teaching machine that he designed.[6]

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[5] Holland, quoted in Burrhus F. Skinner, *The Technology of Teaching* (Cambridge: B. F. Skinner Foundation, 1968; repr. 2003).

That very fall of 1957, while a particular kind of reasoning was establishing the link between the Soviet Sputnik 1 launch and the American classroom, summoning the “Sputnik shock” into the heads of the American population and spurring the calls for US education reform, Skinner’s programmed instruction research was still largely confined to the “gray, clapboard building of Batchelder House” from Holland’s memories.[7] However, soon enough, with the passing of the National Defense Education Act in the 1958, Skinner’s innovative method became increasingly popular. It would potentially become a tool to bridge the imagined knowledge gap between American and the Soviet students. A decade later, programmed instruction method (PI) and its teaching machine, acquiring a multitude of meanings and disguises than initially bestowed by the science of behavior, was listed in 65 countries in Africa, Asia, North and South America, Europe, Oceania, and the separate “continent” of the USSR.[8] Visibly throughout the long 1960s, inquiries into research, development, and implementation of programmed instruction became popular many places around the globe. Programmed instruction lay at the heart of the Cold War developments, since it was the Cold War that also reconceptualized the idea of education.

In a new, revised definition, education became one of the tools and weapons for defeating the “enemy” – the process of such a call to arms is generally referred to as “educationalization” – and programmed instruction was believed to bring education to a new level. Programmed instruction also represented the main desires of the time: it was reportedly “the first empirically determined form of instruction” that played “a prominent role in the convergence of science and education.”[9] In the recent historiographical accounts, PI is positioned as the precursor in the evolution of technology in the classroom. These definitions call upon PI as a stage-setter and are built from our understanding of media in the classroom today, the popularity of which has been ever-growing. However, these definitions say very little about the conception of PI idea as conceived of by Skinner, and instead come very close to associating PI with technological objects; this immediate association is rather limiting compared to the whole scope of features that PI idea represented – namely, the principles of Skinner's behavioral science. The material was not simply translated from a traditional to a mechanic setting – it followed the principles of Skinner's science of behavior, distilled from his experimental study, and aimed at finally establishing psychology as a "scientific" inquiry with a clear subject and method.

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[6] Burrhus F. Skinner, “Teaching Machines and Programmed Learning,” film, 1954.

[7] Holland, quoted in Skinner, *Technology of Teaching*, 12.

[8] Seth Spaulding, *Programmed Instruction: An International Directory* (Paris: UNESCO, 1967).

[9] Paul L. Saettler, *The Evolution of American Educational Technology*, 2nd ed. (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2004), 304.

Context: "Educationalization" and the Cold War

The launch of the first artificial satellite by the Soviet Union in 1957 brought about "the shock of the century".[10] The discussion that ensued in the United States attributed this success to Soviet education. The reasoning that connected Sputnik to the Soviet education system and, by implication, admitted the failure of American schooling, soon firmly established itself as a given. It became a self-perpetuating narrative and the basis for the appeals to reform American education in the 1960s (and beyond), the declarations that the Cold War was fought in the classroom, and that education was as much a matter of defense as military missiles. All these beliefs were crystallized in the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958. Already in 1952, the United States programs for national defense, drafted by the US National Security Council, included education and educational exchanges as an important sphere in international relations.[11] But while educational exchanges laid stress on influence on an international scale, the NDEA emphasised the local scale. In this way, education became not only a matter of influence, as in Soviet–American relations, but also, and most importantly, the matter of defense – the fundamental new development ushered in by the Cold War. The NDEA showed how fast education could wind up in the spotlight of global conflict and become almost entirely responsible for fixing the perceived problems of society, in accordance with the concept of "educationalization". In fact, the NDEA has become one of the most illustrative cases of "educationalization" of the past century and was actually passed at exactly the time when the concept emerged in West Germany as "Pädagogisierung."[12]

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[10] Paul Dickson, *Sputnik: The Shock of the Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001).

[11] Liping Bu, "Educational exchange and cultural diplomacy in the Cold War," in *Journal of American studies* 33(3) (1999): 393–415.

[12] Daniel Tröhler, "Educationalization of social problems and the educationalization of the modern world," in *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Singapore: Springer, 2016), 698–703.

The recruitment of education to this task raised a series of discussions about its relationship to the state. The launch of Sputnik had liberated and enhanced the ongoing “decades-long battles” – as historian Andrew Hartman put it – and “dramatized” them.[13] Through the NDEA, the government wanted to put education to work for national defense, yet at the same time, the very first section of the document (Title I) included the position that “nothing in the act was to mean control over education by any federal agency.”[14] The American educational theorist George Counts, for example, insisted that the heart of the problem lay in education’s ties to the government – “did American education serve the purposes of its system better than the Soviet?”[15] The topic of American education “in the service” of the state, throughout the Cold War and especially after Sputnik, was a sensitive one. On the one hand, the US Navy Admiral Hyman G. Rickover claimed that education was too important to leave it to educationalists, implying the strengthening of education-government ties; and, on the other, the discourse on the role of education in social engineering was the part of the “communist camp”, from which the “free world” persistently differentiated itself. Sputnik and the NDEA prompted the American scenario of putting education “in service to the state” – of course, never articulated in this particularly “communist” way – it was education “in service to foundations of freedom.”[16] The latter thoughts of the American educationalist George Counts were also reflected in the work of Rickover, whose concerns about education led him in 1959 to publish the book “Education and Freedom” (1959), and who persistently argued that education could and should rescue the “free world”.

In the Soviet Union, education was conceived to serve the state as the site of indoctrination and the tool for the making of modern society. However, at the same time that the NDEA was passed in the United States, in 1958, the Soviet Union launched its own vast reform of education, intending “to strengthen the ties between the school and the state” even more in its own surge of “educationalization”. At the end of the 1950s, the Soviet Union was reinventing itself after the end of Stalin’s era and it recruited education for the purpose of revitalizing the Soviet project and enabling it to “catch up and overcome” the West in the Cold

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[13] Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2008), 1.

[14] Wayne J. Urban, *More Than Science and Sputnik: The National Defense Education Act of 1958* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 2.

[15] George S. Counts, *Khrushchev and the Central Committee Speak on Education: A Translation of the Russian “Theses” for Education and Dr. George S. Count’s Commentary and Analysis* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1959), 21.

[16] Counts, *Khrushchev and the Central Committee*, 22.

War. Just as it was in the United States, education was made the center of attention and, in the Soviet state's own "shock", was set on a path of a broad-scale reform meant to fulfil the ambiguous purpose of "connecting school to life" – the reform's main slogan. Khrushchev's plan was to announce the modernization of schooling according to the demands of the time, which included obligatory vocational training as a way to increase manpower for industry, the reorganization of schooling, and the establishment of specialized education facilities with advanced teaching in math and exact sciences. "Strengthening the ties between school and life" in the USSR (1958 education reform) and "education responding to critical national needs" in the USA (the 1958 NDEA) were two seemingly different incentives that nevertheless had very similar implications: Education was being put into service, mobilized by the two states as an instrument and a path towards achieving dominance in the Cold War by means of expanding the potential of their respective national human capital.

The way in which this dominance would be achieved was also strikingly similar and, specifically, stemmed from the unparalleled belief in the power of science for education. On both sides of the Iron Curtain, "educationalization" thus went hand in hand with so-called "scientification", or the emergence of the "scientized discourses and practices" in education at all levels. The growing trust in science after World War II – in which victory was attributed to scientific progress – soon turned into hegemony. The most straightforward popularization of science lay in the promotion of science education as well as the formation of a scientific (rational) worldview in the new generations. Furthermore, scientific methods of instruction were being sought as opposite of traditional "unquantifiable" and "unmeasurable" teaching methods. Finally, in line with scientific methods of teaching, scientific methods in educational research were being encouraged as the future of the field. Both the NDEA in the USA and the 1958 reform in the USSR, in their own ways, activated science for education. The NDEA foresaw the plan for a broad strengthening of science, mathematics, and foreign languages instruction, and the exploration and use of most effective educational media: "Any program that was to come from administration needed to stress science and mathematics, but without seeming to deemphasize or denigrate the social sciences and humanities."[17] The 1958 Soviet reform, in turn, created the platform for the contemporary scientized worldview to assert itself. Both the NDEA and the 1958 Soviet reform enabled different actors to promote their own versions of educational futures, and most of them expressed the primacy of science. Programmed instruction embodied this approach: it was believed to fulfil all these requirements or wishes connected to education, and therefore also became the ultimate and best method of instruction. PI's "faults" were attributed only to the presumed lack of experimentation – never to the design or the conception of this teaching method.

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[17] Urban, *More Than Science and Sputnik,* 84.

Programmed Instruction in Translation

Programmed instruction was first used to train the US army in the 1950s and as such became the subject of strong interest for the Soviet Union's military.[18] American military applications of PI began to be reflected in Soviet military journals starting in the 1950s.[19] The military and technical periodicals like *Voennyi Zarubezhnik* (Military foreigner), *Radioelektronika za rubezhem* (Radioelectronics abroad), *Elektronika* (Electronics), *Novosti zarubezhnoi voennoi tradioelektroniki* (The news of international military radioelectronics) and others were publishing pieces on the uses of the complex "trainers", models, and teaching machines for the training of the American military. Most of the time these were unattributed, highly technical articles explaining the construction and design of the US training units in scrupulous detail. The translated texts were not always cited as such, the Soviet practice of anonymous texts went along with the fact that the Soviet Union was not a part of the Universal Copyright Convention until the 1970s.[20] From the traceable references to their American sources, these were, among others, the American military and technical periodicals like *Military Review*, *Army Information Digest*, *Computers and Automation*, and the *Proceedings of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers* (IEEE).

Edited volumes of translated American articles by the Soviet military followed, which compiled a variety of sources in an attempt to convey a general overview of the topic. Unlike the technical articles in the journals, the edited volumes included a guiding message motivating the military, educators, and the wider public to make themselves aware of such training undergone by the "imperialist armies of the capitalist states," since it increased the threat of further escalation in the Cold War. The first edited volume of this kind, *Aviatsyonnye trenazhery* (Aviation trainers) was issued in 1959 and included articles from a wide range of the American journals with material on the "complex trainers" of US Air Force pilots and personnel.[21] The Soviet Ministry of Defense and the All-Union Institute of Technical-Economic Research and Radioelectronics Information commissioned translations of selected American sources on trainers and educational models in the military (as in, for example, *Trenazher – imitator boevykh deistvij na more dlya prenirovki ofitserov*, 1961; *Modeliruyushchee ustroistvo dlia tselei issledovaniya i obucheniya*, 1961). The All-Union Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (VINITI), in addition to its Journal of Abstracts, issued an "Express Information" and included the entries on teaching machines in its series "Calculating technology".[22] The early years of Soviet military "acquaintance" with American technological innovations at the end of the 1950s turned into a landslide of military and public interest in teaching machines and programmed instruction.

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[18] US Civil Service Commission Bureau of Training, *Programmed Instruction: A Brief of its Development and Current Status. Training Systems and Technology Series No. III.* (Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1970); Leslie J. Briggs, "Teaching machines for training of military personnel in maintenance of electronic equipment," in *Automatic Teaching: The State of the Art*, ed. Eugene Galanter (New York: Wiley, 1959), 131–145.

[19] Viktoria Boretska, "Johnny and Ivan learning in a programmed way: The Soviet reinvention of one American technology," in *IJHE Bildungsgeschichte – International Journal for the Historiography of Education* 9 (2019): 29–46.

[20] Christopher D. Hollings, *Scientific Communication across the Iron Curtain* (Cham: Springer International, 2016), 58.

Characteristic of the Soviet interest in PI was its initial detailed attention to the technical side of the models and "complex trainers" from an engineering perspective, which later shifted towards the intention of understanding the educational principles upon which such machines were built. The following volumes of translations, like the one assembled by Kyiv Engineering and Radio Technology Academy (KVIRTU) in 1962, included contributions by the behavioral psychologist Burrhus Skinner alongside MIT scholar Richard Smallwood's monograph *A Decision Structure for Teaching Machines* (a mathematical approach to the matter), and the technical information about the PLATO teaching machine from the American journal *Institute for Radio Engineers: Transactions on Education* (*Sbornik perevodnykh statei po obuchayushchim mashynam*, 1962). KVIRTU, together with an identical institution in Minsk (former Republic of Belarus), and the Energy Institute in Moscow, dominated early Soviet publications on the topic of developing and implementing the first programmed material, as well as manufacturing their own teaching machines for military training. Later, large edited volumes of translations by the Soviet lieutenant colonel I. D. Ladanov (1966) and I. I. Tikhonov (1968) included a wide range of works, from 1950s articles to contemporary research. The early works by the American applied psychologists Arthur Lumsdaine and Robert Glaser were included in these publications.

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21 Yuri Kirilenko, *Aviatsyonnye trenazhery. Sbornik perevodov i obzorov* [Aviation trainers: The collection of translations and reviews] (Moscow: Inostrannaya literature, 1959).

22 Since their emergence, the "computer" in the Soviet Union had been called "vychislitelnaya mashyna" ("a calculating machine" in Russian).

The American and international sources chosen for the collected translated volumes, included book chapters, brochures, and articles from twenty-two different American journals, varying between educational (e. g., *Phi Delta Kappan*), and technical (e. g., *Computers and Automation*). The list of the American journals as well as their categorization in the chart below shows that technical journals were used by the Soviet side the most. This technical emphasis also shaped the particular image of the teaching machine and programmed instruction in the Soviet Union as a primarily technical innovation, rejecting the psychological traces of Skinner’s behaviorism. The technical orientation of the Soviet translations, among other factors, connected to the specific conditions of censorship in the Soviet Union, under which the authors preferred the technical “import” to educational or psychological content that demanded more resources and ideological reworking.[23] While the translations on the topic were mostly technical, the steep rise in public interest changed the situation.

With the growth of interest in programmed instruction in the Soviet Union, publications on the topic started emerging in the Soviet pedagogical and psychological journals, including *Sovetskaya Pedagogika* (Soviet pedagogy), *Vestnik Vysshei Shkoly* (Herald of higher education, *Voprosy psykhologii* (Questions of psychology) and others. Unlike the technical and military journals, these journals never published the translated articles about teaching machines or programmed instruction; they did, however, include the articles criticizing the American “origins” of programmed instruction.[24] These articles argued against behavioral psychology as the theoretical foundation for programmed instruction and insisted on the development of the Soviet model instead. In contrast to the pedagogical journals, which made up a certain "ideological front" when it came to the American uses of programmed instruction, by the end of the 1960s some edited volumes and bibliographic collections, like O. A. Bondin and V. Ya. Fridman's guide to international literature on PI, mentioned this in the foreword to their books. Admitting that "the scientific organization of pedagogical work in capitalist and socialist countries differs fundamentally in the general goals of the educational system", the authors asserted that the United States had "valuable experience" drawn from their experimental phase of programmed instruction.[25]

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[23] Samantha Sherry, *Discourses of Regulation and Resistance: Censoring Translation in the the Stalin and Khrushchev Era Soviet Union* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

[24] See, for example, Andrei I. Shestakov, “Opyt primeneniya obuchayushchikh mashyn v SShA” [The implementation experience of teaching machines in the USA], *Sovetskaya Pedagogika* 12 (1962); Y. I. Birilko and G. G. Saburova, “Realizatsyia nekotorykh psikhologicheskih printsypov v obuchayusgcgikh mashynakh SShA” [Realization of some psychological principles in teaching machines in the United States], *Voprosy Psychologii* 4 (1962); E. I. Mashbits and V. M. Bondarovskaya, “Osnovnye napravleniya programmirovannogo obucheniya za rubezhem” [Main directions of programmed instruction in the USA], *Radyanska shkola* 9 (1963); I. D. Ladanov, “Programmirovannoe obuchenie i biheviorism” [Programmed instruction and behaviorism], *Soviet Pedagogy* 7 (1964); L. V. Botiakova, “Obsuzhdeniye problem programmirovannogo obucheniya” [Discussion of the problems of programmed instruction], *Sovetskaya Pedagogika* 10 (1964); T. A. Il’ina, “Novyye tendentsii programmirovannogo obucheniya v SShA” [New trends of programmed instruction in the USA], *Sovetskaya Pedagogika* 6 (1965); I. Ya. Braslavsky, “O nekotorykh zarubezhnykh kontseptsiyakh programmirovannogo obucheniya” [On some international conceptions of programmed instruction], *Vestnik Vysshey Shkoly* 2 (1965); O. K. Tikhomirov, “Nekotorye tendentsyi v amerikanskoy psikhologii” [Some trends in American psychology], *Sovetskaya Pedagogika* 10 (1965).

Defensive Rationale: The Making of the Antagonistic West

The Cold War, as described above, turned the classroom into one of its battlefields. Both the US and the USSR brought education into their service to help win this war, launching major educational reforms. This large-scale mobilization effectively blurred the boundaries between the military and public education, reconceptualized education's role in society, and turned public education, along with the military, into a matter of defense. This particularly applied to new methods of instruction like PI. The necessity to study and implement PI in the Soviet Union was preliminarily motivated by the military rationale, as the principles of PI were used in US military training. The use of the new methods in complex simulators for the training of the US Armed Forces alarmed Soviet military educators, who called for awareness on the part of both the military and the wider public regarding pedagogical and technological innovations. Starting in the 1950s, the military and technology journals in the Soviet Union, such as periodicals *Voennyi Zarubezhnik* (Military foreigner) or *Radioelektronika za rubezhem* (Radioelectronics abroad) were publishing articles about the uses of such teaching simulators in the United States and other countries.

The wide selection of translated articles culminated in 1959 in the collected volume on the topic of aviation trainers in the US Air Force (*Aviatsyonnye trenazh-*

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[25] O. A. Bondin, and V. Ya. Fridman, *Programmirovannoe obuchenie i primenenie obuchayushchikh mashyn. Putevoditel‘ po zarubezhnoi literature* [Programmed instruction and the implementation of teaching machines: A guide to foreign literature] (Moscow: Mir, 1969), 5. This annotated bibliography volume with over 500 entries was the Russian combined translation of two American and English bibliographies: Wilbur Schramm, *The Research on Programmed Instruction: An Annotated Bibliography* (Washington D.C.: US Dept. of Health, Education, Welfare Office of Education, 1964); and Ralph D. Gee, *Teaching Machines and Programmed Learning: A Guide to the Literature*, 2nd ed. (London: Hertis, 1965).

ery, edited by Yuri Kirilenko in 1959). These trainers were designed as indoor models of real-life piloting conditions, promising to optimize pilots’ behavior and decision-making through employing the principles of programmed instruction. Kirilenko prefaced his translated volume with the following statement: “The analysis of the articles in this book shows that the development of educational technology in the West serves the interests of the ruling imperialistic circles, which are waging the unstoppable arms race, standing on the brink of war, and threatening the peace and safety of all peoples.”[26] Kirilenko further added, referring to one of the translated articles, that the American military was learning from the experience of Nazi Germany in World War II, when educational media and special trainers reportedly helped the Nazi soldiers in the advance of their military offensive. Similarly, Kirilenko asserted, educational technology would help the Western capitalist countries in the prospective war in the future.[27] Kirilenko, like other authors on military education who followed, popularized the knowledge about the techniques and technologies of military training in the USA, motivating their thorough study by raising the threat of a possible active phase of the Cold War. This threat was further enhanced by the comparison of the West (in general) to Nazi Germany in the training of its armed forces, adding to the particular image of the “enemy” capitalist states that the Soviet Union constructed. The study of American educational technology became the defense strategy, and the materials about US military education did not belong exceptionally to the Soviet military intelligence but circulated among the wider public in journals and publications like Kirilenko’s.

Soviet military educators and officials started getting actively involved in the educational matters traditionally considered as the area of competence of education workers, psychologists, and pedagogues. Like Admiral Hyman Rickover, who in his book *Education and Freedom* (1959), written in the wake of National Defense Education Act (1958), described education as a national security matter, the Soviet Navy admiral Aksel Berg, for example, became one of the most influential actors in revising the role of education in the USSR as defense. In this sense, former military figures and military educators played a key role in an overall “mobilization” of education in the Soviet Union, which, consequently, also became a defense matter. The former military educator I. D. Ladanov, for example, issued a volume of translated articles including international, but mostly American, journals about the implementation of PI in the US military. The volume aimed at, according to Ladanov, “familiarizing the readers with two most important directions of optimizing learning in the armies of the main imperialist states – programmed instruction and the automatization of the learning process."[28] In particular, he turned his readers' attention to programmed instruction, as it was used by "American militarists to improve the combat readiness of their armed forces in their aggressive wars."[29] Addressing the general public, Ladanov sought to raise awareness about the uses of PI, reporting on it as if it were a special weapon of the "enemy" that the Soviet Union needed to study thoroughly in order to "overtake and surpass" in the Cold War.

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[26] Bondin and Fridman, *Programmirovannoe obuchenie*, 6.

[27] Bondin and Fridman, *Programmirovannoe obuchenie*, 6.

The Soviet military educators seemed particularly keen on promoting and popularizing programmed instruction. They compiled bibliographies, developed programs, and constructed teaching machines while the discussion in the pedagogical journals was only just starting to gain momentum. One such example was the Kyiv Engineering and Radio Technology Academy (Kyivske Vyshche Inzhenerne i Radiotekhnichne Uchylyshche – KVIRTU), which in 1962 began preparations for transitioning its courses to the format of programmed instruction. The Academy's director and the lieutenant general of air defense, Tymofiy Rostunov, was a persistent advocate of the new method, envisioning that it could potentially result in developing the general objective "logical-mathematical theory of learning."[30] Thanks to their close cooperation, KVIRTU, the Institute of Cybernetics, and the Institute of Mathematics at the Academy of Sciences in Kyiv became a powerful cluster in the popularization of knowledge about programmed instruction, the promotion of PI beyond military use, and the construction of teaching machines. In this way, Soviet military schools and military educators implemented and experimented with making programmed materials and teaching machines, and contributed to opening the space for a broader public discussion of this technology. The integration of military thinking into public life, and of military education strategies and technologies into public education was creating a unified line of "defense" desired by the Soviets, as also expressed in the militarized perception of education workers, often called "the armies of teachers."[31] The necessity of programmed instruction in the Soviet Union was thus, in this instance, motivated by a defensive rationale and the "West" was depicted as the aggressor in the utilization of programmed instruction for the cause of a coming war.

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[28] Ladanov, *Programmirovannoe obuchenie*, 4.

[29] Ladanov, *Programmirovannoe obuchenie*, 5

[30] Timofey I. Rostunov, "Est predpossylki k perekhodu na novye metody" [There are preconditions of adopting new methods], *Vestnik Vysshei Shkoly* 1 (1963): 12–18.

[31] M. P. Pavlova, "Pedagogika, sozdaiushchaia tip novogo cheloveka" [Pedagogy which makes the new type of man], *Nachalnaya shkola* 3 (1963): 11–18.

Psychological Rationale: The Making of the Unorthodox West

The "Western" idea of programmed instruction went through the process of dissociation from its "origins" at the hands of anyone who wanted to work on it in the Soviet Union. As the "origins" of the American version of programmed instruction were situated in the field of behavioral psychology, the latter became the main target of Soviet scholars and political elites. Soviet scholars, while willing to work with the "import", demarcated their distinction from American scholars, thereby devising a particular image of their American colleagues.[32] Even though Burrhus Skinner was known to have been a keen follower of the Soviet psychologist and physiologist Ivan Pavlov, whose work reportedly inspired Skinner to develop the field of behavioral psychology, neither this nor his active correspondence with the Soviet psychologist Aleksandr Luria prevented crushing criticism of Skinner's methods from Soviet authorities and scholars. On the official political level, for example, a clear distinction was made, as the Deputy Minister of Education in Russian Socialist Republic, Nikolai Aleksandrov, announced in 1965: "The original idea of programmed instruction, developing in the USA, is based on the data from zoological psychology [animal psychology], is grounded on the methodological conceptions of behaviorism, and heavily relies on pragmatist pedagogy. In other words, it builds upon pedagogical and psychological grounds that are unacceptable for the Soviet school."[33] Aleksandrov derogatively referred to behavioral psychology as "animal psychology" on account of its transposition of experiments on animal behavior onto human behavior.

The "unacceptable" conceptions of behaviorism were often condensed in the idea of a mind as a "black box". In his behavioral psychology, Skinner deliberately refused to deal with the mind and picked behavior as his main object of research, thinking that the experimental study of behavior would finally grant psychology the status of a "science". This kind of approach in psychology allowed Soviet scholars to claim that the American conception of PI was fundamentally flawed.[34] Labeled in the Soviet Union as "bourgeois psychology", behaviorism was claimed to reduce all psychological activity to diverse forms of reflexes and, thereby, to deny the cognitive function of the psyche. Contrary to Skinner's intended aim of gaining psychology the status of a "real science", Soviet scholars asserted that "antiscientific nature of such an approach to mental activity was obvious."[35] The Soviet psychologists thus discarded the behaviorist "black box approach", reportedly due to its indifference to what was happening "inside the mind". They claimed that the internal processes – and not the external behavior emphasized in the "black box approach" – were the main stage of an educational process. "For a behaviorist," explained the Soviet psychologists Piotr Galperin and Nina Talyzina, "the purpose of education is to shape the system of external reactions, which is planned beforehand. […] In all instances, at the center of this conception stands the correct reaction (correct answer) and, in all instances, the orientation [or activity] of a student is overlooked."[36]

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[32] For example, Mashbits and Bondarovskaya, *Zarubezhnye*; Piotr Ya. Galperin and N. F. Talyzina, "V osnove – upravlenie protsessom usvoenia znanij" [The control of usvoenie at the basis of PI], *Vestnik Vysshei Shkoly* 14 (1965): 19–26; Braslavsky, "O nekotorykh zarubezhnykh kontseptsiyakh."

[33] Nikolai V. Aleksandrov, "Problemy programmirovannogo obucheniya" [The problems of programmed instruction], *Sovetskaya Pedagogika* 6 (1965): 5.

[34] Mashbits and Bondarovskaya, *Zarubezhnye kontseptsii*, 128–129.

Soviet psychologists insisted on the fundamental difference of the Soviet concept of human "activity" from the American concept of "behavior", desperately trying to prove that their "activity", unlike "behavior", included something more that the external action. They connected this difference to the larger difference in the Soviet approach to human development and learning. Soviet scholars claimed that the behaviorist conception of human development was based upon the idea of adaptation to the environment, while Soviet psychology envisioned a human being as an active agent of change. This allowed them to claim that the American idea of teaching amounted to "training", while the Soviet model was about "upbringing" and "education". This strategy of differentiation led Galperin to publicly denounce also some local "physiological" views upon learning:

> The authors of PI abroad know only one thing: Repetition, repetition, and again repetition. […] I must admit that in our country too, many think that *usvoenie* (learning) consists of blazing of the nerve path, in the deepening of the "rail track", which is being laid in some synapses of the brain. Not knowing the mechanism of *usvoenie*, these psychologists and pedagogues mechanistically imagine its physiological foundations.[37]

At the same time, it should be mentioned that the Soviet image of Americans as unorthodox behaviorists persisted, despite the actual developments across the Atlantic. By 1960, American scholars were already starting to consider that very 'internal' aspect emphasized by the Soviets – the benchmark here being Jerome Bruner's *The Process of Education* – and were living through what was then called the

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[35] Braslavsky, "O nekotorykh zarubezhnykh kontseptsiyakh," 25.

[36] Galperin and Talyzina, "V osnove," 21.

[37] Piotr Ya. Galperin, *Programmirovannoe obucheniye i zadachi korennogo usovershenstvovaniya metodov obucheniya* [Programmed instruction and the tasks of fundamental improvement of the teaching methods] (Moscow: Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education, 1964), 7.

"cognitive revolution" in psychology, the move away from behavior towards mental functions. This transition was persistently and conveniently ignored by the Soviet scholars, eager to keep the behavior vs. activity dichotomy, through which the difference between American vs. Soviet programmed instruction would be expressed. And even when the "cognitive revolution" was mentioned in the Soviet sources, it was still described as an extension of the "mechanistic approach to a human being":

> In the American psychological literature, there's the following paradoxical position: The justly criticized ideas about behavior, based on the concept of reflexes, are getting replaced by the new, more complex ideas, but still mechanistic, because they are the product of direct transfer of the principles of automata – no matter how complex – onto behavior. The main limitation of such approach is that the important problem of specificity of human behavior is not distinctly articulated.[38]

The Soviet scholars fashioned their own image against the one they constructed of their American colleagues. They claimed the exceptionality of the Soviet approach in its intention to focus on the "specificity" of the human being and human learning without resorting to animal experiments or technological metaphors. They planned to attend to precisely that which they believed the Americans deemed unintelligible (the mind as black box) and approach it through the idea of human development/learning as *active internalization*, or *usvoenie* in Russian – the central concept of Soviet education and educational psychology. Programmed instruction in the Soviet Union promised to steer this process. "Active internalization" was positioned as the opposite of American "repetition", which again was used as an argument for the differentiation of Soviet and American PI: "the American approach, which does not deal with the governance of 'internalization' or 'phased formation of mental actions', is instead focused on systematic repetition of all the same units (of information), resulting in memorization rather than understanding".[39] Against this perception of American psychology, the Soviet scholars eagerly imagined themselves as having the "moral high ground" since they approached the human being and human learning from a humanistic, as opposed to an "animalistic" or "mechanistic", perspective. They claimed to be alone in prioritizing the human being and its internal, rather than external, processes of learning.

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38 Tikhomirov, "Nekotorye tendentsyi v amerikanskoy psikhologii," 144.

39 B. V. Gnedenko, "Simvol progressivnyh idei i motodov v pedagogike" [The symbol of progressive ideas and methods in pedagogy], *Vestnik Vysshei Shkoly* 5 (1965): 15.

Historical-Educational Rationale: The Making of the Irrelevant West

The strategy of attacking behaviorists in order to decouple PI from its “origins” was soon complemented by another approach. This approach to programmed instruction described the new method not as the invention of behaviorism, but as a legacy of “the best pedagogues of many epochs aiming at improving the efficiency of pedagogical labor, both the teachers’ and the students’.”[40] Programmed instruction, thereby, was turning into a “natural” development, the inevitable and ultimate step in the evolution of educational ideas. The former Soviet Navy admiral and cybernetics promoter Aksel Berg started defining PI as the successful end product that summoned the wishes of pedagogical thought through all places and ages, suggesting that all the developments in education were directed towards rationalizing the process of teaching and learning. This globalizing and deterministic argument, in line with the Soviet Marxist-Leninist conception of the development of history, cast the behaviorist origins of programmed instruction aside, as well as the obligation of Soviet scholars to criticize behaviorism every time they intended to work with PI. Through this perspective, PI became larger than behaviorist theory, soon considered by the Soviets as just a provisional “host” for the new method and the “didactic system” that it created. As such, PI became seen not as a momentary trend, but the materialization of centuries of work towards the rationalization of education.

This thinking was later condensed in Nikolay Nikandrov’s monograph on the history of PI (1970), where he argued that behaviorism could have never been the original theoretical foundation for PI. Nikandrov used examples from scholarship done in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly by Sidney Pressey in the US and Célestin Freinet in France, to argue that these researchers did not need to adhere to behaviorism to share the set of principles about learning on which behaviorists had based their work. “This fact,” continued Nikandrov, “is very important to us since it shows PI in a different perspective: PI as the result of work by different psychologists and educators having different departure points and united by the same goal – to optimize learning.”[41] Like Berg, Nikandrov claimed that PI, being popularized as a behaviorist invention, in fact emerged from the sum of all previous work on pedagogical thought and was set to rationalize the process of education.[42] To prove the irrelevance of behaviorism for programmed instruction, Nikandrov mentioned the cyberneticians Gordon Pask in England and Helmar Frank in West Germany, who were likewise working in the direction of PI but through different means: Pask, by devising teaching machines guided by the theory of governance, and Frank, by establishing cybernetic pedagogy upon the work on information psychology, reportedly approached the topic of PI even before programmed instruction had spread to Europe.[43] Nikandrov selected these examples to create the impression of a converging evolution of ideas in education, despite cultural or national differences, framing the optimization of education as the ultimate need and reason for international movement.

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[40] Aksel I. Berg, “Teoria i praktika programmirovannogo obuchenia. Navstrechu Vsesoyuznoi konferentsii” [The theory and practice of programmed instruction: Towards the All-Union conference], *Vestnik Vysshei Shkoly* 11 (1965): 66.

[41] N. D. Nikandrov, *Programmirovannoye obucheniye i idei kibernetiki* [Programmed instruction and the ideas of cybernetics] (Moscow: Nauka, 1969), 21.

Nikandrov, like Berg, eliminated the necessity of discursive "destruction" of behaviorism, turning it into an insignificant aspect in the overall development of PI. This supported his further active calls for international exchange and his enthusiasm for learning from the experiences of other countries, specifically highlighting West Germany. West Germany seemed to Nikandrov to be a successful case of a "natural" replacement of behaviorism by cybernetic pedagogy – the direction that West German cyberneticians and educators were working on before the spread of PI in Europe. When PI finally became the topic of conversation in West Germany, information processing psychology[44] and cybernetic pedagogy soon integrated it into their subject of study. Nikandrov referred particularly to Frank's work on the formalization of educational processes, emphasizing the parallels with the Soviet cybernetician Viktor Glushkov, whom Frank often cited. Nikandrov saw a lot of potential in this collaboration for the Soviet style of PI to establish itself exceptionally upon the foundations of cybernetics as well, without the need for a psychological theory. The international popularization of PI based on cybernetics, and not behaviorism, made it possible to imagine an ideology-free exchange among countries, which Nikandrov keenly encouraged.

The history and development of education was constructed by Soviet scholars as a linear progression towards the most "optimal" system and methods, with the rationalization of education as its ultimate purpose. The example of Nikandrov, and his writing of the history of PI, shows that this approach was used to reconsider programmed instruction and deny its status as the American behaviorist "invention", placing it within the linear progression of educational thought instead. Programmed instruction was thus seen as the embodiment of the optimization attempts by educational thinkers through the centuries. Such a historiography effectively removed the "threat" of behaviorism in the framework of programmed instruction in the Soviet Union, and created the space for imagined intelligibility among the countries working on PI as an objective and rational technology. The role of the "West" as the origin of PI became irrelevant and invisible.

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[42] Nikandrov, *Programmirovannoye obucheniye*, 9.

[43] Nikandrov, *Programmirovannoye obucheniye*, 35.

[44] With the emergence of cognitive psychology, the new field of information (processing) psychology was coined by communication and information theorists who envisioned the thinking process as being similar to the processing of information by computer, as can be seen, for example, in Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963).

Outlook: Soviet Discursive Strategies and the Making of the "West"

The implementation of programmed instruction, originally an American idea, in the Soviet Union was accompanied by different strategic processes – from radical differentiation from the "West" to the marginalization of the "West". Programmed instruction was introduced into Soviet military training institutions with the rationale of defending against the "imperialist armies" of the West, when the latter were believed to use PI in the training of their military personnel so that they would be ready to wage "aggressive wars" against the rest of the world. This invented image of the "West" as the aggressor complemented the manufacturing of the Soviet self-image as the country that would adopt programmed instruction exceptionally, to "safeguard" world peace. This antonymic approach also conveniently enabled the Soviet Union to build the desired image of itself as the only actor with humanistic and human-oriented psychology. The Soviet psychologists and officials, criticizing the behaviorist foundations of programmed instruction, were opposed to behaviorist scholarship while at the same time placing "activity" at the center of their psychological school of research. Such a radical differentiation between American "behavior" and Soviet "activity" is yet to be researched. The American behaviorists were described by the Soviet scholars as ignorant brutes – even after the cognitive revolution, the Soviets conveniently stuck to the definition of American psychologists as behaviorists. This is perhaps the most illustrative case of how the "enemy" (i. e., the "West") was, in fact, created to serve the domestic purposes of the Soviet Union, to deepen the antagonism and generate extra tension that would keep the Cold War going. Finally, the discussion of Soviet legitimation strategies concluded with the outright denial and marginalization of the behaviorist foundations of PI by Soviet scholars, who claimed programmed instruction was the "natural" development of centuries of "pedagogical thought".

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Americanization “Russian Style”: Russia’s Love–Hate Relations with America

When on February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation started the full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, openly blaming the West and especially the US for using Ukraine against Russia, it was a shock for many political observers and scholars in the West, who had formerly emphasized the Westernization and Americanization of post-Soviet Russia. Now the same observers suddenly

noted how Putin’s “Americanized” Russia imitated American political practices, such as “the US intrusion under Hilary Clinton into Russian domestic politics” or using US military contractors for foreign military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result of this copycatting of American actions, Russia interfered in US politics in 2016, supporting Donald Trump, and used the Wagner private military mercenary organization in the Russian war against Ukraine in 2022–23.[1]

Paradoxically, Putin’s Russia, which has become openly anti-Western and anti-American, still incorporates and utilizes the typical forms of cultural production/consumption and political practices that were traditionally seen as “American” or “Western.” The events of the Russian wars against independent Ukraine in 2014, and especially in 2022, revealed the ambivalent (‘love–hate’) attitudes towards a concept of “Westernization/Americanization” among not only the Russian political elites – especially Russian/former Soviet intelligence officers, who play an important role[1] in shaping such attitudes in Putin’s Russia – but also among ordinary Russians since at least 2001, since the rise of “the KGB oligarchy,” or the “Chekist regime” in the post-Soviet geopolitical space. Tracing those attitudes from the time of the Russian Empire, through the Soviet period, up until the Putin regime’s war against the West, this essay is an attempt to analyze the various stages of “indigenization” of American influences into Russian/Soviet politics and culture, where “mirrored” or copycat American/Western concepts have entered politics, intelligence, economy, and cultural production/consumption.

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[1] E. g., see various publications of British journalist Shaun Walker about this war and a role of Wagner group in *The Guardian:* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/24/yevgeny-prigozhin-the-hotdog-seller-who-rose-to-the-top-of-putin-war-machine-wagner

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-008

Cultural Consumption as a Major Tool of Indigenization of American Influences

The beginning of the "unusual and mass interest" in American history and culture in general, and Native Americans in particular, among the people who lived in the geopolitical space of the former Russian Empire/Soviet Union, was directly connected to their reading of the adventure novels of American writer James Fenimore Cooper (1789 – 1851) and British writer Thomas Mayne Reid (1818 – 1883), who portrayed brave Native Americans fighting the European colonizers in North America.[2] In 1825, with the first publication of Cooper's novel *The Spy* in Russian translation, the Russian reading audiences began their fascination with the narrative of early American history and American characters, "presented for the first time in very good literary form in the Romantic adventure novel."[3] Having already accustomed itself to the influx of similar historical adventure novels written by Sir Walter Scott, the Russian public was now ready to offer a "welcoming reception" to Cooper's novels featuring the same Romantic writing style. As a result, in Russia all of the major publications of Cooper's adventure novels on early American history – *The Pioneers* (1828), *The Prairie* (1829), *The Red Rover* and *The Pilot* (1831), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1832), *The Pathfinder* (1840) and *The Deerslayer* (1848) – became very popular with their Russian readers, and especially young Russians. The stories of the white trapper Nathaniel Bumppo and his friend, the Mohican Chief Chingachgook, immediately triggered an "unexpected and surprising mass imitation" by young readers from various localities of the Russian Empire. Beginning with the 1865 edition of his "complete works," Cooper's novels were reprinted many times in both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Many Russian writers, such as Aleksandr S. Pushkin, Lev N. Tolstoy, Fedor Dostoevsky, and Anton Chekhov, came to be influenced by Cooper's novels, and incorporated themes and images from his novels into their own writings.[4]

At this same time, the adventure novels of British writer Mayne Reid, especially his novels about Native Americans, such as *The White Chief* and *Osceola the Sem-*

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[2] O. Y. Danchevskaya, "Notes on Russian Indianists," in *Native American Women in the Arts, Education, and Leadership: Proceedings of the Sixth Native American Symposium*, ed. Mark B. Spencer and Robert Tudor (Durant: Southeastern Oklahoma State University, 2005), 55 – 60, esp. 55 – 56.

[3] Aleksandr N. Nikoliukin, "Fenimore Cooper i russkaia kritika," in *Literaturnye sviazi Rossii i SShA: Stanovlenie literaturnykh kontaktov*, by Aleksandr N. Nikoliukin (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), 256 – 326; see esp. 256 – 258.

[4] Aleksandr N. Nikoliukin, *Vzaimosviazi literatur Rossii i SShA: Turgenev, Tolstoi, Dostoevsky i Amerika* (Moscow: Nauka, 1987), 25, 72 – 74.

inole, which were translated into Russian and Ukrainian, became the source of inspiration for millions of young people in both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, including such famous figures as Vladimir Nabokov and Vladimir Mayakovski.[5] The lasting influence and legacy of both Cooper’s and Mayne Reid’s novels became the evident with the development of a “genuine cult” of the “American Indian” among the Russian and Soviet youth. Paradoxically, youth organizations as ideologically divergent as the first Boy Scout movement in pre-revolutionary Russia and the “Leninist” Pioneer movement in the Soviet Union actively promoted the young people’s interest in Native American culture, encouraging a healthy “natural lifestyle of pathfinders” among both pre-revolutionary Russian and Soviet youth. All future Soviet Americanists noted Cooper’s and Mayne Reed’s strong literary influence, which triggered the scholars’ own interest in American civilization, especially in early American history and the history of Native Americans as well.[6]

American Civilization as a Model of Modernity for Russia/Soviet Union

Another source of interest in American civilization was directly connected to a notion of modernity, which from the nineteenth century came to be associated in the Russian imagination and scholarship with “American modernity.” Maksim Kovalevsky (1851–1916), one of the pioneers of American studies in imperial Russia, visited the United States in 1882. Kovalevsky, who was born into a Ukrainian noble family near Kharkiv, studied history, law, and sociology at the University of Kharkiv and Moscow University, where he taught in the department of law. Kovalevsky was so fascinated with American legal and educational systems that he tried not only to publicize his impressions after his American visit in Russia, but also to reform these systems in the Russian empire according to American models. In his memoirs and studies, Kovalevsky especially noted the very important difference between the Russian imperial educational system and American college education. According to Kovalevsky, all academic studies in the United States were free from state interference, while in Russia the whole of academia, including the study of foreign countries like the United States, had become "state business," controlled by "imperial bureaucrats."[7]

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[5] Yulia Pushkarevskaya and Gerald David Naughton, “‘Westward Went in Search of Romance’: The Transnational Reception of Thomas Mayne Reid’s Western Novels,” *The CEA Critic* 75, no. 2 (July 2013): 142–157.

[6] See also Sergei I. Zhuk, “Reading James Fenimore Cooper in the USSR: The American Western Frontier and Native Americans in Soviet Imagination and Cultural Practices,” in *The Western in the Global Literary Imagination*, ed. Christopher Conway, Marek Paryż, and David Rio (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022), 149–163.

> This fascination with America particularly influenced Marxists in the Russian/Soviet imperial space. All major leaders of the Bolshevik regime in the Soviet Union idealized the American experience as a model for Soviet socialism, from the early days of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. Even socialist industrialization, "a peculiar version of the industrial revolution in the USSR," used American industrial towns, like Gary, Indiana, as models for creating the Soviet "Magnetic Mountain" towns that would initiate the industrial modernization of the Soviet socialist landscape.[8] Both Lenin and Stalin emphasized the significance of American models of modernity for Soviet socialism. As Stalin noted in 1924, "The combination of Russian revolutionary sweep with American efficiency is the essence of Leninism in party and state activity."[9]

American experience (and money) was used for the construction of Dniproges, the Dnieper dam and electric power station near the city of Zaporizhia in Soviet Ukraine. As Serhii Plokhy wrote:

> A number of American consultants, who lived in newly built brick cottages in an "American garden city" complete with two tennis courts and golf links, provided American expertise to the Dniproges managers and engineers. The chief American consultant was Colonel Hugh Lincoln Cooper, a civil engineer who had cut his teeth on the construction of the Toronto Power Generating Station at Niagara Falls and the Wilson Dam, which was part of the Tennessee Valley Authority […] On May 31, 1932, after five years of construction, engineers ran the first tests on the turbines and generators produced by American companies, including the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company and General Electric. In October the brand-new plant, whose original estimated cost of $50 million had increased eightfold by the time of completion, was officially inaugurated for operation […] Somewhat later, Colonel Cooper and five other American consultants received the Order of the Red Banner of Labor for their contribution to the construction of communism.[10]

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[7] Maxim Kovalevsky, "American Impressions," *Russian Review* 10, no. 3 (July 1951): 176–184, esp. 178–179; A. S. Sokolov, "Amerikanskaia tema v nauchno-literaturnom nasledii M.M. Kovalevskogo," in *Amerikanskii ezhegodnik* [hereafter *AE*] *1989* (Moscow: Nauka, 1990), 155–173.

[8] Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 42, 47, 52, 362–363; and Paul Josephson, "Industrial Deserts: Industry, Science and the Destruction of Nature in the Soviet Union," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 85, no. 2 (April 2007): 294–321.

[9] This quotation is from Joseph Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism*, section ix. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1924/foundations-leninism/ch09.htm.

[10] Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 247–248.

All major industrial and technological projects of the Stalinist Soviet Union used the American innovations and financial investments.

The Cold War and Four Stages of “Americanization” in the Soviet Union

During World War II, despite of all ideological and political differences, the USSR and the USA became political allies, justifying to some extent the role of American civilization as a model for Soviet socialist modernity. Even during the Cold War confrontation, starting in 1945, this trend continued. The Cold War was also a process of a paradoxical imitation of capitalist America, the major geopolitical opponent of the Soviet Union, especially in the sphere of cultural production and consumption. This process led to peculiar forms of Americanization that reflected both domestic and international issues obtaining in these special chronological conditions. The first stage of this “Soviet Americanization” took place during late Stalinism (1945 – 1953); the second stage of Americanization was triggered by Nikita Khrushchev’s anti-Stalin reforms and the opening of Soviet society to Western influences (1953 – 1964); the third stage was a result of Leonid Brezhnev’s détente, a relaxation of international tensions and collaboration with the West (1968 – 1984); and the fourth and final stage of such Americanization was the Soviet reaction to Mikhail Gorbachev’s perestroika and the opening of politics of dialogue with the United States (1985 – 1991).

The first paradox of the beginning of the Cold War in the USSR between 1946 and 1953 was the coexistence of, on the one hand, very brutal and aggressive anti-American propaganda in all mass media, and on the other, an obvious predominance of US movies on Soviet screens. During the late 1940s Soviet consumers watched various “trophy films”: the movies that were brought from Germany by the Soviet administration after World War II. Many foreign films which were released in the Soviet Union after the war belonged to this category. During the years 1947 to 1949, these films reached not only the larger provincial cities but also small towns and remote villages. While most of these movies were German, there were also many from the United States. For millions of Soviet children, the most popular movies were these American films, especially Westerns (so-called “cowboy films”).[11] As some scholars explained, the collapse of Soviet film production during World War II led to a decline in the number of Soviet movies available for domestic consumption – eighteen films in 1949, ten in 1950, and nine in 1951. This vacuum was filled by the foreign trophy films, the so-called “cinematic spoils of war,” which included 1,531 American, 906 German, 572 French, and 183 British films.[12] The favorite movie of all Soviet children in the 1940s was an American “cowboy film” entitled *The Trip Will Be Dangerous.* Millions of Soviet children fell in love with the movie’s main character, the Ringo Kid (portrayed by John Wayne), and tried to imitate his tricks and behavior. The American Western *Stagecoach* was directed by John Ford and released in the United States in 1939. Subsequently, the screening rights for the film were purchased by German distributors and it was released in Germany with German subtitles for local audiences. After their victory over Germany in 1945, the Soviets brought this film to the USSR as a “trophy,” renamed it *The Trip Will Be Dangerous*, and released it in Moscow, describing it “as an epic about the struggle of Indians against White imperialists on the American frontier.”[13]

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[11] Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 212 – 214.

Two other favorite “trophy films,” *The Sea Hawk* and *Captain Blood*, were also made in America and starred another Hollywood actor, Errol Flynn. These films, translated into Russian as *Korolevskie piraty* (The royal pirates) and *Ostrov stradanii* (The island of suffering), portrayed the romantic adventures of Anglo-American pirates in the Atlantic Ocean, and once again connected attractive and dynamic characters from the screen with the enigmatic America, “whose wonderful movies were more attractive and interesting than the boring and slow Soviet ones.” Of course, Soviet authorities were aware of some of the ideological implications, but in comments delivered before screenings they stressed the “anti-capitalist message” and they censored all “controversial (from the ideological point of view) episodes.”[14]

American trophy films also became a venue for promoting of another popular genre – American jazz music. In the late 1940s, Soviet film goers discovered American musical film *Sun Valley Serenade*, which demonstrated that “the normal people in the capitalist West could live a stylish and attractive life.” Moreover, this movie with its very simple plot introduced American jazz to the Soviet movie screen. For the first time, Soviet film viewers had the unique opportunity to see the Glenn Miller Orchestra playing live on screen. For many children in the post-war Soviet Union, this film not only served as a popular means of advertising very catchy jazz melodies such as “Chattanooga Choo-choo,” but was also instrumental in popularizing English as a very attractive, modern, and “stylish” foreign language.[15] Many representatives of the Soviet post-war generation decided to switch from the obligatory German – the first foreign language in the Soviet school curriculum – to English as their language of choice. As one contemporary noted later that after watching *Sun Valley Serenade* and listening to the music of the Glenn Miller Orchestra, he began to memorize some of the songs from the movie. However, he was unable to pronounce the English sounds correctly because his first foreign language in school was German. That is why he and his friends decided to learn English.[16]

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[12] Tony Shaw and Denise Youngblood, *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 40.

[13] Richard Stites, *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society Since 1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 125.

[14] Sergei I. Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City: The West, Identity, and Ideology in Soviet Dniepropetrovsk, 1960–1985* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press; Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010), 116. See also the recent biography of Errol Flynn: Thomas McNulty, *Errol Flynn: The Life and Career* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004), especially 29–192.

As other contemporaries later recalled, “during the first years after the war everybody who watched American films and used food products sent by the American people understood that Americans were our allies and good friends; Soviet young people, like us, did not think at the beginning in terms of the Cold War at all.”[17] A graduate of the Moscow Institute of International Relations (hereafter MGIMO), recalled how strong the goodwill was toward the American people among the Soviet youth in the 1940s:

> our feelings toward America were very warm. We knew that the United States was giving us substantial help with food and material […] Wartime movies from Hollywood were often shown, many of them depicting the friendship between Americans and Russians. I felt sure we would always be friends; it was inconceivable that anything could come between the Soviet Union and the United States.[18]

Georgii Arbatov, the founder of the USA Institute in Moscow as well as a graduate of MGIMO, confessed in his memoirs that as early as the autumn of 1944, while being demobilized from the Soviet Army, he “decided to study English and specialize in the United States.” As he explained, “The United States was our main ally. The attitude among most of my contemporaries toward America was warm and friendly. Even first-year students [at MGIMO]understood that the United States and the Soviet Union would play a special role in the postwar world. And the country itself was undoubtedly very interesting."[19]

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[15] Vasily Aksyonov, *In Search of Melancholy Baby* (New York: Random House, 1987). Compare with Juliane Fürst, *Stalin’s Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 232.

[16] Personal correspondence with Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, September 12, 1993.

[17] Conversation with Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov on March 19, 1991, at the Institute of World History, Moscow.

[18] Arkady Shevchenko, *Breaking With Moscow* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 56.

At the same time, this first wave of Soviet fascination with American culture led to the rise of the first Soviet youth subculture, known as *stilyagi* ('stylish people') during the late 1940s. These imitators of American popular culture and fashions were influenced by the mass enthusiasm for jazz music, which opened the second stage of "Soviet Americanization" in the post-Stalin era in the 1950s.[20] A majority of *stilyagi* came from the Soviet middle class, privileged families with relatively good financial situations who permitted their children to use expensive tape recorders and wear fashionable dress.[21] According to one of the most prominent representatives of *stilyagi* generation, Soviet jazz musician Alexei Kozlov, a typical Moscow "stylish man" wore "narrow short pants, big shoes, long chequered jacket with bright and long ties […] with Tarzan-like long hair combed straight back and smeared generously with briolin."[22]

Officially, this second stage of Americanization started with the opening of Soviet society to external, Western influences under the new leadership of Nikita Khrushchev, when he initiated various exchange programs with the West and invited foreigners to the World Youth Festival in Moscow in 1957. After almost three months of negotiations, which began on October 29, 1957 in Washington, D.C., William S. B. Lacy, President Eisenhower's Special Assistant on East–West Exchanges, and Georgiy Z. Zarubin, Soviet Ambassador to the United States, signed a special document – the first US–USSR exchange agreement, in fact – entitled "Agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Exchanges in the Cultural, Technical and Educational Fields" on January 27, 1958.[23] This exchange started in 1958 with twenty Soviet students. Their travels in America were officially sponsored by the Fulbright Scholarship Program, which originated in 1946. This exchange program also opened new opportunities for the consumption of American films in the Soviet Union. According to the agreement of 1958, the main Soviet organization for the acquisition and distribution of foreign films, *Soveksportfilm*, was “to enter into contract with representatives of the motion picture industry in the United States, to be approved by the Department of State […] for the purpose of the sale and purchase of films.”[24]

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[19] Georgii Arbatov, *The System: An Insider's Life in Soviet Politics* (New York: Random House, 1992), 35.

[20] See the first satirical description of Moscow stylish man in the humor magazine *Crocodile:* D. Belyaev, "Stilyaga," *Krokodil*, March 10, 1949, 10.

[21] Alexei Kozlov, *Dzhaz, rok i mednye truby*, (Moscow: EKSMO, 2005), 80–81, 89.

[22] Artemy Troitsky, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (London: Omnibus Press, 1987), 2–3.

[23] Robert F. Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges, 1958–1975* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 46–47, 48 ff.; and Yale Richmond, *U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 1958–1986* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), 2, 4 ff.

As the first American reaction to this cultural agreement in 1958, the US tourist company Cosmos Travel funded the travel of seventeen Soviet film directors, cameramen, and actors to the US (including the famous film director Sergei Gerasimov and the poet Sergei Mikhalkov, who represented the Soviet intellectual elite). They visited New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Hollywood. In New York, at a reception attended by a hundred American guests, organized by US film producer Joshua Logan, who had previously visited the USSR, they met movie stars like Lilian and Dorothy Gish, Marlene Dietrich (who signed an autograph for the readers of the Soviet popular magazine *Sovetskii ekran*), and Harry Belafonte. The Soviet visitors were impressed by the film studios in Hollywood and by their visits to Disneyland. They observed how Edward Dmytryk was shooting a film, western, *Warlock*, with Henry Fonda and Dolores Michael.

Moreover, they

> were very impressed by the new film [*The Defiant Ones*] by Stanley Kramer about two fugitive criminals (a white one is played by Tony Curtis and black one – played by Sydney Poitier), who were joined together by one chain, a movie, which exposed the problems of racism and social inequality in the capitalist American society […] This movie witnessed the great possibilities of American cinema, when it worked with progressive themes in realistic spirit.[25]

This visit created the foundations of the business relationships between Hollywood and the Soviet film establishment. An American host, Joshua Logan, was invited to serve as a member of the jury at the Second Moscow International Film Festival (hereafter MIFF) in 1961.[26] After this visit, the Soviet guests recommended to the Soviet administration that they acquire the recent US movies they had seen in America for Soviet domestic consumption. They especially emphasized the positive, “humanistic” role of progressive film makers such as Stanley Kramer. He was later officially invited to serve as a member of the jury at the Third MIFF in 1963. On his second trip to Moscow in 1965 for the Fourth MIFF, “Kramer brought along *Judgment at Nuremberg, On the Beach, The Defiant Ones* and *West Side Story* (a non-Kramer film) to give the Russians an idea of America’s freedom for self-criticism.”[27]

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[24] Quoted by Yale Richmond, *U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchanges*, 64.

[25] Vladimir Shneiderov, “Vostochno-zapadnoe puteshestvie,” *Sovetskii ekran* 3 (1959): 8.

[26] Leonid Mlechin, *Furtseva* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardia, 2011), 349.

[27] Vernon Scott, “Kramer Lured Back to Films,” *Sun Sentinel*, June 7, 1987.

Soviet politicians also supported the film exchanges through their official visits to Hollywood in 1959. Anastas Mikoyan, the first deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, visited the US in January of that year. Following a special official invitation from Eric Johnston, a MPAA president, Mikoyan visited Paramount Pictures Company in Hollywood, where he met with the American film company executive Young Freeman, other representatives of the US movie business, and movie stars such as Marlon Brando, Jerry Lewis, Dina Merrill, and Kirk Douglas. As a result of Mikoyan's official visit, some American actors, including Douglas, received official invitations to visit Moscow, and Paramount Pictures sent its official representatives to the USSR to establish "the mutually useful foundation" for US–Soviet film exchange.[28] During his official visit to the US, in September 1959, Nikita Khrushchev also went to Hollywood, where he met with American movie stars and film makers on the premises of the Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, confirming the official beginning of film exchanges between two countries.[29] At Khrushchev's personal invitation, Gary Cooper, an American movie star who had become popular with the Soviet public via the old trophy films, traveled to the Soviet Union at the end of 1959. Moreover, as a part of this film exchange, the independent US movie *Marty* (Delbert Mann, 1955) was shown in Moscow, and the following year, in 1960, it was released widely all over the Soviet Union.[30] The most important practical results of all these official visits were not only the increasing number of Soviet and American films shown in both countries as part of the exchange programs, and the frequent exchanges between official delegations of film makers, but also special invitations for US film directors and producers to

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28 S. Allov, "Vstrechi v Gollivude," *Sovetskii ekran* 6 (1959): 3. See also Jindriska Blahova, "A Merry Twinkle in Stalin's Eye: Eric Johnston, Hollywood and the Soviet Union," *Film History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 347–359.

29 Vasilii Kiselev, "Vizit mira i druzhby," *Sovetskii ekran* 22 (1959): 2–3; Alexei Kozlov, "N.S. Khrushchev v Amerike," *Sovetskii ekran* 24 (1959): 2–3. For the preparation and organization of Khrushchev's visit to the United States, as recorded in his son-in-law's memoirs, see Aleksei I. Adzhubei, *Te desiat' let* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Rossiia, 1989), 200–207; Adzhubei, *Krushenie illiuzii: Vremia v sobytiiakh i litsakh* (Moscow: Interbuk, 1991), 214–226. Compare with Adzhubei et al., eds., *Litsom k litsu s Amerikoi:Rasskaz o poezdke N. S. Khrushcheva v SSHA, 15–27 sentiabria 1959 goda* (Moscow: Godudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1959), esp. 12, 13–23.

30 Jeffrey Meyers, *Gary Cooper: American Hero* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2001), 302, 303. *Marty* was received by Soviet audiences as a film offering a critical portrayal of life in the United States. [31] Joshua Logan (1961); Stanley Kramer (1963); Fred Zinneman (1965); Dimitri Tiomkin (1967); King Vidor (1969); George Stevens (1973); Bert Schneider (1975); Jay Leyda (1981); Robert Young (1985).

serve as members of the MIFF jury: from 1961, each MIFF had at least one American as a member of its jury.[31]

At the same time, this second period of "Soviet Americanization" led to the beginning of serious studies of American civilization in Soviet academia and a gradual "institutionalization" of American studies after 1953, with pioneering research of Nikolai Bolkhovitinov in Moscow and Arnold Shlepakov in Kyiv. These Soviet experts in American Studies, known as Soviet Americanists, not only prepared the historical justification for the US visit of Nikita Khrushchev in 1959, but to some extent, laid the foundations for a diplomacy of détente (the relaxation of international tensions) during the 1970s, which created the conditions for the third stage of Soviet Americanization, under a new leader of the USSR, Leonid Brezhnev.

New agreements between the Soviet Union and capitalist West about various forms of cultural exchange, signed during the 1970s, especially the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, signed in Helsinki by the Soviet leaders together with thirty-four other heads of state on August 1, 1975, opened Soviet society to new Western influences through various forms of media. A crucial moment in this Westernization was the détente of the 1970s, especially the period from 1972 to 1979. During this period Soviet administration bought official licenses for manufacturing popular music records from the West; officially licensed Western movies were shown (more than 150 feature films from 70 countries in 1973 alone); Soviet TV broadcast concerts by popular Western musicians (since January 11, 1977, a special Soviet TV show, "Melodies and Rhythms of Foreign Estrada," had been shown on a regular basis); the official Soviet television shows, such as *International Panorama*, *Ogoniok*, *Benefis*, *Volshebnyi fonar'*, and *Vesiolye rebiata*, incorporated with a range of Western rock and disco music – from the light dancing tunes of ABBA, The Beatles, Boney M., Paul McCartney, and Smokey, to songs from *Jesus Christ Superstar*, to the heavier beat of Slade, The Sweet, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Nazareth, Queen, and UFO. Western acts such as Cliff Richard, B. B. King, Boney M., Elton John and others performed live for the public in the USSR and fragments of these concerts were shown on Soviet television.[32] At the same time, the popularity of Anglo-American rock music contributed to the rise of the second wave of Soviet youth subculture – the hippie culture, which survived until the end of the 1980s. In the 1970s, *Soveksportfilm* had released, on average, four US films annually.[33] In 1974, *Soveksportfilm* released six US films, and American and Soviet film makers began a new, collaborative production – *The Blue Bird*, starring Elizabeth Taylor, Jane Fonda, and Ava Gardener. The film was shot by American film director George Cukor on the premises of the Soviet Lenfilm studios in both Leningrad and Moscow, commissioning music by the famous Soviet composer Andrei Petrov and coopting the literary genius of the prominent Soviet screenwriter Aleksei Kapler, whose script was based on the play of the same name by Belgian playwright Maurice Maeterlinck. *The Blue Bird* was simultaneously released in both the United States and the USSR in April of 1976.[34]

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[31] 1-765-3

[32] See Leonid Parfenov, *Namedni. Nasha era. 1971–1980* (Moscow: KoLibri, 2009), 215 (1978). I have already discussed this in detail elsewhere. See especially Sergei I. Zhuk, "Détente and the Western Cultural Products in Soviet Ukraine during the 1970s," in *Youth and Rock in the Soviet Bloc: Youth Cultures, Music, and the State in Russia and Eastern Europe* , ed. William J. Risch (Lanham, MD: Lexington Press, 2014), 117–151.

The beginning of the period of détente in US–Soviet relations not only resulted in some important changes in the distribution and consumption of American films, but also in the direct appropriation (even copycatting) of the certain American cultural practices related to cinema and television, including such US film genres as the Western, the musical comedy, and even sitcoms, which were adapted for Soviet TV. A very important role in this process belonged to various Soviet Americanists, experts in US history, politics, and culture. During the 1970s, six hundred of them became active participants in the various political, cultural, and academic exchanges between the US and the USSR, contributing to the cultural politics of the Soviet administration.[35]

To some extent, all other stages of Soviet Americanization, during the period of détente and then perestroika in the 1980s and the 1990s, followed the same paradigm as the first two (during late Stalinism and Khrushchev's tenure): an imitation of US cultural and political forms and practices, on the one hand, and opposition to the same practices on the grounds that they represented "dangerous capitalist propaganda," on the other hand.

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[33] Special film exchanges were organized with professional support from Soviet film critics, some of whom, like Shestakov, became regular visitors in the US. A. Borodin, "My mozhem dat' drug drugu mnogo tsennogo…," *Sovetskii ekran* (1971): 16–17.

[34] A. S. Aleksandrov, "Snimaetsia 'Siniaia ptitsa'," *SEPI* 9 (September 1975): 70–72; Semen Chertok, "Skazka o schastie," *Sovetskii ekran* 13 (1975): 10–13. This film was the fifth screen adaptation of Maeterlinck's play, following two silent films, the studio's 1940 version starring Shirley Temple, and a 1970 animated feature. A positive review of this film is found in Romil Sobolev, "Naiti to, chto ob'ediniaet," *Sovetskii ekran* 24 (1976): 4–5.

[35] Robert English, *Russia and Idea of the West* (New York: Columbia University Press 2000).

“Seductive Adversary,” or “Americanization” and the Rise of the KGB Oligarchy

After the Second World War, during the Cold War, the KGB – the Soviet political police and major intelligence agency – targeted the United States of America as the “main enemy in the world” for the Soviet Union. According to Christopher Andrew, “throughout the Cold War, Soviet intelligence regarded the United States as its ‘main adversary.’”[36] In their everyday counterintelligence activities in Soviet Ukraine, through the entire period of post-Stalin socialism, KGB operatives still dealt mainly with intelligence from the “main adversary,” the United States. According to the official counterintelligence research of KGB in Kyiv, the number of the spies from the US always dwarfed the number of spies from other capitalist countries. Thus, from January to August of 1969, there were 133 cases of espionage committed by foreigners in Soviet Ukraine. Seventy-four of the spies were Americans, twelve were English, nineteen were French, and eleven were West Germans.[37] This was a typical ratio for KGB operations in Ukraine. During the 1970s and the 1980s, more than 60 percent of all recorded and reported KGB counterintelligence operations in Soviet Ukraine targeted only the US and Canada.

“Capitalist America” became not only the “main” but also a “seductive” “adversary” of the KGB, creating attractive cultural products and practices for Soviet consumers. Paradoxically, KGB operatives were also attracted to various “material and cultural items” they associated with “seductive America.” As one retired KGB officer recalled, “despite all our ideological communist upbringing, we, young KGB officers, still dreamed about the products ‘made in the USA’, about a possibility to get a special assignment involving a ‘business trip’ to America, which would allow us to bring the desired items from America to Ukraine.”[38] Former KGB officers, like Oleg Kalugin, recalled how KGB agents living in the US on intelligence assignments enjoyed their consumption of American products and services, literally “falling in love with America" and the American way of life. As Kalugin (who was sent officially to the US as an exchange student in journalism) described his own fascination with America in his memoirs,

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[36] Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 150. See also John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr, and Alexander Vassiliev, *Spies: The Rise and Fall of the KGB in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), esp. 293–481; Oleg D. Kalugin, *Spymaster: My Thirty-Two Years in Intelligence and Espionage Against the West* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 221.

[37] Galuzevyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Sluzhby Bezpeky Ukrainy (hereafter SBU), f. 16, op. 1, spr. 988, ark. 138.

[38] Interview with Leonid K., a retired KGB officer, March 3, 2019, Kyiv, Ukraine. Leonid was a close friend of the Soviet Ukrainian Americanists, such as Arnold Shlepakov and Leonid Leshchenko, who introduced me to this officer in 1992.

> I was twenty-four and had been turned loose in New York City with the princely sum of $250 a month in Fulbright spending money. […] I was living for free in Columbia's John Jay Hall, […] taking journalism courses, and being encouraged by the school newspaper – and the KGB – to sniff around New York and get acquainted with American life […] I visited scores of neighborhoods and all the major museums. I saw ball games and went to the Metropolitan Opera. I rode buses and subways for hours and saw more than one hundred films. I went to a strip club in Greenwich Village, shelling out $40 for a drink with one of the dancers…[39]

But the most important effect of the exchange program on Soviet Americanists was the development, even among the "KGB people," of a psychological phenomenon which some contemporaries called "a fondness of America and its people."[40] As Allen H. Kassof from IREX explained:

> We know in retrospect that many of the Soviet Americanists who came to do research on the United States as adversaries developed a very complex symbiotic relationship with their subjects. Beginning as analysts of American life, they gradually became supporters: the internal messengers of new conceptions of Soviet-American relations and, ultimately, spokesmen for alternatives. On the personal level, they developed significant friendships not only with their counterparts in the American sovietological community, who were their most readily accessible colleagues, but with a representative spectrum of American elites.[41]

This hidden curiosity and fascination about "capitalist America" were obviously present in all individual KGB reports (including the counterintelligence ones), which were submitted to their administration by KGB operatives who worked with the American visitors in Soviet Ukraine. Those KGB officers, who "worked" with the American tourists in Kyiv, recalled that "after a long communication with an American visitor, besides the classified intelligence information, a KGB agent usually reported the numerous details of everyday life in America of his visitor: about American cars, education, food, fashions, even films and television shows.”[42] As KGB operatives joked, by participating in those anti-American operations, the KGB officers “discovered the various details of everyday life in American civilization: it was a peculiar process of the ‘discovery of America/the American Other’ by struggling not only with the alleged American intelligence agents, but also with American propaganda during consumption of the ‘seductive American products’.”[43]

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[39] Kalugin, *Spymaster*, 27, 29.

[40] Pavel Palazchenko, *My Years with Gorbachev and Shevardnadze: The Memoir of a Soviet Interpreter* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 95. Palazchenko, Mikhail Gorbachev's interpreter, wrote in his memoirs: "Most [Soviet] experts on the United States, regardless of differences of view on particular issues, seemed genuinely to like America and the Americans." *My Years*, 95. See also Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain.* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 91.

[41] Allen H. Kassof, "Scholarly Exchanges and the Collapse of Communism," *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 22, no. 3 (1995): 263–274; citation at 270.

According to KGB statistics, the overwhelming majority of criminal cases involving American influences in Soviet Ukraine were not related directly to US intelligence, but rather to the consumption of cultural products produced in the United States. Massive consumption of American jazz and rock music by Soviet youth produced not only the massive phenomenon of the black market and *fartsovshchiks* (black marketeers) in every Soviet city, but also the youth subcultures of *stilyagi*, hippies, and punks, which were considered by the KGB administration to be “the alternative political culture to Komsomol.”[44] All those subcultures used a variety of American cultural practices and models of behavior; the KGB therefore interpreted those subcultures as an “anti-Soviet American threat” and organized special KGB operations against them, especially against the subcultures of hippies and punks during the 1970s and the 1980s.

During the Cold War détente period, the institutionalization of various academic centers for American Studies in Moscow and Kyiv was used by the officers of the KGB and GRU (military intelligence) – the two Soviet intelligence agencies – to create cover positions for themselves, to invite American policy-makers and academics to the Soviet Union and to undertake intelligence- related missions to the United States. Even the first group of four Soviet students of American Studies, who participated in the initial academic exchange with American students at Columbia University in 1958, included three professional Soviet intelligence officers. American hosts were aware of this mission by the Soviet research centers, who sent their representatives to the US “to spy and to interfere with American politics.” According to the published “Vasilii Mitrokhin archive files” (KGB documents named for the KGB archivist who brought them to the West), the most influential “KGB man” among the Soviet experts in US politics, history, and culture was Georgii Arbatov, who had been a director of the Institute for the USA and Canada since 1967.

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[42] Interview with Leonid K.

[43] Interview with Igor T., a retired KGB officer, May 18, 1991, Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine.

[44] I quote my interview with Igor T. See also Zhuk, *Rock and Roll in the Rocket City.*

Arbatov, who had the KGB codename of “Vasilii,” built up an influential circle of high-level contacts in America, and he was regularly required to cultivate these connections. One of the most important of Arbatov’s contacts in the 1970s was former Under-Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance, codenamed by the KGB as “Vizir” (‘Visier’).[45] Three other leaders of the Soviet Americanist centers were either KGB officers or KGB agents. I refer to Grigorii Sevostianov, an intelligence officer who was the head of such a center at the Institute of World History in Moscow between 1968 and 1988; to Nikolai Sivachev, a KGB agent and Sevostianov’s former student, leader of a similar center at Moscow State University between 1974 and 1982; and to Aleksandr A. Fursenko (1927–2008), a KGB operative and founder of the St. Petersburg school of Russian Americanists. Another prominent “KGB/FSB person” among Soviet and Russian Americanists was Vladimir Sogrin, Sivachev’s student, who became a director of the Center for North American Studies at the Institute of World History in Moscow after 2008. Many of those centers included professional intelligence officers who had officially retired from their KGB service. Sevostianov’s center had at least two of those officers: Vadim A. Koleneko (1943–2011), a specialist in Canadian Studies, and Vladimir V. Poznyakov (1946–2021), an expert in Soviet-American intelligence before and during the early Cold War.[46]

As we have already seen, from the very beginning, the academic exchanges between the United States and the USSR were used as opportunities for infiltration by the “KGB people.” These “people” included a wide variety of the experts – from the ranked KGB officers to various scholars and scientists (including Soviet Americanists), who collaborated with the KGB and provided those “directing organs” not only with intelligence information and necessary “informal” contacts in academic and diplomatic circles, but also with very important expertise in such disparate fields of knowledge as the functions of the US Department of State, computer science, or the banking system. Many Soviet participants recalled how their KGB supervisors requested them to provide information about the different functions of US banks “to use this experience for the organization of the Soviet foreign banks, working abroad.”[47] According to former Soviet KGB officers who participated in these exchange programs, this information about banking and financial services in the West would be used for future financial operations in post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine.[48]

The main result of the KGB’s operations in “capitalist America” was a typical industrial and technological espionage. The KGB provided Soviet military factories and research centers with precious technological and industrial information by stealing from their "main adversary." As the KGB officers who supervised these operations in Kyiv revealed:

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[45] Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *Sword and the Shield*, 211–212, 213.

[46] Interview with Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, Moscow, May 21, 2001.

[47] Interview with Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, March 23, 1991, Moscow.

[48] See Kalugin, *Spymaster*, 424.

> [Between] 1965 and 1987, almost 90 % of all technological innovations in all research institutes and the factories of the "military-industrial complex" of Soviet Ukraine were based on the stolen information from the capitalist countries by the specially trained KGB agents. And at least 80 % of all those "secret samples" of important technological "inventions" came directly from the United States of America. Paradoxically, a majority of these technological secrets were stolen from the American laboratories and colleges by the Soviet engineers and scientists, who participated in the international academic exchanges programs and who executed the KGB orders, performing the functions of the Soviet spies on the American soil.[49]

Soviet Americanists and their KGB supervisors began their own participation in the creation of an international community of scholars, becoming partners in academic exchange with their American colleagues. They established good relations not only with American experts in US history, politics, and culture, but also with American specialists in Russian/Soviet studies. To some extent, the participation of Soviet Americanists in this international community would not only shape the development of American studies in the USSR, but also influence Russian studies in America. After visiting America, Soviet Americanists hosted American guests, experts in Russian studies, building strong personal connections with them – as Bolkhovitinov did with Norman Saul, Sivachev with Donald Raleigh, Vladimir Sogrin with Saul and Alfred Rieber, and so on. (The two American historians linked to Sogrin stayed at his Moscow apartment, and were helped during their research in Moscow. Rieber was a "Slavist" while Saul was an "Americanist.") Eventually, through these personal connections, Soviet Americanists (including the KGB agents) and their American colleagues created an important academic international network, which involved their students as well, and which survived the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.[50]

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[49] Sergei I. Zhuk, *KGB Operations against the USA and Canada in Soviet Ukraine, 1953–1991* (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 152–153.

[50] I have written about this in detail in my book *Soviet Americana: The Cultural History of Russian and Ukrainian Americanists* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2018; repr. Bloomsbury, 2019).

Crisis of the Russian "Americanization" Under the KGB Regime of Putin

The process of "Americanization" for Russian politics and culture was gradually changed after 2000, when a new Russian President, Vladimir Putin, a former KGB officer, began transforming the political system of the Russian Federation, from which emerged the so-called "KGB kleptocratic regime."[51] A notion of "Americanization" never influenced the deep social, economic, political, and ideological foundations of the Soviet nor (after 1991) the Russian political regimes. Both political elites, including Putin's KGB kleptocrats, and ordinary Russians enjoyed only the material comfort and various forms of entertainment they associated with this Americanization, mostly through various venues and forms of consumption, starting with James Fenimore Cooper's novels and American Western films, later listening to Anglo-American rock and roll. As one KGB officer noted, "we loved in a process of Americanization only **comfort**, we never accepted such American concepts as a rule of law or democracy."[52] The KGB never understood and never accepted the rules of a democratic system of politics and the rule of law into Russia. Moreover, after a 2007 speech given by Putin in Munich, in which he accused the West and especially the US of anti-Russian politics, the Russian ruling elites, supervised by Putin's kleptocracy, gradually began distancing themselves from old perceptions of Americanization. The peak of this distancing from "dangerous American influences" came in July 2021, when Putin published a historical essay in which he accused the USA of using Ukraine against Russia. This publication became his theoretical justification for open war against Ukraine, which was publicly presented as if it were a war against the threat to Russian security posed by the US and NATO.[53] Paradoxically, an indigenization of American influences led to their complete rejection. And the very people who used to provide and justify those influences into Russian society, the Russian experts in American studies (many of whom were, and still are, KGB/FSB officers and agents) now justify Putin's expansionism and his anti-Americanism, focusing their attention on contemporary cultural consumption and youth culture, which became, in the

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[51] See Karen Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), and Mikhail Zygar, *All the Kremlin's Men: Inside the Court of Vladimir Putin* (New York: Public Affairs, 2016).

[52] Interview with Leonid K.

[53] See Vladimir Putin's article "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians," published on the official Kremlin site on July 12, 2021. Available at: http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181.

KGB imagination, the object of “Americanization,” the direct result of American cultural and ideological influences.

KGB/FSB ideologists in Russia, like Andranik Migranian, blame America for “creating” all the domestic and international problems of the Russian state.[54] Another Russian ideologist, Vyacheslav Nikonov, served an Executive Director of Russkii Mir Foundation from 2007 to 2012, publicly taking an anti-American position, criticizing the Orange Revolution and Maidan Revolution in Ukraine as an “American conspiracy against Russia.” In his textbook, the publication of which was funded by Russkii Mir Foundation, Nikonov presents the United States as the major geopolitical enemy of Russia. He interprets all events in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine since the collapse of the Soviet Union as a result of “US expansionism.” According to Nikonov, the major goal of the United States is to “weaken” and to “punish” Russia, by exploiting the recent developments in Ukraine and Russia. Moreover, Nikonov supports Russian expansionism, the Russian annexation of Crimea, and Russian military presence in eastern Ukraine. He justifies the Russian war in Ukraine through the “historical mission” of Russian state to “defend” its state national interests against “American imperialism” in Eastern Europe, in a post-Soviet geopolitical space.[55] Other Russian ideologists also follow Nikonov in their criticism of US “public diplomacy,” alleging that America has been “masterminding” “Ukrainian revolutions.” They accuse US politicians of having attempted to “take out” Ukraine from the Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe as early as 2003. According to this group, US “public diplomacy” focused its efforts on pro-Western Ukrainian youth, organizing the so-called “Orange” Revolution and other anti-Russian movements in Ukraine. These Russian ideologists repeat the old Soviet concepts about an “American anti-Russian conspiracy.” They emphasize that starting in 2003, “the USA were able to create [in Ukraine] a solid human potential, oriented to the West.”[56] Paradoxically, both Nikonov and Migranian were among the first young Soviet Americanists from Moscow to visit the US as Fulbright scholars in the early 1980s, when they praised a “modern America.”[57]

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[54] Andranik Migranian, “Putin Triumphs in Ukraine,” *The National Interest*, March 6, 2014. On the role of Andranik Migranian as an advisor to both President Yeltsin and President Putin, see Eugeniusz Górski, *Civil Society, Pluralism and Universalism* (Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007), 57, 58, 61.

[55] V. A. Nikonov, *Sovremennyi mir i ego istoki* (Moscow: Izd-vo Moskovskogo universiteta, 2015), esp. 302–304.

[56] N. A. Tsvetkova, “Publichania diplomatiia SSHA: ot kholodnoi voiny k novoi kholodnoi voine,” in *Rossiia i SShA: poznavaia drug druga. Sbornik pamiati akademika Aleksandra Aleksandrovicha Fursenko*, ed. Vladimir V. Noskov (Saint Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriia, 2015), 82–97; quotations at 92 and 93.

[57] Richmond, *Cultural Exchange*, 173.

The imperial ideal of tsarist Russia, mixed with Soviet political and cultural stereotypes, now shapes not only political but also academic discourse in a post-Soviet space. As in the nineteenth century, according to Maxim Kovalevsky's complaint, the state (today, Putin's nationalist autocracy) again dominates Russian interpretations of US history and politics. And Russian Americanists still call on Russian politicians to "resist by all available means" the "American threat."[58] Unfortunately, Russian politicians today forget what Nikolai Bolkhovitinov, a pioneer in the studies of Russian-American relations, emphasized in 1968 during the Cold War: "We do not intend to present an idealized picture and create an impression that no disagreement or antagonism existed between Russia and America […] The lesson of Russian-American relations consists not in the absence of differences and conflicts, but in the fact that history testifies to the possibility of overcoming them – not with the help of weapons, but peacefully, by means of negotiation."[59]

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[58] Nikonov, *Sovremennyi mir*, 371 – 380, 427 – 446.

[59] Quoted in Lyman Henry Butterfield, "Introduction," in Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, *The Beginnings of Russian-American Relations, 1775 – 1815*, trans. Elena Levin (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1975), xvi. On the role of Bolkhovitinov in Soviet American Studies, see Sergei I. Zhuk, *Nikolai Bolkhovitinov and American Studies in the USSR: People's Diplomacy in the Cold War* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Press, 2017).

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May Jehle

Letztes Jahr Titanic (1990) and *Große weite Welt* (1997)

Documentary (Re-)Presentations of the Transformation Process in and of the GDR

1 The Presence of “the West” in “the East”

Despite all efforts towards ideological distinction on both sides of Germany during the forty years of division, there were still reciprocal relationships at various levels. The historian Sascha-Ilko Kowalczuk even speaks about an omnipresence of “the West” in “the East.”[1] He considers Western media, which could be received in most parts of the eastern German Democratic Republic (GDR), as the most important factor. The images of “the West” presented by Western media influenced East Germans’ ideas of “the West” significantly. Western media not only transferred political information but also represented the broad product range of the Western consumers’ world. The resulting perceptions of a difference between East and West were intensified by the tradition of the so-called *Westpaket* (Western package) and the existence of so-called *Intershops.* The Western package symbolized the decades-long practice of sending care packages to friends and family relations between the East (GDR) and West (Federal Republic of Germany, FRG). In a metaphorical sense, it can be found in the collected volume *Erinnerungsorte der DDR* (Places of remembrance of the GDR) edited by Martin Sabrow: “There once was a flavor which was inexpressibly delicious and delightful and which was created by a mixture of oranges, soap, coffee, chocolates, and some other ingredients. It was the flavor of the big wide world, exotic and luxurious and happy, who could enjoy it.”[2] The Intershops were established in 1962. Initially, Western visitors could go to them to buy Western products using Western currencies, which provided an accrual of foreign exchange for the GDR. Since 1974, GDR citi-

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[1] Sascha-Ilko Kowalczuk, *Endspiel: Die Revolution von 1989 in der DDR* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2009), 181. See also Stefan Wolle, *Die heile Welt der Diktatur: Alltag und Herrschaft in der DDR 1971–1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1998), 69–71.

[2] Petra Kabus, “Das Westpaket,” in *Erinnerungsorte der DDR*, ed. Martin Sabrow (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2009), 441. All quotations from German references have been translated by the author unless otherwise noted.

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-009

zens were also allowed to own West German currency and the Intershops turned into an attractive shopping possibility for all with West German currency.[3]

In the context of the generally restricted travel opportunities between the East and West, it was almost impossible for Eastern Germans to travel to the western Federal Republic of Germany. Apart from privileged exceptions, this was only possible for retired persons, starting in 1964; as of 1972, it could also be permitted for younger persons in cases of urgent family affairs. However, these allowable travel opportunities did not alleviate the longing for "the West"; rather, they seemed to have the opposite effect. The exit and refugee movement increased continuously until the end of the GDR.[4]

"The West" represented a "projection screen" for "hopes and longings" as well as for "fears of threat."[5] To understand the latter, we have to keep in mind the officially propagandized enemy stereotype of "the West" as warlike and exploitative imperialism.[6] Of course, we should suppose a differentiated perception of these enemy stereotypes, but the image of a warlike imperialism might still be plausible against the backdrop of the Cold War and its international conflicts and debates on international armament. Moreover, we can assume that the Eastern critique of the capitalist system, with its consequences of poor working conditions and mass unemployment, met with approval. Thus, there was not only an exit and refugee movement in the GDR in 1989, but there was also a strong protest movement which formulated the slogan "We stay here." This movement wanted to achieve democratic change in the GDR but not necessarily the end of the socialist system.

Taken as whole, the causes for the end of the GDR were diverse and complex. Beyond doubt, the increasingly organized and growing opposition that gained more and more visibility at the end of the 1980s and occupied the streets and public places in a lot of cities with their protest demonstrations in the autumn of 1989 was a crucial driving force. By this, the Central Committee of East Germany's Sozialistische Einheitspartei (Socialist Unity Party, SED) was already under pressure when they were confronted with economic bankruptcy in the autumn of 1989.[7] Moreover, throughout the whole year, the increasing exit and refugee movement was a constant problem: already in the summer of 1989, 100,000 people were recorded as having left the GDR, recalling similar numbers in the crisis years of 1953 and 1961.[8] In the summer months, more than 80,000 people fled via Hungary.[9] The images of the occupied embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Prague became iconic, especially the moment when the West German foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, proclaimed from a balcony that the waiting masses were allowed to travel into the Federal Republic. During their train passage through the GDR, people collected at the railways and stations. They cheered and waved to the travelers, and some wanted to jump on the trains. There were violent riots when the police tried to intervene and, as a further consequence, more demonstrations. Thus, the existence of the GDR was also seriously threatened by the increasing exit and refugee movement.[10]

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[3] Kowalczuk, *Endspiel*, 182; Wolle, *Heile Welt der Diktatur*, 74 – 78.

[4] Kowalczuk, *Endspiel*, 183 – 192.

[5] Wolle, *Heile Welt der Diktatur*, 196.

[6] May Jehle, "Visuelle Codierungen des geteilten Deutschlands in Staatsbürgerkundelehrbüchern der DDR und ihre Behandlung im Unterricht: Eine Analyse historischer Videoaufzeichnungen von Unterricht im Zeitraum 1978 – 1986," in *Der Kalte Krieg im Schulbuch*, ed. Franziska Flucke et al. (St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2017), 95 – 115.

[7] Kowalczuk, *Endspiel*, 431 – 433.

Against this backdrop, we can interpret the process of transformation in and of the GDR after the Peaceful Revolution of 1989 as a process of "going West" in different ways. At first, there was the extensive migration of people from the GDR to the Western federal states. Then, there was the process of the transformation of the whole GDR that could be interpreted as a process of the whole country "going West." With this in mind, I will present two documentary films, which accompanied both people who moved to the West after 1989 and people who stayed in the East. The films thus represent experiences of migration to the West on an individual, biographical level as well as representing individual experiences in the context of the transformation process after the accession of the GDR to the Federal Republic of Germany on October 3, 1990.

2 The Series of the *Leipzig Filme*

The double DVD with the title *Leipzig Filme*[11] was released in 2015 and includes five documentary films made by Andreas Voigt between 1986 and 1997. The first film, *Alfred* (1986), was Voigt's diploma project at the film academy in Babelsberg. He portrayed the worker, anarchist, communist, and unionist Alfred Florstedt through distinct phases of German history: from the First World War, through the Weimar Republic, during National Socialism and the Second World War, and in the Cold War. The film documents his conflicts with these distinct political systems, and likewise in the GDR. It also took a critical stance, especially in its documentation of the despair young female workers felt and of the derelict industrial landscapes.[12]

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[8] Kowalczuk, *Endspiel*, 346–347.

[9] Kowalczuk, *Endspiel*, 351.

[10] Konrad Jarausch, *Die unverhoffte Einheit: 1989–1990* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 29–46.

[11] *Leipzig-Filme 1986–97*, directed by Andreas Voigt (Fridolfing: absolut MEDIEN GmbH, 2015), DVD.

Andreas Voigt and Gerd Kroske shot the film *Leipzig im Herbst* (Leipzig in autumn) between October 16 and November 7, 1989. Production was preceded by an intensification of public political protests: regular demonstrations against election fraud; protests around the fortieth anniversary of the GDR; the increasing exit and refugee movement, with the embassy occupation in Prague as a symbolic climax, and the escalating protests during the train passages of these refugees through the GDR; the increasing influx of prayers for peace in Leipzig's Saint Nicholas Church; and the Monday demonstrations that followed. Specifically, the Monday demonstration in Leipzig on October 9, 1989 can be considered the historical turning point of the Peaceful Revolution. Despite the expectation of a violent police operation, more than 70,000 people rallied at the demonstration. Even before they moved, the police had received the order to not intervene. That was thus a sign of a shift in power from the party headquarters to the street.

In consequence, the DEFA filmmakers felt it was their responsibility to document these events and got conditional permission to do so for archive purposes.[13] The protesting crowd greeted them with cheers. The film documents the demonstrations and discussions at a meeting place of the citizens' movement called *Neues Forum* (New forum). The filmmakers interviewed demonstrators, workers, party functionaries, and police forces. Through these interviews, it becomes obvious how narrowly they had escaped a violent escalation of the demonstration on October 9. Moreover, the film shows how impressively and widely the particular atmosphere of change had spread to all sections of the population. It is an atmospheric picture of an open-ended and hopeful political self-empowerment.

By December 1989, Voigt had already started the shooting for *Letztes Jahr Titanic* (Last year Titanic). With this film, he mainly accompanied five protagonists from Leipzig through the whole of the following year, up until December 1990. By documenting their daily life and interviewing them, he created another atmospheric picture: this time it is a picture of the last months of the GDR and the first months in the reunified Federal Republic of Germany.

The documentary film *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung* (Faith, love, hope) from 1993 mainly consists of interviews with radical youths from the left-wing and right-wing scenes. The filmmaker contrasted pictures of luxurious shopping malls built by West German investors with the living environment of these youths, who portrayed a broad spectrum of social problems between family violence, various forms of neglect, and unemployment. Since its presentation of statements that trivialized violence and racism and extreme right-wing and neo-Nazi attitudes were not commented upon, the film is considered the most controversial of the whole series.

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[12] Helen Hughes, "Documenting the *Wende:* The films of Andreas Voigt," *in DEFA: East German Cinema, 1946–1992*, ed. Seán Allen and John Sandford (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1999), 288.

[13] Hughes, "Documenting the *Wende*," 289–291.

With the film *Große weite Welt* (Big wide world) from 1997, the filmmaker returned to some of the protagonists from the two preceding films. He documented their living environments in the mid-1990s and confronted them with sequences from the preceding films, which were presented as a filmic montage. In 2015, the year of the double DVD of the film series appeared, twenty-five years after the reunification of Germany, and the year that marked the thousandth anniversary of Leipzig, Voigt also released the film *Alles andere zeigt die Zeit* (Everything else is shown by time) in which he returns once more to these protagonists and continues to tell their life stories.

As a whole, these films present a panorama of different moods in Leipzig over the years. Specifically, the films *Letztes Jahr Titanic* and *Große weite Welt* represent the first experiences of "going West" in the literal as well as in the metaphorical sense. While retrospective perspectives tend to be a retroactive linearization of these experiences,[14] these films present contemporary perspectives on individual experiences within processes of transformation. By accompanying the protagonists over years, the films also offer the opportunity to analyze these experiences over the course of time.[15] With this intention, I will focus in the following on the filmic representations of imaginations of and experiences with "the West." Based on the film *Letztes Jahr Titanic*, we can analyze experiences in the early phase of transformation after the Peaceful Revolution, and we can contrast this with the perspective from the mid-1990s that is represented in the film *Große weite Welt.*

3 Documentary Films as Sources in the History of Education

The intended analysis and discussion of the filmic representation of experiences of "going West" need, to begin with, some methodological considerations on using documentary films as sources in the history of education. For a long time, German historians approached documentary films as sources with skepticism. This especially concerned the relation between historical facts and media representation.[16] We can at least consider that it is common sense that documentary films refer to reality and real people.[17] The actors shown in a film present their individual perspectives on the subject. The film as a whole is a consciously created representation of specific events that we should keep in mind during the analysis. As sources, we can consider documentary films as media constructions within a specific context and with specific intentions that contribute to the societal generation of meaning. East German documentaries, particularly from 1989/90, are themselves documents of a revolutionary time that open a new context and condition for the production of documentary films.[18]

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[14] Harald Welzer, *Transitionen: Zur Sozialpsychologie biographischer Wandlungsprozesse* (Tübingen: Edition Diskord, 1993), 295.

[15] Hughes, "Documenting the *Wende*," 285.

Differentiations between intentions of filmmakers cover a wide range of possibilities. It includes the aspiration for representations that are as realistic as possible or objective representations that consider various perspectives. In addition, we find biased views, investigative revelations, informative or solution-oriented approaches, and contributions to public opinion. The media design features used might refer to specific documentary film traditions and can be consciously used to accentuate specific intentions. The selection and composition of the footage, the camera perspectives and settings, the succession of scenes, the use of direct quotes and authentic sounds, and comments or text overlays combine to create a specific narrative of the subject of the film. We can differentiate if filmmakers have used original footage or if they have re-enacted the event, if they have taken an exclusively observational perspective or if they have interacted with the actors, the inner logic by which they have organized the succession of sequences, and if they have let them speak for themselves or have given them explicit comments. The reconstruction and analysis of these elements and their interplay enable differentiated classifications within the various genres of documentary films and further interpretations of the filmic means, the narration, and the possible intentions or effects on its reception.[19]

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[16] Artur Schlegelmilch, “Die Historie und der Dokumentarfilm; Vergangenheit und Zukunft eines schwierigen Verhältnisses,” in *Der dokumentarische Film und die Wissenschaften: Interdisziplinäre Bedeutungen und Ansätze*, ed. Carsten Heinze and Artur Schlegelmilch (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2019), 60.

[17] Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 6 – 41.

[18] Marc Silberman, “Post-Wall Documentaries: New Images from a New Germany?” *Cinema Journal* 33 (1994).

[19] Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 1 – 64, 94 – 119,142 – 171; Schlegelmilch, “Die Historie und der Dokumentarfilm,” 69; Thomas Weber, “Neue medienwissenschaftliche Perspektiven auf den dokumentarischen Film,” in *Der dokumentarische Film und die Wissenschaften: Interdisziplinäre Bedeutungen und Ansätze*, ed. Carsten Heinze and Artur Schlegelmilch (Wiesbaden: Springer VS,

4 *Letztes Jahr Titanic* (1990)

Letztes Jahr Titanic was shot between December 1989 and December 1990. The film has a length of 97 minutes, and it is mainly filmed in black and white. At the beginning of the shooting, no one could foresee the accession of the GDR to the Federal Republic of Germany. Though one can interpret the results of the first free elections in March 1990 as a majority vote for the prospect of reunification. The citizens' movements that aimed at reforms in the GDR received only 2.9 percent of the votes.[20]

The film hardly refers to any political events. Some protagonists talk about election programs, and the results of the elections are presented by the news program *Tagesschau*, which people watch at an election party. The Wirtschafts-, Währungs- und Sozialunion (Economic, Currency and Social Union) as well as the introduction of the West German D-Mark on July 1, are illustrated by scenes from a party on the evening before, according to the motto *Letztes Jahr Titanic*, yet there is no explicit reference to the accession itself. Later, following the first all-German elections in December 1990, the film only shows the results of the vote being presented again by a news program. This time, the TV is placed in a gambling game stall at the Leipzig Christmas market.

Basically, the film combines two documentary modes.[21] With the regular interview sequences, the filmmaker used the participatory mode with the five protagonists. This also includes shorter singular interview sequences with others, like workers at a foundry and in the pub, two Bavarians who shot pornos with housewives, seamstresses at their workplace, and a policeman. The filmmaker let the scenes roll without any comments or explications. Thus, the recipients might have felt like participant observers during this process with its particular dynamic. In combination with its observational mode, the film documents the multilayered atmosphere. This mode includes longer sequences of people's everyday work, and at the end of the film, the machines are shut down. Moreover, it presents extraordinary events like a meeting of the sex league, which was founded in June 1990 with the intention to free sexual life. The weird atmosphere there, which resembles a party conference, and its strong contrast with the obscene porn filmmaker's performance, illustrate the societal eruption in various spheres of life. The film in-

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2019), 84 – 91; Yvonne Zimmermann, "Analyse nicht-fiktionaler Filmformen," in *Handbuch Filmanalyse*, ed. Malte Hagener and Volker Pantenburg (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2017), 3 – 8.

[20] Jarausch, *Die unverhoffte Einheit*, 195.

[21] Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 132 – 158.

terweaves scenes of a carnival, street parades, and political demonstrations, thus blurring the borders between the various spheres.

The eponymous party motto of *Letztes Jahr Titanic* is exemplary for that mixture of political and art performances. In one approximately two-minute scene, we can hear the national anthem of the GDR: *Auferstanden aus Ruinen* (Risen from the ruins). Since the 1970s, the GDR played the anthem officially without lyrics because of the line "Deutschland einig Vaterland" ('Germany united fatherland'). At the party, we can hear the anthem with a full choir accompaniment. Against this backdrop, a man used a megaphone to demand that people abandon a ship after it collided with an iceberg. In the background, some young men remove their festive clothes and line up in their underpants (Fig. 1). Without knowing the exact intentions of the performance, we might interpret that as a symbolic performance of the country's oath of manifestation. That another group shouts "Wir bleiben hier" ('We stay here') seems outdated rather than forward-looking. However, it is remarkable – if we take the metaphor further – that a safe rescue cannot even be guaranteed by the lifeboats.

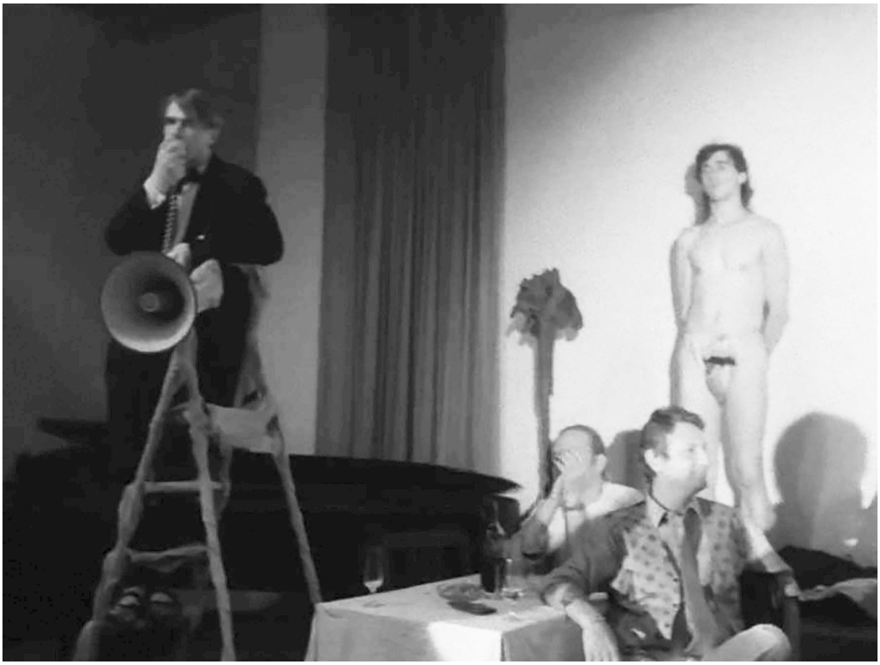

Fig. 1: Scene from *Letztes Jahr Titanic* (Last year Titanic): Performance at the party on the evening before the Economic, Currency and Social Union (Voigt 2015, 00:47:18).

Additionally, the interviews with the five protagonists illustrate the ambivalence of reactions to the introduction of the D-Mark. Isabell, who had anticipated and supported the introduction of the D-Mark before the elections in March, is near to tears now. She will keep her GDR money in hopes that it will eventually be reintroduced. In contrast, Sylvia and her partner Dietmar happily and proudly rustle the new banknotes in front of the camera.

Other presentations of artistic performances remain rather cryptic. For example, in one sequence, we see at first only a TV with a broadcast of a political debate. The next take shows a disguised man sitting on the floor in front of the TV who shouts that "in these days, weeks, months, they give away, sell, fix, destroy a lot." With his somewhat incomprehensible words, he addresses a "president," he utters sounds, gesticulates, and twitches. Finally, we see the whole room, which is almost empty except for some ropes and cables (Fig. 2). The whole scenario remains in need of explanation or contextual information.

In this manner, the film stages enactments by its protagonists who express their interpretations of the transformation. These result in a multilayered atmospheric picture which cannot be expressed verbally and leaves room for interpre-

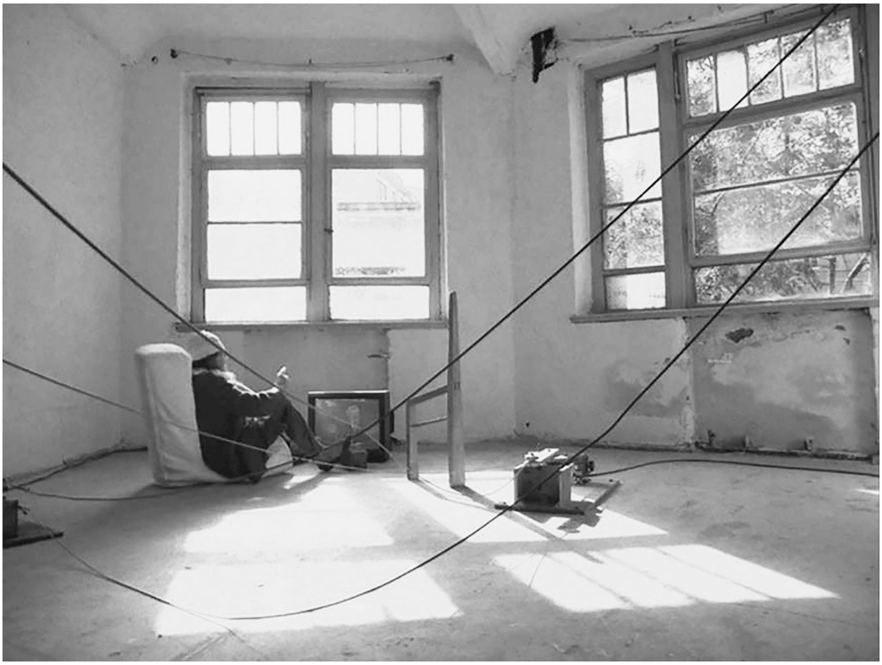

Fig. 2: Scene from *Letztes Jahr Titanic* (Last year Titanic): Contextless cryptic artistic performance (Voigt 2015, 00:56:04).

tation. The montage of these various pictures creates an atmosphere between daily life and surrealism. The unexplained succession of the different scenes and scenarios generates the impression of a flow of events and experiences between awakening and decline without a coherent narrative line. What we see is a narrow entanglement of societal spheres, the parallel existence of close relatedness, and a sharp distinction between different living worlds.[22]

Against this backdrop, the film outlines distinct lines of development with the recurring interview sequences with the five main protagonists. The iron founder, Wolfgang, had stayed in the GDR for family reasons after he was arrested twice because of attempted flights. At the beginning of the film, he talks about going to the West, and he hopes for the D-Mark, reunification, and economic recovery. At the end of the film, he is still there, and there is no work at the iron foundry anymore. Sylvia abandons her pub and goes to West Germany with her partner. She hopes for a better life, greater prosperity, and a beautiful and healthy living environment. She does not want to wait until things get better in the GDR. Isabell, a goth girl, seems disoriented. She has been living in condemned houses, fears the increasing violence on the streets, and does not have a specific idea of how her future will look. The former journalist, Renate, struggles with her involvement in the political system and her connections to the Ministry of State Security. She is trying to come to terms with her past. The “redskin,”[23] John, regards himself as being involved in a violent fight against fascists, whom he does not consider human because of their ideology. At the same time, the filmmaker also takes care to present the protagonists from different angles. For example, he presents the same redskin in the act of taking care for an old, disabled man in his free time, or shows him listening to a Mozart requiem.

However, the dominant motifs in these interviews are feelings of uncertainty and a lack of perspectives, fears, and threats; rather, the protagonists reacted with resignation or radicalization. In different ways, the actors expressed feelings of disempowerment. We can also observe these feelings of powerlessness and discrimination through the missing ideas of their own possibilities for action in other scenes. One of the protagonists, who is a worker in the pub scene, complains about the filmmaker’s attention to the contract workers from Mozambique. Others, who are seamstresses feel disadvantaged in relation to their Vietnamese colleagues because they can find work in Vietnam again. Moreover, the film itself is a document of the threat of unemployment. In the last interview scene, Wolfgang asks the filmmaker about his future, and in his response, we hear that the film studio will be closed. Then there is a tracking shot that shows the front of a closed cinema, and we see a poster with the slogan, "Film is only an experience in a cinema," and a neon sign of the video store Video World at the next corner. The introduction of the Western market economy and its long-desired products is presented in its ambivalence. The connection between "the West" and unemployment finds its confirmation through the people's experiences. The beginning transformation requires the reorganization of their own life, causing an uncertainty that replaces the celebratory mood at the beginning of the film.

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[22] Anna Lux and Alexander Leistner, “‘Letztes Jahr Titanic’: Untergegangene Zukünfte in der ostdeutschen Zusammenbruchsgesellschaft seit 1989/90,” *Historische Anthropologie: Kultur – Gesellschaft – Alltag* 29 (2021): 112.

[23] In this context, *redskin* is the name for a member of a left-wing skinhead group.

5 *Große weite Welt* (1997)

With his film *Große weite Welt*, made in 1997, the filmmaker returns to some of the protagonists from the films *Letztes Jahr Titanic* (1990) and *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung* (1993). He confronts them with film sequences from the former films and interviews them about their current living situations. The montage also includes scenes from *Leipzig im Herbst* (1989), even if there are no interviews with protagonists of this film. The film has a length of 90 minutes. The present-day scenes are shot in color while the scenes from the former films are in black and white. This differentiation facilitates the classification of the scenes, especially since the filmmaker also refrains from any explanatory comments in this film, as in his previous ones. The present-day and former sequences are contrasted in alternate order or stand alone. The interview sequences predominate in this film so that we can categorize it as being mainly in a participatory mode. Scenes that were shot in the observational mode document, in particular, the protagonists' daily lives.

The title strip reuses the opening scene of *Letztes Jahr Titanic:* the motif of the train driving into Leipzig's main station. The following scenes from *Leipzig im Herbst* present demonstrations and demonstrators who are arguing in support of socialist reforms and freedom of speech, travel, and "freedom at the workplace, oh all those freedoms." In the next scene, which is in color, we see a young woman in a car who orders a cheeseburger and a Coke at the McDonald's drive-thru. Implicitly, this montage already suggests an underlying narration that the call for freedom in autumn 1989 has been superimposed by these new Western-style consumer opportunities.

The young woman's name is Diana: she is the girlfriend of Sven, a central protagonist from *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung.* Apart from a short episode in the East German right-wing scene, he was a member of the redskin scene at that time. By the time of *Große weite Welt* in 1997, he is a soldier in the German armed forces. He and Diana are planning their wedding. In the first flashback of the film, Sven talks about the difficulties of finishing one's training and getting a job in the early 1990s. Later, actual interview sequences present his decision for joining the German armed forces, which in addition to responding to his love of adventure and physical fitness, was also pragmatically motivated. It guarantees financial security in an uncertain job market situation. Additionally, as we see in other scenes, he experiences professional recognition, and he receives military decorations as well as positive assessments and certificates. For this, he accepts longer periods of separation from his girlfriend due to specific missions. He wants to guarantee financial security for her as well while she is finishing her training.

The contrasting montage of sequences illustrates this personal transformation process. After a scene from *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung*, in which Sven talked about his job for a security service and its relation to firearms, we see Diana and Sven dancing intimately in a present-day scene. In another former scene, Sven talks about loneliness and the loss of solidarity. The following scene returns to the present when Sven and Diana are watering their flower beds. Private happiness has taken the place of regret for the loss of a solidary community.

At the end of the film, we see Diana and Sven again. They are sitting in a car in the parking lot of an industrial park. In the background, we see the sign of the McDonald's drive-thru. It is probably a continuation of the scene from the beginning of the film. During their conversation, the camera zooms out slowly. They think about the developments and changes that took place during the process of shooting the films and come to the conclusion that "the only thing that really lasts" is their love.

Another flashback from *Letztes Jahr Titanic* shows Sylvia when she closed her pub and went to West Germany with her partner. Now we see them in their new home in Bavaria. In the first present-day scene, we only see her partner, Dietmar, who is talking about the difficulties of acclimatization and about some travels. He describes the short, joyful period when "they [first] opened the big wide world." On the other hand, he also mentions the sobering experience that you need a job if you want to participate in the "good life." In other scenes, we see Sylvia in a rather passive role at home. She could not realize her former dream of opening a new pub. Instead, she is sitting on the couch and flipping through travel brochures. Dietmar talks about a new life as a diving instructor. Sylvia, too, talks about wanderlust and making a new start. "The West" is not what they had hoped for, but there are still prospects.

The presentation of the former journalist Renate and her story also begins with a flashback. In a scene from *Letztes Jahr Titanic*, she described her positive experiences from her involvement in the political system, her liaison with the Secret Service, and the fact that she was forced to cooperate with the Secret Service after being raped. In the following present-day scene that follows, she talks about how she has not watched the film again since its original presentation. It would have been too painful. The montage of flashback and present-day scenes represents her struggle with the past. She says that one can never come to terms with that. Later in the film, she talks about an application to a literary association. They want to employ her, but the employment office still has to approve this job creation scheme. She says that she is refreshing her language skills and that she has gotten her driver's license. She also has a plan to make a new start. In the last scene, we see her taking an elevator upstairs. Those who know the film *Alles andere zeigt die Zeit* (2015) know that the new start did not succeed and that she died by suicide.

The issue of job prospects and financial security is a constant topic throughout the film, not only in the interviews with the main protagonists. One of the seamstresses from *Letztes Jahr Titanic* talks in the present-day scenes about working part-time jobs for additional income during her unemployment, about unsuitable retraining, repeated unemployment, and her hope for being retrained in accordance with her vocational interests. A former coworker of Wolfgang's at the iron foundry also appears again. As he says, when he lost his job, his world fell apart, and he talks about how he became an alcoholic after his wife passed away.

The entry of the Western consumer's world into the former GDR is presented mainly in the background. One exception to this is the framing of the drive-thru scene and its continuation at the end: when Sven and Diana are talking in the car, the shining neon sign is still in the background (Fig. 3). Similarly, in another scene, we see an old man sitting at a bus stop and playing the accordion. After the bus has left, the camera is fixed on the facades of the industrial park on the other side of the road. One can recognize a reference to a scene in *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung* (1993). Between images of the demolition of the foundry and the properties of a Western investor, we see the same accordion player sitting in front of a kiosk. In the background, there are advertisement posters, the logos of Coca-Cola and Marlboro (Fig. 4). In a sense, these images call to mind scenes from the film *Goodbye Lenin* (2003), such as the one in which Alex tries to keep the recent political events from his mother, who was in coma between October 1989 and June 1990. However, at the same time, "the West" enters, with all its distinctive symbols.

Fig. 3: Scene from *Große weite Welt* (Big wide world): Sven and Diana talking in the car (Voigt 2015, 01:23:59).

Marlboro
Marlboro
IMBISS
Coca-Cola

Fig. 4: Scene from *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung* (Faith, love, hope): accordion player in front of a kiosk (Voigt 2015, 00:39:14).

The motif of "going West" in the individual biographies remains ambivalent in this film, too. We see opportunities and hope for new starts that indicate that the protagonists expected more in life. At the same time, the fear of unemployment and their dependence on public authorities is a constant issue. As a result, we observe a common type of pragmatism relating to career choices. The new starts mainly present a retreat into the private sphere. The protagonists are looking for individual happiness. We find various individual narratives which present a process of individualistic isolation. In *Letztes Jahr Titanic*, some protagonists were already mentioning the importance of the principles of efficiency and the merits of the Western job market as well as the issue of human isolation. Thus, in *Große weite Welt*, we can observe the continuation and further development of these motifs.

6 The Ambivalence of "the West" in the Context of the Transformation Process

In conclusion, what experiences and interpretations of "going West" do the films represent? The period of shooting *Letztes Jahr Titanic* presents the transition from the Peaceful Revolution to the accession of the GDR to the Federal Republic of Germany. In the retrospective, sociologists and historians characterize this period through the "specific dynamics of the events," their "unpredictability and condensation," and a "simultaneity of acceleration and uncertainty."[24] The film conveys insights into how people connect their imaginations of "the West" with their experiences, how they find them confirmed, or how they transform them. Even if the perspective of the film includes the filmmaker's interpretations, it is a contemporary perspective that presents the interpretation of experiences in progress and not from a retrospective perspective.

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[24] Lux and Leistner, "Letztes Jahr Titanic," 98 – 100.

The presentation of the last months of the GDR and the first as a new part of the Federal Republic focuses on people's daily lives. People perceive the entry of "the West" in different ways. We see people who joyfully receive the West German D-Mark while others part sadly with the East German Mark. Individual protagonists discover new perspectives on life, several stories representing a break from their former life. The film repeatedly presents scenes of people celebrating, a carnival, a Christmas market, and fireworks.

At the same time, uncertainty accompanies this transition; not every break is a new awakening with an aim in mind. The youth protagonists like Isabell, her friends, and John seem particularly disoriented. Concerns in the face of looming unemployment dominate in the factories. The GDR images of "the West," which sharply accentuated the dark side of capitalism, are vindicated.

On this basis, the film *Große weite Welt* presents different lines of development. Those who went to the West report on confrontations with other unfamiliar mentalities. Dietmar mentions in particular that they had to explain their distance from the church in the mainly Catholic Bavarian village. Isabell describes a Swabian mentality that supports the idea that one acts in one's own self-interests, an attitude that she has also acquired. In both the East and West, we observe mainly pragmatic decisions with regard to the job market and career options, particularly with the young protagonists giving priority to financial security. One has to be able to afford the new opportunities of the big wide world. At the same time, unemployment creates new dependencies: those who are looking for new job perspectives and need to be retrained are dependent on the approval of the employment office. People who acted amid their work collective and social environment in *Letztes Jahr Titanic* now sit alone in their living rooms. Thus, the film not only documents the hardships of the capitalist job market, but it also illustrates the isolating lifestyle and the lack of solidarity within a capitalist society.

However, the narrative line is still open-ended. The opportunity for a new start, and also new places, is still present. The individual stories still include future prospects. Though, they mainly present a retreat to the private sphere. In this sense, the series of the *Leipzig Filme* represents a depoliticization of ideals. The diverse biographies of its protagonists might help to explain why a more politically active generation did not arise after the revolution as had been expected by some journalists or sociologists in the 1990s. Instead, in the end, there was no ideological superstructure for the uprising in 1989, and the individual protagonists were pragmatically looking for what was possible and feasible in their "new" lives.[25]

Indeed, this narrative cannot claim to present historical facts. Nevertheless, the films present authentic interpretations and experiences of their protagonists through the course of transformation. Thus, the films claim to give the protagonists a voice and let them speak for themselves. The filmmaker created an aesthetic representation through his selection of sequences and their composition. In this manner, he connected the statements and images that formed an implicit narrative line. The presentation of the narrative in this way refers to the already existing experiences and interpretations that are aesthetically represented. By this means, they become available for others and provide potential references upon which future interpretations in the societal discourse can be built. Admittedly, we do not have valid data about the reception of these films. They probably presented rather a niche view of the societal media discourse. Nevertheless, the awards for some films in the series indicate the societal recognition for these representations of experiences and interpretations.[26]

Moreover, the interpretative narrative that connects these experiences is also plausible against the backdrop of scientific discourses in social sciences and history. The films present the struggle for "the reclamation of security and stability" as a consequence of the complete replacement of the "systemic framework conditions of the political, economic, and social order."[27] In particular, they address the effects of the economic and societal transformation on the individual level. Remarkably, the political dimension does not seem as significant.

In general, we can describe the protagonists' reactions as a pragmatic assimilation. Even the protagonists who succeeded in securing their private needs focused their attention on the future. They asked themselves if this private happiness would remain secure in the future or if there were other prospects for greater freedom or happiness in another place. Despite the new opportunities, the experience of "the West" was also an experience of limitations. Aside from individual success, the experience of mass unemployment and social decline was almost omnipresent.[28] Additionally, the experience of dependency on anonymous authorities was not an individual case at that time, and it concerned all social classes.[29] Against this backdrop, we can trace the theoretical assumption of a depoliticizing individualization of modern societies which undermines social and solidary structures.[30] Thus, the narrative represented by the films that the process of transformation oriented to the West is connected with experiences of isolation and individual self-responsibility has proven plausible.[31]

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[25] Steffen Mau, *Lütten Klein: Leben in der ostdeutschen Transformationsgesellschaft* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2019), 201–202.

[26] Award given by the GDR Film Club for the best documentary film for *Alfred*; the Golden Pigeon (*Goldene Taube*) at the international documentary film festival in Leipzig for *Leipzig im Herbst*; the Adolf Grimme Award for *Letztes Jahr Titanic*; and the Grand Prix for documentary film at the Festival du Film, Strasbourg, for *Glaube Liebe Hoffnung*.

[27] Heinrich Best and Everhard Holtmann, "Die langen Wege der deutschen Einigung: Aufbruch mit vielen Unbekannten," in *Aufbruch der entsicherten Gesellschaft: Deutschland nach der Wiedervereinigung*, ed. Heinrich Best and Everhard Holtmann (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 2012), 9.

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[28] Steffen Schmidt and Hartmut Rosa, "Institutionelle Transformationen – Habituelle Irritation – Sozialstrukturelle Petrifikation: Empirische Befunde und transformationstheoretische Schlüsse zur deutschen Vereinigung," in *Aufbruch der entsicherten Gesellschaft: Deutschland nach der Wiedervereinigung*, ed. Heinrich Best and Everhard Holtmann (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 2012), 433.

[29] Christa Uhlig, "Über Schwarze Pädagogik, Sozialdiskriminierung und strukturelle Gewalt – Erfahrungen aus dem Arbeitsamt," in *Jahrbuch für Pädagogik: Arbeitslosigkeit*, ed. Dieter Kirchhöfer and Edgar Weiß (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007), 27– 39.

[30] Ulrich Beck and Peter Sopp, *Individualisierung und Integration: Neue Konfliktlinien und neuer Integrationsmodus?* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1997).

[31] Many thanks to Nicole Gotling for her attentive proofreading.

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Karen Lillie

In Pursuit of the Frontier: Changes at an American School in Switzerland

1 Introduction

This chapter presents a case study of one school's desire and ability to orient itself towards a changing frontier, illuminating both how educational institutions can remake their images and how one notion of the "new frontier" has evolved over time. The Leysin American School (LAS), an American school founded in the early 1960s in Switzerland, provides the example, first through its establishment as an American school abroad in the Cold War era, and then through its sending of graduating students from all over the world to the "West" – to the Anglophone world in general and the US in particular – since roughly the turn of the twenty-first century. These changing configurations, I argue, parallel broader shifts in America's positioning on the global stage.[1]

This chapter thus relates to the theme of "Go West" not necessarily in a literal, geographical sense, but in a metaphorical one. In the American context, the phrase "Go West" was probably first used by the newspaper editor and publisher Horace Greeley (1811–1872), in reference to the Manifest Destiny: the contested nineteenth-century idea that Americans had a duty to move westward, settling and colonizing the land along the way.[2] As such, I understand "Go West" to be relational, to refer to the opening of new frontiers.

When LAS was founded, as will be discussed in Section 3, American educators were tasked with the duty of shipping an American education abroad as part of the nation's Cold War efforts. LAS was very much a part of this narrative, paving the way as the first and only American school in its Swiss educational landscape. As time went on, the Cold War thawed, and the US increasingly focused on using soft power to try to win over the world, thereby shifting the "new frontier." Accordingly, LAS also repositioned itself: formerly a school fulfilling a mission of providing an American education abroad, it became one that facilitated opportunities for graduating students to study in the US. For many of those students, such a route

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[1] See also Karen Lillie, "Adaptations to Global Changes: Strategic Evolutions of an Elite School, 1961–2011," *History of Education* 51, no. 2 (2022), doi: 10.1080/0046760X.2021.2002433.

[2] Elizabeth Knowles, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 351; Frederick Merk and Lois Bannister Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-010

moved westward both geographically and metaphorically, opening what they perceived to be new opportunities for continued physical mobility as well as social mobility, through the building of international networks and gaining of social status on a global scale.

The Leysin American School is a secondary boarding school in the Swiss Alps. At the time of my fieldwork, the school educated around 300 young men and women, from the ages of twelve to eighteen, from around fifty different countries. Less than 3% of the students were Swiss. LAS offered two curricular options: the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the US high school diploma. Admission to the school was effectively open – moderated mostly by the ability to pay. However, as reputedly one of the most expensive schools in the world, with tuition currently costing 124,000 Swiss Francs (SFr.) per year, ability to pay is no small barrier. LAS is, then, a school that serves a global cross-section of the superrich.

To gather data, I conducted fieldwork for just over a year. I collected observations; interviewed students and members of the administration, including one of the school's founders; and analyzed historical documents. Those documents, from which this chapter primarily draws, came from Swiss cantonal and national archives, online repositories, and current and former LAS administrators, staff, and students. The lattermost are here cited as from the LAS Document Collection. They include letters (1960 – 1982), meeting minutes and school memos (1961 – 2011), yearbooks (1963 – 2011), and school publications (1965 – 2011).[3] Although this fieldwork was carried out in the late 2010s, my document analysis only goes up to 2011 as that was the year that LAS rebranded itself (see Section 4).

This chapter starts with an overview of LAS's closest peer schools, which are also located in the Lake Geneva region of Switzerland. It then turns to how the institution came to be part of the narrative of the new frontier of American schools abroad during the Cold War. The section thereafter examines a transition period at the school as this frontier changed. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of LAS as a place that, since the turn of the twenty-first century, has sent its global student body westward, mostly to the US.

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[3] For a discussion of the ethics of this research, see Karen Lillie and Pere Ayling, "Revisiting the Un/Ethical: The Complex Ethics of Elite Studies Research," *Qualitative Research* 21, no. 6 (2021), doi: 10.1177/146879412096536.

2 The Educational Landscape Around Lake Geneva

LAS's closest peer schools – Aiglon College (Aiglon), Collège Alpin Beau Soleil (Beau Soleil) and Institut Le Rosey (Rosey) – are secondary schools located in the Lake Geneva region, as LAS is.[4] Like LAS, they were founded on educational ideas imported from elsewhere, adapted to the local context. They thus all positioned themselves as schools in Switzerland, rather than as schools for the Swiss. This positioning was consciously cultivated in partnership with the Swiss state. For example, in the early twentieth century, the state worked with the Swiss Private Schools' Association to produce tourism materials suggesting that such schools could educate foreigners without nationalizing them.[5]

Rosey was established in 1880 by a French-Swiss who was in exile from the home he had made in German Switzerland. The school opened a second winter campus in Gstaad in 1916. This began Rosey's association with wealthy foreigners who "wintered" in the Alps.[6] It taught the Swiss Maturité. Beau Soleil was founded in 1910, also in Gstaad. Originally a sanatorium, it moved to the alpine mountain next to LAS's in 1920 and successfully rebranded itself as a school.[7] Francophone in origin, it offered the French Baccalaureate and diplôme national du brevet. Aiglon was started in 1949 by a tutor who had taught under Kurt Hahn at Gordonstoun School in Scotland. The school followed the British public school model and Hahn's educational approach, centered around leadership, service and outdoor adventure.[8] It taught the British A-level curriculum.

This was thus the educational landscape that LAS entered in the 1960s, composed of the institutions that it would eventually consider to be its peers. Like LAS, these schools adopted and adapted educational ideas from other regions and catered to a non-Swiss student body. Also like LAS, they have become, over time, some of the most expensive schools in the world. For the 2023/24 school year, Rosey charged 140,000 SFr.; Aiglon, 130,000 SFr.; and Beau Soliel, 125,000 SFr. Thus, like LAS, these institutions all currently serve a global cross-section of wealthy young people – one that, in the case of LAS, is oriented westward.

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[4] Leysin American School Document Collection (LASDC), Board Minutes, 2010; LASDC, Strategic Plan Meeting, 2016.

[5] Michelle Swann, "Promoting the 'Classroom and Playground of Europe': Swiss Private School Prospectuses and Education-Focused Tourism Guides, 1890 – 1945." (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2007), 301; see also Caroline Bertron, "Les scolarités des fortunes internationales entre refuge et placement: Socio-histoire des pensionnats privés suisses." (PhD diss., Paris 1; Université de Lausanne, 2016).

[6] Swann, "Promoting the 'Classroom'."

[7] Swann, "Promoting the 'Classroom'," 201.

[8] Nigel Watson, *With Wings as Eagles: The Story of Aiglon College* (London: James & James Ltd., 1999).

3 The New Frontier of American Schooling Abroad

Fred and Sigrid Ott, a married couple, founded LAS – the Leysin *American* School – in 1961 in the village of Leysin, in the Swiss Alps. Importing an American school was no easy task, as will be discussed. The fact that they pursued this vision was linked to the moment: the Cold War, which catalyzed America's interests in exporting its education abroad.

American foreign interests were woven into Fred's biography long before he and Sigrid opened LAS's doors. Fred was born in 1914 in the German part of Switzerland but moved with his family to the US in 1925. There, he completed his bachelor's and master's degrees before becoming a secondary school principal (1938–1939) and then a junior college instructor (1939–1942). In 1944, Fred was drafted into the US army to serve in World War II. In 1947, he was discharged.

At that time, American money was being invested in Europe – for example, through the Fulbright Act of 1946, which supported international educational exchange programmes, and the Marshall Plan of 1947, which helped finance rebuilding. This also meant that Americans themselves were relocating to the continent. Fred, then, started a service that connected Americans abroad with Swiss boarding schools for their children. He ran this until 1951.

At that point, he took up a job for the US Air Force. As Director of Plans and Programs for the Dependent Schools, he opened elementary and secondary schools in Europe, North Africa, and the Near East. These were run by the US government for the children of servicemen posted abroad; the schools hired Americans to teach an American curriculum.

It was around this time that Fred's wife, Sigrid, an American brought to Europe by her husband, laid the groundwork for LAS. In 1949, she created a summer camp for the children of American military families posted abroad. According to my interview with Sigrid, the couple eventually felt that Americans should also have a proper boarding school in Europe. They thus started imagining an American-curriculum school for American expatriates, in Fred's home country of Switzerland – a project that Sigrid, in our interview, described as "very, very modest but with good intentions." They opened LAS in 1961 with eighty-four students, mostly drawn from the camp registers.

To finance the school, Fred and Sigrid incorporated a shareholder's association in 1960, with 350,000 SFr. (1.5 million SFr. in 2023, adjusted for inflation).[9] According to the Articles of Incorporation, at least 60 percent of shares needed to be owned by Americans. This created a number of logistical problems – for instance, when dealing with US tax filings and German-language financial reports.[10] Nevertheless, American shareholders were prioritised as a means of maintaining the school's American spirit through its governance.

Fred and Sigrid also encountered further logistical problems when trying to adapt American educational standards and practices to their Swiss setting.[11] They had difficulties with recruiting and hiring American staff, communicating in the local French language, meeting the local educational legal requirements, and acclimatising to higher costs.[12]

Establishing an American educational institution abroad thus presented a number of issues; however, it also tapped into the mood of the moment. The 1950s and 1960s were the height of the Cold War, a story with which educational institutions were deeply entwined. University academics, for instance, lobbied the US administration for a program to send US citizens abroad, leading to the inauguration of the Peace Corps in 1961.[13] The Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961 established US government-run international educational exchange programmes. The International Education Act of 1966 poured financial resources into international educational activities. Education became "the very heart of [US] relations with the nations and the peoples of the rest of the world."[14] With the notion of American educational institutions abroad thus woven into US foreign policy, it is unsurprising that by 1969, there were almost 450 American schools in 110 countries, sponsored by the US Departments of State and Defense, which educated a combined total of almost 185,000 students.[15]

LAS, as part of this trend, successfully recruited American students to its campus by strategically advertising to Americans serving their nation politically, militarily, or economically from abroad. The year that it opened, LAS cost almost $2000 per year.[16] At the time, the US median income was under $6000.[17] LAS would thus have been financially out of reach for the typical American family; however, the US Department of State and many multinational companies helped cover boarding school fees for their employees' children, if their parents were posted abroad.[18] As such, LAS advertised to this clientele. It sent its materials to US firms abroad, US embassies and other government agencies with foreign offices.[19]

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[9] LASDC, Articles of Incorporation, 1960.

[10] LASDC, Letter from Sigrid Ott, December 6, 1966; LASDC, Letter to Fred Ott, December 12, 1966; LASDC, Letter to Fred Ott, April 18, 1966; LASDC, Letter from Sigrid Ott, December 12, 1968.

[11] LASDC, Board Report, 1964.

[12] LASDC, Progress Report, 1966.

[13] Anne Palmer Peterson, "Academic Conceptions of a United States Peace Corps," *History of Education* 40, no. 2 (2011), doi:10.1080/0046760X.2010.526966.

[14] R. Freeman Butts, "America's Role in International Education: A Perspective on Thirty Years," in *The United States and International Education: The Sixty-Eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, ed. Harold Shane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 34.

[15] Cole Brembeck, "United States' Educational Designs Woven into the Fabric of International Education," in Shane, *The United States and International Education.*

Accordingly, LAS was mostly composed of the sons and daughters of Americans working for US defence companies, multinational oil corporations, or the diplomatic corps. In October 1963, two years after opening, the student body was 97 percent American but drawn from thirty countries on five continents.[20] Almost 20 percent of those students came from families connected to diplomatic efforts – meaning American embassies, US governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations – and 13 percent from families associated with commercial enterprises, primarily oil companies.[21] LAS therefore became, as was intended, an American school for the children of Americans serving their nation overseas.

LAS's American culture was visible on campus. There was an American flag in the headmaster's office.[22] There was also one flying from the school's façade, next to a Swiss flag.[23] The yearbooks from the 1960s and 1970s feature photos of students with American flag patches, American footballs, and American flags in their dorm rooms. They also highlight visits from the US Representative to the European Office of the United Nations (1963) and three US Ambassadors to Switzerland (1964, 1969, 1970).[24]

The students seemed to take to being Americans in Switzerland. The 1966 yearbook reads: "Uncle Sam wishes to remind you of and thank you for the many gay times when this tiny American community 'traveled' through new experiences to a deeper understanding of other people and their customs." It later features photos under the heading "We learn to live with the Swiss," delineating the students from their environment. It is thus unsurprising that the 1968 Progress Report described the school as “a very marked island” within its mountain village.[25]

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[16] LASDC, Catalogue, 1965.

[17] Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports: Consumer Income* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of the Census, 1963).

[18] LASDC, Board Minutes, 1968.

[19] LASDC, Board Report, 1960.

[20] LASDC, Board Report, 1963.

[21] LASDC, Yearbook, 1963.

[22] LASDC, Yearbook, 1965.

[23] LASDC, Yearbooks, 1965, 1968.

[24] LASDC, Yearbooks, 1963, 1964, 1969, 1970.

Sigrid Ott, in our interview, also positioned the school as an outsider in the regional educational landscape: “We met some of [the other] school directors […] we worked with them in that way, but it wasn’t a strong relationship.” Because LAS was American, she felt, “we were absolutely dependent on ourselves for everything […] the operation was actually from scratch.” She and Fred instead envisioned LAS as a peer to boarding schools in the US.[26] LAS was, then, at the forefront of the new frontier of American schooling in Switzerland.

4 A Period of Transition

As the school continued into later decades, it reimagined its connections to its American heritage. The founders’ son, K. Steven Ott, took over in 1982 and confronted a shifting global environment. The Cold War was morphing into international capitalism, changing the constellations of America’s power abroad from primarily military-based to primarily finance-based.[27] In parallel, Steven started remaking LAS’s overt American character. By 1984, just two years after taking over, the Swiss and American flags on the façade had both been removed.[28] The class of 1984 also hosted the first graduation speaker who was not Anglo-American or Swiss: His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed of Jordan, who had attended Beau Soleil.[29]

This trend of moving LAS away from its roots intensified in 1990 with the Gulf War. In our interview, the principal working under Steven’s direction at the time recalled a discussion “to drop ‘American’ out of ‘Leysin American School.’ That’s a little-known fact. But it was like Americans should be low profile.” During that period, he told me, students were primarily Americans living in areas of the world where local international schools did not extend through high school. There were very few students from high-profile families: “Leysin American School, when we were here, was a middle-class school for middle-class kids whose parents just happened to be living in Africa, Middle East, or Eastern Europe […] It just felt like a really normal international school.”

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[25] LASDC, Progress Report, 1968.

[26] LASDC, Progress Report, 1966.

[27] Richard Saull, *The Cold War and After: Capitalism, Revolution and Superpower Politics* (London and Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2007).

[28] LASDC, Yearbook, 1984.

[29] LASDC, Yearbook, 1984.

Yet there also seemed to be a concerted push to recruit from outside this American expatriate population. Steven started recruiting privately paying families from the former Soviet Union after its dissolution in 1991.[30] LAS enrolled its first student from the former Soviet Bloc in 1992 and its first Chinese student in 1993, facts which it now highlights in the central corridor of one of its two main buildings. In 1995, Steven made a "concerted effort" to make inroads in more international markets, believing that as "more and more countries liberalize trade," an education in Switzerland would become affordable and attractive to families in those countries.[31]

During this period, in 1991, LAS became the first boarding school in Switzerland to adopt the IB curriculum. The IB was established in the 1960s as an internationally standardized curriculum catering to the children of geographically mobile parents – for example, those working as diplomats or at multinational organizations.[32] Over time, however, it increasingly appealed to parents who linked their children's social mobility to their physical mobility and to the idea of "world citizenship."[33] This curricular change thus helped the school appeal to a more global clientele.

LAS's trend of internationalization continued through the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 2007, the school leadership decided to "rewrite our mission statement and in doing so create an LAS 'brand'."[34] The motto became: *Developing innovative, compassionate and responsible citizens of the world.* Its language and form drew directly from the IB, whose mission statement, according to its website, was: *To develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.*

The tuition at LAS had been slowly rising over time, hitting 40,000 SFr. for the 2008/09 academic year.[35] That year, however, saw a significant drop in the percentage of American students due to the global financial crisis. By 2009, the student body was 12 percent American, down from 32 percent just three years earlier. Russian students increased to 14 percent. Those numbers would remain roughly stable for the next ten years.

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[30] Sigrid Ott and Kristinn Steven Ott, with D. Beaudouin, *Saga: How One Family Made a World of Difference Through Education* (Self-published, 2017).

[31] LASDC, Board Report, 1995; see also Karen Lillie and Anne-Sophie Delval, "Introduction to the Special Issue: Switzerland as a Site of Capital Accumulation: The Case of International Education," *Swiss Journal of Sociology* 50, no. 2 (2024), doi: 10.26034/cm.sjs.2024.6033.

[32] Saira Fitzgerald, "Blackboard/Whiteboard: The Discursive Construction of the International Baccalaureate in Canada" (PhD diss., Carleton University, 2017).

[33] Catherine Doherty, Li Mu, and Paul Shield, "Planning Mobile Futures: The Border Artistry of International Baccalaureate Diploma Choosers," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 30, no. 6 (2009), doi:10.1080/01425690903235292.

[34] LASDC, Board Minutes, 2007.

[35] LASDC, Historical Prices, 2018.

Another change in 2009 saw Steven Ott's eldest son, Marc-Frédéric, take over LAS from his father, meaning the school entered its third generation of Ott family leadership. Two years later, in 2011, the Swiss Franc appreciated almost 30 percent in two weeks. To cover costs, tuition continued to rise, hitting 45,000 SFr.[36] According to a 2011 Board report, LAS had become like "all other private Swiss boarding schools" – an institution that not only offered "luxury-valued services" but also no longer identified with American boarding schools in the US, whose tuition fees were now about half those of LAS.[37]

By this time, then, LAS had evolved from an American-centric, so-called "middle-class" school to an internationally oriented one mainly for the children of wealthy families.[38] This ideological shift reflected the school's increasing financialization over three decades, in parallel with the decline of the Cold War and America's changing position on the global stage. LAS had thus transitioned from pursuing the frontier of American schooling in Switzerland, to belonging to its surrounding educational landscape (see Section 1).

5 Sending Students Westward

In LAS's modern era, which we may date from 2011, when it rebranded as a school for "high-end clientele" from around the world, the school facilitates its graduating students' westward movement to the Anglosphere – in particular, to America. This reflects the change in the US's position on the global stage. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the US increasingly shifted its focus from asserting hard power, through the military, to promoting soft power, through its international cultural appeal. This was exercised in part through its higher education system, which became globally renowned and, often, desired.[39]

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[36] LASDC, Historical Prices, 2018.

[37] LASDC, Board Minutes, 2011.

[38] See also Karen Lillie, "Geographies of Wealth: The Materiality of an Elite School in Switzerland," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 45, no. 3 (2024), doi:10.1080/01596306.2024.2335005.

[39] Philip Altbach and Patti Peterson, "Higher Education as a Projection of America's Soft Power," in *Soft Power Superpowers: Cultural and National Assets of Japan and the United States*, ed. Yasushi Watanabe and David McConnell (New York: Routledge, 2015); Joseph Nye Jr, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004); Claire Maxwell, "Changing Spaces: The Reshaping of (Elite) Education through Internationalisation," in *Elite Education and In-*

LAS's alignment with this "soft power" approach was intentional and happened in both formal and informal ways. Formally, LAS marketing materials particularly emphasize the US and UK university destinations of its alumni, thereby implying that such destinations are the most desirable. Moreover, they stress the school's English as a Second Language program as excellent preparation for university – seemingly, for higher education in English-language locales.

Additionally, those materials highlight the school's IB curriculum, which is implicitly connected to mobility to Western, English-speaking countries. Although the IB is meant to be an international curriculum that fosters global citizenship, it was developed in Europe and arguably promotes Western ways of thinking and even communicating.[40] In 2024, for example, the IB diploma in one or more languages was offered by over 5,800 schools in 162 countries, according to the organization's website. Yet, although the curriculum is officially available in forty languages, it is most often taught in English (5,431 schools), Spanish (1044 schools) and French (365). At LAS, it was taught in English.

LAS also worked informally to orient its graduating students towards a future in America. For instance, despite its internationalized student body, LAS retained its American identity.[41] In interviews, LAS students noted American institutional structures, like the class schedule, pedagogical approach, grading system, traditions (Prom), and codes of conduct (no drinking or smoking). They also mentioned American cultural artefacts, such as the preferred fashions, foods, memes, movies, music, and slang on campus.[42] There is also the name of the school. As one student summarised, "I think there's quite a lot of American influence in Leysin *American* School" [emphasis his]. LAS thus retained its "Americanness" in feel and in name, despite internationalizing its student body.

Almost all graduating students went on to higher education. In a typical year, 75 percent would attend university in an English-speaking country: 40 percent in the US; 30 percent in the UK; and 5 percent in Canada. The other 25 percent mostly enrolled in English-language programs elsewhere – primarily in the Netherlands

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ternationalisation: From Early Years to Higher Education, ed. Claire Maxwell et al. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[40] Barry Drake, "International Education and IB Programmes," *Journal of Research in International Education* 3, no. 2 (2004), doi: 10.1177/1475240904044387; Mico Poonoosamy, "The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in Post-colonial Mauritius: Reaffirming Local Identities and Knowledges," *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 30, no. 1 (2010), doi: 10.1080/02188790903503569.

[41] See also Karen Lillie, "Multi-Sited Understandings: Complicating the Role of Elite Schools in Transnational Class Formation," *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 42, no. 1 (2021), doi:10.1080/01425692.2020.1847633.

[42] See also Karen Lillie and Claire Maxwell, "Practices of Consumption: Cohesion and Distinction within a Globally Wealthy Group," *Sociology* 58, no. 3 (2024), doi:10.1177/00380385231206070.

or Switzerland. Often, the only students who returned to their home countries for higher education were Americans or Brits.

These educational destinations were most frequently geographically located north and/or west from students' home countries. Only 10 percent of the student body came from Northern or Western Europe; 13 percent came from North America, including Mexico. Students from E7 countries – meaning, the seven major emerging markets, named to parallel the so-called G7 group of major advanced markets – comprised 42 percent of the overall student body and 37 percent of the graduating class at the time of fieldwork.

The routes these students took after LAS thus often followed an established path from the so-called Global South to the Global North. This was a conscious decision. University destinations were informed by prestige of location, rather than the details of the study program.[43] The students wanted to study in cosmopolitan Western cities like London, New York, and Vancouver. In general, they felt that mastering English through living in an English-speaking locale opened new opportunities for international networking and geographic mobility. As has been argued elsewhere, they sought to join "a 'superior' [social] class in a superior location" – the Anglosphere.[44]

These young people might still return to their home countries after university. Follow-up interviews with them suggest that this does, indeed, seem to be the case.[45] This supports other research showing that students who go abroad for higher education often then seek post-schooling employment in their home countries[46] – though, on the other hand, studying abroad can also hinder one's ability to successfully follow this path.[47] Nonetheless, it is clear that, at least at the point of transition from LAS to higher education, these students' orientation was westward.

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[43] See also Karen Lillie, "Mobile and Elite: Diaspora as a Strategy for Status Maintenance in Transitions to Higher Education," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 69, no. 5 (2021), doi: 10.1080/00071005.2021.1948965.

[44] Jane Kenway et al., *Class Choreographies: Elite Schools and Globalization* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 231.

[45] See also Claire Maxwell and Karen Lillie, "From a National Elite to the Global Elite: Possibilities and Problems in Scaling Up," *The British Journal of Sociology* 75, no. 5 (2024), doi:10.1111/1468–4446.13129.

[46] Johanna Waters, "Geographies of Cultural Capital: Education, International Migration and Family Strategies between Hong Kong and Canada," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 31, no. 2 (2006), doi: 10.1111/j.1475–5661.2006.00202.x; Johanna Waters, *Education, Migration and Cultural Capital in the Chinese Diaspora: Transnational Students between Hong Kong and Canada* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2008).

6 Conclusion

This chapter started by mapping the educational landscape around Lake Geneva that LAS joined when it was founded. It then discussed how LAS became part of a new frontier during the Cold War, as an American school abroad. The following sections turned to a period of transition at the school that paralleled broader changes in America's positionality on the world's stage. The chapter ended by examining LAS as an institution whose students are oriented westward, mostly to the US.

I argue that LAS provides a case of an educational institution shifting over time, from one that provides an American education abroad, to one that facilitates the westward movement of students looking towards the Anglophone world. This followed changes in America's approach to foreign affairs, as well as evolutions in what was considered "West," in the sense of a new frontier. In this way, LAS was part of the story of looking West, and also of how that gaze, both broadly and institutionally, evolved over time.

It will be interesting to see how LAS develops in the future. We are arguably in an era when the US has become culturally less attractive to the rest of the world – seemingly due to a combination of surfacing racism, sexism, and nationalism. This likely means that the frontier will shift yet again and that LAS, in parallel, will change as well.

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Roberto Kulpa

Re-Thinking "Europe" with Central-Eastern Europe: Towards Non-Occidentalist and Decolonial Epistemics in/of Queer Studies

Introduction

A simple question: *What is Europe?* is often focal for numerous disciplines such as area studies, cultural geography, history, postcolonial studies, and recently also gender and sexuality studies. Although richly diverse, perhaps one common thread among them would be an inclination to show that *Europe* – while surely denoting a continent, a place on a map (the *where* of it) – is also more than just a simple geographical indication of place. It is a specific *idea* of culture, of politics, of relations, of humanity, of the world order.[1]

Connected, but less often asked, is another important question in thinking Europe: *When is Europe?* That is: What are the explicit and implicit temporalities that govern imaginations of that place? For example, how temporal signifiers of "progress/backwardness," "civilization/barbarity," "science/spirituality" designate telos of society and culture and re/inscribe racialized categories on the populations across continents; how specific time and temporality become, as I have just written above: "a specific *idea* of culture, of politics, of relations, of humanity, of the world order" itself.

In this chapter, I want to think more about these elusive concoctions of geographies and time: geo-temporalities, symbolically marked by a hyphen of connection, and yet still, a fissure of separation. It alludes to the inseparable nature of the place/location and cultural perceptions of time/temporality, and as a result, to the socio-political consequences of such collusions. In particular, the affirmation and contestation of what is gender, (homo)sexuality, and knowledge is the central focus of interrogation in transnational politics as a litmus test of "globalization," "Europeanization," the idea of Europe, and "civilization" itself. Gender, sexuality,

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[1] Katalin Miklóssy and Pekka Korhonen, eds., *The East and the Idea of Europe* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010); Lionel Gossman, "The Idea of Europe," *Common Knowledge* 16, no. 2 (2010): 198 – 222; Menno Spiering and Michael Wintle, eds., *Ideas of Europe Since 1914* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Anthony Pagden, ed., *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Kevin Wilson and Jan van der Dussen, eds., *The History of the Idea of Europe*, rev. ed. (London: Routledge and The Open University, 1995).

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-011

and (il)legitimacy of knowledge surrounding them has become the implicit and explicit battleground of political ideologies and strategies, variably expounded across the left–liberal–conservative–right continuum. The attitudes towards, understandings of, representations of, relations to, and perceptions of identities and/or practices of gender, sexuality (especially homosexuality), and the knowledge produced about them, have become the defining markers of what Europe might have signified, what it does signify, what it should have signified, what it will have signified. And the different grammatical tenses here are deliberately used to highlight the underlying temporality in our operationalizations of the symbolic and material dimension of ideas, practices, places.

As I take time and give space to revisiting how I and others have been thinking about geo-temporalities of Europe and homo/sexualities, I am guided by the question: What relations and convergences of power/knowledge can be observed when thinking towards a critical, queer-oriented, Central and Eastern European (CEE) epistemological perspective? And what decolonial frameworks emerge to destabilize occidentalism, and potentially re/compose socio-political agora, when CEE becomes not an afterthought of queer studies (or decolonial thought, or postcolonial studies, for that matter), but a minaret of enunciation of contemporary (queer) ideas, aspirations, practices?

To follow these questions, I have organized this chapter into clusters. Firstly, in "Coloniality of Intellectual Horizons" I draw on decolonial theories and philosophers to map out how the place on the map dis/en/ables one's own legitimacy as researcher/thinker within the occidentalist framework of "science." This opens up the space to summarize how CEE has been imagined as a space of "in-betweenness" betwixt the East and the West. Secondly, in "CEE Queer Feminist Decoloniality" I reflect on geo-temporalities of Europe in sexual politics to date, and the exciting decolonial epistemologies emerging from the post-state socialist hinterlands. Finally, I bring together the threads in the concluding section, speculating and daydreaming about the prospects of that which has been, is (though maybe not yet), and/or will (not) have been.

Coloniality of Intellectual Horizons

I want to start by focusing on the role of geography in maintaining frames of eligibility for recognition, which underpin the world-system of contemporaneity, and that through the nodes of relationality enmesh individuals in a coloniality of power and knowledge. In the following pages I use "discourse" as in the Foucauldian tradition, as a symbolic-material orchestration of performative rhetoric, actions, governing values, and principles that are not confined to language alone but span the whole spectrum of socio-political communication and behavior, having both symbolic *and* material effects.

Walter Mignolo – one of the key thinkers of decoloniality and epistemic injustices – has titled one of his writings "I am where I think" (1999).[2] A snappy title that nonetheless contains deep wisdom and insight. I am *where* I think. Mignolo, of course, riffs on the Cartesian "je pense, donc je suis" – *cogito ergo sum*, 'I think, therefore I am' – and the choice is not only rhetorical to hook the reader's attention. Descartes is considered one of the key Western European philosophers, whose work nowadays is understood as foundational to the (Western) European Enlightenment (philosophy) and to Modernity (socio-economic, cultural, technological processes deriving from Enlightenment principles). Importantly, Descartes also needs to be understood as a key facilitator of European coloniality, especially coloniality of knowledge,[3] by which I mean the ongoing hegemony of the Western and Western European models, systems, and traditions of understanding and reflecting on human and non-human life. They are disguised as "universal" (displaced, dis-embodied, a-historical) and historically succeeded in devaluing other traditions of thinking, conceptualizing, ideating, imagining, writing, organizing, and preserving. The process started in the fifteenth century, with (wrongly labeled) "discoveries" that began the period of (Western) European colonial conquests.[4]

Mignolo in this one sentence – I am *where* I think – exposes the emperor's nakedness; he shows the idealized and thus empty signification of this Cartesian dictum, pretending to be "universal" and "human," "the philosophy per se," while in fact being only a particular expression of a particular set of cultural and social circumstances in a particular place, that of Western Europe, mid-seventeenth century France. One's own *loci of enunciation* – that is, from where one *thinks* – is always already manifesting one's location, genealogy, language, and is what preconditions one's recognizability in the modern world-system as "civilized": cultured, knowledgeable, scientific. Mignolo thus helps us to understand how the role of geographical annunciation is obscured by the cunning pretense of universality in the Western European scholarship that underpins Eurocentric framings of "modernity" and the world-system we live in. A simple sentence, "I am *where* I think," while exposing the pseudo-universality of eurocentrism, does something more profound as well. It shows that ontology (I am) is always already yoked to epistemology (I think), and it is the place (where) that acts as the synesthetic synapse; it undermines the very foundations of Eurocentric knowledge premised on the dichotomies of subjectivity and objectivity, of materiality and creativity/thinking, of body and thought, and so on. The sentence, which like a hyphen, brings ontology and epistemology together, as inseparable, declines the Enlightenment's paradigms of discrete and disconnected scientific classifications. Instead, Hamid Dabashi points to enmeshing and thinking otherwise – decolonial indeed.

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[2] Walter D. Mignolo, "I Am Where I Think: Epistemology and the Colonial Difference," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 8, no. 2 (1999): 235–245.

[3] Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality," *Cultural Studies* 21 (2007): 2, 168–78.

[4] Madina Tlostanova, "Can the Post-Soviet Think? On Coloniality of Knowledge, External Imperial and Double Colonial Difference," *Intersections: East European Journal of Society and Politics* 1, no. 2 (2015): 39.

Years after Mignolo's essay, Dabashi asked more bluntly on *Al Jazeera* online: "Can non-Europeans think?" and continued to elaborate his argument at length in a book that followed.[5] He questioned the implicit (and explicit) relations of materiality and symbolism in how thinkers and artists are related and referred to, depending on where they happen to work and create. Dabashi poignantly points to epistemic injustices, much as Mignolo did, showing how intellectual production from non-European geo-cultural and linguistic traditions is deemed the subject of "ethnophilosophy" or "ethnomusicology" (rather than "Philosophy" or "Musicology," unspoiled and unmarked by adjectives that discursively mark them as "spin-offs," something of a lesser value).

Mignolo and Dabashi both show how geo-politics of knowledge production are fundamental to sustaining the coloniality of Modernity. Coloniality is the functional structure of the modern world-system and multitude of inequalities, intrinsic to the neoliberal software with which this world-system operates. Specifically, this system functions through a range of temporal and geographical narratives of backwardness/progress, center/periphery, female/male, white/black, Orient/Occident, civilization/nature, and Modernity; that is, thinking, relating, organizing, as underlying and enabling practices of recognized living, are the expressions and manifestations of power. Gennaro Ascione shows how Modernity manifests itself as a parallel modality: a racialized dynamic of white supremacy that structures the power of Western domination; as a mode of power, "it is implemented by multiple actors and subjectivities that are hierarchically distributed, moved by specific needs, put under determined pressures, yet transversally positioned in front of meta-geographical dualisms such as Europe/Others, West/East, North/South, metropolis/colonies."[6] Coloniality/Modernity are often graphically linked with the forward-slash sign, highlighting the constitutive inseparability of both.

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[5] Hamid Dabashi, "Can Non-Europeans Think?" *Al Jazeera*, January 15, 2013, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/01/2013114142638797542.html; Hamid Dabashi, *Can Non-Europeans Think?* (London: Zed Books, 2015).

[6] Gennaro Ascione, *Science and the Decolonization of Social Theory. Unthinking Modernity* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 2.

These epistemic dynamics have very material dimensions that actively over-privilege anglophone scholarship, and by extension devaluate non-English thinkers and their work, as has been extensively documented across a range of disciplines, from geography[7] to biology.[8] How to address these epistemic injustices is an ongoing debate, and one that surely is not to be settled soon, for the issues are more complex than a list of tasks on a to-do list. Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls such an epistemic project “The Epistemologies of the South”:

> The South of the epistemologies of the South is not a geographical south. It is an epistemological South, a South heir of struggles for other knowledges and forms of being, a South born in struggles against the three modern forms of domination: capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. This threefold domination has for many centuries been legitimated by the power-knowledge privileged by the epistemologies of the North.[9]

Thinking with the “South” and “North” (as in, for instance, the “Global South/Global North’), or with the “East” and “West” is not just a semiotic game of words and metaphors; it does indicate certain intellectual affiliations, loci of enunciation, theoretical traditions, and political histories, and has been elaborated by many notable thinkers. Consequently, what *coloniality* and *decoloniality* refer to is not the same as colonialism, decolonialization, and postcolonial theories. As both epistemic fields are now well established, and their interconnectedness and divergences mapped, I will refer the reader to the work of Gurminder Bhambra (2014) for more elaborate reading. Here, let me just point out that thinkers of coloniality who originate in Latin American intellectual contexts focus on the epistemic structures of understanding the world that formed in the sixteenth century onwards. This early (Western) European colonial conquest of South and Central American populations and cultures laid the groundwork for occidentalist cosmology that later shaped (Western) European orientalism and military-political imperialisms across the globe. It imposed a particular – Western European – “modernity” as universal, delocalized, and disembodied “humankind” development. These political philosophies and the epistemic formation of "modern (i.e., European) science" peaked during the European Enlightenment's long durée and the nineteenth century, serving as the rationalization of colonialisms and imperialisms. However, as such, coloniality as a structure of thinking permeates beyond the historical periods and geographies of Western European imperialisms, and is the condition of our contemporary living inasmuch as it was centuries back. Decolonial thinking engages with epistemic structures we use to understand the world, while decolonialization often refers to two issues: (1) historically, to a process of regaining independence; (2) more recently, to diversity and inclusion in education (for instance, "decolonizing curriculum"). And postcolonial theories, as the intellectual reflection on the consequences of (Western) European colonialisms and historical decolonialization, are also often focused on examples from the Middle East, South Asia, or Africa (and to a degree on the Western European imperial centers), and on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[10]

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[7] Jerzy Bański and Mariola Ferenc, “‘International” or ‘Anglo-American’ Journals of Geography?” *Geoforum* 45 (March 2013): 285–295.

[8] Tatsuya Amano et al., “The Manifold Costs of Being a Non-Native English Speaker in Science,” *PLOS Biology* 21, no. 7 (2023): e3002184.

[9] Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Maria Paula Meneses, eds., *Knowledges Born in the Struggle: Constructing the Epistemologies of the Global South. Epistemologies of the South* (New York: Routledge, 2020), xiv-–v; Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, “Theory From the South: Or, How Euro-America Is Evolving Toward Africa,” *Anthropological Forum* 22, no. 2 (2012): 113–131; Raewyn Connell, *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007).

Imagining Central and Eastern Europe

How then, in these two aligned but not alike contexts of postcolonial and decolonial theorizing, to think about Central and Eastern Europe, and eventually, also about gender and sexuality? *Where* and *when* is that locus of enunciation for "Central-Eastern" Europeans, from which we may want to probe, after Mignolo and Dabashi, into the ability of thinking and ideating in/from CEE (including knowledge/theories in/of gender or queer studies)?

There are numerous thinkers who have engaged with postcolonial perspectives to refine and conceptualize the dynamics of eurocentrism, occidentalism, and orientalism in the European southern and eastern borderlands.[11] Gerard Delanty captures a common thread and complementarity in the diversity of arguments present in these writings, when he frames the "idea of Europe" as follows:

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[10] Madina Tlostanova and Walter Mignolo, *Learning to Unlearn: Decolonial Reflections from Eurasia and the Americas* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012), 40; Robert Kulpa and Joseli Maria Silva, "Decolonizing Queer Epistemologies: Section Introduction," in *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*, ed. Gavin Brown and Kath Browne (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 140.

[11] See for example Epp Annus, ed., *Coloniality, Nationality, Modernity: A Postcolonial View on Baltic Cultures under Soviet Rule* (New York: Routledge, 2018); Milica Bakić-Hayden, "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (1995): 917–931; Timothy Brennan, "The Cuts of Language: The East/West of North/South," *Public Culture* 13, no. 1 (2001): 39–63; Alfrid Bustanov, *Soviet Orientalism and the Creation of Central Asian Nations* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Violeta Kelertas, ed., *Baltic Postcolonialism* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006); Dorota Kołodziejczyk and Cristina Şandru, "Introduction: On Colonialism, Communism and East-Central Europe – Some Reflections," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48, no. 2 (2012): 113–116; Redi Koobak

> The idea of Europe remained the cultural model of the western core states. A major implication of this view is that the eastern frontier of Europe was above all a frontier of exclusion rather than of inclusion; it accelerated and intensified a process by which Europe became the mystique of the West.[12]

Larry Wolff further refined the development of the East–West axis, complementing the South–North one: while grounded in geography, Wolff found this to be more an outcome of the Enlightenment's discourse of evolution and progress. Framed in the technological and economic terms, civilization and capitalism united, are the measures of progress/backwardness of the Self (Western Europe) and the Incomplete Self (CEE) or the Other (the "Orient"). Wolff uses the metaphor of a scale: "Eastern Europe was located not as the antidote of civilization, not down in the depths of barbarism, but rather on the developmental scale that measured the distance between civilization and barbarism."[13] Melegh metaphorically visualized this scale as a slippery slope, adding the important vertical element to ensure that the horizontal East–West axis is not misunderstood as a continuum of equally positioned "East" and "West."[14] He also underlines the porous, flexible, and unfixed character of the borders not only within CEE, but also between the East and West, inviting ambiguity, ambivalence, in-betweenness, and transitionality as aligned word-concepts helping to capture the dynamic under discussion. Still other thinkers offer yet another viewpoint. Drawing on different sets of materials and locating her attention across a different timespan, Maria Todorova arrives at the divergent conclusion that "[in] the first place, there is the historical and geo-

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et al., eds., *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues: Intersections, Opacities, Challenges in Feminist Theorizing and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2021); Janusz Korek, ed., *From Sovietology to Postcoloniality: Poland and Ukraine from a Postcolonial Perspective* (Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2007); David Chioni Moore, "East Is South: Central Europe in Global Perspective," *Macalester International* 2, no. 1 (1995); Martin Müller, "In Search of the Global East: Thinking Between North and South," in *Geopolitics* 25, no. 3 (2020): 734–755; Lela Rekhviashvili et al., "Special Issue 'Conjunctural Geographies of Post-Socialist and Postcolonial Conditions': Introduction," *Connections: A Journal for Historians and Area Specialists* (2022): http://www.connections.clio-online.net/article/id/fda-133272; Ana Vilenica, ed. *Decoloniality in Eastern Europe: A Lexicon of Reorientation* (Novi Sad: Kuda, 2023).

[12] Gerard Delanty, *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 48.

[13] Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), 13.

[14] Attila Melegh, *On the East-West Slope: Globalization, Nationalism, Racism and Discourses on Central and Eastern Europe* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2006).

graphic concreteness of the Balkans as opposed to the intangible nature of the Orient,"[15] urging for new conceptualizations (such as "Balkanization") in place of the "orientalism" frame. The same is true in yet another diverging perspective suggested by Milica Bakić-Hayden, who theorized orientalism as also relevant to/within CEE, and especially the Balkans ("Balkanism").[16] She observed the deployment of othering and orientalizing frames by peoples in the region against other populations in this region and termed it "nested orientalism." Similar nesting orientalizing perspectives and debates are also present in other CEE contexts, such as Poland[17] or Latvia.[18] Finally, Plamen Georgiev expands on this intra-regional dynamic and also resorts to "orientalism" as a concept that captures and analyzes dynamics of self-orientalizing in south-east Europe as an accompanying dynamics of eurocentrism and occidentalism.[19]

Central and Eastern European Queer Feminist Decoloniality

Briefly sketched (and unavoidably flattened and oversimplified), the richness of the ways of engaging with CEE as diverse spaces and places, with "post-socialism" as a time period, and with postcolonialism as a conceptual frame (as I have tried to show above), is not, however, a testament to a conflict and competition. Rather, I would argue that it shows the complementary and dialogic nature of manifold power dynamics, enabling ever-changing resignification and destabilizing ideas about "development," "modernization," "civilization," "race/whiteness," "(dis)identifications," and so on. This is a realization of what is already apparent: there is no single "Europe" and the coloniality of knowledge not only molds the global world-system along the binary of Europe vs. Other, but also recreates dualisms within the continent and its populations. As Emanuela Boatcă wrote:

> A hierarchy of multiple Europes with different and unequal roles in shaping the definition of Europe and Europeanness as opposed to the "New World" emerged alongside modernity and

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[15] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 11.

[16] Bakic-Hayden, "Nesting Orientalisms."

[17] See Claudia Snochowska-Gonzalez, "Post-Colonial Poland: On an Unavoidable Misuse," *East European Politics & Societies* 26, no. 4 (2012): 708–723.

[18] Dace Dzenovska, "Historical Agency and the Coloniality of Power in Postsocialist Europe," *Anthropological Theory* 13, no. 4 (2013): 394–416.

[19] Plamen K. Georgiev, *Self-Orientalization in South East Europe*, Crossculture (Cham: Springer, 2012).

> coloniality in the 16th century – indeed, it was the premise for both (Boatcă 2010, 2013). What informed the reigning notion of “Europe” – and its corresponding claims to civilization, modernity, and development – was defined one-sidedly from positions of power mainly associated with colonial and imperial rule.[20]

Boatcă hints at the process of not only othering the other, but also at identifying the self of the West in the Western European *imaginarium Europeum.* Inspired by decolonial thinking, she argues that the differentiation of Europe into two and ascribing “Central-Easternness” to one of them helped to veil the “Westernness” of the second, which has been made unmarked as “just Europe.”

This process is foundational for occidentalism, which – we need to remind ourselves – is not a mirror process of orientalism. It would be naïve to believe that the non-Western Others have the same discursive (symbolic and material) standing as the West, to issue a counter-discourse to orientalism. Occidentalism here, then, is a double of orientalism – Western self-identifications, self-images, and emerging formations, while othering the others.[21] Occidentalist framing of CEE, not only vis-à-vis the Western self, but also vis-à-vis the orientalised others, helps enable us to appreciate the semi-peripherality of CEE as its defining quality in the Western imaginary. Orientalism inscribed a vocabulum of barbarism and mysticism, enclosed as Muslim traditions in the geographically distant lands, as the defining impediments of the oriental Other of Europe. But such assignations would not hold for the semi-peripheral CEE, due to its geographical proximity to the assumed “center” (effectively the west of Europe) and racialized whitewashing of European populations as predominantly “white” by virtue of Christianity. Occidentalist *imaginarium bestiarum* of CEE therefore contained it as an Incomplete Self of Europe, rather than its other.[22]

Outlined above, the messiness of thinking about the material-geographical and symbolic-temporal discourses shows intricate entanglements and the ongoing processes constitutive of contemporary politics, power, and knowledge formations. Below, I want to reflect on my own work and the role of (homo)sexuality in imagining different Europes (plural intended), as well as on the role of the idea of Europe in sexual politics, complemented with a reflection on Central and Eastern European queerfeminist, decolonial epistemics.

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[20] Manuela Boatcă, “Counter Mapping as Method. Locating and Relating the (Semi-)Peripheral Self,” *Historical Social Research* 41, no. 2 (2021): 248.

[21] Boaventura de Sousa Santos, “A Non-Occidentalist West?” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 26, nos. 7–8 (2009), 105.

[22] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 18.

Geo-Temporalities of Europe in Sexual Politics

In conceptualizing orientalism, Edward Said has shown the importance of gendered, sexual imagination, and especially desire, lust, and erotics in shaping the oriental phantasmagoria of sexuality. Likewise, the authors quoted above show in their discussions how gendered and sexual metaphors play a significant role in framing CEE as the Incomplete Self of (Western) Europe. My attention, much inspired by queer studies, drifts towards heteronormative presumptions underpinning both: occidentalist discourses of CEE, as well as the above theories grappling with them – and seeks to cast a more queer and feminist lens on the politics of modern Europe in the post-1989 era (following the fall of state socialisms in CEE) and the post-2004 era (which saw the largest EU enlargement with the accession of CEE countries). While inspired by and in dialogue with the above discussed works, my own writings (individual or collaborative) attempt to show how occidentalist temporalities and geographies are fused with the discourses of "gay rights" (secularism and the expansion of state-sponsored institutionalization of solutions and privileges to homosexual people) to reinvent and reinscribe various othering and distancing narratives, elongating and augmenting the prescribed disparity between the (Western) Europe and Central-Eastern (European) borderlands.[23]

The in-betweenness of CEE is not only a descriptive analytics to conceptualize sexual politics in CEE vis-à-vis "The West." It is a personal sense of dis/location, with the "personal" denoting not only a private life, but also a professional identity as an academic. It was personal experience of migration and settling in a new country and in a new academic system that has shaped and directed my intellectual curiosities. I started the chapter with Mignolo and Dabashi, for they capture so profoundly and in such crisp terms that feeling and sensation I had when I started developing my academic career as a Polish migrant to the UK, as a gay man from "oppressive" Catholic Poland in the supposedly "liberal" secular UK, and finally as a Polish gay migrant working intellectually in British, Anglophone, Western academia on gender and sexuality in Poland and Central-Eastern Europe. This personal reflection accentuates experience in the spirit of queerfeminist self-reflexive methodologies to capture the situatedness of epistemic ability and legitimacy, on which Mignolo and Dabashi reflect. When reading them and thinking about the occidentalist framings of the othered intellectual, I felt that my individual experience, while meaningfully reflected in theirs, was still somehow elusive and beyond. The theorizations of CEE as the other Other of (Western) Europe, meaningful to me in capturing the sense of "incomplete European Self," were still not able to explain how gender and sexuality become not just the auxiliary othering categories, but as I claim, the main dividers reinscribing the well-known tropes of progress to the west of Europe, and backwardness to the east of Europe. I wanted to better understand that place of in-betweenness that is familiar yet odd, that moment of feeling you belong yet are a stranger, being the same yet other, being on time and yet already late and delayed – that so often described not only my personal life history but also captured the socio-political imaginations of CEE when addressing issues of gender and sexuality.

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[23] Robert Kulpa and Joanna Mizielińska, eds., *De-Centring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Robert Kulpa, "Western Leveraged Pedagogy of Central and Eastern Europe: Discourses of Homophobia, Tolerance, and Nationhood," *Gender, Place & Culture* 21, no. 4 (2014): 431–448; Robert Kulpa, "National Menace: Mediating Homo/Sexuality and Sovereignty in the Polish National/Ist Discourses," *Critical Discourse Studies* 17, no. 3 (2020): 327–343; Roberto Kulpa, "Queer Politics of Post-Enlightenment: Beyond the Horizon of the Present," in *Hungarian Studies Review* 48, no. 2 (2021): 199–208; Roberto Kulpa, "Dangerous Liaisons: Neoliberal Tropes of the 'Normal' and 'Middle-Class Respectability' in the Post-Socialist LG(BT) Activism," in *Mapping LGBTQ Spaces and Places: A Changing World*, ed. Marianne Blidon and Stanley D. Brunn (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 279–291.

So the idea of Europe and engendered claims of sexual secular politics (mostly articulated through "gay rights" narratives of political and non-governmental actors), in all its geo-temporal denominators of east and west, future and past, south and north, progress and backwardness, have been the focus of my attention, starting with the book *De-Centring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives*, co-edited with Joanna Mizielińska (2011). This made an intervention into queer studies by bringing CEE into focus and exploring how popular and academic discourses of sexual politics and especially LGBT and queer activism did not reflect or help us analyze the realities of CEE. We were especially interested in providing theoretical insights more attuned to our geo-temporal realities. In a way, the project turned to be about how predominantly anglophone historiographic/epistemic models of the LGBT activism were unintentionally re-implementing the occidentalist "rainbow curtain" between the wests and the easts (in and of Europe). While the existing research about genders and sexualities in CEE at the time was focused on empirical evidencing of its socio-political conditions and experiences, we wanted to go beyond simple descriptive narratives of "What's it like to be 'gay' in CEE?" While such a witness-bearing, fact-telling format has its role and importance, we thought that "data mining" was not enough of an antidote to the void in the understanding of the sexual politics of Central and Eastern Europe. Looking back with the perspective of time, it seems to me that our deployment in the book of such concepts as "temporal disjunction," "knotted temporality," and "time of sequence vs. time of coincidence" was an attempt to unlink ourselves from the dominant *modi operandi* of the LGBT historiography and queer studies of the early 2000s. We tried to capture and name the underlying temporal frameworks in thinking about geography and culture of "Central-Eastern" borders of the Europe when considering sexuality and sexual politics. In "Western Leveraged Pedagogy of Central and Eastern Europe,"[24] I have further conceptualized this as a form of a leveraged pedagogy:

> This discourse frames CEE as permanently "post-communist," "in transition" (i. e. not liberal, yet, enough), and, last but not least, homophobic. […] I suggest CEE is somehow "European enough" to be "taken care of," but "not yet Western" so as to be allowed into the "First World" club. Yet I argue that this "taking care of" CEE is a hegemonic deployment of the Western EUropean liberal model of rights as the universal one (as in the "universal human rights'). To sustain this model as superior (self-essentialising of West/ Europe as liberal), CEE is rendered as permanently "post-communist" (i. e. catching up on an uneven slope of progressive distance/proximity from the peak of the West/Europe ideal).

By pointing out that the occidentalist appropriations of "progress" are nowadays linked with "gay rights" as litmus tests and geo-temporal b/order-making in and across Europe(s), this mounts a challenge to the normative narratives. Showing the geo-temporal messiness of sexual politics in CEE interrupts the dominant representations and offers fresh perspectives that are not meant to replace one epistemological standpoint with another, but to pluralize prospects for co-existing in a non-hierarchical frame; consequently, unlinking from the coloniality of occidentalist, cognitive modalities of self (west of Europe), of the incomplete self (east of Europe), and the other (non-[Western] Europe).

It seems to me now, from this perspective, that we have tried to capture and name the position of CEE queer scholars as listened to but not heard, as the others located on the borders, in the global system of the coloniality of knowledge present in queer studies. In one article, echoing with Dabashi's question, Todorova asked: "Can the Post-Soviet Think?" There she pondered what the inter-relation is between global production and circulation of knowledge and CEE's geo-political locality. Specifically, it is the interplay of social sciences and Slavonic studies (in Western academia) that interests her, as she notices that (against the backdrop of the coloniality of knowledge) such a mashup either excludes "the post-soviet" or subsumes it under the post-colonial, in each case eradicating its subjectivity. In Tlostanova's words:

> The situation can be described as a general invisibility of the post-Soviet space and its social sciences and scientists for the rest of the world and the refusal of the global North to accept the post-Soviet scholar in the capacity of a rational subject. The reasons for this complex in-

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[24] Kulpa, "Western Leveraged Pedagogy," 432.

> tersection of the post-Soviet, postcolonial and other post-dependence factors are both internal and external, political and epistemic.[25]

Her words strongly resonate with my lived experiences as the CEE scholar in British anglophone academia, and capture the uncanny standpoint of in/betweenness that many of my CEE colleagues experience and perceive (irrespective of their location, whether in "native" academic contexts, or in "migratory academia" settings), and also resonate with how Mignolo has expressed this tension and unease:

> I shall mention once more that my discomfort with modernity and Western civilization (two faces of the same phenomenon) is not with Western modernity's contribution to global history, but rather with the imperial belief that the rest of the world shall submit to its cosmology, and the naïve or perverse belief that the unfolding of world history has been of one temporality and would, of necessity, lead to a present that corresponds to the Western civilization that Hegel summarized in his celebrated lessons in the philosophy of history. *Both the political and the economic expansion of Western civilization have gone hand in hand with the management of all spheres of knowledge. Or, worded differently, Western civilization's ability to manage knowledge explains its success in expanding itself politically and economically.*[26]

This certainly speaks truth to public (including political) discourse inasmuch as defines the whole of academia and higher education more broadly, as well as research funding and the research and innovation sectors. After all, the invention of the whole field(s) of "area studies" or "international development" (for instance, "Oriental Studies," "Slavonic Studies," "African Studies," "Latin American Studies") exclusively encompasses the non-Western and non–Western European Others as the objects of examination. Some of these disciplines were directly related to imperialism and colonialism (as in the case of "Oriental Studies"). Others, like "Slavonic Studies" were sponsored by the military in the political effort to "know your enemy" (state socialist countries from the "Soviet Bloc") in the post–World War II world order.[27] Likewise, critical studies (including gender and sexuality studies), being one of the contemporary scientific disciplines, are a product of the coloniality of knowledge, expressive of (Western) European occidentalism. This is why work inspired by decolonial theory in disciplines such as geographies, temporalities, and sexualities is so urgently needed,[28] and my own (and our, where I have shared the joy of intellectual collaborations) wrestling with thinking about sexual politics that would escape the occidentalist and colonial narratives of teleological progress towards Western self-universalized "modernity" represents such attempts. (And I do not think the category of "failure/success" in doing so is a suitable approach for evaluating such work, for scuffles with coloniality of knowledge/ power is a process, and not a zero-sum game.)

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[25] Tlostanova, "Can the Post-Soviet Think?" 38.

[26] Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), x (my italics).

[27] Noam Chomsky et al., eds., *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years* (New York: New Press, 1997); Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1996); Christopher Simpson, ed., *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences During the Cold War* (New York: New Press, 1998).

Furthermore, if breaking with colonial knowledge formations is (among other things) about fortifying the subaltern, marginalized outlook – to break the equivalency chain of subject and object, of the knower and the known, and to offer new figurations of knowledge – then reaffirming CEE epistemic and activist standpoints might do just that, as I suggest in "Queer Politics of Post-Enlightenment":

> Can this slippery slope of being neither here nor there actually be a source of the empowering, disruptive location for contemporary queer (geo)politics? […] Could the ambivalent geotemporalities of CEE be for once a source of advantage that facilitates a movement beyond the legacies of the Enlightenment and Occidentalism? How can this in-betweenness of CEE, its queer supplementarity and its threshold porosity, geo-temporal (t)here, which is neither now nor then, be used?[29]

Post-Soviet Epistemics

In weaving the various above-mentioned threads of geo-temporalities and geo-politics together with genders and sexualities and with knowledges and expressions of power, one may notice that much of this thinking is "reactive" in that it *re*acts and *pre*occupies itself with the "problem" and "obstacle" that presents itself, a priori, in these configurations of occidentalism, coloniality, CEE, and Europe. It could be described as mistrustful and skeptical, and could well be a manifestation of Paul Ricoeur's "hermeneutics of suspicion" or Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's "paranoid reading."[30] But I suggest that the concept of a "sociology of absences" developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos is more suitable and adequate to capture those brewing sentiments:

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[28] Kulpa and Silva, "Decolonizing Queer Epistemologies," 13 – 142.

[29] Kulpa, "Queer Politics," 206.

[30] Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Heaven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 124 – 127.

> The sociology of absences consists of an enquiry that aims to explain that what does not exist is in fact actively produced as non-existent, that is – as a non-credible alternative to what exists. Its empirical object is deemed impossible in the light of conventional social science, and for this reason its formulation already represents a break with it. The objective of the sociology of absences is to transform impossible into possible objects, absent into present objects, invisible or non-credible subjects into visible and credible subjects.[31]

De Sousa Santos’s words resonate very well with my assertation of the central tenets of what CEE academic scholarship (i.e., CEE scholars of gender and queer studies) and CEE *in* academic scholarship (i.e., CEE as the locus of reflection in gender and queer studies) can offer, as we search for ways of moving away from occidentalist epistemics and towards alternative, decolonial *modi operandi.* Notably, it articulates that which is actively produced as neither (Western) “Self” nor (orientalized) “Other,” and as suspended “in-between,” “incompleteness”; perpetual “becoming” without the prospect of, nor the need to be stabilized as an identitarian *idée fixe* of what is or should be, but only as what might be.

There is also a counterpart to the “sociology of absences”: that of a “sociology of emergences,” and it seems to me that this is already en route, with many inspiring initiatives such as networks[32] or issuing call for papers.[33] Here, two journals are especially notable, in my opinion, for their publication ethics, epistemological direction, and editorship: *Feminist Critique: East European Journal of Feminist and Queer Studies / Критика феміністична: східноєвропейский журнал феміністичних та квір-студій*,[34] a Ukrainian initiative led by Maria Mayerchyk and Olga Plakhotnik; and *Intersections: East European Journal of Society and Politics*,[35] based in Budapest. Both have published articles and embrace the mission expressing what might be called a “post-soviet, decolonial, and queer and feminist epistemics.” There is a growing number of inspiring philosophers, writers, researchers, thinkers, and scholars who have gained prominence in the last decade, as they offer exciting new outlooks on queerfeminist, decolonial post-socialist studies, skillfully combining these intellectual traditions, traversing decolonial thinking and CEE standpoints.[36] The shift in thinking presented by these writers and their works is exemplary of that "sociology of emergences," defined by de Sousa Santos as:

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[31] Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *The Rise of the Global Left: The World Social Forum and Beyond* (London: Zed Books), 15.

[32] For example, Postdependence Geographies in Central & Eastern Europe (PostCEE), https://postcee.com/about/, accessed March 23, 2023.

[33] Call for Papers: Decolonising Central and Eastern Europe, for the Central European Journal of International and Security Studies, https://cejiss.org/decolonising-cee, accessed March 23, 2023.

[34] https://feminist.krytyka.com/en, accessed March 23, 2023.

[35] https://intersections.tk.hu/index.php/intersections/, accessed March 23, 2023.

> The sociology of emergences is the enquiry into the alternatives that are contained in the horizon of concrete possibilities. It consists in undertaking a symbolic enlargement of knowledges, practices and agents in order to identify therein the tendencies of the future (the Not Yet) in which it is possible to intervene so as to maximize the probability of hope vis-à-vis the probability of frustration. Such symbolic enlargement is actually a form of sociological imagination with a double aim: on the one hand, to know better the conditions of the possibility of hope; on the other, to define principles of action that favour the fulfilment of those conditions.[37]

For instance, the exciting possibilities of thinking otherwise and cracking the epistemic paradigm in order to move beyond hegemonic occidentalism are further exemplified in the works of Alyosxa Tudor[38] and Marina Yusupova.[39] Drawing to varying degrees on the work of Maria Lugones,[40] both have invested in re/conceptualizing gender, sex, and race (ethnicity) in the post–state socialist contexts of Russia and CEE broadly. Lugones extended Aníbal Quijano’s formulation of the coloniality of power to include gender (“coloniality of gender”) as the inherently divisive concept that obscured, annihilated, and re/formed non-European societies and sexual cultures to align with occidentalist binaries.[41] Lugones also showed how conceptualizing “gender” is inseparable from conceptions of “race” and how both processes facilitated (Western) European imperialist colonialization of populations and lands outside of Europe. Yusupova’s focus on masculinities in Russia and (Western) Europe show intersectionally how cisgender and heteronormative masculinities are inherent in and inseparable from the idea(l)s of “Europe” and occidentalist narratives of the world order and race permeating cultural and political practices across the continents.[42] Tudor, on the other hand, focuses on trans- sex and gender categories more broadly as fields of knowledge production (trans and gender studies).[43] Playing with “transing” as a performativity-driven conceptualization to underplay inadequacy of static understandings, Tudor “intervenes in forms of minority nationalism that reproduce racism, sexism, heteronormativity and gender binary as the norm of Western national belonging.”[44] Both thinkers draw creatively on decolonial premises to think with CEE and offer new approaches across gender and queer studies and race/racism studies. Similarly, the work of Redi Koobak and Raili Marling,[45] and all the authors gathered in the impressive volume *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues: Intersections, Opacities, Challenges in Feminist Theorizing and Practice*,[46] should be named as examples of the emerging CEE decolonial queerfeminist work. Here, a gesture to the work of Bogdan Popa[47] is also very important in showcasing the “sociologies of emergence" across post-soviet decolonial knowledge-making. As he observes, "[t]ransgender/queer theory and postsocialist theory have not been often theorized together, but here I want to think about their alliance to suggest their potential for future anticapitalist politics. […] [My] aim is to show that trans* politics and a legacy of socialism emerge together as a common danger to racialized US capitalism."[48]

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[36] See, for example, Catherine Baker, "Postcoloniality Without Race? Racial Exceptionalism and Southeast European Cultural Studies," *Interventions. International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 20, no. 6 (2018): 759 – 784; Marina Blagojević, *Knowledge Production at the Semiperiphery. A Gender Perspective* (Belgrade, Serbia: Institut za kriminološka i sociološka istraživanja, 2009); Agnes Gagyi, ""Coloniality of Power' in East Central Europe: External Penetration as Internal Force in Post-Socialist Hungarian Politics," *Journal of World-Systems Research* 22, no. 2 (2016): 349 – 372; Maria Mayerchyk and Olga Plakhotnik, "Ukrainian Feminisms and the Issue of Coloniality," presented at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, December 11, 2020; Müller, "In Search of the Global East"; Koobak et al., *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues*; Kulpa, "Queer Politics"; Iveta Silova, Zsuzsa Millei, and Nelli Piattoeva, "Interrupting the Coloniality of Knowledge Production in Comparative Education: Postsocialist and Postcolonial Dialogues after the Cold War," *Comparative Education Review* 61, S1 (2017): 74 – 102; Tlostanova and Mignolo, *Learning to Unlearn*; Madina Tlostanova, "The Janus-Faced Empire Distorting Orientalist Discourses: Gender, Race and Religion in the Russian/(Post)Soviet Constructions of the 'Orient'," *Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise* 2, no. 2 (2008): 11; Madina Tlostanova, *What Does It Mean to Be Post-Soviet?: Decolonial Art from the Ruins of the Soviet Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018); Alyosxa Tudor, "Decolonizing Trans/Gender Studies?: Teaching Gender, Race, and Sexuality in Times of the Rise of the Global Right," *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (2021): 238 – 256; Marina Yusupova, "Coloniality of Gender and Knowledge: Rethinking Russian Masculinities in Light of Postcolonial and Decolonial Critiques," *Sociology* 57, no. 3 (2023): 682 – 699.

[37] Santos, *The Rise of the Global Left*, 31.

[38] Tudor, "Dimensions of Transnationalism," *Feminist Review* 117, no. 1 (2017): 20 – 40; Tudor, "Decolonizing Trans/Gender Studies."

[39] Marina Yusupova, "The Invisibility of Race in Sociological Research on Contemporary Russia: A Decolonial Intervention," *Slavic Review* 80, no. 2 (2021): 224 – 233; Yusupova, "Coloniality of Gender and Knowledge."

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[40] Marìa Lugones, “Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System,” *Hypatia* 22, no. 1 (2007): 186–219; Marìa Lugones, “Toward a Decolonial Feminism,” *Hypatia* 25, no. 4 (2010): 742–759.

[41] Quijano, “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality.”

[42] Yusupova, “The Invisibility of Race”; Yusupova, “Coloniality of Gender and Knowledge.”

[43] Tudor, “Decolonizing Trans/Gender Studies.”

[44] Tudor, “Decolonizing Trans/Gender Studies,” 20.

[45] Redi Koobak and Raili Marling, “The Decolonial Challenge: Framing Post-Socialist Central and Eastern Europe Within Transnational Feminist Studies,” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 21, no. 4 (2014): 330–343.

[46] Koobak et al., *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues.*

[47] Bogdan Popa, “Trans* and Legacies of Socialism: Reading Queer Postsocialism in Tangerine,” *The Undecidable Unconscious: A Journal of Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis* 5, no. 1 (2018): 27–53; Bogdan Popa, *De-Centering Queer Theory: Communist Sexuality in the Flow During and After the Cold War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021).

The writers mentioned here delegitimize the contemporary occidentalist knowledge-making moment in their engagement with post- and de- gender-colonial-queer-socialist-trans-race theorizations that refuse to treat legacies of "post-socialism" and "the Cold War" as the problem only of CEE. Instead, they argue for novel ways of thinking about race, racialization, and racism in the Western and Central-Western Europe(s) that are inseparable from gender/sex/sexuality, evidencing decolonial analysis as they wrestle with the task of re/theorizing Western European and North American cultures and politics as having equally experienced "post-socialist transformations" and "Cold War" consequences, just like any other state-socialist or neoliberal, capitalist part of the world (for there is no contemporary neoliberalism free of the specter of Marxian communism, the history of state socialism, racial capitalism,[49] and colonialism).

Conclusions

This chapter has engaged with ideas that are so tightly knit together that oftentimes the very process of writing, and by necessity, of straightening things up (ahem!) becomes antithetical to the very nature of the object of reflection, the process of thinking, and the stampede of thoughts rushing through the writer's mind. These uncanny temporalities of writing, a meta-layer of temporalities in a chapter about geo-temporalities, are another example of the complex messiness of time and temporality and how they infuse thinking about CEE, epistemics, and queerness.

In my writings I grapple with "Central-Easternness" and "Westerness" of Europe as geo-temporal markers of time and place that disturb but also recompose the relations of what we know, how we know, and why we know (especially in connection to gender and sexuality). These attempts (always partial, usually unsatisfactory, intentionally uncomplete) of thinking of a queerfeminist account of CEE as an "Incomplete Self of Europe," offer a promising potential contribution to the wider project of epistemic decoloniality.

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[48] Popa, "Trans* and Legacies," 27.

[49] Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

I maintain that one catalyst for this emerging synergy could be the revalidation of the "inbetweenness" of CEE and queer politics in the region, which has been so far seen as a hindrance to be dealt with (whether in scholarship, in activism, or in politics). Instead, I argue that re-engaging the unruly geo-temporality that is framed as willfully spilling over the boundaries of (neo)liberal democracies, and frustrating occidentalist self-fulfillment, may become a characteristic of decolonial hope.

If we sideline the occidentalist systems that produce neatly delineated hierarchizations and categorizations of ideas and practices as the desired outcomes or as main references, then we accept the opportunity to thrive in between the incompleteness of the occidentalist frames that ground and systematize the coloniality of knowledge and power. Engaging the gerund tense in referring to the so-called "post-communist transformations" of CEE as perpetually transitioning/transiting/transing (in itself a form of "leveraged pedagogy" of CEE[50]) emboldens the reconstituting of the premise of CEE and its always-in-the-making temporality – no longer as a hindrance, but as a source of an empowering step away and step towards.

Critical regionalism in/of CEE matters to the project of epistemic decoloniality (especially in queerfeminist thought) because it can refocus attention away from "the West as a point of reference" towards "the West as a point of meeting"[51] and perhaps "the West as a point of passing/exchange." It is where queerfeminist thought creation and knowledge-making (in activism or academia, or elsewhere) turn towards each other, margin to margin, rather than being preoccupied with the occidentalist center alone, addicted to the center–margin dichotomy that serves occidentalist coloniality.

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[50] Kulpa, "Western Leveraged Pedagogy."

[51] Credit for this inspiring idea goes to Olga Sasunkevich (University of Gothenburg), who made this observation in our informal conversation.

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Philipp Stelzel

Antagonists, Arbiters, and Allies: West German Historians and their American Colleagues

Conventional wisdom has it that after the end of World War II, American historians of modern Germany generally sided with their few "progressive" West German colleagues and therefore contributed to the modernization of the West German historical profession. As Ernst Schulin put it succinctly, "Anglo-American critical interest in German history influenced and assisted in the modernization of West German historical writing."[1] Virtually every single account of postwar German-American historiography echoes this point of view.[2] This has created the impression of American historians providing some sort of intellectual developmental aid to their German colleagues, who were slowly moving along on their "long way West." According to this narrative, after World War II Americans consistently intervened on behalf of those German historians who proposed a "critical" perspective on the German past. During the Fischer-Kontroverse of the 1960s, concerning the origins and the course of World War I, Americans sided with Fritz Fischer, who was initially very isolated within the West German historical profession.[3] During the 1970s, Americans provided important intellectual impulses for the emerging "critical" historians surrounding the Bielefelder Schule. And during the *Historikerstreit* of the 1980s, American historians were unanimous in their opposition to

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[1] Ernst Schulin, "German and American Historiography in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in *An Interrupted Past: German Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States after 1933*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann and James J. Sheehan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 31.

[2] See, for example, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *The Return to the Western Tradition: German Historiography since 1945* (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1991); Georg Iggers, "Introduction", in *The Social History of Politics: Critical Perspectives in West German Historical Writing Since 1945* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1985), 1–45; Andreas Daum, "German Historiography in Transatlantic perspective: interview with Hans-Ulrich Wehler", *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute, Washington, D.C.* 26 (2001): 121–123.; Jürgen Kocka, *Sozialgeschichte: Begriff – Entwicklung – Probleme* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 40.

[3] For an account of the debate, see Konrad H. Jarausch, "Der nationale Tabubruch. Wissenschaft, Öffentlichkeit, und Politik in der Fischer-Kontroverse," in *Zeitgeschichte als Streitgeschichte. Grosse Kontroversen seit 1945*, ed. Martin Sabrow, Ralph Jessen and Klaus Große Kracht (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2003), 20–40; for a focus on the American dimension of the debate see Philipp Stelzel, "Fritz Fischer and the American Historical Profession: Tracing the Transatlantic Dimension of the Fischer-Kontroverse," *Storia della Storiografia* 44 (2003): 67–84.

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-012

Ernst Nolte's apologetics regarding the singularity of National Socialism and the Holocaust.[4]

In this essay, I suggest an alternative interpretation of the role American historians of modern Germany played for their West German colleagues. As its title suggests, American historians could serve as antagonists, arbiters, and allies for West German historians of *all* political and methodological persuasions. The exclusive emphasis on American historians' modernization efforts not only leads to an incomplete picture of postwar German-American scholarly relations, it also exaggerates the degree to which West German "modernizers" during the 1960s and 1970s relied on American historiographical assistance.

In order to illustrate my argument, I will first discuss some efforts of both conservative and left-liberal (or "progressive") historians to capitalize on their contacts with American historians. The essay then suggests a periodization of German-American scholarly relations after World War II into two distinct phases. During the first phase, lasting from the end of the war to roughly the mid-1960s, German historians had recognized the increased importance of American views on German history, but some Germans still argued that Americans (including German émigrés) tended to lack empathy for and understanding of the peculiar conditions of German history. After the mid-1960s, this argument began to appear unacceptable. Now American historians served even more as allies and arbiters, especially during the many historiographical debates. The essay's final section discusses a few examples of that discursive strategy employed by conservative Germans to dismiss disagreeable American views.

Resuming Cooperation After the War

As far as Americans were concerned, intellectual cooperation with West Germans after 1945 generally developed out of the desire to reintegrate German historians into an international scholarly community that had suffered tremendously during the interwar years and World War II. In addition, often Americans simply continued to value scholarly contacts with their German colleagues. They would therefore demonstrate considerable understanding in some cases if Germans had made certain concessions to National Socialist ideology in their writings, or had even belonged to National Socialist organizations.[5] Sometimes, their own conservative political views helped facilitate intellectual rapprochements, in particular as the new bipolar world order regrouped previous alliances. Finally, it should be kept in mind that the American historical profession at the end of World War II was much less diverse and politically more conservative than it is today.[6]

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[4] See Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Gordon Craig, "Review of Ernst Nolte, *Der europäische Bürgerkrieg*," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 36 (1988): 772–773.

As for the West Germans, idealistic academic internationalism did not always constitute the main motivation for reaching out to the other side of the Atlantic. German historians had become acutely aware of the importance of American views on their scholarship – even if they disagreed with these views. Therefore German scholars of all political and methodological stripes – and not just the most liberal-minded – attempted to establish, or reestablish, relations with American colleagues. Many German scholars recognized all too well that a transatlantic orientation could be materially or politically advantageous, and that the conditions of the Cold War made it possible for them to rally under the ideological umbrella of the "West."[7]

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[5] Egmont Zechlin (University of Hamburg) in 1933 freely admitted to Harvard historian William Langer that he was writing articles for the Nazi party newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*, and that he had just joined the SA's motor squad. Even more surprising was the case of the medievalist Percy Ernst Schramm who, during a research visit to Princeton University (he had received Princeton's Benjamin Shreve Fellowship) in the spring and summer of 1933, had defended the political conditions in Germany after the Nazi takeover. Schramm insisted that the Nazi authorities were only "protecting citizens against Bolshevism" and denied the "rumors of persecution" of Jewish Germans. Yet this blatant propaganda did not keep the Princeton medievalist Gray C. Boyce from paying Schramm a complimentary research visit at Göttingen University the following year. See John L. Harvey, "The Common Adventure of Mankind: Academic Historians and an Atlantic Identity in the Twentieth Century" (PhD diss., Pennsylvania State University, 2003), 497. In 1958 Schramm was considered for the honorary foreign membership of the AHA, but the selection committee chose Gerhard Ritter instead. In 1969, Gray C. Boyce made another attempt: in a letter to Julian Boyd (Princeton, Chairman of Comm.), dated August 23, 1969, suggesting the medievalist for the honorary foreign membership, Boyce wrote, "Schramm and I have been friends ever since I first met him when he came to Princeton as a visitor in 1933. I know that after the war there was some question concerning his attitudes during the trying days following 1933. When I knew him in Goettingen in 1933/35 he was active in trying to get unfortunate Jewish scholars placed outside of Germany and was not looked upon with favor by a number of the confessed Nazis." Library of Congress, AHA papers, Box 737, Committee Files.

[6] Stephen Steinberg, *The Academic Melting Pot* (New York: Transaction Books, 1974), chapter 1. For egregious examples of anti-Semitism in the interwar American historical profession, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 172–174; and John Hope Franklin, *Mirror to America: The Autobiography of John Hope Franklin* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2005), 64–65.

Conservative Germans' Connections

One of these historians was Gerhard Ritter, the first postwar chairman of the German Historians' Association and one of most influential figures of the profession at least until the early 1960s. In contrast to many other Germans of his generation, Ritter was well connected with the American historical profession.[8] In his attempt to find international partners for the journal *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, as editor Ritter joined forces in 1948 with the American church historians Roland Bainton and Harold Grimm. Both Bainton and Grimm were Germanophiles who also harbored deep reservations about ethnic and religious diversity in American historiography and society.[9] Whereas Ritter strove to broaden the scope and the appeal of the journal, he was also clearly attracted by the similarly conservative ideological outlook of his American colleagues.

Ritter also repeatedly attempted to capitalize on his contacts to American colleagues in order to have his books published in the United States. His self-confidence in these matters continues to amaze: attempting to secure an English translation of his *Europa und die Deutsche Frage* in 1948, Ritter told Fritz T. Epstein, a German émigré historian now teaching in the United States, that he would be "very grateful if you could get Stanford [University] Press to accept it for publication. After all, my views represent the *communis opinio* of all German academic historians."[10] In reality, Ritter did not even represent all *conservative* scholars in postwar Germany, as one could see through his failure to achieve a more prominent role within the newly established *Institut für Zeitgeschichte.*[11] And yet, some Americans accepted Ritter's self-confident claim to speak for the entire postwar German historical profession. Andreas Dorpalen, one of the leading observers of nineteenth- and twentieth-century German historiography, even argued that "the combination of adaptability in foreign affairs and conservatism in domestic policy which his [Ritter's] speeches and writings reveal seems characteristic of the climate of opinion in the Bonn Republic. Thus Ritter's work continues not only to deal with German history but to be a representative part of that history."[12]

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[7] See Karl Dietrich Erdmann, *Toward a Global Community of Historians: The International Historical Congresses and the International Committee of Historical Sciences, 1898–2000* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 139–195.

[8] Ritter's American contacts, listed together with the period of their correspondence, included: Roland H. Bainton (New Haven), 1947–1967; Howard K. Beale (Madison), 1948–1956; Gordon Craig (Princeton), 1949–1966; Andreas Dorpalen (Columbus), 1948–1962; C. V. Easum (Madison/Bonn), 1953–1966; Howard M. Ehrman (Michigan), 1954/1955; Fritz Epstein 1947–1965; Klaus Epstein, o.D., 1965, 1967; Sidney Fay (Cambridge, MA), 1948–1950; Guy Stanton Ford (Washington, D.C.), 1938, 1947–1948; Harold J Grimm, 1948–1967; Felix E. Hirsch (New York), 1947–1966; Helmut Hirsch (Chicago), 1955, 1957; Hajo Holborn (New Haven), 1939, 1959–1960; Georg Iggers, 1960–1963; Henry Kissinger (Cambridge, MA), 1953–1956; William L. Langer (Cambridge, MA), 1947–1965; Arthur S. Link (Princeton), 1966; Ralph H. Lutz, 1947, 1956/1957, 1962–1964; William H. Maehl (Lincoln), 1964–1967; Henry Cord Meyer (Claremont), 1948, 1954; Armin E. Mruck (Baltimore), 1960, 1962; Peter Paret (Princeton), 1957–1959, 1967; Hans Rothfels, 1947–1967; Richard Salomon (Ohio), 1947, 1954; John L. Snell (New Orleans),1958–1967; Alfred Vagts (Sherman, CT), 1947–1967.

[9] John L. Harvey, "Reformationsgeschichte Reformed? The Rebirth of *Archiv of Reformationsgeschichte* from Five Decades Past," paper delivered at the Annual Conference of the Society of Reformation Research, Minneapolis, October 24–28, 2007.

One last example: in 1965 Ohio State University Press published Ritter's *The German Problem*, a collection of essays that had previously appeared in German (this was in fact the English translation of *Das deutsche Problem*, which had appeared in 1962 and was an updated version of *Europa und die deutsche Frage*). And some Americans saw this publication as overdue, for example Ralph Lutz of Stanford University who in a letter to Ritter emphasized the significance of having Ritter's essays available in English, since "Prussian militarism is still a subject which few American historians can present objectively to our present generation."[13]

These examples illustrate that Ritter's selection as honorary foreign member of the American Historical Association (AHA) was less surprising than it seems in retrospect. In fact, the AHA's secretary, Guy Stanton Ford, had already suggested Ritter in 1952, but the committee chose Franz Schnabel, a Catholic yet liberal outsider among the West German historians.[14] When Ritter's name came up again in

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10 Letter, Gerhard Ritter to Fritz T. Epstein, October 8, 1948, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BAK), NL Epstein, Box 82. In 1949, the publishing house Regnery, politically very much in tune with Ritter, signaled interest, but eventually decided not to publish Ritter's book since Hans Rothfels's study on the German resistance had turned out to be an economic disappointment. See letter from Ritter to Epstein, December 23, 1949, BAK, NL Epstein, Box 82.

11 See Christoph Cornelissen, *Gerhard Ritter. Geschichtswissenschaft und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2001), 534–545; Winfried Schulze, *Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft nach 1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 1989), 229–234.

12 Andreas Dorpalen, "Historiography as History: The Work of Gerhard Ritter," *Journal of Modern History* 34 (1962): 18.

13 Ralph Lutz to Gerhard Ritter, November 16, 1962, BAK, NL Gerhard Ritter, Box 353.

14 Raymond Sontag vetoed Ritter's nomination in the AHA's selection committee. See the meeting report by the committee's chairman, Richard H. Shyrock to Guy Stanton Ford, May 28, 1952: "Dr. Ford notes that the question of possible German representation – presumably West German – will come up; and suggests Schnabel and Ritter in this connection. Dr. Carroll apparently thinks

1958 (along with those of the medievalists Walter Goetz and Percy Ernst Schramm), the Selection Committee discussed Ritter's mixed record during the Nazi years and emphasized that "he was very much a German Nationalist and went along with the Nazis for quite a while although he then went into opposition and was even placed in prison."[15] Eventually, the Committee did not let these political considerations affect their decision in choosing Ritter.[16] Of course, one should not overrate the significance of such honorary gestures, as they were certainly influenced by a number of very different factors – scholarly as well as political. Yet it remains remarkable that a historian like Ritter, labeled even by his sympathetic biographer as a *wissenschaftspolitischer Frontkämpfer*, could receive such an honor only a decade and a half after the end of the war.[17]

While Ritter in the was fairly representative of the West German conservative-nationalist academic establishment, even an arch-conservative such as Walther Hubatsch, a specialist in naval history at the University of Bonn who throughout his career remained a rather marginal figure within the West German historical profession, received an opportunity to teach in the United States: Hubatsch spent the spring semester of 1960 at the University of Kansas. Hubatsch's guest professorship also made possible the translation of his study on the Central Powers in World War I, based on the lectures he had given while at Kansas as well as on an earlier contribution to a handbook on German history.[18] This was a study that at times downplayed, at times simply denied the German Empire's territorial ambitions. Yet Henry Cord Meyer, a former student of Hajo Holborn's at Yale, who had written his dissertation on the history of the *Mitteleuropa* concept in Germany, provided a surprisingly sympathetic preface to the study.[19] He conceded that Hubatsch's views by no means constituted the consensus among German historians, mentioning Ludwig Dehio and Fritz Fischer (who had just published his mag-

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both of these worthy of discussion; Dr. Sontag supports Schnabel but not Ritter." LoC, AHA papers, Box 173, Secretary File.

[15] Letter, Felix Gilbert to Boyd Shafer, November 14, 1958, LoC, AHA papers, Box 489, Secretary File.

[16] Committee chairman Paul H. Clyde reported to Boyd Shafer that in the second round of votes "one committee member preferred to abstain from voting in the case of Ritter." Shafer replied, "I think you should recommend Ritter with the explanation that one member declined to vote." Letters of October 13 and 16, 1959, LoC, AHA papers, Box 661, Secretary's and Executive Secretary's File.

[17] Cornelissen, *Gerhard Ritter*, 457.

[18] Walter Leo and Walter Bussmann, eds., *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte, Vol. IV part 2* (Konstanz: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1955). The chair of Kansas' history department, George Anderson, likely was instrumental in this case.

[19] Henry Cord Meyer, *Mitteleuropa in German Thought and Action, 1815–1945* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1955).

num opus *Griff nach der Weltmacht*) as differing markedly from Hubatsch.[20] Yet Meyer claimed that by engaging Hubatsch's interpretations, American readers would "stand to lose only two expandable qualities – our ignorance and our prejudice."[21]

Unfortunately for Hubatsch, not all American historians agreed. Reviewing the book in the *Journal of Modern History*, Hans Gatzke labeled it an example of apologist historiography still rampant in West Germany: "Reading the works of some German historians since World War II, one is impressed with the open-mindedness and objectivity with which they tackle touchy subjects in their nation's past. But there are also still those who prefer to sweep under the rug that which they cannot face."[22] Gatzke's damning evaluation referred to Hubatsch's questionable assertions, such as the claim that the brutal Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918 should be regarded as "an attempt to establish a provisional order along certain structural lines determined by the principle of recognizing nationalities as well as by the interests of state of the Central Powers."[23] In addition, in his discussion of the German Empire's war aims, Hubatsch categorically declared that "no chancellor adopted a program of annexations during the war" – a statement that was simply incorrect.[24] That at least some American historians took offense to such a blatant apologia was not surprising. After all, even among those German historians tending toward a rather sympathetic evaluation of the German Empire's foreign policies, Hubatsch occupied a fringe position. But despite such negative responses, it is evident that a pluralistic American historical profession offered space to German scholars of different backgrounds. One did not have to be politically progressive or even a historiographical iconoclast to find some like-minded colleagues on the other side of the Atlantic.

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[20] Interestingly, in *Germany and the Central Powers in the World War 1914–1918* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1963), Hubatsch claimed that "few eras have been studied as thoroughly as the period from 1914 to 1918" and that "as a consequence historians can write about the war from a reasonably firm and definitive basis" (14). However, two years earlier Fritz Fischer had proved that the opposite was the case.

[21] Henry Cord Meyer, "Introduction," in Hubatsch, *Germany and the Central Powers in the World War*, xi.

[22] Hans W. Gatzke, "Review of Walther Hubatsch, *Germany and the Central Powers in the World War, 1914–1918*," *Journal of Modern History* 36 (1964): 101.

[23] Hubatsch, *Germany and the Central Powers in the World War 1914–1918*, 108.

[24] Hubatsch, *Germany and the Central Powers in the World War 1914–1918*, 64.

The Bielefelder Schule and Its Allies

Of course, West German historians of left-liberal political persuasions also established and entertained contacts with their American colleagues, and arguably more so than West German conservatives. Similarly, they were at least as intent as their conservative counterparts on enlisting American historians for the historiographical enterprises. And since historians associated with – or sympathetic to – the Bielefelder Schule have written most of the texts surveying the development of the West German historical profession during the last decades, the Bielefelders' transatlantic progressive connection has become conventional wisdom.[25]

When Hans-Ulrich Wehler in 1971 launched the series *Deutsche Historiker*, he assembled a group of younger historians, thus emphasizing the project's distance from the West German historiographical establishment. In addition, several foreign – mostly American – scholars became part of the team, thus symbolizing not just a generational change but also the internationalization of the discipline. For an essay on Gerhard Ritter, for example, Wehler turned to Andreas Dorpalen, who had already published widely on German historiography, including Heinrich von Treitschke and Gerhard Ritter.[26]

Similarly, as Wehler and others launched their new journal *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, and applied for financial support from the Volkswagen Foundation, they noted not only that *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* intended to fill a gap in the landscape of academic journals: whereas sociological publications tended to neglect the historical dimension, their historical counterparts either focused too narrowly on a particular epoch or failed to grant the "new kind" of social history appropriate space. Just as importantly, Wehler emphasized in particular the support his undertaking had received abroad and listed an advisory committee consisting of nineteen scholars from six countries and various disciplines. With nine members, American historians and social scientists constituted by far the largest group.[27]

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[25] Mommsen, *Return to the Western Tradition*; Iggers, "Introduction"; Schulin, "German and American Historiography."

[26] Andreas Dorpalen, *Heinrich von Treitschke* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957); Dorpalen, "Historiography as History." Dorpalen later published the first comprehensive account of East German historiography, *German History in Marxist Perspective: The East German Approach* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985).

[27] Letter, Hans-Ulrich Wehler to Stiftung Volkswagenwerk, July 25, 1974, BAK, NL Theodor Schieder, Box 1301. The list included the historians Gerald D. Feldman, David S. Landes, Charles S. Maier, Arno Mayer, Hans Rosenberg, James J. Sheehan, and Henry A. Turner; the sociologist Dietrich Rüschemeyer, a German who had come to the United States after receiving his PhD and taught at

Finally, an episode from the 1972 Historikertag in Regensburg illustrates the issue of supposed American support for West German social historians very well. On a general level, this conference saw debates between those historians who believed the West German historical profession to be under-theorized and those who did not.[28] A particularly good example was the discussion surrounding the concept of "Organized Capitalism" that Wehler, Kocka, and others first promoted for the study of the German economy from the 1870s to the early 1920s.[29] They invited two younger American historians, Gerald Feldman of Berkeley and Charles S. Maier, then at Harvard. This was in itself remarkable, since foreign historians participating in panels at the Historikertag still constituted somewhat of an exception. Yet, as Maier recalls, the Americans arrived at Regensburg feeling "enlisted" by the Bielefelder to support their new historiographical direction.[30] Ultimately, Maier and Feldman became the contributors most critical of the concept, and they made their skepticism quite explicit. Feldman articulated "serious terminological and conceptual reservations" and criticized that "in many ways the term organized capitalism, as Wehler and Kocka use it, is so all-encompassing that it loses almost all its meaning."[31] Still, the impression such episodes left on other West German historians was that the Bielefelder and other progressives were in methodological and interpretive agreement with their American colleagues, and the Bielefelder in their writings did everything to corroborate this impression.

To emphasize this strategic dimension should not be understood as merely a cynical reduction of innocent and even idealistic international scholarly cooperation to academic politics. Of course, German historians often reached out to their colleagues on the other side of the Atlantic because of shared interests and approaches. But American historians could *also* assume the role of useful allies or

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Brown University for thirty years; and Guido Goldman, a sociologist who in 1979 became the founding director of the Center for European Studies at Harvard University.

[28] Volker R. Berghahn, "Fritz Fischer und seine Schüler," *Neue Politische Literatur* 19, special edition (1974): 148.

[29] See Gerald D. Feldman, "Der deutsche Organisierte Kapitalismus während der Kriegs- und Inflationsjahre," in *Organisierter Kapitalismus. Voraussetzungen und Anfänge*, ed. Heinrich August Winkler (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), 150 – 171; see also the contributions in the same volume by Wehler, "Der Aufstieg des Organisierten Kapitalismus und Interventionsstaates in Deutschland," 36 – 57; Kocka, "Organisierter Kapitalismus oder Staatsmonopolistischer Kapitalismus? Begriffliche Vorbemerkungen," 19 – 35; and Winkler, "Einleitende Bemerkungen zu Hilferdings Theorie des Organisierten Kapitalismus," 9 – 18.

[30] Charles S. Maier, interview with the author, October 30–November 1, 2006.

[31] Feldman, "Der deutsche Organisierte Kapitalismus während der Kriegs- und Inflationsjahre," 150, 152.

"court of appeals," in particular during the many hard-fought historiographical debates.[32]

For the Bielefelder in particular, the often-emphasized American connection served a specific purpose during the inner-German controversies that accompanied the establishment of their *Schule* within the German historical profession in the late 1960s and afterwards. The protagonists of *Historische Sozialwissenschaft* labeled their enterprise "critical," interdisciplinary, and internationally oriented, namely part of a transatlantic network of historians. Accordingly, the Bielefelder's opponents, "avowed historicists" such as Thomas Nipperdey and traditional diplomatic historians such as Andreas Hillgruber could only embody the opposite. A closer look at the numerous programmatic statements by Wehler, Kocka, and others reveals a repeated emphasis of their opponents' lacking a critical stance, an interdisciplinary orientation, and a sufficient international perspective.[33] When the Bielefelder's opponents took issue with the labeling of history as a social science, the Bielefelder responded that in other countries, such as the US, this had been done for quite a while, implying that only a few old-fashioned Germans refused to accept a development that had become common wisdom abroad.[34]

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[32] Other foreign historians could serve in the same role. This constitutes one of two main reasons why Eley's, Blackbourn's, and Evans's critique of the *Sonderweg* paradigm warmed the hearts of German conservatives. British historians could hardly be accused of an apologetic stance toward Imperial Germany. The critics' neo-Marxist orientation provided even more reason for satisfaction, since the Bielefelder were attacked by fellow "progressives." See David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, Mythen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung: Die gescheiterte bürgerliche Revolution von 1848 (Frankfurt, 1980). An expanded English edition was published as The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany (Oxford, 1984). See also Richard J. Evans, ed., Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany (London, 1978).

[33] For a critique of Hillgruber's and Hildebrand's methodological and political conservatism, see Wehler, "German Historiography 1949–1979," first in Jürgen Habermas, *Stichworte zur geistigen Situation der Zeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), later in Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Historische Sozialwissenschaft und Geschichtsschreibung: Studien zu Aufgaben und Traditionen deutscher Geschichtswissenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 26 and 36–37; Wehler, "Moderne Politikgeschichte oder 'Grosse Politik der Kabinette'," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 1 (1975); Wehler, "Kritik und kritische Antikritik," *Historische Zeitschrift* 225 (1977); Kocka, *Sozialgeschichte.* More generally, non-German scholarship often served as a yardstick against which Wehler measured the supposedly old-fashioned German diplomatic and political histories – and found them wanting. See, for example, Wehler, "Vorwort zur zweiten Auflage," in *Krisenherde des Kaiserreichs 1871–1918: Studien zur deutschen Sozial- und Verfassungsgeschichte*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 12: here he emphasizes the "denkbar schmale Angebot an wahrhaft modernen politikhistorischen Arbeiten […]. Lohnen sie, stammen sie oft aus den Vereinigten Staaten oder neuerdings aus England. Hierzulande müssen die Vertreter der ‚modernen Politikgeschichte' noch einen erheblichen Nachholbedarf befriedigen."

The Postwar Decades: Two Distinct Phases

Observing the post–World War II German-American community of historians during the postwar decades, we can distinguish two phases. During the first phase, between the late 1940s and the mid-1960s, West German historians realized and accepted that American views on German history could no longer be ignored. Yet they still often resorted to the argument that Americans tended to lack proper understanding for and empathy with the specific conditions of German history. *Verstehen* and *Einfühlen* became key terms in this context. During the second phase, beginning in the mid-1960s, such an argument became unacceptable.

As the examples provided above reveal, German historians of all methodological and political persuasions sought transatlantic contacts, because American views on German history had begun to matter. Even more, it increasingly mattered what American historians of Germany thought not only about the German past but also about the German historiographical present. Thus, when at the height of the Fischer-Kontroverse Gerhard Ritter inquired why *Historische Zeitschrift* had repeatedly granted Fritz Fischer the opportunity to advance his views on the German Empire's policies during World War I, he received a telling response. Editor Theodor Schieder admitted that his decision had been motivated by the fact that "most American historians have a completely distorted view of our profession. Above all, they believe that there is still an ongoing controversy between 'reactionary' and 'progressive' historians." Therefore it was important "to demonstrate very clearly that the German historical profession is overwhelmingly critical of Mr. Fischer but does not exclude him from the debate."[35] That leading figures within the West German historical profession had done just that when they were secretly trying to torpedo Fischer's lecture tour to the United States belied Schieder's statement allegedly favoring a free scholarly discourse.[36]

Having recognized the importance of American views, Germans increasingly sought contacts with like-minded American historians and sometimes even "enlisted" those with similar views. While German historians increasingly understood that intellectual isolation was not a viable option, some still liked to insist that foreign colleagues more likely than not lacked the necessary empathy (*Einfühlungsvermögen*) into the peculiarities of German history.

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[34] See Kocka, *Sozialgeschichte*; Wehler, "Moderne Politikgeschichte oder 'Grosse Politik der Kabinette" and "Kritik und kritische Antikritik," both reprinted in Wehler, *Krisenherde des Kaiserreichs 1871–1918*.

[35] Theodor Schieder to Gerhard Ritter, November 9, 1964, BAK, NL Schieder, Box 243.

[36] Stelzel, "Fritz Fischer and the American Historical Profession," 67–84.

Verständnis and *Einfühlungsvermögen*

I would therefore like to mention some examples of such attitudes of conservative West German historians vis-à-vis their American colleagues, including émigré historians now teaching in the United States. As it is well known, of the émigré historians teaching in the United States, only the most conservative, such as Hans Rothfels, permanently returned to West Germany. Some scholars who signaled interest in positions in Germany, such as Fritz T. Epstein, never managed to secure appointments. Others who were asked to return preferred to stay in their new homeland: Hans Rothfels did not succeed in recruiting Gerhard Masur as his successor at Tübingen.[37]

Overall, it is safe to say that the more conservative an émigré was, the more attractive he was for the postwar West German historical profession. Hans Rothfels fit into the field much better than the liberal Hans Rosenberg could ever have. Therefore it was only a logical consequence that Theodor Schieder, who due to his towering significance within the West German historical profession certainly held greater influence on job distributions than any of his colleagues, pointed to Klaus Epstein – the son of Fritz T. Epstein – when asked for the names of promising younger scholars. For Epstein, according to Schieder, had not only an "extraordinarily sharp mind," but also, and more importantly, an "impressive ability to empathize with the German conditions, from which he had been removed through his course of life."[38] By hiring Epstein, the German historical profession would have been able to signal its openness toward "foreign" perspectives without running the risk of pushing revisionism too far. Schieder's remark also suggests that not all émigré historians could be trusted to express the same empathy and understanding. After all, throughout the first two postwar decades, German conservatives often hurled the accusation of harboring *emigrantisches Ressentiment* ('émigré resentment') against scholars advancing disagreeable views.[39]

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[37] See Hans Rothfels to Gerhard Masur, January 15, 1961, and Masur to Rothfels, February 12, 1961, in Ritter, ed., *Friedrich Meinecke. Akademischer Lehrer und emigrierte Schüler*, 214–217.

[38] Theodor Schieder to Dekan H. Moser, February 5, 1964, BAK, NL Schieder, Box 115. As early as 1963, Schieder had recommended Epstein for a position at the University of Frankfurt. See the letter from Theodor Schieder to Dietrich Geyer (History Department, University of Frankfurt), January 30, 1963, BAK, NL Schieder, Box 115.

By contrast, it is hard to imagine Fritz Stern or even George Mosse being considered for an appointment at a German history department in the 1960s. What West Germany's leading historians thought about Stern became apparent during the Fischer-Kontroverse. In October 1964 the publisher of the journal *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* (*GWU*) suggested including Stern's contribution to the Historikertag, which had supported Fritz Fischer's position, in a forthcoming issue. *GWU*'s editor, Karl Dietrich Erdmann (one of the profession's most influential figures), responded that Stern's paper was merely emotional in nature and contained not a single factual argument ("Appell an Emotionen, kein einziges Argument zur Sache"). Eventually, *GWU* decided not to print Stern's paper.[40] Complaining to Erdmann about "Mr. Stern's babble" at the Historikertag, which had deeply annoyed him, Gerhard Ritter voiced a similar sentiment.[41]

The perceived ability to empathize with the peculiarities of German history, which apparently distinguished Klaus Epstein from others, was an appealing quality to be found in an American scholar. It was also a yardstick that some German historians still used to assess their foreign colleagues, up until the early 1960s.

Another example provides the reception of Koppel Pinson's synthesis *Modern Germany*, published in 1954. Reviewing the book in *Historische Zeitschrift*, Hans Herzfeld acknowledged that Pinson had provided "one of the most serious foreign attempts to grapple with the difficult problems of nineteenth and twentieth century German history."[42] The entire review was suffused by a condescending tone – Herzfeld noted approvingly that Pinson showed a "true inner relationship to German intellectual life" and that the reader could find "in detail some streaks of objectivity."[43] Thus, while Herzfeld at least acknowledged Pinson's efforts to provide an "objective" analysis of recent German history, he also stressed that the author "inevitably" – as he put it – fell short in some respects as well.[44]

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[39] For example, Gerhard Ritter rejected Helmuth Plessner's *Verspätete Nation*, considering it "not real history, but the product of an émigré's imagination" ("nicht echte Historie sondern Konstruktion aus Emigrantenfantasie"). Gerhard Ritter to Theodor Schieder, [undated, ca. 1961], BAK, NL Schieder, Box 506. Helmuth Plessner (1892–1985), was a sociologist whose study *Verspätete Nation* (Belated nation) analyzed what Plessner considered the belated and defective form of modernization of German economy and society (in particular of the *Bürgertum*). See Carola Dietze's biography *Nachgeholtes Leben: Helmuth Plessner, 1892–1985* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006).

[40] See the letters from Friedrich Dieckmann to Karl Dietrich Erdmann, October 21, 1964, and Karl Dietrich Erdmann to Friedrich Dieckmann, November 1, 1964, BAK, NL Erdmann, Box 21.

[41] Gerhard Ritter to Karl Dietrich Erdmann, October 14, 1964, BAK, NL Ritter, Box 270.

[42] Hans Herzfeld, "Review: Modern Germany: Its History and Civilization by Koppel S. Pinson," *Historische Zeitschrift* 182 (1956), 402–405, quote at 402.

[43] Herzfeld, "Review," 402, 404.

Even German-born and -trained historians teaching overseas were suspected to have lost their *Einfühlungsvermögen*, so that, when the first volume of Yale historian Hajo Holborn's *German History* was published in 1960, Gerhard Ritter found it necessary to tell Holborn, "I have to compliment you on having maintained a true understanding of the history of your German fatherland, which you have been able to preserve despite your *Amerikanismus*, and despite the distance from Germany in which you have been kept since the 1930s."[45]

These "compliments" reveal a persistent belief among German scholars that the different personal backgrounds and experiences of both American-born and émigré historians might pose some obstacles to an appropriate *Einfühlen* into the conditions of German history. Even some émigré historians, such as Klaus Epstein himself, would not shy away from such a claim: in a review essay on three American studies of German socialism in the early twentieth century Epstein argued that American scholars sympathizing with the left wing of the SPD had, because of their nationality, difficulties understanding the no-win situation in which the moderate Social Democrats had found themselves. In Epstein's words, "American historians are handicapped when dealing with German developments by the deep-rooted American faith that all problems can be solved by intelligence and good will […] American historians have underestimated the impersonal forces and conditions which have made German socialists act the way they did, and they have engaged in the futile search for villains."[46] Ironically, one of the historians charged with having such a handicap was Epstein's fellow émigré Peter Gay.

Conclusion

My essay has dealt to a large extent with the exploitation of German-American scholarly contacts for German historiographical gain. This focus has served to correct the predominant view about the postwar transatlantic community of historians. Still, the German-American historiographical balance sheet looks very good overall: the decades under review witnessed the establishment and consolidation of a large and diverse German-American scholarly community. The creation of a continuous transatlantic conversation, in which the national background of the participants became less and less important, unquestionably constitutes an impressive achievement. To dismiss American historians as lacking the proper understanding of the peculiarities of German history today would be perceived as unacceptable. While national historiographical and of course societal traditions continue to influence the work of historians studying countries other than their own, the earlier critique, which mostly conservative Germans leveled against disagreeable foreign perspectives, has lost its effectiveness.

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[44] Herzfeld, "Review," 402.

[45] Gerhard Ritter to Hajo Holborn, October 13, 1960, BAK, NL Ritter, Box 350.

[46] Klaus Epstein, "Three Studies of German Socialism," *World Politics* 11 (1959): 650 – 651.

As German historians realized that intellectual isolation and the dismissal of American – and other foreign – perspectives on German history was no longer a viable option, they increasingly co-opted American colleagues who happened to share their views. Again, these remarks are not meant to reduce international scholarly cooperation to its function within academic politics. But American colleagues often became supposedly impartial scholarly arbiters, whose opinion conveniently served to bolster the respective German position – of conservatives and of progressives.

Therefore we should view American historians of modern Germany as attentive observers rather than active participants during the West German historiographical revolution of the 1960s and early 1970s. When younger German historians during those years attempted to modernize the West German historical profession, they tended to be less in tune with their American colleagues than they claimed. Many Americans were impressed by the creative energy, which in particular Kocka and Wehler unleashed upon their discipline. But they generally did not subscribe to *Historische Sozialwissenschaft* and by and large refused to follow the West German iconoclasts on their *Sonderweg.*

Ultimately, the German-American scholarly community of modern Germany resembles other loose, that is, unorganized transatlantic collectives. In his study on the intellectual exchange between American and European social reformers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Daniel T. Rodgers has identified “perception, misperception, translation, transformation, co-optation, preemption, and contestation” as its defining features.[47] All of these qualities characterized German-American scholarly relations as well.

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[47] Daniel T. Rodgers, “An Age of Social Politics,” in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, ed. Thomas Bender (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 260.

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111408989-013

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